

Al-Jahiz	Muslim historian. more...
Abhedananda, Swami	author of India and her people. more...
Aiyar, Sir Chetpat Pattabhirama Ramaswami	ormer Dewan of Travancore, and eminent scholar-statesman and former Vice-Chancellor, who was the first to ban hunting in India. more...
Akbar, M. J.	Indian journalist and editor of Asian age and author of The Shade of Swords: Jihad and the Conflict Between Islam and Christianity. more...
Alcott, Amos Bronson	writer, philosopher, schoolteacher, visionary. Born in 1799 to an illiterate flax farmer in Wolcott, Connecticut, Amos Bronson Alcott was singular among the Transcendentalists in his unassailable optimism and the extent of his self-education. He is also the author of Orphic Sayings, Tablets, and Concord Days. Louisa May Alcott, portrayed him as the grandfather in Little Women. His second daughter, Louisa Alcott, became a world-famous writer, and his youngest daughter, May, was a critically acclaimed artist. When Ralph Waldo Emerson met Alcott in Boston in the late 1830's, he was so impressed with his intellect and innovative ideas that he convinced him to move to Concord and join his circle of friends. more...
Ali bin Abi Talib	The Fourth Caliph more...
al-Qifti, Abu'l Hasan	Arab scholar and author of Chronology of the Scholars, speaks of Arab admiration for Indian place-value system and methods of calculation. more...
Altekar, Anant Sadashiv	author of several books including Education in Ancient India and Sources of Hindu dharma in its socio-religious aspects. more...
Anquetil-Duperron	A French Orientalist who spent seven year in India, had recorded in his moving testimony in 1778. more...

Apollinaire, Guillaume	French poet, novelist, dramatist, and art and literary critic. He became a leader of the avant-garde in Paris in the early 20th century and is believed to have coined the term surrealist. more...
Arnett, Robert	Professor, has lectured widely throughout America including the Smithsonian Institute and Harvard and Yale Universities. He has been interviewed on National Public Radio, Voice of America and various television programs. Arnett has written a new book ' India Unveiled '. more...
Arnold, Sir Edwin	poet and scholar. Author of The Song Celestial, which is a translation of the Bhagavad Gita. It has great elevation of tone and majesty and dignity of style. There are many translations of the Gita but Arnold's translation has a place apart among them by its accuracy and the grave harmony of the verse. more...
Arpi, Claude	French dentist-turned- Tibetologist, author of Fate of Tibet: When Big Insects Eat Small Insects. more...
Arrian, Flavius	Greek historian of the campaigns of Alexander. more...
Arun Shourie	is a Rajya Sabha member and among India's best known commentators on current and political affairs. His writings are backed by rigorous analysis and meticulous research. Shourie has been an economist with the World Bank, a consultant in the planning commission and the editor of Indian Express. Among the many honors and awards, he has received the Magsaysay Award, the International Editor of the Year, the Dadabhai Naoroji and the Astor Award. Author of several books, including Secular Agenda, Eminent Historians, Harvesting Our Souls, Religions in Politics. more...
Aurobindo, Sri	Most original philosopher of modern India. Education in England gave him a wide introduction to the culture of ancient, or mediaeval and of modern Europe. more...
Avelino, Vecente	who was the Consul General for Brazil in India in 1930 belonged to the inner circle called Tattva Shri Chaitanya. He was a devout Vaishanava and an ardent admirer of Shri Ramakrishna. In an address at Panihati, near Calcutta, on the occasion of a religious festival organized by the Shri Gauranga Grantha Mandir to commemorate Shri Chaitanya's visit to that place more...

Babbitt, Irwin	The Harvard literary scholar and cultural thinker, will always stand as a monument to American intellectual culture at its finest. Babbitt had a fascination with Asian religion and philosophy. He was one of the principal critics of the twentieth century and an influential teacher of T. S. Eliot. more...
Bailly, Jean-Sylvain	18th century French astronomer and politician. His works on astronomy and on the history of science (notably the Essai sur la théorie des satellites de Jupiter) were distinguished both for scientific interest and literary elegance and earned him membership in the French Academy, the Academy of Sciences, and the Academy of Inscriptions. more...
Bart, Sir William Wedderburn	He left for India in 1860 and began official duty at Dharwar as an Assistant Collector. He was appointed Acting Judicial Commissioner in Sind and Judge of the Sadar Court in 1874. In 1882 he became the District and Sessions Judge of Poona. At the time of his retirement in 1887, he was the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay. As a Liberal, William. Wedderburn believed in the principle of self-government. more...
Basham, Dr. A. L.	One of the leading authority of ancient Indian culture and author of The Wonder that was India. more...
Beck, L. Adams	author of The Story of Oriental Philosophy. more...
Bernstein Richard	a former New York Times correspondent in China, book critic, author of The book, Ultimate Journey more...
Besant, Annie Wood	George Bernand Shaw regarded her the " greatest woman public speaker of her time." more...
Bhave, Vinoba	The great spiritual leaders and social reformers of modern India, was a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. Founder of the Bhoodan, or land-gift, movement, seeking donations of land for redistribution to the landless. more...
Biardeau, Madeleine	was professor of Indian Religion at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, author of several books, including Studies in Hinduism: Vedism and Hinduism and India. more...
Bjornstjerna, Count Magnus Fredrik Ferdinand	author of The Theogony of the Hindoos with their systems of Philosophy and Cosmogony. more...

Blackwill, Robert	lecturer on international security at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, former ambassador to India. Blackwill is the author and co-editor of numerous books and articles on U.S. foreign policy, including: America's Asian Alliances. more...
Blavatsky, Madame Helena Petrova	HPB as she was known, was a cultured and widely traveled woman. Brilliant, fiery and witty; able to attract the attention of the highest minds, she was in the frequent company of scientists, philosophers and scholars in many fields. She wrote many books-Isis Unveiled, The Voice of Silence and Key to Theosophy. But her magnum opus, The Secret Doctrine, published in 1885, is her most profound book-a bible of Theosophy. more...
Bloomfield, Leonard	American linguist and author of Language, published in 1933) characterization of Panini's Astadhyayi ("The Eight Books"). more...
Bohm, David	Was one of the world's greatest quantum mechanical physicists and philosophers. David Bohm explains his theory that there is something like life and mind enfolded in everything. Bohm was profoundly affected by his close contact with J. Krishnamurti more...
Bohr, Niels Henrik David	Danish nuclear physicist who developed the Bohr model of the atom. His received the Nobel Prize in physics in 1922, for his theory of atomic structure (Quantum Theory). more...
Bose, Jagdish Chandra	A pioneer of modern Indian science, combined ancient Indian introspective methods with modern experimental methods to demonstrate "the universal livingness of matter" or the "omnipresence of Life in Matter." Modern science thus endorsed the ancient Upanishadic truth that the entire universe is born of a life-force and is quivering with a touch of animation. His work represents the triumph of spirituality over extreme materialism. more...
Bournouf, Professor	Professor, in his Discourse on Sanskrit and Its Literature, given at the College of France. more...
Briggs, Rick	NASA researcher, has written about India's ancient language - Sanskrit. more...
Brown, W. Norman	Author of Mythology of India more...

Brunton Paul	A British philosopher, mystic, traveler and author of A Hermit in the Himalayas, A Message from Arunachala and The Orient: Legacy to the West. A Search in Secret India is one of the great classics of spiritual travel writing. With a keen eye for detail, Paul Brunton describes taking a circular journey round India: living amongst yogis, mystics and gurus, seeking the one who would give him the peace and tranquility that come with self-knowledge. His vividly told search ends at Arunachala, with Sri Ramana Maharshi. more...
Buitenen, J A B Van	more...
Burke, Edmund	British statesman, parliamentary orator and political thinker, played a prominent part in all major political issues for about 30 years after 1765, and remained an important figure in the history of political theory. more...
Burnof, Emile	author of La science des religions and Dictionnaire classique sanscrit-français and Essai sur le Veda, ou Introduction a la connaisance de l'Inde. more...
Campbell, Joseph	One of the foremost interpreters of myth in our time. more...
Capra, Fritjof	Austrian-born famous theoretical high-energy physicist and ecologist and the author of The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism, He is co-director of the Center for Eco-Literacy in Berkeley. Capra who studied with Werner Heisenberg. more...
Carlyle, Thomas	Scottish-born English historian and essayist who was leading figure in the Victorian era. more...
Chaitanya, Prema	more...
Chamberlain Houston Stewart	British born writer, and admirer of music composer Richard Wagner. In his major work, The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, he extolled the profundity of Indian philosophy and praise of Hindu mysticism. more...
Chaplin Dorothea	author of the book, Matter, Myth and Spirit or Keltic and Hindu Links more...

Charles Seife	a journalist with Science magazine, has also written for New Scientist, Scientific American, The Economist, Science, Wired UK, The Sciences, and numerous other publications. He holds an M.S. in mathematics from Yale University and his areas of research include probability theory and artificial intelligence. He is a mathematician and science writer, author of Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea more...
Cheiro, Count Louis Hamon aka	author of several book, Language of the Hand and World Predictions published in 1926. Born in Ireland as William John Warner, Cheiro also went by the name Count Louis Hamon. He had a wide following of famous European and American clients like Mark Twain, Sarah Bernhardt, Mata Hari, Oscar Wilde, Grover Cleveland, Thomas Edison, the Prince of Wales, General Kitchener, William Gladstone, Bernard Shaw and Joseph Chamberlain. more...
Chidambaram Dr. R	Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India has said: "Bhagwat Gita" continues to be the source of inspiration for both Indian and western scientists and "one sees a thread of similarity in the spiritual thinking of great scientists like Srinivasa Ramanujan, C V Raman, Chandrasekhar," more...
Childe, Professor Gordon	more...
Chinmayananda, Swami	founder of Chinmaya Mission. He was not satisfied with degrees in literature and law or with other worldly aspirations pursued the spiritual path in the Himalayas under the guidance of his Gurus Swami Tapovanam and Swami Sivananda. Has written several books including Self-Unfoldment (The Self-Discovery Series) more...
Chopra, Dr. Deepak	Vedantic sage and wise-man from the East, author of several books including 'Ageless Body, Timeless Mind' more...
Clemente, Francesco	Italian born Indophile, New York artist Clemente was born in 1952. His art was displayed at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum recently. He is the youngest artist ever to receive a full-museum retrospective at the Guggenheim. Clemente arrived in India in 1973 and 1978 made more than ten trips there, immersing himself deep in India's philosophy, religion, art and crafts. more...

Coates Austin	son of composer Eric Coates, Assistant Colonial Secretary and a magistrate in Hong Kong during the World War II, and First Secretary to the British High Commission in Kaula Lumpur and Penang in 1959-62). more...
Cooraswamy, Dr. Ananda K.	The late curator of Indian art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, was unexcelled in his knowledge of the art of the Orient, and unmatched in his understanding of Indian culture, language, religion and philosophy. He is the author of ' The Dance of Shiva: Essays on Indian Art and Culture'. more...
Cousin, Victor	French Philosopher more...
Cox, Harvey	of the Harvard Divinity School. more...
Cramb, J A	author of The Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain more...
Creuzer, Friedrich	philologist. more...
Crooke, W.	Author of the book " The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India" (Oxford University Press, 1896.) more...
Crooke, W.	Author of 'The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India' more...
Cunningham, General Joseph Davey	author of A history of the Sikhs, from the origin of the nation to the battles of the Sutlej. more...
Curzon, Lord	the late Viceroy of India, in an address delivered at the great Delhi Durbar in 1901. more...
Danielou, Alain, a.k.a Shiv Sharan	Son of French aristocracy, author of numerous books on philosophy, religion, history and arts of India, including Virtue, Success, Pleasure, & Liberation : The Four Aims of Life in the Tradition of Ancient India. He was perhaps the first European to boldly proclaim his Hinduness. He settled in India for fifteen years in the study of Sanskrit. He had a wide effect upon Europe's understanding of Hinduism more...

Danino, Michel	Born in 1956 at Honfleur (France) into a Jewish family recently emigrated from Morocco, from the age of fifteen Michel Danino was drawn to India, some of her great yogis, and soon to Sri Aurobindo and Mother and their view of evolution which gives a new meaning to our existence on this earth. He has been settled in Tamil Nadu for 25 years and has given many lectures in India and is author of The Invasion That Never Was, The Indian Mind Then and Now and Kali Yuga or The Age of Confusion. He is also the convener of the International Forum for India's Heritage. more...
David-Neel Alexandra	French explorer, writer, Orientalist and mystic, had remarked that the role Gods play in India is remarkable. more...
Davies, John	author of Hindu philosophy. more...
de Laplace, Pierre Simon	French mathematician, philosopher, and astronomer, a contemporary of Napoleon. Laplace is best known for his nebular hypothesis of the origin of the solar system. more...
Deussen, Paul	He prefered to be called in Sanskrit, Deva-Sena was a scholar of the Asiatic Society of Bengal more...
Dickinson, Goldsworthy Lowes	A friend of E. M. Forster, wrote in his "Essay on the Civilizations" thesis. more...
Dobson, John	Scientist and a teacher. His theories in physics and cosmology boldly break new ground and significantly challenge the scientific orthodoxy. He was featured in the PBS television series "The Astronomers". John Dobson is perhaps best known for his work in the design and construction of telescopes, however, as most telescopes made today use what is known as a "Dobsonian" mount. more...
Dow, Alexander	had published an essay on Hinduism, entitled A Dissertation Concerning the Customs, Manners, Language, Religion, and Philosophy of the Hindus (1768). The first European scholar to produce a real dissertation on Sanskrit learning. more...
Droit, Jean-Paul	French philosopher, and Le Monde journalist, recently wrote in his book "The Forgetfulness of India." more...
Duff, Dr. Alexander	British Christian missionary more...

Durant, Will	American historian more...
Dutton , Clarence Edward	A captain of ordinance in the U.S. army, geologist-poet and a Yale man, Dutton was deeply influenced by the philosophies of India. It was Dutton who likened the snow-covered peaks of the canyon walls to the Hindu gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. There is even a Hindu amphitheatre which Dutton likened to the "profusion and richness which suggests an Oriental character." more...
Ecevit, Bulent	the then Turkish prime minister, was asked what had given him the courage to send Turkish troops to Cyprus (where they still remain). His answer: he was fortified by the Bhagavad Gita which taught that if one were morally right, one need not hesitate to fight injustice. Besides the Gita, Ecevit was also influenced by Nehru's Glimpses of World History. more...
Eck, Diana L.	Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and Member of the Faculty of Divinity, Harvard University. Her work on India includes the books Banaras, City of Light and Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India. more...
Eddy, Mary Baker	founder of the Christian Science Movement. She published Science and Health With a Key to the Scriptures in 1875. She had imbibed some of the teachings of the New England Transcendentalists (Ralph Waldo Emerson, Amos Bronson Alcott and Henry D. Thoreau) who made their influence widely felt through books, magazines and newspaper articles. more...
Einstein, Albert	World famous physicist. In 1905 He published his theory of Relativity. more...
Eliade, Mircea	Romanian-born philosopher, novelist, poet, and historian of religion. more...
Eliot, Sir Charles	A famous scholar and linguist of Oxford, observed on his book Hinduism and Buddhism: An Historical Sketch, 3 Volume Set. more...
Eliot, T. S.	American-English Harvard educated poet, playwright, and literary critic, a leader of the modernist movement in literature. Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1948. He drew his intellectual sustenance from the Bhagavad Gita. more...
Elisseev, Serge	Asian scholar more...

Elst, Koenraad	Dutch historian, born in Leuven, Belgium, on 7 August 1959, into a Flemish (i.e. Dutch-speaking Belgian) Catholic family. He graduated in Philosophy, Chinese Studies and Indo-Iranian Studies at the Catholic University of Leuven. During a stay at the Benares Hindu University, he discovered India's communal problem and wrote his first book about the budding Ayodhya conflict. more...
Emerson, Ralph Waldo	Author, essayist, lecturer, philosopher, Unitarian minister more...
Eminescu, Mihai	The greatest poet of Rumania, learnt of Indian philosophy through Schopenhauer. The Hindu approach to reality and beauty is found in his verses. The title of his poem "Tattwamasi," indicates his familiarity with Upanishadic thought, but the content deals with the identity of Atman and Brahman. Hindu Monoism is reflected in his poem. more...
Enfield, William	more...
Epstein, Sir Jacob	Leading English Sculptor. After studying with Rodin in Paris, he revolted against the ornate and pretty in art, producing bold, often harsh and massive forms in stone and bronze. His best-known pieces include the Oscar Wilde Memorial (1911; Père-Lachaise, Paris), a marble Venus (1917; Yale Univ., New Haven, Conn.), and a Madonna and Child (Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, London) more...
Fabre, Christian aka Swami Pranavananda Brahmendra Avadhuta	was born in the south of France. He grew up in a family with ties to the garment industry. Author of Swami : PDG et Moine hindou. more...
Feuerstein, George	A specialist in the Sanskrit literature of yoga and has written considerable number of articles on various aspects of Indian thought. He has written various books,' Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy, and Practice.' and ' The Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita: Its philosophy and Cultural Setting'. more...
Ford, Alfred B.	aka Ambarish Das grandson of Henry Ford (founder of the Ford Motor), and Trustee member of Ford Motor Company. He is involved in Ford's corporate charity work. more...

Frawley David	Also known as Vamadeva Shastri. He is the eminent teacher and practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine and Vedic astrology, considers Hinduism to be a religion of the Earth. more...
Gandhi, Mahatma	Was among India's most fervent nationalists, fighting for Indian independence from British rule. more...
Garaudy, Roger	A Muslim philosopher more...
Gautier, Francois	Paris-born, he has lived in India for 30 years, is a political analyst for Le Figaro, one of France's largest circulation newspaper. He defends Indian nationalism. He caused a storm of controversy in India by advocating reunification with Pakistan. Author of several books, including A Western journalist on India : The Ferengi's Columns and Rewriting Indian History. more...
Gibbon, Edward	English historian and scholar, the supreme historian of the Enlightenment, who is best-known as the author of the monumental author of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. more...
Gidwan S. Bhagwan	author of The Return of the Aryans, more...
Gilbert, William Harten	author of Peoples of India. more...
Goel, Sita Ram	scholar, writer, publisher, the founder of Voice of India, an ‘intellectual’ Kshatriya’ par excellence, and a Hindu revivalist. Author of several books, including The Story of Islamic Imperialism, Defence of Hindu Society and History of Hindu-Christian Encounters. more...
Goldich, H. T.	more...
Goldstucker, Theordore	born in Germany, professor of Sanskrit at London’s University College wrote the Dictionary of Indian Biography. more...
Grant, W. J.	Author of the book The Spirit of India 1933. more...
Griffin, Sir Lepel Henry	Knight Indian Civil Servant. President, East India Association and the diplomatic representative at Kabul of the Indian government. Author of several books including The Rajas of the Punjab; being the history of the principal states in the Punjab and their political relations with the British government and The Great Republic. more...

Grousset Rene	French art historian. Author of Civilizations of the East more...
Guenon, Rene	One of the best-known European traditionalist authors on various civilizations, wrote a book - Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines. more...
Guenon, Von Rene	French metaphysician has described our own era as "the reign of quantity". In his many books, Guenon exposed its shortcomings and called for a return to sacred tradition. more...
Hamilton Alexander	aide-de-camp to George Washington and first secretary of the Treasury more...
Happold, F. C.	more...
Harrison George	former Beatle and rocker, who was the impetus for the group's spiritual quest of the 1960s which brought them to India. In 1965, he discovered the Indian string instrument, the sitar. Harrison was in India, to learn how to play the instrument under the renowned sitar maestro Ravi Shankar. But for some, Harrison brings back memories of a time when the West turned to India for inspiration and enlightenment. more...
Harvey, Andrew	has devoted hi life to studying the world's mystical traditions. He is the author of several books including The Direct Path creating a journey to the divine through the world's mystical traditions. more...
Hastings, Lord Warren	Was the first governor general of British India. more...
Hauer, J. W.	A missionary in India and an official exponent of "the German faith", and a Sanskrit scholar, who gave to the Gita, a central place in the German faith. more...
Havell Binfield Ernest Dr	principal to the Madras College of Art in the 1890s and left as principal of the Calcutta College of Art some 20 years later. He wrote several books, including his book, Indian Architecture - Its Psychology, Structure and History from the First Mohammedan Invasion to the Present Day more...
Heeren, Arnold Hermann Ludwig	an Egyptologist more...

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich	German philosopher, wrote in his "lectures on the Philosophy of History." Hegel belongs to the period of "German idealism" in the decades following Kant more...
Heimann, Betty	Late professor of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy at Ceylon University. more...
Heine, Henrich	A late Romantic lyric poet, whose influence was enormous not only in Germany but in most countries of the Western world, describes the India of his imagination: " ...in the glass I saw the dear motherland, the blue and sacred Ganges, the eternally shining Himalayas, the gigantic forests of Banyan trees on whose wide shadowy paths quietly walk wise elephants and while pilgrims ... more...
Heisenberg, Werner Karl	German theoretical physicist was one of the leading scientists of the 20th century. Heisenberg is best known for his Uncertainty Principle and was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics more...
Heras, Father	was a Spanish Jesuit priest who worked in India and was a celebrated Professor of History in Bombay. more...
Herbert Jean	Famous Indianist more...
Herder, Johann Gottfried	German philosopher, poet and critic, clergyman, born in East Prussia. Herder was an enormously influential literary critic and a leader in the Sturn und Drang movement. more...
Hesse, Herman	German poet and novelist, awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1946, found in Indian thought an answer to his yearning for deliverance from "ego" and from the tyrannical dictates of temporality. more...
Holmes Arthur	geologist, professor at the University of Durham. more...
Holroyde, Peggy	British author of several books on India including Indian Music: a vast ocean of promise and East comes West: a background to some Asian Faith. more...
Holst, Gustav	composer of S¯avitri ; The dream-city, Choral hymns from the Rig Veda and S¯avitri; an episode from the Mah¯abharata, Op. 25 He was Vaughan Williams' greatest friends. Despite his German name, Holst was born in Cheltenham in 1874. Holst's music as exploring 'mystical regions'. more...

Housden, Roger	Author of "Travels Through Sacred India" and a student of the spiritual traditions of India for over 20 years. more...
Humboldt, Wilhelm von	Prussian minister of education, a brilliant linguist and the founder of the science of general linguistics. more...
Hume Ernest Robert	whose renderings of thirteen principal Upanishads published in 1921 are still widely read. His translation of the thirteen principal Upanishads was published more than a hundred years ago, and revised more than sixty years ago. It has long been recognized as a classic translation which provides a faithful rendering of the original Sanskrit into twentieth-century English more...
Hume, Robert Earnest	Christian missionary. Author of the book The Thirteen Principal Upanishads. more...
Hunter, Sir William	editor of Imperial Gazetteer of India and author of The Indian Musalmans. more...
Huxley, Aldous	English novelist and essayist, born into a family that included some of the most distinguished members of the English ruling class more...
Huyler, Stephen P.	Art historian, cultural anthropologist, curator at the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler gallery, in his book 'Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion', defines Hinduism more...
Hyndman, H. M.	the eminent British publicist thus describes the important place of India in the world's history and civilization. more...
Ifrah, Georges	French historian of Mathematics and author of the book, The Universal History of Numbers. more...
Iqbal, Allama	Indian thinker and poet. more...

Isherwood Christopher W. B.	Translator, biographer, novelist, and playwright, he is the author of over twenty books, including Vedanta for the Western World and My Guru and His Disciple - a book about Swami Prabhavananda, who guided Isherwood for some thirty years. During the 1940s his interests turned from Christianity to Hinduism. With his guru Swami Prabhavananda Isherwood translated from the Sanskrit The Bhagavad-Gita and The Yoga Aphorism of Patanjali. Isherwood broke from the strictly chronological format to create a spiritual autobiography wherein the values of Vedanta Hinduism counter his life as a Hollywood scriptwriter. more...
Jacolliot, Louis	He worked in French India as a government official and was at one time President of the Court in Chandranagar, translated numerous Vedic hymns, the Manusmriti, and the Tamil work, Kural. His masterpiece, La Bible dans l'Inde, stirred a storm of controversy. He praised the Vedas in his Sons of God. more...
Jagmohan, Shri	Union Minister of Tourism and Culture of India. more...
Jaspers, Karl	the famous Austrian existentialist philosopher. more...
Joad, Cyril Edwin Mitchinson	British philosopher, author, teacher, and radio personality. He was one of Britain's most colorful and controversial intellectual figures of the 1940s. He became head of the department of philosophy at Birbeck College, Univ. of London, in 1930. As a rationalist, he was a successful lecturer and writer. Author of several books including Guide to Philosophy and The Story of Indian Civilization. more...
Jois, Justice Manadagadde Rama	Former Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court. A distinguished writer and historian, Justice M. Rama Jois has produced several authoritative books on Service Law, Habeas Corpus Law, Constitutional Law, etc., which are popular among the Law fraternity of India including students of Law. His most appreciated two-volume book Legal and Constitutional History of India is a textbook for Law Degree course. His another book Seeds of Modem Public Law in Ancient Indian Jurisprudence is also a much-valued contribution. A book authored by him Eternal Values in Manu Smriti, was released by former Chief Justice of India A.S. Anand. more...
Jones, Sir William	He came to India as a judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta. He pioneered Sanskrit studies. His admiration for Indian thought and culture was almost limitless. more...

Josephson, Prof. Brian David	Welsh physicist, the youngest Nobel Laureate. more...
Jung, Carl G.	A student of Sigmund Freud, psychiatrist, interpreted Hinduism in terms of his psychological system, and pointed out the great significance of Indian thought for the modern West. more...
Kak, Dr. Subhash	is a widely known scientist and a Indic scholar. Currently a Professor at Louisiana State University, he has authored ten books and more than 200 research papers in the fields of information theory, quantum mechanics, and Indic studies. He is a Sanskrit scholar and is author of Astronomical Code of the Rig Veda, and India at Century's End: Essays on History and Politics. more...
Kamiya, Takeo	Japanese architect has spent about 20 years and all his savings traveling across India documenting the country's heritage buildings to enlighten Japan and the world about the "wonders of real India". He is a member of the Japan Architects Academy. Kamiya first visited India about 27 years ago and travelled across the country, like Hieun Tsang during the Golden Age of Guptas. more...
Kaplan, Abraham	American professor of philosophy. more...
Keay, J. Seymour	British M. P. Banker in India and Indian Agent more...
Kellett, Ernest E	author of A Short History of Religions. more...
Keyserling, Count H.	Philosopher, author, public speaker. more...
Kezwer, Glen Peter	a physicist from Canada. He lives in Himachal Pradesh and is author of the book Meditation, Oneness and Physics more...
Kipling, Rudyard	British writer, who spent his earliest years were blissfully happy in an India full of exotic sights and sounds. Kipling was a Nobel Laureate in Literature more...
Klostermaier, Klaus K.	Professor of Religion at the University of Manitoba. Author of several books, including A Survey of Hinduism more...
Klostermaier, Prof Klaus	Distinguished Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Manitoba in Canada. He is author of several books including Hinduism: A Short Introduction more...

Knapp, Stephen (Sri Nandanandana Dasa)	American born author of several books including The Secret Teachings of the Vedas : The Eastern Answers to the Mysteries of Life and Proof of Vedic Culture's Global Existence. more...
Koestler Arthur	Hungarian-born British novelist, journalist, and critic. He is best known for his novel Darkness at Noon and The Lotus and the Robot, in which he examines Eastern mysticism more...
Kriplani, Acharya Jiwatram Bhagwandas	Noted Gandhian, and Eminent National Leader. When speaking as the President of the Congress in India. more...
Krishnamacharya, Ekkirala	author of Cradle of Indian History, physician, educationist and Kulapati (rector) of the Theosophy-related World Teacher Trust in Visakhapatnam. Fondly called by his disciples as `Master E.K'. more...
Lal, B B (Braj Basi)	On joining the Archaeological Survey in January 1946, he held charge of the Excavations Branch and participated with Sir Mortimer Wheeler in the excavations at Harappa, now in Pakistan. In 1951 he was deputed for advanced studies at the Institute of Archaeology, London. In 1961, under a UNESCO project, he conducted excavations in Nubia, Egypt, and brought to light valuable evidence relating to prehistoric and protohistoric periods of that country. more...
Lamb, Beatrice Pitney	Author of several books including India: A World in Transition. She was Editor of the United Nations News for several years and has written and lectured extensively on Indian affairs. Beatrice Lamb first visited India in 1949 on an assignment for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Mrs. Lamb saw the many-hued soul of India revealed through its people, living, working and worshipping. more...
Lannoy, Richard	author of The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society more...
Larson Gerald James	An American scholar who points out that there are in a manner of speaking almost as many Gitas as there are readers of it more...
Le Bon, G	Author of the book The World of Ancient India. more...

Leatherdale, Marcus	Montreal born photojournalist has had a long love affair with India. To him Hinduism and India are almost synonymous. What he likes about Hinduism is that its very emotional, colorful and joyful. more...
Lecky William Edward Hartpole	Irish historian, essayist, author of The Substance of History of European Morals (From Augustus to Charlemagne). more...
Lemaitre, Solange	uthor of several books, including Le Mystère de la mort dans les religions d'Asie and Râmakrishna et la vitalité de l'hindouism. more...
LeMee, Dr. Jean	Born in France in 1931, Studied Sanskrit at Columbia University. Author of the Hymns from the Rig Veda more...
Levi, Sylvain	French scholar more...
Loti Pierre	pseudonym of Louis-marie-julien Viaud, a novelist whose exoticism made him popular in his time and whose themes anticipated some of the central preoccupations of French literature between World Wars. Loti's career as a naval officer took him to the Middle and Far East, thus providing him with the exotic settings of his novels and reminiscences. Some of his books include Voyages 1872-1913 and L'Inde sans les Anglais. more...
Louis-Barthou, Madame Alice	more...
MacDonald, James Ramsey	first Labor Party prime minister of Great Britain more...
Macintosh, William	more...
Mackintosh, Sir James	British writer and Philosopher. He was trained as a physician, but after settling in London he became a writer and lawyer. He served as recorder of Bombay (1804-6) and judge in Bombay vice-admiralty court (1806-12). more...
Maeterlinck, Count Maurice	Belgian writer of poetry and a wide variety of essays. He won the 1911 Nobel Prize for literature. more...
Maharaj, Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati	The founder of The Divine Life Society, with headquarters in Rishikesh, Himalayas, began as a physician before he turned sannyasi. more...

Maharishi, Ramana	A great saga, Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni, called him Bhagavan or God for he regarded him as the incarnation of Skanda or Subramania, and named him Ramana, the sweet one, and Maharshi, the great saga. more...
Maine, Sir Henry James Summer	His first work, Ancient Law was his most famous. He was (1862-69) legal member of the viceroy's council in India, where he planned the codification of Indian law. more...
Majer, Friedrich	A disciple of Johann Gottfried Herder, an Orientalist more...
Malcolm Sir John	Was the Governor of Bombayauthor of A Memoir of Central India including Malwa and Adjoining Provinces and who worked for the East India Company more...
Malraux, Andre	A profound thinker and French prolific writer, an essayist, novelist, art-historian, and political speech writer, Malraux did give his readers a philosophy. more...
Martel, Yann	a Canadian who won this year's Booker Prize for Life of Pi. more...
Mascaro, Juan	Author of The Bhagvad Gita - translated By Juan Mascaro.Penguin Classics, 1962), pays tribute to the glory of the Sanskrit literature. more...
Maugham, W. Somerset	Was born in the British Embassy in Paris and was educated in England and Germany. After medical school, a successful attempt at writing led him to widespread fame for his plays and novels. Author of several books including "Of Human Bondage" and " The Moon and Sixpence." more...
McArthur, Tom	author of Yoga and the Bhagavad Gita more...
Melville, Herman	The great American novelist, in his magnum opus Moby Dick, refers to the incarnation of Vishnu in the form of a whale, which sounded down to the utmost depths of the sea to rescue the sacred books. more...

Menuhin, Sir Yehudi	Born to Russian - Jewish parents who migrated to America. One of the greatest violinists of the 20th century revered an Indian Yogi as his teacher. He was famous for his affiliation with renowned Hatha yoga teacher B K S Iyengar and legendary sitarist Ravi Shankar. The more he learned about India and Yoga, the more he loved it. He was among the first in the West to espouse yoga and the principles of organic food. more...
Merton, Thomas	Was a Trappist monk, poet, social critic and author of many books, including Seeds of Contemplation, Life and Holiness, Mystics and Zen Masters. Merton , in his book "Thoughts on the East" talks about the living importance of the Bhagavad Gita. more...
Michelet, Jules	French writer, the greatest historian of the romantic school more...
Milburn, Mr. R. Gordon	more...
Monier-Williams, Sir	Indologist and head of the Oxford's Boden Chair more...
Mookerji, Dr. Radhakumud	distinguished historian and author of several books including Hindu civilization (from the earliest times up to the establishment of Maurya empire), Ancient Indian education; Brahmanical and Buddhist and Indian shipping: a history of the seaborne trade and maritime activity of the Indians from the earliest times. more...
Moorhouse, Geoffrey	British author of "Om: an Indian Pilgrimage" more...
Motwani, Kewal	author of several books including Manu Dharma S'satra: A sociological and historical study. more...
Mukerji, Dhan Gopal	was the first South Asian immigrant to the United States to carve out a successful literary career, publishing more than twenty books Caste and Outcast was the first book on India written by an Indian that was widely read in America. As an interpreter of Indian thought and spirituality, Mukerji's influence on American literary circles was considerable. Among his long-time literary associates were the eminent critic Van Wyck Brooks and the historians Will and Ariel Durant. Mukerji's opus was an integral part of a far-flung intellectual effort in the early twentieth century that seriously studied Indian civilization and drew upon it for inspiration and direction. Those involved included such figures as T. S. Eliot, Theodore Dreiser, Eugene O'Neill, Lewis Mumford, Luther Burbank and A. J. Liebling. more...

Müller, Friedrich Maximilian	German philologist and Orientalist. more...
Munro Thomas Sir	held various posts in the colonial administration of India, served as brigadier-general during the third Maratha War (1817–18) and was appointed Governor of Madras in 1819. more...
Naipaul, Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad	Nobel Laureate, was born in Trinidad into a family of Indian origin is known for his penetrating analyses of alienation and exile. Writing with increasing irony and pessimism, he has often bleakly detailed the dual problems of the Third World: the oppressions of colonialism and the chaos of post-colonialism. His grandfather had emigrated there from India as an indentured servant. He is the author of several books including Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted Peoples, India: A Wounded Civilization, Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey, India: A Million Mutinies Now. more...
Needham, Joseph	s famous mainly for the formidable magnitude and scholarship of his work on science in China. He impressed by the achievements of India in the field of knowledge and learning. more...
Nehru, Jawaharlal	The first prime minister of free India, was more than a deeply moral human being. He yearned for spiritual light. He was particularly drawn to Swami Vivekananda and the Sri Ramakrishna Ashram. The Upanishads fascinated him. more...
Nietzsche, Friedrich	The great German Philosopher, poet, classical philologist, who became one of the most provocative and influential thinkers of the 19th century. He wa s deeply influenced by Schopenhauer in his youth. One of the great European philosophers, Friedrich Nietzsche's beliefs were best expressed in his Thus Spake Zarathustra, in which his teachings are put into the mouth of the wandering prophet Zarathustra. more...
Novalis	Was the pseudonym of the young Baron Friedrich von Hardenberg. He was a pioneer of the early German Romantics, one of Germany's greatest Romantic poets. more...
Okakura, Professor Kakuzo	a Japanese philosopher, art expert, curator and author of The Book of Tea and The Ideals of the East, with Special Reference to the Art of Japan. more...

O'Malley, L S S	author of Popular Hinduism writes about Hindu Literature as giving help to a sense of moral value and to maintain a healthy ethical standard. The two great epics, the Mahabharata and Ramayana, are a means of moral education for millions, teaching moral lessons in concrete terms and illustrating in the lives of heroes and heroines such virtues as truth, love, fidelity, courage and calm resignation. more...
O'More, Haven	a scholar at the University of Chicago and author of several books, including Butoh : Dance of the Dark Soul and Sacrificial Bone Inscriptions, more...
Oppenheimer, J. Robert	Scientist, philosopher, bohemian, and radical. A theoretical physicist and the Supervising Scientist Manhattan Project, the developer of the atomic bomb more...
Oppert Gustav	born in Hamburg, Germany, he taught Sanskrit and comparative linguistics at the Presidency College, Madras for 21 years. He was the Telugu translator to the Government and Curator, Government Oriental Manuscript Library. more...
Organ, Troy Wilson	A professor at Ohio University more...
Otto Professor Rudolph	Was associate professor at Göttingen. Eventually he became a professor of systematic theology, first at Breslau in 1915, then at Marburg in 1917. more...
Ovington J	Chaplain to the British King, the seventeenth-century English traveler, wrote in his A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689 more...
Palkhiwala, N. A.	The eminent Indian jurist more...
Panikkar, Sardar Kavalam Madhava	Indian scholar, journalist, historian from Kerala, administrator, diplomat, Minister in Patiala Bikaner and Ambassador to China, Egypt and France. Author of several books, including Asia and Western Dominance, India Through the ages and India and the Indian Ocean. He has succinctly summed up the basic tenets of Hinduism, which show that the Divine for the Hindu is a family phenomenon and not a distant Truth. more...

Paul, Hubert	a French Theosophist, was to write in glowing terms of Charles Wilkins translation the Bhagavad Gita. In his book Histoire de la Bhagavad Gita he said it was one of the 'striking events in the universal history of philosophy' more...
Paz, Octovio	Was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1990. He served as Mexico's ambassador to India from 1962 until 1968. This is what he says about Hindu art in his book "In Light of India". more...
Philips, Ashby	Of Princeton University more...
Philostratus	Ancient Greek writer, son-in-law of Flavius Philostratus. more...
Plunkett, E. M.	Author of the book Ancient Calendars and Constellations more...
Pol Droit Roger	French philosopher and journalist, author of L'oubli de l''Inde : une amnâesie philosophique (The forgetting of India) more...
Pratt, James Bissett	American author of Why Religions Die and India and its Faiths. more...
Prince MShikoh Muhammad Dara	the favorite Sufi son of Moghul emperor, Shah Jehan. Known the world over for his unorthodox and liberal views. He was a mystic and a free thinker. He had learned Sanskrit and studied the Hindu scriptures in the original. more...
Prinsep, James	an employee of the East India Company, deciphered the Brahmi script in 1883 and author of Essays on Indian antiquities, historic, numismatic, and palaeæographic of the late James Prinsep. more...
Pym, Michael	author of The Power of India more...
R S Nathan	author of Hinduism That is Sanatana Dharma more...
Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli	Was a prominent Indian philosopher, author and educationalist. Radhakrishnan was also a professor of Eastern Religions at Oxford and later President of India more...

Rajagopalachari, C.	Was a scholar, a statesman, and a linguist. A contemporary of Mohandas Gandhi, he was also free India's first Governor General. Perhaps his most signal accomplishment was his thoughtful rendition of the Mahabharata and Ramayana in English, making the stories and wisdom contained in those classics available to a new generation of English educated Indians. more...
Rajaram, Navaratna S	s a mathematician, computer scientist and linguist and historian of science. He has taught in several universities in the United States. Since 1984 he has been an advisor to the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA). He has written several books including Politics of History, Aryan Invasion Theory and the Subversion of Scholarship. more...
Rama Tirtha, Swami	enounced his career as a Mathematician in order to practice and preach Vedanta. more...
Ramakrishna, Sri	The surreal Hindu Bengali Saint spent a lifetime seeking spiritual enlightenment, beginning in his childhood with a mystical encounter he experienced at the age of six. more...
Ramanuja	Known as the greatest exponent of Visistadvaita Vedanta. more...
Ramanujan. Srinivasan	is one of India's legendary intellectual heroes, hailed as one of the greatest Mathematician of India and compared to all time greats, Euler, Gauss and Jacobi, for natural genius, is an eternal source of inspiration, especially for the student of mathematics. more...
Rankin, Dr. Aidan	author of Lifting the shadow : why Conservatives must reclaim human rights and was a Research Fellow in Government at the London School of Economics and editor of the Britain's leading environmental magazine, the Ecologist. more...
Rawlinson, Professor H. G.	more...
Renou, Professor Louis	Author of several books including Hinduism, Civilization in Ancient India, L'Inde fondamentale more...
Revel, Louis	more...

Riencourt, Amaury de	was born in Orleans, France. He received his B.A. from the Sorbonne and his M.A. from the University of Algiers. He is author of several books including The American empire and The Soul of India. more...
Riepe, Dale M.	Author of the book ' The Philosophy of India and its impact on American Thought' more...
Roberts, Paul William	He taught at Oxford for a year before setting off around the world, stopping in India before settling in Canada, where he has been an award-winning television writer and producer, university lecturer, journalist, film and book critic and novelist. He journeyed through India for twenty years, and in his book ' Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys in India.' creates a dazzling mosaic, by turns tragic and comic, of the subcontinent and its people. more...
Robertson Rev. William	more...
Rodin François-Auguste-René	French sculptor, who imbued his work with great psychological force, which was expressed largely through texture and modeling. He is regarded as the foremost sculptor of the 19th and early 20th centuries more...
Roeer Edward	German Indologist, born in Braunschweig Germany, made a name for himself on account of his research in Hindu philosophy. His knowledge of philosophy and philology enabled him to publish a number of valuable editions of philosophical texts. On Roeer's suggestion the Asiatic Society of Bengal decided to publish the Upanishads together with Shankara's commentary. more...
Rolland, Romain	French Nobel laureate, professor of the history of music at the Sorbonne and thinker. more...
Ruckert, Friedrich	Professor of Oriental Languages at the University of Erlangen from 1827 to 1841, produced, under the inspiration of August Wilhelm von Schlegel, numerous skilful translations from Sanskrit. His published translations from Indian classical poetry made Indian lyrics and poems widely popular in Germany. more...
Russel, A. E. George	the Irish poet, essayist, painter, Nationalist leader, mystic, and economist; a leader in movement for cooperation among Irish farmers; editor The Irish Statesman 1923-30. Russel paid an eloquent tribute to the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. more...

Ryder, Arthur William	Professor at Berkeley. J Robert Oppenheimer the nuclear physicist had studied Sanskrit with him at Berkeley in 1933. He has translated several books including, Dandin's Dasha-kumara-charita : The ten princes. more...
Sa`Id Al-Andalusi	Arab writer in AD 1068, He wrote Kitab Tabaqat al-Uman or "Book of the Categories of Nations," which recorded the contributions to science of all known nations. more...
Sadler, Sir Michael	authority on education. more...
Sagan, Dr. Carl	Famous astrophysicist, in his book "Cosmos" more...
Salim Rizwan	, New York Tribune, Capitol Hill reporter, Engineering Times, assistant editor, American Sentinel, published in Hindustan Times more...
Saraswati, Swami Dayanand	Rightly described as a human dynamo, Swami Dayananda shook the structure of established Hinduism to its foundations and infused into it new blood and fresh vigor. The founder of Arya Samaj, was a prophet with a difference. Dayanand is the father of both Renaissance (he brought to life world's supreme knowledge, the Vedas, with his slogan 'Back to Vedas) and Reformation. In 1849, the British annexation of Punjab, introduced the aggressive conversion of faith of Christianity. In time, Christianity threatened each of the coexisting religions. Christian missionaries brought with them new forms of organization and techniques of proselytism. He created a psychological revolution and gave tremendous self-confidence to Hindudom. Swamy Dayananda took the Christian and Muslim converts back into the Hindu fold by performing purification rites for them. more...
Saraswati, Swami Ghanananda	the first African swami was initiated by Swami Krishnanand of India in 1975. He heads the Hindu Monastery of Africa in Accra, Ghana, regularly imparting spiritual guidance to devotees. more...
Sarfatti, Jack	Physicist of the Physics/Consciousness Research Group more...

Satprem	aka Bernard Enginger, a sailor and a Breton born in Paris. A member of the French Resistance. Satprem was arrested by the Gestapo when he was twenty and spent a year and half in concentration camps. Devastated he journey first to Upper Egypt, then to India, where he served in the French colonial government of Pondicherry. There he discovered Sri Aurobindo and Mother. Their Message - "Man is a transitional being" - struck a deep chord. more...
Saunders, Kenneth	author of The Heritage of Asia. more...
Schopenhauer, Arthur	German philosopher and writer. He was one of the greatest philosophers of the 19th century. more...
Schröder, E.	German philosopher, has also remarked in his book 'Pythagoras und die Inder' more...
Schroedinger, Erwin	Austrian theoretical physicist, a Nobel prize-winner, on quantum mechanics more...
Schuon, Frithjof	was born in 1907 in Basle, Switzerland, of German parents. He was a philosopher, poet and artist author of Language of the Self. Many of his ideas are taken from Vedanta. more...
Schweizer, Dr. Albert	Humanitarian, theologian, missionary, organist, and medical doctor. more...
Sebokbt, Severus	Bishop of Kenneserin, a Syrain astronomer. more...
Seidenberg, Abraham	An American historian of mathematics. more...
Sen, Gertrude Emerson	historian and journalist and Asia specialist. Author of several books including The Story of Early Indian Civilization. She married a Bengali - Basiswar Sen and in her Voiceless India, she learned to love the deep-rooted Indian view of life, Indian ways of thought and Indian ideals. more...
Shakaracharya, Adi	Indian philosopher and religious thinker who developed Advaita Vedanta, a system of philosophical thought within Hinduism. more...
Shankar V Shri	ICS (Retd.) former Defense Secretary and earlier Private Secretary to the late Sardar Patel. more...

Shankar, Shri V.	ICS (Retd.) former Defense Secretary and earlier Private Secretary to the late Sardar Patel. more...
Shankar, Sri Sri Ravi	Founder of the Bangalore based Art of Living, an International Foundation. He recently addressed the UN Peace Summit on Aug 28. He is the only non-westerner to serve on the advisory board of Yale University's School of Divinity and is author of the book - Hinduism and Christianity. more...
Shaw, George Bernard	Nobel Laureate in Literature. Famous British Author and Playwright, of books such as Pygmalion. more...
Shearer, Alistair	more...
Shelley, Percy B	English Romantic poet who rebelled against English politics and conservative values. His pantheism is full of unconscious reminiscences of Hindu thought, which reached them through the medium of Neoplatonism. more...
Sherring, M. A.	Noted missionary of the 19th century. more...
Shih, Hu	Chinese philosopher in Republican China. He promoted vernacular literature to replace writing in the classical style. He was ambassador to the U.S. (1938-42) and chancellor of Peking University (1946-48). more...
Singh, Dr. Karan	Heir apparent to the Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir, Indian Ambassador to the U.S. and an outstanding thinker and leader. more...
Sister Nivedita - Margaret Noble	Her first literary achievement was Kali the Mother, in which she expounds the conception of Kali. more...
Smart, Ninian	Professor of Sociology. born in Scotland, he taught at the Universities of London, Birmingham, and Wales for many years before moving to the University of California, Santa Barbara. more...
Smith Vincent	British historian, and author of The Oxford History of India, more...

Smith, Huston	Born in China to Methodist missionaries, a philosopher, most eloquent writer, world-famous religion scholar who practices HathaYoga. Has taught at MIT and is currently visiting professor at Univ. of California at Berkley. Smith has also produced PBS series. He has written various books, " The World's Religions", "Science and Human Responsibility", and "The Religions of Man". more...
Smythe, Colonel Frank Smythe aka Francis Sydney	military leader, explorer, mountaineer, writer, photographer. He describes experiencing the same feeling of loneliness and revelation in the Bhyunder Ganga Valley. Chronicle of the author's four months in the remote, difficult to reach Bhyundar Valley in the Himalayas, the spectacular Valley of Flowers. The credit for the popularising the Valley of Flowers generally goes to Frank S. Smythe and R.L. Holdsworth who incidentally reached this valley after a successful expedition of Mount Kamet in 1931. more...
Sonnerat, Pierre	A French naturalist more...
Sorman, Guy	French intellectual, writer, economist and a professor of political science at Paris University, visiting scholar at Hoover Institution at Stanford and the leader of new liberalism in France. He has observed India with a keen eye, a great deal of intelligence and genuine affection. more...
Southey, Robert	English poet, generally considered a member of the romantic movement. He was born in Bristol and educated at the University of Oxford. Southey was a good friend of poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. more...
Steiner, Rudolph	Austrian architect, highly interested in the alignment between science and nature, matter and spirit, he developed an anthropomorphic architecture for his own Anthroposophical Society. A scholar who had edited the works of German dramatist/poet Johann Wolfgang Goethe. more...
Stutfield, H.	Author of Mysticism and Catholicism. more...
Subramuniyaswami, Satguru Sivaya	Editor of Hinduism Today. Swami says in his book, "Siva's Cosmic Dance: An Introduction to the World's Most Ancient Religion, Saivite Hinduism." more...

Sunderland, Rev. Jabez T.	American born, former President of the India Information Bureau of America and Editor of Young India (New York). Author of India, America and World Brotherhood, and Causes of Famine in India. He has written glowingly about India's culture. more...
Suneson, Carl	author of Richard Wagner och den indiska tankevärlden. more...
Suzuki Dr. D T	Japanese Buddhist and Zen scholar, who has written several books, including Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture (1938, rev. ed. 1959), An Introduction to Zen Buddhism. more...
Swarup Ram	a foremost spokesperson of Hindu spirituality and culture in India. He will probably prove to have been the most influential Hindu thinker and Hindu Revivalist in the second half of the 20th century. Arun Shourie has called him a scholar of the first rank. In the 1950s when Indian intellectuals were singing paens to Marxism and Mao, he wrote critiques of communism. He was also an author of several books, Hinduism vis-à-vis Christianity and Islam and Christianity, an Imperialist Ideology more...
Tagore, Rabindranath	Poet, author, philosopher, Nobel prize laureate. more...
Taylor Edmund	author of Richer By Asia more...
Taylor, William Cooke	author of several books including A popular history of British India, commercial intercourse with China, and the insular possessions of England in the eastern seas. more...
Teresi, Dick	author and coauthor of several books about science and technology, including The God Particle. He is cofounder of Omni magazine and has written for Discover, The New York Times Magazine, and The Atlantic Monthly. more...
Tesla, Nicola	The Serbian-American inventor, electrical engineer, and scientist, used ancient Sanskrit terminology in his descriptions of natural phenomena more...
Tharoor, Shashi	Under-Secretary-General for Public Information at the UN, author of six novels and two non-fiction books. Educated in India and London, describes himself as a `believing Hindu'. more...
Thieme, Paul	German Indologist University of Tuebingen. more...

Thomas, F. W.	Wrote the book 'The Mutual Influence of Mohammedans and Hindus," more...
Thoreau, Henry David	American Philosopher, Unitarian, social critic, transcendentalist and writer more...
Thorton, Mr.	Author of the book, History of British India. more...
Tilak, BalGangadhar	Freedom fighter, great Sanskrit scholar and astronomer. His contribution to modern India stands on par with that of Mahatma Gandhi's. Proclaimed to the nation, "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it!" more...
Todd, Colonel James	more...
Tolstoy, Leo	Was a champion of nonviolent protest; he was "an influential factor in the social restlessness that swept Russia before the revolution." Tolstoy the famous Russian author of 'War and Peace', responded to India with sensitivity. Ancient Indian literature and the writings of Swami Vivekanada mad a deep impression on him. In a letter to Gandhi in 1909, he quoted from the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Tamil Kural, and Vivekananda. Tolstoy is only one of the many Western writers and thinkers to find much of illumination within Hinduism's pages. more...
Torwesten, Hans	Author of the book "Vedanta - Heart of Hinduism". more...
Toynbee, Dr. Arnold Joseph	Great British historian. more...
Tripurari, Swami B V	American born has spent over 30 years as a Hindu monastic, founder of the Gaudiya Vaishava Society, author of several books, most recently Bhagavad-Gita: Its Feeling and Philosophy. more...
Tully, Mark	Former BBC correspondent in India, author of several books, including No Full Stops in India and The Heart of India. more...
Twain, Mark	Also known as Samuel Clemens, one of the most widely loved and celebrated American writers since his first books were released in the late 1860s. more...
Tyanaeus, Apollonius	Greek Thinker and Traveler. 1st Century AD. more...

van Beethoven, Ludwig	Was also attracted by Indian thought, as it is clearly attested by numerous passages and notes referring to Indian ideas and texts found in the Beethoven papers. He was first introduced to Indian literature by the Austrian Orientalist, Hammer-Purgstal, who founded a periodical for the dissemination of Eastern knowledge in Europe as early as January 1809. Beethoven had a deep interest in Indian knowledge long before Indological studies began in Germany. more...
Van Nooten, Barend	Author of Rig Veda, a metrically restored text with an introduction and notes, and The Mahabharata; Attributed to Krsna Dvaipayana Vyasa. more...
Varenne, Jean Michel	the distinguished French Orientalist more...
Verlaine, Paul	The French lyric poet known for the musical quality of his verse, wrote the French poem, "Savitri". Verlaine became keenly interested in Hindu mythology during his high school days. more...
Versluis, Dr. Arthur	Associate Professor of American Thought and Language at Michigan State University, a scholar and researcher of several currents of the hermetic, gnostic, theosophic and mystic traditions and author of The Egyptian Mystery. more...
Vivekananda, Swami	Foremost disciple of Ramakrishna and a world spokesperson for Vedanta. more...
Voltaire, Francois Marie Arouet	France's greatest writers and philosophers, was a theist, and a bitter critic of the Church, which he looked upon as the instigator of cruelty, injustice, and inequality. more...
von Goethe, Johann Wolfgang	German Poet, Dramatist, Novelist, Natural Scientist. His own enthusiasm for Shakuntala was no less exuberant than Herders. more...
von Schiller, Fredrick	was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's friend, who otherwise took little interest in Indian literature, was also moved to enthusiastic praise of Shakuntala, which he found in some respects un paralled in the classical literature of Greece and Rome. He published part of the Shakuntala in Thalia. more...
von Schlegel, August Wilhelm	German Scholar and Poet who also learnt Sanskrit. The impulse to Indological studies was first given in Germany, through his book, ' The Language and Wisdom of the Indians' which appeared in 1818. more...

von Schlegel, Frederich	German philosopher, critic, and writer, the most prominent founder of German Romanticism. Educated in law, he turned to writing. His brother, August Wilhelm von Schlegel, was a scholar and poet. With his brother, August Wilhelm, he published the Athenaeum, the principal organ of the romantic school. Schlegel study of Sanskrit and of Indian civilization, On the Language and Wisdom of India (1808), was outstanding. more...
von Schroeder, Leopold	more...
Wagner, Richard	German composer, known for his 13 operas. more...
Walker, Kenneth	A famous British surgeon, has devoted a good deal of time and writing to the study of Indian thought and literature in search of an answer. more...
Walters, J. Donald (Swami Kriyananda)	World renowned as a singer, composer, and lecturer, founder of the Ananda Village is perhaps the most successful intentional community in the world. Has written a book " The Hindu Way of Awakening: Its Revelation, Its Symbols". more...
Wassaf, Abdullah	Muslim historian. more...
Waterstone, Richard	Studied Sanskrit at the University of Edinburgh, journalist, creator of BBC documentary, author, comments in his book on " India: Living Wisdom". more...
Watts, Alan	A professor, graduate school dean and research fellow of Harvard University, drew heavily on the insights of Vedanta. Watts became well known in the 1960s as a pioneer in bringing Eastern philosophy to the West. more...
Wells, Herbert George H. G.	historian, a bitter critic of the Roman Catholic Church and author of several books including A Short History of the World and Crux Ansata: An Indictment of the Roman Catholic Church and The Time Machine. more...

Wheeler, John Archibald	Physicist, the first American involved in the theoretical development of the atomic bomb. He also originated a novel approach to the unified field theory. Professor Emeritus at Princeton and Texas universities, studied with Niels Bohr, was named winner of the 1997 Wolf Prize in Physics, for developing the modern "black hole" theory. Has taught students include scientists like Richard Feynman, now occupies the chair that was held by Einstein. more...
Whitehead, Alfred North	British mathematician, logician and philosopher best known for his work in mathematical logic more...
Whitman, Walt	Who championed American intellectual independence, was amongst those who came under the influence of the American Transcendentalists. He wrote his famous poem Leaves Of Grass in 1855. Whitman turned to the East in his anxiety to escape from the complexities of civilization and the bewilderments of a baffled intellectualism. more...
Whittier, John Greenleaf	Was a talented poet who was influenced by Emerson and from whom he borrowed a copy of the Bhagavad Gita. more...
Wilcox, Ella Wheeler	famous American poet and journalist who is perhaps best remembered for verse tinged with an eroticism that was still unconventional for her time. Wilcox poems have been collected in volumes such as Poems of Pleasure (1897) and Maurine and Other Poems (1888). more...
Winternitz, Maurice	Famed Indologist, author of History of Indian Literature. more...
Wood, Michael	British historian/host/writer of The Barbarian West public TV documentary. more...
Woodroffe, Sir John aka Arthur Avalon	the well known scholar, Advocate-General of Bengal and sometime Legal Member of the Government of India. He served with competence for eighteen years and in 1915 officiated as Chief Justice. Writing under the pseudonym, Arthur Avalon seemed to be an 'An Indian Soul in a European Body? His books challenged the dominant Western understanding of Tantra as a primitive and demonic cult. His emphasis was on the philosophical aspects of Tantra and his conclusion that textual descriptions of rites should be read as deeply spiritual symbolism. Author of several books including Bharata Shakti, The Serpent Power, more...

Yaqubi	Muslim historian. more...
Yeats, William Butler	1923 Nobel Laureate in Literature, described his first meeting with a Hindu philosopher at Dublin. more...
Young, James	officer, Bengal Horse Artillery, and twice sheriff of Calcutta Secretary, Savon Mechanics Institutes. more...
Yutang, Lin	Chinese scholar and author of the book, The Wisdom of China and India. more...
Zaehner, Robert R. C.	British historian of religion who investigated the evolution of ethical systems and forms of mysticism, particularly in Eastern religions. The son of Swiss parents who had immigrated to England, Zaehner studied Oriental languages at the University of Oxford. Author of several books including Hindu Scriptures, and Hinduism more...
Zimmer, Dr. Heinrich	The great German Indologist, a man of penetrating intellect, the keenest esthetic sensibility. Zimmer came to the United States in 1940, at the height of his career, and was lecturing at Columbia University when he died in 1943. His other works in the Bollingen series include Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization and Philosophies of India. more...
Zimmer, Dr. Heinrich	Was a scholar with a great deal of first-hand knowledge of Indian philosophy and art history. Zimmer wrote a book called "Philosophies of India". more...
Zukav, Gary	author of The Dancing Wu Li Masters. more...

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

home welcome contents



This site is dedicated to Lord Ganesha - Lord of Beginnings, Bharat Mata (Mother India) and to the intuition of countless rishis (sages) of the past, who committed their lives in pursuit of Sanatan Dharma, the Eternal way of life.

The purpose of this site is to provide useful information about the world's oldest religion. Hinduism's traditions have been preserved continuously since ancient times to the present day despite the tyranny of her invaders. This site catalogs thoughts of world-renowned intellectuals regarding Hinduism, recommends books for further reading, and provides useful links for further research.

This site was established to inspire Hindus worldwide, to create a sense of pride, and to give pleasure regarding Hindu heritage. Hindus can take pride in the fact that India has never invaded any country in the last thousand years of history. This site is also meant to educate, enlighten, and create awareness of the rich canvass of religious traditions of Hinduism. It is hoped that it will help to remove some of the common misconceptions and misinterpretations surrounding rituals and worship found in popular media.

Om Asato maa sad-gamaya;
tamaso maa jyotir-ga-maya;
mrtyor-maa amrutam gamaya.
Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih.

O Lord Lead me from the unreal to the real.
Lead me from the darkness to light.
Lead me from death to immortality.
May there be peace, peace, and perfect peace.

- a Sanskrit invocation from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishads 1.3.28).

What's New

December 19, 2003

The site has been redesigned with new color scheme.
Three chapters have been added in the current update.

- **Glimpses VIII on Hinduism and India** - This chapter has interesting information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India. (**more**...).
- **Glimpses IX on Hinduism and India** - This chapter has interesting information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India. (**more**...).
- **Glimpses X on Hinduism and India** - This chapter has interesting information on

varied aspects of Hinduism and India. (**more**...).

These existing chapters have been updated.

- **Quotes 321- 340 -** Srinivas Ramanujan, Georges Ifrah, Sir Lepel Henry Griffin, Dr. Radhakumud Mookerji, Diana L. Eck, Ramana Maharishi, Alfred B. Ford, Takeo Kamiya, Abu'l Hasan al-Qifti, Shashi Tharoor, Christian Fabre aka Swami Pranavananda Brahmendra Avadhuta, Justice Manadagadde Rama Jois, Ambassador Robert Blackwill, Bulent Ecevit, Beatrice Pitney Lamb and (**more**...).
- **Articles** - By Tavelen Singh, Saroj Bala, Ambassador O P Gupta, G R Josyer, Pankaj Jain and others. (**more**...).

About the Author

My name is Sushama Londhe, and this site is my personal endeavor to provide appropriate information about Hinduism, as well as to attain correct appraisal of India's rich cultural heritage. Furthermore, it is to create awareness among Hindus and non-Hindus about the world's most ancient living tradition. I began this initiative in the fall of 1997 as a small personal non-commercial web page/hobby, and it has grown over the years as I have become aware of more relevant information. I am an Indian American who came to the U.S. as a graduate student more than 25 years ago, and have settled here for good. Although I welcome feedback from everybody, this site is NOT associated with any religious or political organization.

Some readers have expressed desire to help this effort by contributing information and content. Please feel free to e-mail me or to write in the guest book your suggestions. I promise to take them into consideration and give credit for any content used. Please note that all chapters get updated regularly.

bhagirathi@atributetohinduism.com

This site has been featured at:

Of God and Holy Water (by Rajeev Srinivasan at Rediff.com)
Hinduism Today (April/May/June 2003)

Click on the thumbnail to zoom in:



maayaboli.com

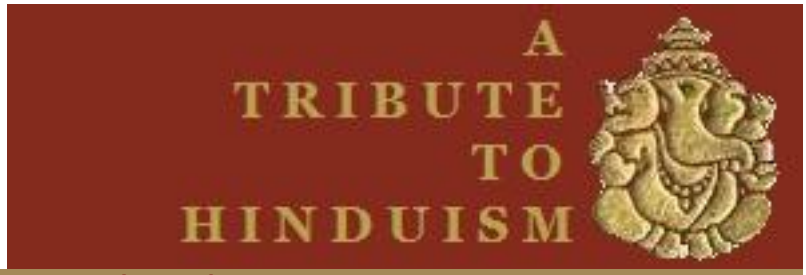
Balilife.com
A Voice Without Form
Encyclopedia Britannica
Introduction - Inde
Voice of India
Desi-journal.com
Glasgow University Hindu Society

as well as in:

The Commemorative Sanskrit Souvenir 2003 of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
Chapter (e) Sanskrit - The Language of Ancient India

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chapters

Quotes on Hinduism (chronologically) **Quotes on Hinduism** (alphabetically)	Catalogs thoughts on Hinduism from world-renowned intellectuals. Quotes have been organized both by chronologically and alphabetically.
Thoughts on Hinduism	There seems a constant effort at defamation of Hinduism in the media in the west.
Introduction to Hinduism	Hinduism is among the oldest of the world's faiths. Its traditions extend back before recorded history.
Symbolism in Hinduism	Hinduism is often labeled as a religion of 330 million gods. This misunderstanding arises when people fail to grasp the symbolism of the Hindu pantheon.
Hindu Scriptures	No other living tradition can claim scriptures as numerous or as ancient as Hinduism; none of them can boast of an unbroken tradition as faithfully preserved as the Hindu tradition.
Nature Worship	Hinduism has always been environmentally sensitive philosophy. The rishis of the past have always had a great respect for nature.
Yoga and Hindu Philosophy	"Without the practice of yoga, How could knowledge Set the atman (soul) free? asks the Yogatatva Upanishad. Yoga: is union with the ultimate.
Hindu Cosmology	In India, science and religion are not opposed fundamentally, as they often seem to be in the West,
Advanced Concepts in Hinduism	The Vedas have guided Indian civilization for thousands of years. There is no major religion on the planet, which has not been influenced by the Vedas.
Hindu Art	"The man who knows nothing of music, literature, or art is no better than a beast," ancient Hindu wisdom warned. Art pervades every facet of Indian life, is found on every byway of Indian Civilization.

Hindu Music	Since the most ancient times, music in India has been practiced as a spiritual science and art, a means to enlightenment. Sangita, which originally meant drama, music and dance, was closely associated with religion and philosophy.
Vimanas	Vedic literature of India contains many descriptions of flying machines that are generally called vimanas.
War in Ancient India	The value and importance of the army were realized very early in the history of India, and this led to the maintenance of a permanent militia to put down dissent within and arrest aggression from without. This gave rise to the Ksatriya warrior caste, and the ksatram dharmam came to mean the primary duty of war.
Hindu Culture Part I	India is the world's most ancient civilization. Indians have demonstrated greater cultural stamina than any other people on earth.
Hindu Culture Part II	India is the world's most ancient civilization. Indians have demonstrated greater cultural stamina than any other people on earth.
Education in Ancient India	From the Vedic age downwards the central conception of education of the Indians has been that it is a source of illumination giving us a correct lead in the various spheres of life.
Hinduism's influence on world religions	From the beginning of her history, India has adored and idealized, men who have stamped infinity on the thought and life of the country.
Sanskrit	Sanskrit (meaning "cultured or refined"), the classical language of Hinduism, is the oldest and the most systematic language in the world.
Yantras	The word “yantra” is derived from the root yam, to control, and has been freely used in ancient India for any contrivance. Mechanical skills had produced in ancient India many accessories for scientific activities.
History of Hinduism: Islamic Onslaught	India gave shelter, acceptance, and freedom to all. But, in holy frenzy, millions of Hindus were slaughtered or proselytized. Their cities were pillaged and burnt, temples were destroyed and accumulated treasures of centuries carried off.
History of Hinduism: European Imperialism	There is nothing either in the time-honored doctrines or the hoary history of Hinduism, which resembles even remotely the ideology, or history of Nazism, or for that matter, Christianity or Islam or Communism.

Dwaraka	Dwaraka was submerged by the sea after the death of Lord Krishna yet it has not attracted attention as ancient Troy.
Bhaarat and China	The Mahabharata refers to China several times. According to Rene Grousset, the name China comes from "an ancient" Sanskrit name for the regions to the east. According to Terence Duke, martial arts went from India to China. Fighting without weapons was a specialty of the ancient Ksatreya warriors of India.
Suvarnabhumi - Greater India	Southeast Asia region was broadly referred to by ancient Indians as Suvarnabhumi (the Land of Gold). Earliest references are found in the Ramayana.
Bhaarat and Egypt	Neither historical events nor cross-cultural currents can explain the unique parallels in the myths and imagery of ancient Egypt and India.
Bhaarat and Greece	Indian civilization is distinctive for its antiquity and continuity. Indian civilization has continued to grow despite revolutionary changes.
India on Pacific Waves?	What if Hindus and Hopis, Advantins and Aztecs, Tibetan Monks and Mayans were part of one world culture - a spiritual one?
Seafaring in Ancient India	Western scholars have underestimated India's achievement with regard to commerce, ship-building and navigation, and sea travel. The colonist bias against Indian culture is fully matched by the Indian 'Marxist historian' bias against culture.
First Indologists	It was the British who first portrayed Vedic literature and culture as something barbaric, inferior, and recent.
Aryan Invasion Theory	Since the nineteenth century, India's ancient history from Vedic times have been distorted including the groundless Aryan Invasion theory
Politics of Conversion	Hinduism and India have been under attack for thousands of years. First it was Islam, then came Christianity that have created havoc to the fabric of Hindu society.
Caste System	The Caste System or varna-ashrama has been one of the most misrepresented, misinformed, misunderstood, misused and the most maligned aspects of Hinduism.
Women in Hinduism	In ancient India, women occupied a very important position, in fact a superior position to, men.
Unknown Hindu Revivalists	Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale, Arumuga Navalar, Dayanand Saraswati, were some of the earlier revivalists.
Glimpses	Interesting information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India.

Glimpses II	more information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India.
Glimpses III	more information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India.
Glimpses IV	more information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India.
Glimpses V	more information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India.
Glimpses VI	more information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India.
Glimpses VII	more information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India.
Glimpses VIII	more information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India. NEW
Glimpses IX	more information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India. NEW
Glimpses X	more information on varied aspects of Hinduism and India. NEW
Articles	A wide selection of articles relating to various aspects of Hinduism. Vedas, Dharma, Mother Goddess, Ayurveda and others.
Recommended Books	A vast collection of books that have been used for information on this site.
Images and Scriptural quotes	Colorful and lovely Images, a poem named 'Brahma' by Ralph Waldo Emerson.
Did You Know?	Did You Know? feature at the end of all chapters. Little bits of information on amazing facts related to Hinduism and India.
Links	A list of interesting sites about Hinduism. Some of the sites have been suggested by readers.

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Show in alphabetical order

Some of the famous intellectuals in the West and the East had the following things to say about Hinduism:



1. **Henry David Thoreau** (1817-1862) American Philosopher, Unitarian, social critic, transcendentalist and writer. It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who aroused in him a true enthusiasm for India. He wrote:

"In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonal philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seems puny."

(source: **The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau - Walden** 1989. Princeton Univ. Press. page 298).

In the 1840s Thoreau's discovered India, his enthusiasm for Indian philosophy was thus sustained. from 1849-1854, he borrowed a large number of Indian scriptures from the Harvard University Library, and the year 1855 when his English friend Thomas Chilmondeley sent him a gift of 44 Oriental books which contained such titles as the Rig Veda Samhita, and Mandukya Upanishads, the Vishnu Puranas, the Institutes of Manu, the Bhagavad Gita and the Bhagvata Purana etc.

In Indian contemplation he found a "wonderful power of abstraction" and mental powers which were able to withdraw from the concerns of the empirical world to steady the mind and free it from distractions.

"What extracts from the Vedas I have read fall on me like the light of a higher and purer luminary, which describes a loftier course through purer stratum. It rises on me like the full moon after the stars have come out, wading through some far stratum in the sky."

(source: **Commentaries on the Vedas, The Upanishads & the Bhagavad Gita By Sri Chinmoy** Aum Publications. 1996. Pp 26.)

"Whenever I have read any part of the Vedas, I have felt that some unearthly and unknown light illuminated me. In the great teaching of the Vedas, there is no touch of sectarianism. It is of all ages, climes and nationalities and is the royal road for the attainment of the Great Knowledge. When I am at it, I feel that I am under the spangled heavens of a summer night."

(source: **The Hindu Mind:** Fundamentals of Hindu Religion and Philosophy for All Ages - **By Bansi Pandit** B & V Enterprises 1996. page 307.

"I would say to the readers of the Scriptures, if they wish for a good book, read the Bhagvat-Geeta .... translated by Charles Wilkins. It deserves to be read with reverence even by Yankees...."Besides the Bhagvat-Geeta, our Shakespeare seems sometimes youthfully green... Ex oriente lux may still be the motto of scholars, for the Western world has not yet derived from the East all the light it is destined to derive thence."

In his book **Walden**, **Thoreau** contain explicit references to Indian Scriptures such as:

"How much more admirable the Bhagavad Geeta than all the ruins of the East.'

(source: **The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau - Walden** 1989. Princeton Univ. Press. page 57).

Thoreau described Christianity as "radical" because of its "pure morality" in contrast to **Hinduism's "pure intellectuality"**

(source: **A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers - By Henry David Thoreau** p. 109 - 111).



"The Vedas contain a sensible account of God." "The veneration in which the Vedas are held is itself a remarkable feat. Their code embraced the whole moral life of the Hindus and in such a case there is no other truth than sincerity. Truth is such by reference to the heart of man within, not to any standard without."

Thoreau, like other Transcendentalist had a breath and catholicity of mind which brought him to the study of religions of India. From the beginning he was disillusioned with organized Christianity (he never went to Church) and like Emerson showed great interest in Hinduism and its philosophy. In comparison to Hebraism, Thoreau found Hinduism superior in many ways. The following passage demonstrates Thoreau's disenchantment with Hebraism and his love for Hinduism: In 1853 he wrote:

"The Hindoos are most serenely and thoughtfully religious than the Hebrews. They have perhaps a purer, more independent and impersonal knowledge of God. Their religious books describes the first inquisitive and contemplative access to God; the Hebrew bible a conscientious return, a grosser and more personal repentance. Repentance is not a free and fair highway to God. A wise man will dispense with repentance. It is shocking and passionate. God prefers that you approach him thoughtful, not penitent, though you are chief of sinners. It is only by forgetting yourself that you draw near to him. **The calmness and gentleness with which the Hindoo philosophers approach and discourse on forbidden themes is admirable."**

The Christian and Hindu concept of man, Thoreau thinks, are diametrically opposed to each other, the former sees man as a born sinner whereas the latter takes him to be potentially divine. The lofty concept of man embodied in Hinduism appealed to Thoreau. Praising such concept he writes: "In the Hindoo scripture the idea of man is quite illimitable and sublime. There is nowhere a loftier conception of his destiny. He is at length lost in Brahma himself 'the divine male.'

Thoreau – his grand philosophic aloofness, his hatred of materialism, his society, his yogic renunciation and austerity, his lack of ambition, his love of solitude, his excessive love of nature, resulting his refusal to cooperate with a government whose policies he did not approve of, were certain extreme traits like to be misunderstood. Besides, he was a vegetarian, a non-smoker, and a teetotaler. He remained a bachelor, throughout his life, walked hundreds of miles, avoided inns, preferred to sleep by the railroad, never voted and never went to a church, **derived spiritual inspiration from the Hindu scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita,** and the laws of Manu living an extremely frugal and Spartan life.

The influence of Hinduism made Thoreau a Yogi.

(source: **Hindu Scriptures and American Transcendentalists - By Umesh Patri** p 98 -240 and **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** p.235-236).

"In the Hindoo scriptures the idea of man is quite illimitable and sublime. There is nowhere a loftier conception of his destiny. He is at length lost in Brahma himself....**there is no grandeur conception of creation anywhere**....The very indistinctness of its theogeny implies a sublime truth."

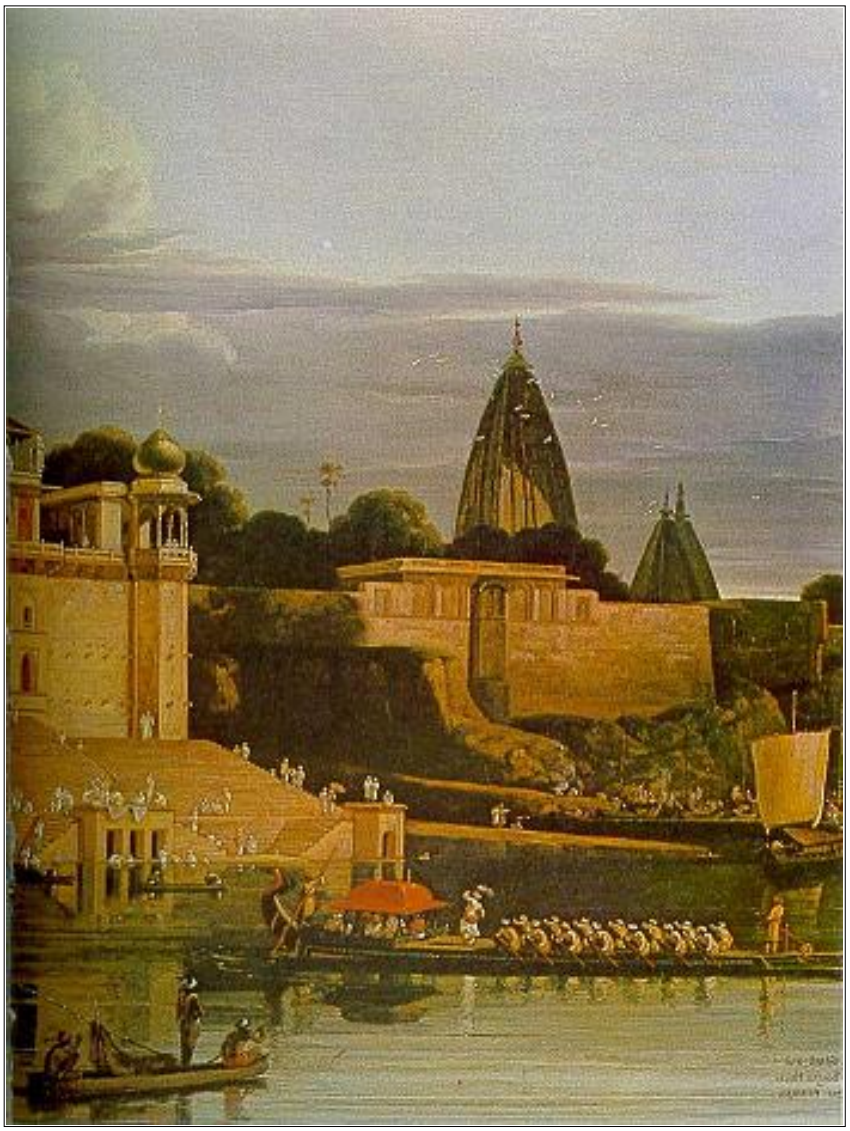
Thoreau's use of Indic scriptures in Walden far outweighs his use of the Bible. He refers to the Bhagawad-Gita, the Harivamsa, the Vedas, the Vishnu Purana, Pilpay (whose fables form the Hitopadesa) and Calidasa. Thoreau annexes India for his own purpose. It is, for example, in the spirit of

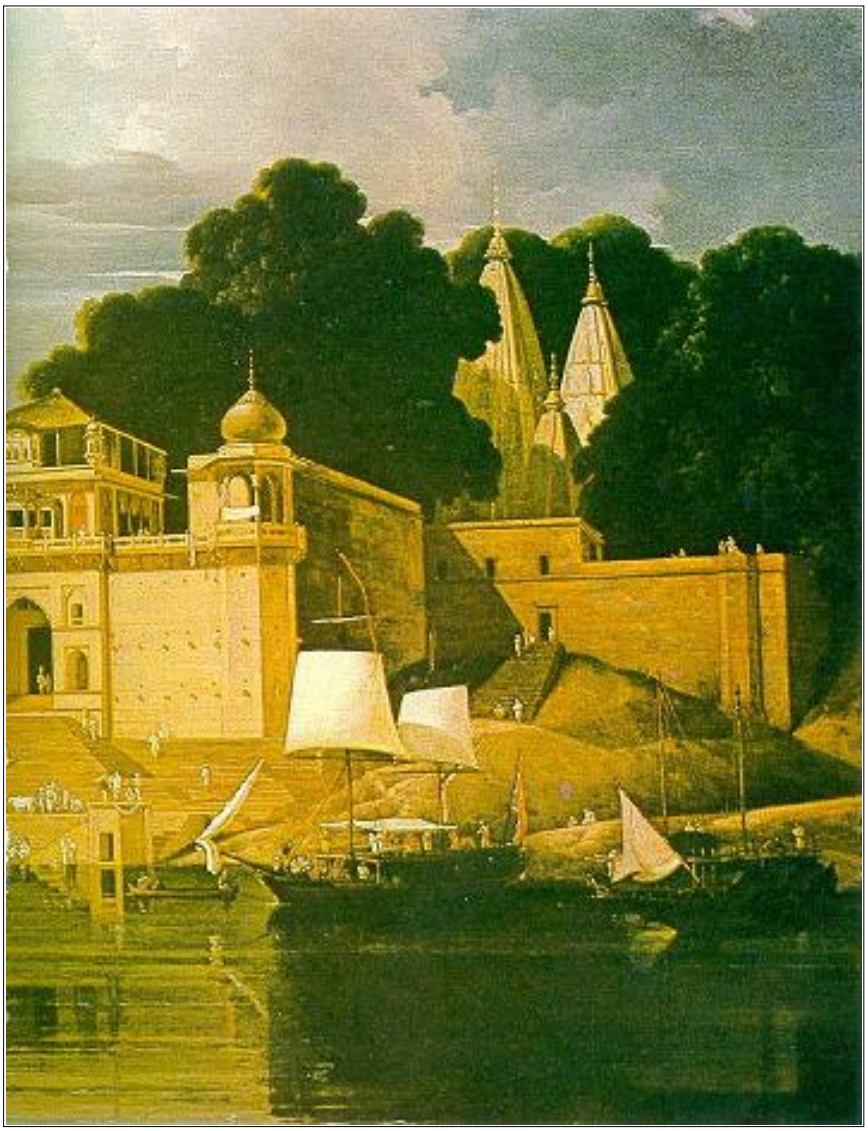
the Indic myth that Thoreau writes the fantastic passage connecting Walden with the Ganges and Concord with India, and it is in the spirit of India that Thoreau wrote or included the story of the artist of Kuru.

On 6 August 1841 he wrote in his journal that:

"I cannot read a sentence in the book of the Hindoos without being elevated as upon the table-land of the Ghauts. It has such a rhythm as the winds of the desert, such a tide as the **Ganges**, and seems as superior to criticism as the Himmaleh Mounts. Even at this late hour, unworn by time with a native and inherent dignity it wears the English dress as indifferently as the Sancrit."

(source: **India in the American Mind - By B. G. Gokhale** p.22-27).





The Ghats on the Ganges
(source: Picturesque India: sketches of travels of Thomas and William Daniell – By J. Mahajan).

He even followed a traditional Hindu way of life.

"It was fit that I should live on rice mainly, who loved so well the philosophy of India."

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction By T. C. Galav** Universal Science-Religion. ISBN: 0964237709 p 18).

In his Transcendental thoughts, the world at large conglomerate into one big divine family. He finds beside his Walden pond "the servant of the Brahmin, priest of Brahma and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas…" their buckets "grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges".

Thoreau, the Concord sage, said, "The Vedanta teaches how by 'forsaking religious rites' the votary may obtain purification of mind." And **"One sentence of the Gita, is worth the State of Massachusetts many times over"**

(source: **The Bhagavad Gita: A Scripture for the Future** Translation and Commentary **By Sachindra K. Majumdar** Asian Humanities Press. 1991. p 5.)

"The reader is nowhere raised into and sustained in a bigger, purer or rarer region of thought than in the Bhagavad-Gita. The Gita's sanity and sublimity have impressed the minds of even soldiers and merchants."


He also admitted that, **"The religion and philosophy of the Hebrews are those of a wilder and ruder tribe, wanting the civility and intellectual refinements and subtlety of Vedic culture."** Thoreau's reading of literature on India and the Vedas was extensive: he took them seriously.

(source: **The Secret Teachings of the Vedas. The Eastern Answers to the Mysteries of Life** - **By Stephen Knapp** volume one. pg- 22).

Like Emerson, the Concord sage, Thoreau, was also deeply imbued with the sublime teachings of Vedanta.

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** p.235-236).

He was particularly attracted by the **yogic elements** in the Manu Smriti. Thoreau embarked on his Walden experiment in the spirit of Indian asceticism. In a letter written to H. G. O Blake in 1849, he remarked:

"Free in this world as the birds in the air, disengaged from every kind of chains, those who have practiced the Yoga gather in Brahmin the certain fruit of their works. Depend upon it, rude and careless as I am, I would fain practice the yoga faithfully. This Yogi, absorbed in contemplation, contributes in his degree to creation; he breathes a divine perfume, he heard wonderful things. Divine forms traverse him without tearing him and he goes, he acts as animating original matter. To some extent, and at rare intervals, even I am a Yogi.

(source: **Oriental Enlightenment: The encounter between Asian and Western thought - By J. J. Clarke** p. 86-87 and **Hindu Scriptures and American Transcendentalists - By Umesh Patri** p 98 -240). For more on Thoreau refer to chapter **GlimpsesVI**).

Along with Emerson, he published essays on Hindu scriptures in a journal called **The Dial**.



2. **Arthur Schopenhauer** (1788-1860), German philosopher and writer. He was one of the greatest philosophers of the 19th century. He was the first Western philosopher to have access to translations of philosophical material from India, both Vedic and Buddhist, by which he was profoundly affected. Counted among his disciples are such thinkers as Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, as well as Sigmund Freud, who takes a large part of his psychological theory from the writings of Schopenhauer.

No other major Western philosopher so signalizes the turn towards India, combined with a disenchantment with the European-Christian tradition. **He proclaimed the concordance of his philosophy with the teachings of Vedanta.** His contribution to the propagation and popularization of Indian concepts has been considerable.

(source: **India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding - By Wilhelm Halbfass** p. 436).

Schopenhauer became acquainted with the thought of the **Upanishads** through a Latin translation from Persian by a Frenchman, Anquetil Duperron. His eulogy is well known.

"The Indian air surrounds us, the original thoughts of kindred spirits.....And O! how the mind is here washed clean of all its early ingrafted Jewish superstition! It is the most profitable and most elevating reading which is possible in the world."

(source: **Eastern Religions and Western Thought - by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan** pg 248 and **Hinduism Invades America - By Wendell Thomas** p. 240 published by The Beacon Press Inc. New York City 1930).

Schopenhauer was in search of a "philosophy which should be at once ethics and metaphysics." India

did not disappoint him. He found it in the Upanisadhic "**tat twam asi**", "that thou art".

"From every sentence (of the Upanishads) deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit...."In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. They are destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people." Schopenhauer, who was in the habit, before going to bed, of performing his devotions from the pages of the Upanishads, regarded them as:



" It has been the solace of my life -- it will be the solace of my death."

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** Oxford University Press. 1995. pg 92 and **The Upanishads** Translated for the Modern Reader By **Eknath Easwaran** Nilgiri Press. 1987 p. 300 and **Outlines of Hinduism - By T. M. P. Mahadevan** - p.30).

He anticipated later speculations with his claim that Christianity had "Indian blood in its veins" and that the moral teachings of the New Testament had their historical source in Asia beyond Israel: "Christianity taught only what the whole of Asia knew already long before and even better"

(source: **Oriental Enlightenment: The encounter between Asian and Western thought - By J. J. Clarke** p.68-69).

To **Schopenhauer** the Upanishads were documents of 'almost superhuman conception,' whose authors could hardly be thought of as 'mere mortals.'

He also remarked: "How every line is of such strong, determined, and consistent meaning! And on every page we encounter deep, original, lofty thoughts, while the whole world is suffused with a high and holy seriousness."

(source: cited in German in **Upanishaden: Altindische Weisheit** (Upanishads: Ancient Indian Wisdom) **- By Alfred Hillebrandt** (Dussseldorf-Koln, Germany; Diederichs Verlag, 1964 p. 8).



He spoke of India as the 'fatherland of mankind' which 'gave the original religion of our race,' and he expressed the hope that European peoples, 'who stemmed from Asia,...would re-attain the religion of their home.'

He believed that the Upanishads, together with the philosophies of Plato and Kant, constituted the foundation on which to erect a proper philosophy of representation. It was the **Upanishads' analysis of the self** which caused Schopenhauer to stamp them as **" the product of the highest human wisdom".** He dedicated himself to this task, producing his magnum opus, **The World as Will and Representation,** in 1819. This is what he says in this book:

"We, on the contrary, now send to the Brahmans English clergymen and evangelical linen-weavers, in order out of sympathy to put them right, and to point out to them that they are created out of nothing, and that they ought to be grateful and pleased about it. But it is just the same as if we fired a bullet at a cliff. **"In India, our religions will never at any time take root; the ancient wisdom of the human race will not be supplanted by the events in Galilee. On the contrary, Indian wisdom flows back to Europe, and will produce a fundamental change in our knowledge and thought."**

(source: **The World as Will and Representation** - **By Arthur Schopenhauer** Volume I, & 63, pg. 356-357).

Schopenhauer regarded the **Hindus as deeper thinkers** than Europeans because their interpretation of the world was internal and intuitive, not external and intellectual. For intuition unites everything, the intellect divides everything. The Hindus saw that the "I" is a delusion, that the individual is merely phenomenal, and that the only reality is the Infinite One **"That art Thou"**

(source: **India and World Civilization By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. Pg 254).

Schopenhauer wrote in the preface of his "**The World as a Will and Representation**"



"According to me, the influence of Sanskrit literature on our time will not be lesser than what was in the 16th century Greece's influence on Renaissance. **One day, India's wisdom will flow again on Europe and will totally transform our knowledge and thought."**

Schopenhauer, had extracted from Indian philosophy its contempt for the mere intellect. **He admitted extracting his philosophical outlook from the Vedanta and attempting to weld "empirical realism" with transcendental idealism."**

"Schopenhauer went on from there to vindicate Indian philosophy's rightful place in the world.." He even went so far as to express pleasure at the continuous failure of West-Christian proselytism in Asia and added: "Our religions will never at any time take root; the ancient wisdom of the human race will not be supplanted by the events in Galilee. On the contrary, Indian wisdom flows back to Europe, and will produce a fundamental change in our knowledge and thought." His anti-Christianism was largely based on a fierce anti-Biblism; .....he attributed systematically to subtle influences originating on the "holy-banks of the Ganges."

(source: **The Soul of India - By Amaury de Riencourt** p 274-275).

It is well-known that the book 'Oupnekhat' (Upanishad) always lay open on his table and he invariably studied it before retiring to rest. He called the opening up of Sanskrit literature '**the greatest gift of our century',** and predicted that the philosophy and knowledge of the Upanishads would becomes the cherished faith of the West.

(source: **Western Indologists: A Study in Motives - P B Dutt**
http://www.philosophy.ru/library/asiatica/indica/authors/motives.html).

The **Upanishads** came to Schopenhauer as a new Gnosis or revelation. **"That incomparable book," he says, "stirs the spirit of the very depths of the soul."**

(source: **The Legacy of India - edited by G. T. Garratt** p. 32).

Schopenhauer was fond of saying that the first intuition of the work he was to do came to him while reading these texts, of which he was later to say that they had been "his life's consolation."

(source: **Yoga and the Hindu Tradition - by Jean Varenne** p. 186 - 187).



3. **Lord Warren Hastings** (1754-1826), was the first governor general of British India. **Hastings** was very much impressed and overwhelmed with Hindu philosophy:

He wrote with a prophetic and resounding pronouncement on the whole body of Indian writings:

"The writers of the Indian philosophies will survive, when the British dominion in India shall long have ceased to exist, and when the sources which it yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrances."

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction - By T. C. Galav** Universal Science-Religion. Pg 19).

" I hesitate not to pronounce the Gita a performance of great originality, of sublimity of conception, reasoning and diction almost unequalled; and a single exception, amongst all the known religions of mankind.."

(source: **India Discovered - By John Keay** p- 25).

4. **Ralph Waldo Emerson** (1803-1882) author, essayist, lecturer, philosopher, Unitarian minister who lectured on theology at Harvard University, was becoming increasingly disillusioned with aspects of Christian teaching that just did not make sense to his active and inquiring intelligence. He was influenced by Indian Scriptures the most. His initial rebellion against Christianity in its various forms prompted him to find a ready refuge in the idealism of Hinduism.

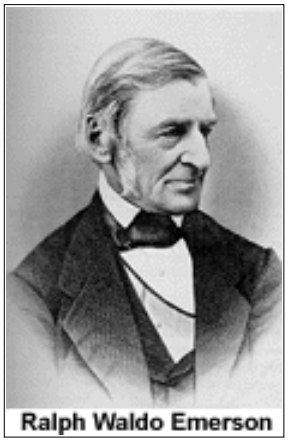
Historian **Protap Chunder Mazumdar** has said about Emerson that he was the best of Brahmin and "Amidst this ceaseless, sleepless din and clash of Western materialism, this heat and restless energy, the character of **Emerson shines upon India serene as the evening star**. He seems to some of us to have been a geographic mistake, he ought to have been born in India. Perhaps Hindoos were closer kinsmen to him than his own nation because every typical Hindoo is a child of Nature."

For Emerson, the idealism of the Hindus propounded in the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and other Indian scriptures, was based on fundamental concepts. He turned eastward towards India very early in life, when he was in his teens.

He said this about the Gita:

" I owed a magnificent day to the Bhagavad-Gita. It was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us."

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction - By T. C. Galav** Universal Science-Religion. p 65 and **Hinduism - By Linda Johnsen** p.42 and **Hindu Scriptures and American Transcendentalists - By Umesh Patri** p. 22-23).


Ralph Waldo Emerson

In his Journal, Emerson paid homage to **Vedic thought**:

" It is sublime as night and a breathless ocean. It contains every religious sentiment, all the grand ethics which visit in turn each noble poetic mind....It is of no use to put away the book; if I trust myself in the woods or in a boat upon the pond. Nature makes a Brahmin of me presently: eternal compensation, unfathomable power, unbroken silence....This is her creed. peace, she saith to me, and purity and absolute abandonment - these panaceas expiate all sin and bring you to the beatitude of the Eight Gods."

(source: **India's Priceless Heritage - By Nani A. Palkhivala** 1980 p.9 - 24).

Repelled by the increasing materialism of the West, **Emerson** turned to India for solace:

"The Indian teaching, through its clouds of legends, has yet a simple and grand religion, like a queenly countenance seen through a rich veil. It teaches to speak truth, love others, and to dispose trifles. The East is grant - and makes Europe appear the land of trifles. ...**all is soul and the soul is Vishnu** ...cheerful and noble is the genius of this cosmogony. Hari is always gentle and serene - he translates to heaven the hunter who has accidentally shot him in his human form, he pursues his sport with boors and milkmaids at the cow pens; all his games are benevolent and he enters into flesh to relieve the burdens of the world."

Emerson refers to the Indian doctrine of transmigration calling it easy of reception and used the idea in his essay on History. As early as 1821 he speaks of the intimate relationship between man and nature and the system of emanations in Indian thought. He wrote poems such as Brahma and Hamatreya.

(source: **India in the American Mind - By B. G. Gokhale** p. 120-21 and **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. Pg 254).

Emerson's Oversoul is the paramatman of the Upanishads.

"All science is transcendental or else passes away. Botany is now acquiring the right theory - the avatars of Brahman will presently be the text-books of natural history."

(source: **India's Priceless Heritage - By Nani A. Palkhivala** 1980 p.9).

Ralph Waldo Emerson says: "Plato was synthesis of Europe and Asia, and a decidedly Oriental element pervades his philosophy, giving it a sunrise color."

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** p.223).

He felt that the genius of the Hindus was unsurpassed "in the grandeur of their ethical statement." Emerson's interest in India which began in 1818 continued well into the 1860s. He admired the "Largeness" or sweep of the Indian vision which should be a vital part of the Transcendental wisdom.

In 1848 he says that he owed a "magnificent day to the reading of the Bhagavat-Gita" and adds that **England could not produce such a book as the Gita.** He found Indian books "excellent gymnastic for the mind as showing treatment - imagination, volatility etc."

In 1859 he felt: **"When India was explored and the wonderful riches of Indian theological literature found that dispelled once and for all the dream about Christianity being the sole revelation."**

(source: **India in the American Mind - By B. G. Gokhale** p. 16).



His famous poem "**Brahma**" is an example of his Vedantic ecstasy. If there is one piece that beautifully and succinctly expresses Emerson's vision of India it is in his poem Brahma.

(source: **Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage By Will Durant** MJF Books. 1935. pg 415).

Emerson wrote a third poem with a Hindu title in addition to "Brahma" and "**Hamatreya**"; this little poem, entitled "**Maya**", begins,

"Illusion works impenetrable,
Weaving webs innumerable.

The poem is called Maya for Hindu Goddess who keeps mankind under the spell of illusions. For Emerson, life was a riddle; he loved the Hindus because they had attempted to find a satisfactory answer to it. In "Poetry and Imagination" the sage of Concord tells us how ephermeral are man's various conditions in life: youth, age, property - all like a great dream." ...successive Mayas through which Vishnu mocks and instructs the soul" But it is not only the Vishnu Purana that inspired Emerson. Another Hindu work stimulated his mind a great deal: The Katha Upanishad. In 1856, when he was fifty-three, he wrote in his Journal:

"A grander legend than Western literature contains, is the story of Nachiketas."

We have noticed how strong had been the influence of Indian thought in shaping the intellectual and spiritual growth of the sage of Concord. He felt his own spiritual affinity for the Hindus and wrote once to a friend, "nature makes a Brahmin of me presently."

(source: **Elements of Brahmanism in the Transcendentalism of Emerson - By Leyla Goren** p. 42-45).

Emerson's essays like The Oversoul and Circles and poems like Brahma are Upanishadic wisdom, pure and simple. At one stage of his life he writes, **"Nature makes a Brahmin of me presently."**

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p.74).

Emerson's Transcendentalism earned him the appellation of "the Boston Brahmin."

(source: **Indian Philosophy and Modern Culture - By Paul Brunton** p. 35 London. Rider & Co.).

Fredric Ives Carpenter in his book, **Emerson and Asia** (1930) says, that Emerson was the first American thinker to plant Oriental, especially Indian thought, on the American soil and draw spiritual inspiration from it. The poem **Brahma** became a controversial poem from the very beginning because of its anti-Christian attitude and the direct treatment of the Upanishadic mysticism. He further says that this poem expresses the fundamental Hindu concept "more clearly and concisely than any other writing in the English language perhaps better than any writing in Hindu literature itself. Emerson got his central idea of the poem from his reading of **Katha Upanishad.**..If the slayer thinks I slay.....does not slay nor is it slain."

The idea of rebirth or reincarnation is found throughout Emerson's work and journals. "The transmigration of souls is no fable...."

Faith in transmigration of souls though antithetical to Christianity, appealed to him because it countered the nation of finality, inherent in Christianity, and embodied a vision of correction through successive stages of development until one achieves beatitude and divine bliss.

(source: **Hindu Scriptures and American Transcendentalists - By Umesh Patri** p. 22 -23 and 79).

Emerson, talking of the Upanishads and the Vedas, said that having read them, he could not put them away. **"They haunt me. In them I have found eternal compensation, unfathomable power, unbroken peace."**

(source: **The Commemorative Sanskrit Souvenir 2003 of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan -** p. 28).

"When Confucius and the Indian Scriptures were made known, no claim to monopoly of ethical wisdom could be thought of" Emerson joyfully proclaimed. "It is only within this century (the 1800's) that England and America discovered that their nursery tales were old German and Scandinavian stories; and now it appears that they came from India, and are therefore the property of all the nations."

(source: **Hinduism Today** - April/May/June 2004 issue - p 59).



5. **Wilhelm von Humboldt** (1767- 1835) Prussian minister of education, a brilliant linguist and the founder of the science of general linguistics. **Humboldt** began to learn Sanskrit in 1821 and was greatly moved by Schlegel's edition of the Bhagavad Gita, on which he published an extensive study. The Bhagavad Gita made a great impression on Humboldt, who said that " this episode of the Mahabharata was:

"The most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue ....perhaps the deepest and loftiest thing the world has to show."

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction By T. C. Galav** Universal Science-Religion. Pg 650)

He devoted to it a long treatise in the **Proceedings of the Academy of Berlin** (1825-6).

He thanked God for having permitted him to live long enough to become acquainted with the Gita.

(source: **Vedanta: Heart of Hinduism - By Hans Torwesten** An Evergreen Book. Grove Press. 1985. pg 6.

On June 30 1825, Humboldt lectured to the Berlin Academy of Sciences on the Gita, placing it firmly in the mainstream of the scholarship of the period. **He found in the Bhagavad Gita his own "spiritual ancestors". What appealed to him was its originality and its simplicity.** Krishna's doctrine, he wrote,

" ...develops in such a peculiarly individual way, (and) it is, so far as I can judge, so much less burdened with sophistry and mysticism, that it deserves our special attention, standing as it does as an independent work of art..."

(source: **The Universal Gita: Western Images of the Bhagavad Gita a Bicentenary Survey** - **By Eric J. Sharpe** p. 19).

Humboldt studied Sanskrit with Franz Bopp in London. For Humboldt, **Sanskrit with its wealth of grammatical forms is the climax of inflecting languages.**

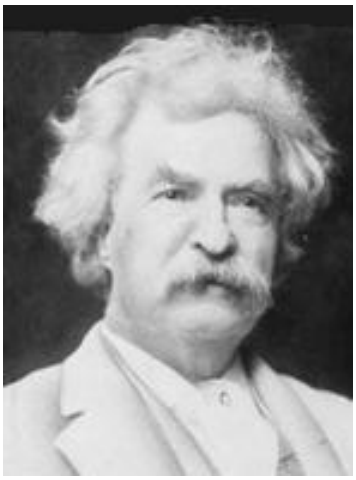
(source: **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German** - **By Valentine Stache-Rosen**. p.5-6).



6. **Mark Twain** (1835-1910) also known as Samuel Clemens, one of the most widely loved and celebrated American writers since his first books were released in the late 1860s. Many of his writings have reached the pinnacles of American and world literature, including the timeless Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court and Following the Equator. Besides these easily recognizable classics, Twain wrote fascinating Travelogue detailing his experiences in Asia.

"So far as I am able to judge, nothing has been left undone, either by man or nature, to make India the most extraordinary country that the sun visits on his rounds. Nothing seems to have been forgotten, nothing overlooked."

"Land of religions, cradle of human race, birthplace of human speech, grandmother of legend, great grandmother of tradition. The land that all men desire to see and having seen once even by a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for the shows of the rest of the globe combined."



"India had the start of the whole world in the beginning of things. She had the first civilization; she had the first accumulation of material wealth; she was populous with deep thinkers and subtle intellects; she had mines, and woods, and a fruitful soul."

Varanasi or Banaras has been continuously populated for more than 3,000 years, and has often been called the oldest city in the world. It was the contemporary of Thebes and Babylon. Early visitors were struck by the "spectacle" the "panorama" of the Banaras riverfront.

In his around-the-world adventures, **Following the Equator**, Mark Twain wrote:

"The Ganges front is the supreme showplace of Benares. Its tall bluffs are solidly caked from water to summit, along a stretch of three miles, with a splendid jumble of massive and picturesque masonry, a bewildering and beautiful confusion of stone platforms, temples, stair flights, rich and stately palaces....soaring stairways, sculptured temples, majestic palaces, softening away into the distances; and there is movement, motion, human life everywhere, and brilliantly costumed - streaming in rainbows up and down the lofty stairways, and massed in metaphorical gardens on the mile of great platforms at the river's edge."

(source: **Banaras: City of Light - By Diana L Eck** p.14).

He had said in his inimitable style: **"Varanasi"** or Banaras is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together."

(source: **Soul of a Nation - The Hindustan Times**).

Mark Twain remarked: "India has two million gods, and worships them all. In religion all other countries are paupers; India is the only millionaire." When traveling through India, he had exclaimed that though a week had only seven days, Indians seemed to celebrate eight festivals every week.

He observed that having had only the briefest glimpse of India, you would not trade the experience for all the riches in the world. This is what he wrote about India in 1896:

"India had the start of the whole world in the beginning of things. She had the first civilization; she had the first accumulation of material wealth; she was populous with deep thinkers and subtle intellect; she had mines, and woods, and a fruitful soul."

(source: **Hinduism Today** July/August/September 2002 p. 52).

"Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India."

Twain was awed by **Hindu tradition**. He said, "the one land that all men desire to see, and having once seen, by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for all the shows of all the rest of the globe combined."

(source: **Hinduism - By Linda Johnsen** p. 364).

"India is a country "whose yesterday's bear date with the mouldering antiquities of the rest of nations."



7. **Dr. Arnold Joseph Toynbee** (1889-1975) the great British historian. His massive research was published in 12 volumes between 1934 and 1961 as `A Study of History'. Author of several books, including **Christianity: Among the Religions of the World** and **One World and India**. Toynbee was a major interpreter of human civilization in the 20th century.

"It is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in self-destruction of the human race. **At this supremely dangerous moment in human history , the only way of salvation is the ancient Hindu way.** Here we have the attitude and spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together in to a single family."

The tolerance of Hinduism was recognized by Toynbee, who on many occasions contrasted the exclusivity of the Jewish religion, based on the Jewish belief that the Jews are the chosen people with the **large tolerance of the Hindus and Buddhist.** This plague of exclusiveness, he claims, was inherited by both the Christians and Muslims: hence their lamentable record.

(source: **Concordant Discord - By R. C. Zaehner** pp-22-23).

‘‘There may or may not be only one single absolute truth and only one single ultimate way of salvation. We do not know. But we do know that there are more approaches to truth than one, and more means of salvation than one.’’‘‘This is a hard saying for adherents of the higher religions of the Judaic family (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), **but it is a truism for Hindus. The spirit of mutual good-will, esteem, and veritable love ... is the traditional spirit of the religions of the Indian family. This is one of India’s gifts to the world.’’**

(source: **Britannia Perspectives -** Quoted By **T. V. R. Shenoy** in **Secularism is not for Hindus alone**).

Toynbee predicted: "At the close of this century, the world would be dominated by the West, but that in the 21st century *"***India will conquer her conquerors."**

(source: **Spiritual Heritage of India - By Swami Prabhavananda** Vedanta Press 1997).



"India is a whole world in herself; she is a society of the same magnitude as our Western society."

(source: **Civilization on Trail and the World and the West - By Arnold Toynbee** Meridian Books. p. 257).

In 1952, Toynbee had observed: “In fifty years, the world would be under the hegemony of the USA, but in the 21st century, as religion captures the place of technology, it is possible that India, the conquered, will conquer its conquerors.”

(source: **Power of the Indian mind: our heritage & asset - by Jagmohan** - tribuneindia.com - editorial - Sunday February 23 2003).

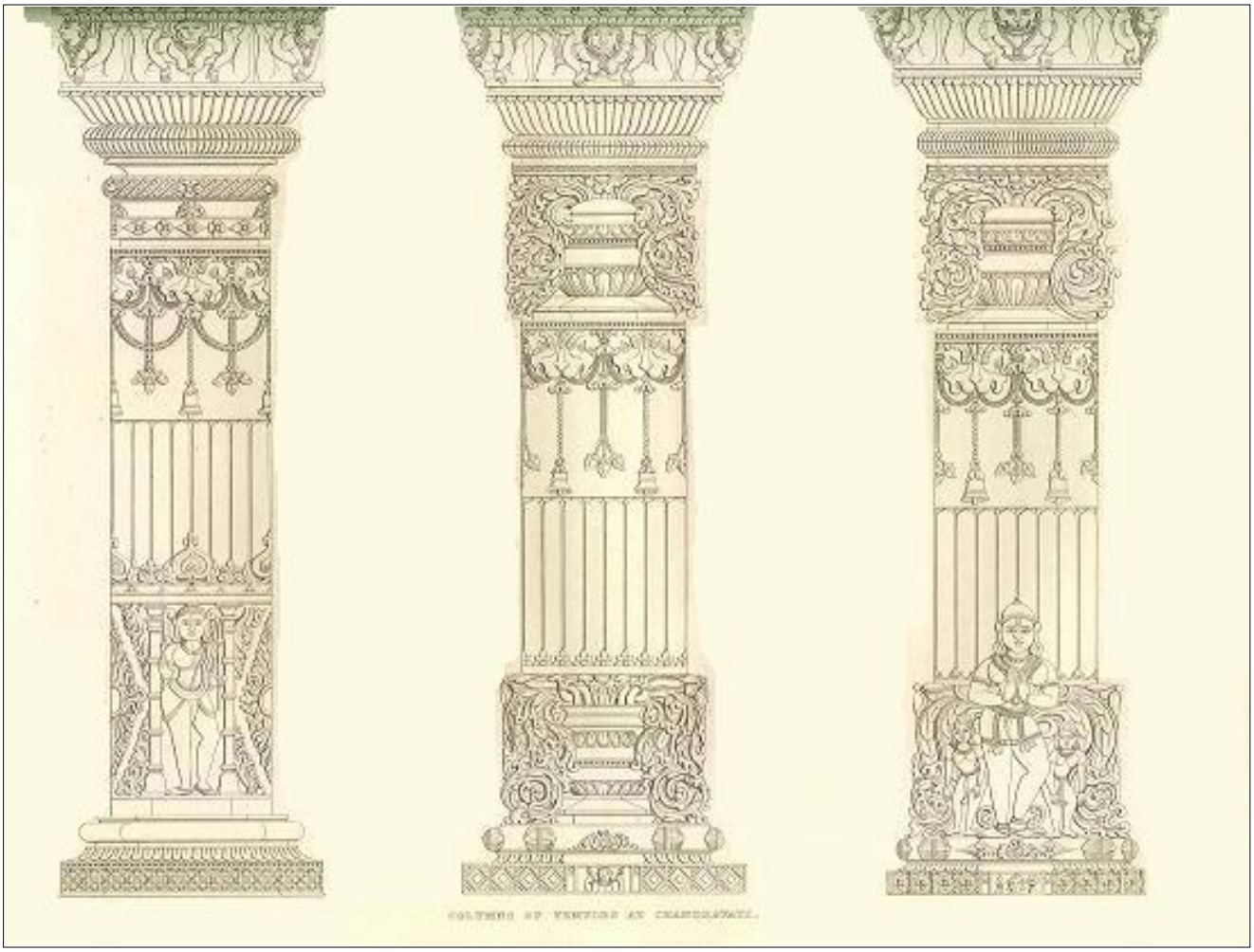
"India is not only the heir of her own religious traditions; she is also the residuary legatee of the Ancient Mediterranean World's religious traditions." "Religion cuts far deeper, and, at the religious level, India has not been a recipient; she has been a giver. About half the total number of the living higher religions are of Indian origin."

(source: **One World and India - By Arnold Toynbee** Indian Council for Cultural Relations New Delhi. 1960 p. 42- 59).

Toynbee explains his position in clear terms: In our spiritual struggle, he says "I guess that both the West and the world are getting to turn away from man - worshipping ideologies - Communism and secular individualism alike - and become converted to an Oriental religion coming neither from Russia

nor from the West. I guess that this will be the Christian religion that came to the Greeks and the Romans from Palestine, with one or two elements in traditional Christianity discarded and **replaced by a new element from India,** I expect and hope that this avatar of Christianity will include the vision of God as being Love. But I also expect and hope that it will discard the other traditional Christian vision of God as being a jealous god, and that it will reject the self-glorification of this jealous god's "chosen people" as being unique. **This is where India comes in, with her belief that there may be more than one illuminating and saving approach to the mystery of the universe."**

(source: **East and West: Some Reflections - By S. Radhakrishnan** p.128).



Column of temples at Chandravati
*(source: **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India - By Colonel James Tod**).*

8. **Annie Wood Besant** (1847-1933) was an active socialist on the executive committee of the Fabian Society along with George Bernard Shaw. George Bernard Shaw regarded her the " greatest woman public speaker of her time." Was a prominent leader of India's freedom movement, member of the Indian National Congress, and of the Theosophical Society. Dr. Annie Besant was a housewife, a propagator of atheism, a trade unionist, a feminist leader and a Fabian Socialist.

She was also fundamentally instrumental in freeing the country she lost her heart and sublimed her soul to: India. Besant is an indivisible part of the composite struggle for independent India because she declared most passionately,

"I love the Indian people as I love none other. My heart and my mind... have long been laid on the alter of the Motherland."

(source: **Hindustan Times** 01/25/02).



Annie Besant, proponent of the philosophy of Theosophy, gave many a lecture in which she aired her views that India was a victim of the mischief wrought by Christian missionaries. A friend of Swami Vivekananda, Mrs. Besant was trying to lead Indians back to their own gods and arouse their sense of self-respect and pride in the greatness of their religions.

This is what she said on India and Hinduism :

"After a study of some forty years and more of the great religions of the world, I find none so perfect ,none so scientific, none so philosophical and no so spiritual that the great religion known by the name of Hinduism. **Make no mistake, without Hinduism, India has no future**. Hinduism is the soil in to which India's roots are stuck and torn out of that she will inevitably wither as a tree torn out from its place. And if Hindus do not maintain Hinduism who shall save it? If India's own children do not cling to her faith who shall guard it. India alone can save India and India and Hinduism are one. "

Annie Besant thought that "among the priceless teachings that may be found in the great Indian epic **Mahabharata, there is none so rare and priceless as the Gita."**

"This is the India of which I speak - the India which, as I said, is to me the **Holy Land.** For those who, though born for this life in a Western land and clad in a Western body, can yet look back to earlier incarnations in which they drank the milk of spiritual wisdom from the breast of their true mother - they must feel ever the magic of her immemorial past, must dwell ever under the spell of her deathless fascination; for they are bound to India by all the sacred memories of their past; and with her, too, are bound up all the radiant hopes of their future, a future which they know they will share with her who is their true mother in the soul-life."

(source: **India: Essays and Lectures Vol. IV - By Annie Besant** London. The Theosophical Publishing Co. p. 11.1895).



Mrs. Besant remarked at Calcutta: **"India is the mother of religion. In her are combined science and religion in perfect harmony, and that is the Hindu religion, and it is India that shall be again the spiritual mother of the world."**

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** - Besant's lecture at the Grand Theatre, Calcutta on Jan 15th 1906).

"During the early life of a Nation, religion is an essential for the binding together of the individuals who make the nation. **India was born, as it were, in the womb of Hinduism, and her body was for long shaped by that religion.** Religion is a binding force, and India has had a longer binding together by religion than any other Nation in the world, as she is the oldest of the living Nations."

(source: **Hindu Rashtra-What It Means - By Prof. V. Rangarajan**).

Besant held Hinduism in high esteem and very well advised in her book, **In Defense of Hinduism**:

"Based on knowledge it need not fear any advance in knowledge; profound in spirituality, the depths of the spirit find in it deeps answering into deep, it has nothing to dread, everything to hope, from growth in intellect, from increasing sway of reason."

(source: **India Rediscovered - By Dr. Giriraj Shah** p. 31 Abhinav Publications New Delhi 1975).



9. **Victor Cousin** (1792-1867) eminent French philosopher, whose knowledge of the history of European philosophy was unrivalled, believes that:

"When we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East--above all, those of **India**, which are beginning to spread in Europe--we discover there many a truth, and **truths so profound, and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which European genius has sometimes stopped, that we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the East, and to see in this cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy."**

(source: **Is India Civilized: Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p. 132).

He has observed:

“The history of Indian philosophy is the abridge history of the philosophy of the world.”

(source: **The Bible in India: Hindoo origin of Hebrew and Christian revelation - By Louis Jacolliot** p 9).

" India contains the whole history of philosophy in a nutshell."

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** - p. 11-12).

10. **Jules Michelet** (1798 -1874) French writer and the greatest historian of the Romantic school said:



"At its starting point in India, the birthplace of races and religions, the womb of the world."

While seeking for the wisdom of ages, he cried at the commencement of his work, “The Bible of Humanity”: “The year 1863 will remain dear and blessed to me.” Why? Because he had read India’s sacred poem, the **Ramayana**.

"Divine poem, ocean of milk!"

cried Michelet on discovering this ancient Scripture.

In what moving terms he then wrote about India. We can but transcribe his burning words:

“Each year, it is necessary to respire, to take breath again, to revive ourselves at the great living sources that forever keep their eternal freshness. Where can we find them if not at the cradle of our race, on the sacred summits from where descend the Indus and the Ganges....?

(source: **The Fragrance of India : landmarks for the world of tomorrow - By Louis Revel** p. 16 Kitabistan Allahabad 1946).

This is what **Michelet** said of the Ramayana:

"Whoever has done or willed too much let him drink from this deep cup a long draught of life and youth.....Everything is narrow in the West - Greece is small and I stifle; Judea is dry and I pant. Let me look toward lofty Asia, and the profound East for a little while. There lies my great poem, as vast as the

Indian ocean, blessed, gilded with the sun, the book of divine harmony wherein is no dissonance. A serene peace reigns there, and in the midst of conflict an infinite sweetness, a boundless fraternity, which spreads over all living things, an ocean (without bottom or bound) of love, of pity, of clemency."

Such was the first and enduring impression made on Michelet by the Ramayana.

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction - An Introduction By T. C. Galav** Universal Science-Religion. Pg 149. **The Fragrance of India : landmarks for the world of tomorrow - By Louis Revel** p. 16 Kitabistan Allahabad 1946).

" From India comes to us a torrent of light, a river of Right and Reason" .....

(source: **Arise O' India - By Francois Gautier** ISBN 81-241-0518-9 Har-Anand Publications 2000. p. 25).

" Whereas, in our Occident, the most dry and sterile minds brag in front of Nature, **the Indian genius**, the most rich and fecund of all, knows neither small nor big and has generously embraced universal fraternity, even the identity of all souls."

(source: **La Bible de l'Humanite in OEuvres - By Louis Michelet** (Paris : Larousse, 1930, vol. 5, p. 119.).



11. **Francois Marie Arouet Voltaire** (1694-1774) France's greatest writers and philosophers, was a theist, and a bitter critic of the Church, which he looked upon as the instigator of cruelty, injustice, and inequality. No wonder that Voltaire, who strongly opposed the Church's totalitarian grip over men's lives, and may count as one of the ideologues of secularism, mentioned the religions of India and China as a model of how religion could be a free exploration by the individual. He said :

"We have shown how much we (Europeans) surpass the Indians in courage and wickedness, and how inferior to them we are in wisdom. Our European nations have mutually destroyed themselves in this land where we only go in search of money, while the first Greeks traveled to the same land only to instruct themselves."

Voltaire concluded, **" I am convinced that everything has come down to us from the banks of the Ganges, - astronomy, astrology, metempsychosis, etc."**

" It is very important to note that some 2,500 years ago at the least Pythagoras went from Samos to the Ganges to learn geometry...But he would certainly not have undertaken such a strange journey had the reputation of the Brahmins' science not been long established in Europe..."

(source: **The Invasion That Never Was - By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 18).

Voltaire (Fragments relating to some revolutions in India), spoke of the Hindus as "a peaceful and innocent people, equally incapable of hurting others or of defending themselves."

(source: **Is India Civilized - Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p. 36).



He found that India was the home of religion in its oldest and purest form. He described India as a country **"on which all other countries had to rely, but which did not rely on anyone else."** He also believed that Christianity derived from Hinduism. He wrote to and assured **Fredrick the Great of Prussia** that **"our holy Christian religion is solely based upon the ancient religion of Brahma."**

(source: **On Hinduism Reviews and Reflections - By Ram Swarup** p. 101-102).

It is in such a context, that a man like Voltaire considered **India "famous for its laws and sciences"**

and deplored the mounting European preoccupation (both individual and national) of those in India with the amassing of "immense fortunes." This quest for riches intensified the struggles, plunder, etc. during his own time, and made him remark that "If the Indians had remained unknown to the Tartars and to us, they would have been the happiest people in the world."

(source: **Indian Science and Technology in the Eighteenth Century: Some Contemporary European Accounts - By Dharampal** Impex India. p. LXIII).

Voltaire among others held up Hinduism as an example of a natural deistic religion with a pedigree much older than that of Judeo-Christianity.

(source: **Oriental Enlightenment: The encounter between Asian and Western thought - By J. J. Clarke** p.50).



12. **Will Durant** (1885-1981) American historian, would like the West to learn from India, tolerance and gentleness and love for all living things:

"It is true that even across the Himalayan barrier India has sent to us such questionable gifts as grammar and logic, philosophy and fables, hypnotism and chess, and above all our numerals and our decimal system. But these are not the essence of her spirit; they are trifles compared to what we may learn from her in the future."

"Perhaps in return for conquest, arrogance and spoliation, India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of the mature mind, the quiet content of the unacquisitive soul, the calm of the understanding spirit, and a unifying, a pacifying love for all living things."

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction - By T. C. Galav** Universal Science-Religion. Pg 20)

"India was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit the mother of Europe's languages: she was the mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; mother, through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy. **Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all."** Nothing should more deeply shame the modern student than the recency and inadequacy of his acquaintance with India....This is the India that patient scholarship is now opening up like a new intellectual continent to that Western mind which only yesterday thought civilization an exclusive Western thing."

"As flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their name and form, thus a wise man, freed from name and form, goes to the divine person who is beyond all." Such a theory of life and death will not please Western man, whose religion is as permeated with individualism as are his political and economic institutions. **But it has satisfied the philosophical Hindu mind with astonishing continuity.**

Durant felt that

"Even in Europe and America, this wistful theosophy has won millions upon millions of followers, from lonely women and tired men to Schopenhauer and Emerson. Who would have thought that the great American philosopher of individualism would give perfect expression to the Hindu conviction in his poem **'Brahma',** that individuality is a delusion? "

(source: **Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage By Will Durant** MJF Books. 1935. pg 415)



13. **Aldous Huxley** (1894-1963) the English novelist and essayist, born into a family that included some of the most distinguished members of the English ruling class, says that the Gita is for the whole world. He is one of those who enriched the West greatly with the wisdom of the East.

"**The Bhagavad-Gita is the most systematic statement of spiritual evolution of endowing value to mankind. The Gita is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the spiritual thoughts ever to have been made.**"

Hence **Huxley** thought its enduring value, not only for Indians, but for all mankind."

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction - By T. C. Galav** Universal Science-Religion. Pg 65).

In his latest books, **Eyeless in Gaza** and **Ends and Means**, Aldous Huxley invites our attention to the discipline essential for spiritual insight and argues for the acceptance of the **Yoga** method. The influence of Indian thought is not so much a model to be copied as a dye which permeates.

(source: **Eastern Religions and Western Thought -By Dr. S. Radhakrishnan** pg 250).

He observed that while historical religions have been violent, eternity-philosophies like "Hinduism and Buddhism have never been persecuting faiths, have preached almost no holy wars and have refrained from that proselytizing religious imperialism, which have gone hand in hand with the political and economic oppression of the colored people."

(source: **On Hinduism Reviews and Reflections - By Ram Swarup** p. 149).

"The Gita occupies an intermediate position between scripture and theology, for it contains the poetical qualities of the first with the clear-cut methodicalness of the second."

(source: **India's Empire of Mind - By Sudhansu Bimal Mookherji** p. 93).

14. **Alfred North Whitehead** (1861-1947), British mathematician, logician and philosopher best known for his work in mathematical logic and who, in collaboration with Bertrand Russell, authored the landmark three-volume **Principia Mathematica** (1910, 1912, 1913).



Whitehead is reported to have remarked:

" Vedanta is the most impressive metaphysics the human mind has conceived."

(source: **Huston Smith: Essays on World Religion edited by M. Darrrol Bryant** Paragon House 1992 page 135).

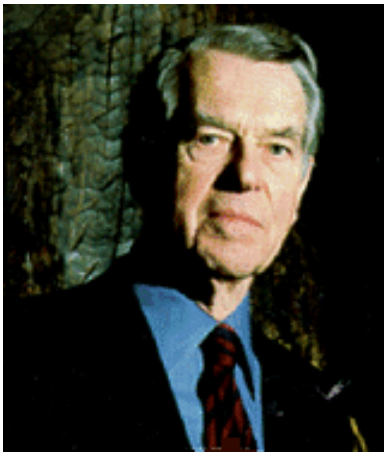
15. **Joseph Campbell** (1904-1987) was one of the foremost interpreters of myth in our time. **Campbell** was a prolific writer, dedicated editor, beloved teacher, inspiring lecturer, and an avid scholar of spiritual and cultural development.

"It is ironic that our great western civilization, which has opened to the minds of all mankind the infinite wonders of a universe of untold billions of galaxies should be saddled with the tightest little cosmological image known to mankind? The Hindus with their grandiose **Kalpas** and their ideas of the divine power which is beyond all human category (male or female). **Not so alien to the imagery of modern science that it could not have been put to acceptable use.**"

(source: **Myths to Live By - By Joseph Campbell**. A Bantam Book 1988. page 90).

"The first principle of Indian thought, therefore, is that the **ultimate reality is beyond description.** It is

something that can be experienced only by bringing the mind to a stop; and once experienced, it cannot be described to anyone in terms of the forms of this world. The truth, the ultimate truth, that is to say, is transcendent. it goes past, transcends, all speech all images, anything that can possibly be said. But, as we have just seen, it is not only transcendent, it is also immanent, within all things, Everything in the world, therefore, is to be regarded as its manifestation. There is an important difference her between the Indian and the Western ideas.



"There is an important difference between the Hindu and the Western ideas. In the Biblical tradition, God creates man, but man cannot say that he is divine in the same sense that the Creator is, **where as in Hinduism, all things are incarnations of that power. We are the sparks from a single fire. And we are all fire. Hinduism believes in the omnipresence of the Supreme God in every individual. There is no "fall". Man is not cut off from the divine. He requires only to bring the spontaneous activity of his mind stuff to a state of stillness and he will experience that divine principle with him."**

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction - by T C Galav** Universal Science-Religion. Pp 19 and **Joseph Campbell Foundation**).

"There is an illuminating story told of the deity Krishna, who, in the form of a human child, was raised among a little company or tribe of herdsmen. One day he said to them, when he saw them preparing to worship one of the great Gods of the Brahminical pantheon: "But why do you worship a deity in the sky? The support of your life is here, in your cattle. Worship these! " Whereupon, they hung garlands around the necks of their cattle and paid them worship. **This wonderful art of recognizing the divine presence in all things, as a ubiquitous presence, is one of the most striking features of Oriental life, and is particularly prominent in Hinduism."**

'I have seen very simple people out in the country, climbing a hill, who, when they became tired and paused to rest and eat, set up a stone, poured red paint around it, and then reverently placed flowers before it. The pouring of the red paint set that stone apart. The idea was simply that those people were now going to regard it, not as a stone, but as a manifestation of the divine principle that it is immanent in all things. The pouring of the red paint and placing of the flowers were typical acts of Bhakti, Devotional Yoga: simple devices, readily available to anyone, to shift the focus of the mind from the phenomenal aspect of the object as a mere stone to its mystery of a miracle of being. And this popular form of yoga, no less than the very much sterner and more difficult discipline of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, to which I first alluded, is **a technique to link consciousness to the ultimate truth: the mystery of being. The sense of the whole universe as a manifestation of the radiance of God and of yourself as likewise of that radiance, and the assurance that this is so, no matter what things may look like, round about, is the key to the wisdom of India..."**

(source: **Joseph Campbell Foundation**).

Joseph Campbell, traveled widely in India and was a good friend of Hindu teacher J. Krishnamurti. He also assisted in the translation of one of the greatest classics of modern times, The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. At one point, **he admitted that discovering the Mandukya Upanishad affected him more profoundly than the beginning of the World War II.**

(source: **Hinduism - By Linda Johnsen** p. 364).



16. **Sir Monier Monier-Williams** (1860-1888) Indologist and head of the Oxford's Boden Chair said:

"The strength of Hinduism lies in its infinite adaptability to the infinite diversity of human character and human tendencies. It has its highly spiritual and abstract side suited to the philosopher, its practical to the man of the world, its aesthetic and ceremonial side attuned to the man of the poetic feeling and imagination; and its quiescent contemplative aspect that has its appeal for the man of peace and the lover of seclusion."

The Hindus, according to him, were Spinozists more than 2,000 years before the advent of

Spinoza, and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin and Evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of Evolution was accepted by scientists of the present age.

"I have found no people in Europe more religious, none more patiently persevering in common duties."

(source: **Indian Culture and the Modern Age - By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri** Annamalai University. 1956 p.22).

"Starting from the Vedas, Hinduism has ended in embracing something from all religions, and in presenting phases suited to all minds. It is all tolerant, all-compliant, all-comprehensive, all-absorbing."



The following passages about the **Hindu Epics** (Ramayana and Mahabharata) are noteworthy for their beauty and for their insight:

"It must be admitted, however, that, in exhibiting pictures of domestic life and manners, the Sanskrit epics are even more true and real than the Greek and Roman. In the delineation of women the Hindu poet thrown aside all exaggerated coloring and drawn from nature - Kaikeyi, Kausalya, Mandodari (favorite wife of Ravana), and even the humble-backed Manthara are all drawn to the very life. Sita, Draupadi, and Damayanti engage our affections and our interest for more than Helen or even Penelope. Indeed Hindu wives are generally perfect patterns of conjugal fidelity; can it be doubted that, in these delightful portraits of the Pativrata or purity and simplicity of Hindu domestic manners in early times."

"Indeed, in depicting scenes of domestic affection, and expressing those universal feelings and emotions which belong to human nature in all time and in all places, Sanskrit epic poetry is unrivalled even by Greek Epics.....In the Indian epics, such passages abound, and besides giving a very high idea of the purity and happiness of domestic life in ancient India, indicate a capacity in Hindu woman for the discharge of the most sacred and important social duties."

"Yet there are not wanting indications in the Indian Epics of a higher degree of civilization than that represented in the Homeric poems. The battlefields of the Ramayana and Mahabharata,.....are not made barbarously wanton cruelties; and the description of Ayodhya and Lanka imply far greater luxury and refinement than those of Sparta and Troy."

"He (Rama) is the type of a perfect husband, son, and brother. Sita also rises in character far above Helen and even above Penelope, both in her sublime devotion and loyalty to her husband, and her indomitable patience and endurance under suffering and temptation.....it may be affirmed generally that the whole tone of the Ramayana is certainly above that of the Iliad."

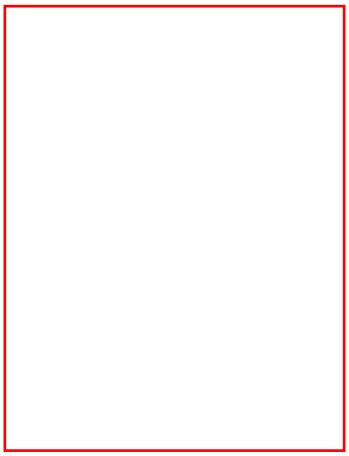
(source: **Eminent Orientalists: Indian European American** - Asian Educational Services. p. 153-157).

In the words of Monier Williams, India is 'in all respects a complete world in itself'.

(source: **India Through the Ages - Madan Gopal -** under details).

"It may be with truth be asserted that no description of Hinduism can be exhaustive which does not touch on almost every religious and philosophical idea that the world has ever known. It is all-tolerant, all-comprehensive, all-compliant, all-absorbing. It has its spiritual and its material aspect; it's esoteric and exoteric; it's subjective and objective; it's rational and irrational. It has one side for the practical; another for the severely moral; another for the devotional and the imaginative; another for the philosophical and speculative."

(source: http://www.geocities.com/hindusoc/special/hindintr.htm).



Sir Monier Monier-Williams, in his **Brahmanism and Hinduism : or, Religious thought and life in India, as based on the Veda and other sacred books of the Hindus** , declares:

"Indeed, if I may be allowed the anachronism, the Hindus were Spinozites more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza; and Darwinians may centuries before Darwin; and evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time, and before any word like 'evolution' existed in any language of the world."

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** - p.16).

He said that Pythagoras and Plato both believed in this doctrine, and that they were indebted for it to Hindu writers.

(source: **Indian Wisdom - By Sir M. Monier Williams** p. 68).

About the **Niti Shastras** he says: " Anyone who studies the best Hindu writings cannot but be struck by the moral tone which everywhere pervades them...constantly represent the present condition of human life as the result of actions in the previous existence. Hence a right course of present conduct becomes an all-important consideration as bearing on future happiness...."

Sir Monier Williams says that whatever conclusions we form as to the source of the first astronomical ideas in the world it is probable that we owe to the Hindus the invention of algebra and its application to astronomy and geometry. And that from them the Arabs received the numerical symbols and decimal notation, which now used everywhere in Europe have rendered untold services to the cause of science.

And again: “The motions of the sun and moon were carefully observed by the Hindus and with such success that their determination of the moon’s synodical revolution is a much more correct one than the Greeks ever achieved. They introduced the period of Jupiter with those of the sun and moon into the regulation of their calendar in the form of sixty years common to them and the Chaldeans. They were keenly interested in logic and grammar, and in medicine and surgery they once kept pace with the most enlightened people of the world.”

(source: **The Story of Oriental Philosophy - By L. Adams Beck** p. 10 - 13).



17. **Friedrich Maximilian Müeller** (1823-1900) German philologist and Orientalist. He repeatedly drew attention to the uniqueness of the Vedas and awakened interest in Indology among educated people. He did more than any other scholar to popularize philology and mythology, e.g., his lectures Science of Language.

Muller is best known for his series **Sacred Books of the East**.

He wrote:

"If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered over the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant, I should point to India." And if I were to ask myself from what literature we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of the Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw the corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human a life...again I should point to India."

(source: **The World's Religions - By Huston Smith**. Harper San Francisco. 1991 pg 12)

"I maintain that for everybody who cares for himself, for his ancestors, for his history, for his intellectual development, a study of Vedic literature is indispensable ".

"The Upanishads are the.....sources of .....the Vedanta philosophy, a system in which human speculation seems to me to have reached its very acme." "I spend my happiest hours in reading Vedantic books. They are to me like the light of the morning, like the pure air of the mountains - so simple, so true, if once understood."

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction - By T. C. Galav** Universal Science-Religion. Pp 19).

"The conception of the world as deduced from the Veda, and chiefly from the Upanishads, is indeed astounding."

(source: **The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy - By Max Muller** (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1916), p. xiv.

"The transcendent temperament acquired, no doubt, a more complete supremacy in the Indian character than anywhere else."

In **History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature** (p 557), Max Muller observed, **"In the Rig Veda we shall have before us more real antiquity than in all the inscriptions of Egypt or Ninevah...the Veda is the oldest book in existence.."**

"Historical records (of the Hindus) extend in some respects so far beyond all records and have been preserved to us in such perfect and legible documents, that we can learn from them lessons which we can learn nowhere else and supply missing links."

(source: **India - What It Can Teach Us - By Max Muller** p. 21).



"The Vedic literature opens to us a chamber in the education of human race to which we can find no parallel anywhere else. Whoever cares for the historical growth of our language and thought, whoever cares for the first intelligent development of religion and mythology, whoever cares for the first foundation of Science, Astronomy, Metronomy, Grammar and Etymology, whoever cares for the first intimation of the first philosophical thoughts, for the first attempt at regulating family life, village life and state life as founded on religion, ceremonials, traditions and contact must in future pay full attention to the study of Vedic literature."

(source: **Hinduism: The Eternal Religion - By M. D. Chaturvedi** p.12-13).

"The whole of their (Hindu) literature, from one end to the other, is pervaded by expression of love and reverence for truth.'

(source: **Popular Hinduism: The Religion of the Masses - By L S S O'Malley** p. 82).

He declared: "None of our philosophers, not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant, or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lightnings. Stone follows on stone, in regular succession after once the first step has been made, after once it has been clearly seen that in the beginning there can have been but One, as there will be but One in the end, whether we call it Atman or Brahman."

(source: **The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy - By Max F. Muller** p. 239).

Muller says that from Indian literature the Christian world "may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly humane, a life not for this only, but a transfigured and eternal life."

(source: **India - What It Can Teach Us - By Max Muller** p. 6).

In **Three Lectures on Vedanta Philosophy** published in 1896, Muller writes: *"***What distinguishes the Vedanta philosophy from all other philosophies is that it is at the same time a religion and a philosophy."** (pp 11-12).

About the love of truth experienced by the sages of the Upanishads, Prof. Max Muller says, " If it seems strange to you that the old Indian Philosophers should have known more about the soul than Greek or medieval or modern philosophers, let us remember that however much the telescopes for observing the stars of heaven have been improved, the observatories of the soul have remained much the same."



He went on to say: **"It is surely astounding that such a system as the Vedanta should have been slowly elaborated by the indefatigable and intrepid thinkers of India thousands of years ago, a system that even now makes us feel giddy,** as in mounting last steps of the swaying spire of a Gothic cathedral. None of our philosophers, not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lighting. Stone follows on stone after regular succession after once the first step has been made, after once it has been clearly seen that in the beginning there can have been One, as there will be but One in the end, whether we call it Atman or Brahman."

(source: **Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy**, London. 1894. p. 7).

Prof Max Mueller, an authority on ancient India, says: "I do not deny that the manly vigor, the public spirit and the private virtues of the citizens of European states represent one side of the human destiny." But, surely, he asserts, "there is another side to our nature and possibly another destiny open to man." And he points to **India**, "Where the climate was mild and the soil fertile." He asks: "Was it not, I say, natural then, that another side of human nature should be developed — not the active, the combative and acquisitive, **but the passive, the meditative and reflective?"**

"If philosophy is meant to be a preparation for a happy death, or Euthanisia, I know of no better preparation for it than the Vedanata philosophy."

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** p.234).

"Whatever sphere of the human mind you may select for your special study, whether it be language, or religion, or mythology, or philosophy, whether it be law or customs, primitive art or primitive science, everywhere you have to go to India, whether you like it or not, because some of the most valuable and instructive materials of the history of man are treasured up in India and India only."

(source: **Yoga: A Vision of its Future - By Gopi Krishna** p. 119).

"The Hindus," says Max Muller, "were a people remarkably gifted for philosophical abstraction."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - Har Bilas Sarda** p. 276).

"The earliest of these Upanishads will always maintain a place in the philosophic literature of the world among the most astounding products of the human mind."

(source: **Hinduism Invades America - by Wendell Thomas** p. 240 published by The Beacon Press Inc. New York City 1930).

18. **Count Hermann Keyserling** (1880-1946) philosopher, author, public speaker. He is the first Western thinker to conceive and promote a planetary culture, beyond nationalism and cultural ethnocentrism, based on recognition of the equal value and validity of non-western cultures and philosophies. **Keyserling** founded the School of Wisdom in Darmstadt, Germany in 1920 based on the original Schools of Wisdom which prospered over two thousand years ago in Northern India.



Keyserling was much impressed with the metaphysical profundity of India. **He used Indian thought to measure European standards of conduct and morality.** The influence of Keyserling on the European intelligentsia after World War I, especially in Germany was deep but short-lived. Germany shattered from the disastrous war, had returned its attention towards India for solace and new inspiration as is indicated by the publication of innumerable novels and poems with a predominantly Asian background.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. Pg 240).

"I have not found in Europe or America, poets, thinkers or popular leaders equal, or even comparable, to those of India today."

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** Oxford University Press. 1995. pg 89).

" Hinduism at its best has spoken the only relevant truth about the way to self-realization in the full sense of the word.'

(source: **Huston Smith: Essays on World Religion. edited by M. Darrrol Bryant** Paragon House 1992 page 29-30).

India, says Keyserling,

"**has produced the profoundest metaphysics that we know of** " and he speaks of **" the absolute superiority of India over the West in philosophy; poetry from the Mahabharata, containing the Bhagavad-Gita, "perhaps the most beautiful work of the literature of the world."**

source: **The Case for India - By Will Durant** Simon and Schuster, New York. 1930 p.6).

Count Keyserling, who left Europe shortly before World War I to journey around the world, wrote

an account of the city of Banaras:

"Benares is holy. Europe, grown superficial, hardly understands such truths anymore.....I feel nearer here than I have ever done to the heart of the world; here I feel everyday as if soon, perhaps even today, I would receive the grace of supreme revelation...The atmosphere of devotion which hangs above the river is improbable in strength; stronger than in any church that I have ever visited. Every would be Christian priest would do well to sacrifice a year of his theological studies in order to spend his time on **the Ganges; here he would discover what piety means."**

(source: **Banaras: City of Light - By Diana L Eck** p. 17).

19. **Romain Rolland** (1866-1944) French Nobel laureate, professor of the history of music at the Sorbonne and thinker. He authored a book on the **Life of Ramakrishna**



This is what he said about India: **"If there is one place on the face of the earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India....**For more than 30 centuries, the tree of vision, with all its thousand branches and their millions of twigs, has sprung from this torrid land, the burning womb of the Gods. It renews itself tirelessly showing no signs of decay."

"Let us return to our eagle's nest in the Himalayas. It is waiting for us, for it is ours, eaglets of Europe, we need not renounce any part of our real nature...whence we formerly took our flight."

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction By T. C. Galav** Universal Science-Religion. Pp 20.)

"Religious faith in the case of the Hindus has never been allowed to run counter to scientific laws, moreover the former is never made a condition for the knowledge they teach, but there are always scrupulously careful to take into consideration the possibility that by reason both the agnostic and atheist may attain truth in their own way. Such tolerance may be surprising to religious believers in the West, but it is an integral part of Vedantic belief."

Romain Rolland thought: "The true **Vedantic spirit** does not start out with a system of preconceived ideas. It possesses absolute liberty and unrivalled courage among religions with regard to the facts to be observed and the diverse hypotheses it has laid down for their coordination. Never having been hampered by a priestly order, each man has been entirely free to search wherever he pleased for the spiritual explanation of the spectacle of the universe."

He points outs out that "a hundred facts testify to how great an extent the East (India) was mingled with Hellenic thought during the second century of our era."

(source: **Romain Rolland** has given a long Note as an appendix to his book on **Vivekananda** - 'On the Hellenic-Christian Mysticism of the First Centuries and its Relationship to Hindu Mysticism.').

He wrote: "The greatest human ideal is the great cause of bringing together the thoughts of Europe and Asia; **the great soul of India will topple our world."**

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** (**Le Genie de l'Inde**) Macmillan India Ltd. 2001. ISBN 0333 93600 0 p. 157-158).


MAHATMA GANDHI

20. **Mahatma Gandhi** (1869-1948) was among India's most fervent nationalists, fighting for Indian independence from British rule. Gandhi rose to the eminence of being called "amoral genius" by no less a person than the celebrated British philosopher **C. E. M Joad**. (For more on Joad refer to **Quotes301_320**).

He was disillusioned by the hypocrisy of the Western civilization. He denounced England's devilish acts in India, and proclaimed it as a "Satanic Power'. Then, gave the cry for the 'Quit India' movement. While in London, Gandhi wrote: **"Looking at this land, I at any rate have grown disillusioned with Western civilization.** They spend, their days in luxury or in making a bare living and retire at night thoroughly exhausted. In this state of affairs, I cannot understand when they can devote themselves to prayers."

(Indian Opinion: Mahatma Gandhi quoted by Judith M. Brown. 1994:5 - Modern India: The Origins of an Asian democracy). It is said that Gandhi was once asked what he thought of Western civilization, and answered that he felt it might be a good idea.

(source: **OutlookIndia.com**).

He claimed: **"I am a proud staunch Sanatani Hindu."** He took considerable pride in this self-identification. Far from being a dirty word as it would soon become even for some so-called Hindu leaders, the word "Hindu" conveyed to him all that was noble and elevating. He did not feel that he was being "communal" when he called himself a Hindu. For him Hinduism was a a vast, spiritual vision beckoning man to rise to the highest heights.

He has further stated:

"Hinduism has made marvelous discoveries in things of religion, of the spirit, of the soul. We have no eye for these great and fine discoveries. We are dazzled by the material progress that Western science has made. Ancient India has survived because Hinduism was not developed along material but spiritual lines."

"Hinduism is a relentless pursuit of Truth. "Truth is God" and if today it has become moribund, inactive, irresponsive to growth, it is because we are fatigued; and as soon as the fatigue is over, Hinduism will burst upon the world with a brilliance perhaps unknown before."

(source: **Young India, 24/11/1924** p. 390-396 and **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru**. Oxford University Press. 1995. pg 75).

"The tendency of Indian civilization is to elevate the moral being, that of the western civilization is to propagate immorality. The latter is godless, the former is based on a belief in God."

(source: **Popular Hinduism: The Religion of the Masses - By L S S O'Malley** p. 46).

"I believe that the civilization India has evolved is not to be beaten in the world. Nothing can equal the seeds sown by our ancestry. Rome went; Greece shared the same fate; the might of the Pharaohs was broken; Japan has become westernized; of China nothing can be said; but India is still, somehow or other, sound at the foundation."

(source: **Hindu Swaraj or Indian Home Rule** Chapter xiii)

This is what **Gandhi** wrote about the **Bhagavad Gita:**



"The Geeta is the universal mother. I find a solace in the Bhagavadgeeta that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad Gita. I find a verse here and a verse there , and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies - and my life has been full of external tragedies - and if they have left no visible or indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teaching of Bhagavadgeeta."

About the Bhagawad-Gita, Gandhi, says: “Today the Gita is not only my Bible or my Koran, it is more than that—it is my mother... When I am in difficulty or distress I seek refuge in her bosom.” (source: **Harijan** 24-8-1934).

"Hinduism is a living organism liable to growth and decay subject to the laws of Nature. One and indivisible at the root, it has grown into a vast tree with innumerable branches. The changes in the season affect it. It has its autumn and its summer, its winter and its spring. It is, and is not, based on scriptures. It does not derive its authority from one book. "Non violence has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism.

(source: **Hindu Dharma - M. K. Gandhi**. Chapter on **Why I am a Hindu** p.1-8).

I think I have understood Hinduism correctly when I say that it is eternal, all-embracing and flexible enough to suit all situations. (**Navjeevan** 27-9-1924). Hinduism contains the essence of all religions. What it does not contain is not worth knowing (Navjeevan 17-9-1925).

Since Hinduism is based on truth and nonviolence , it can never oppose any other religion. Hinduism strives for the betterment of all religions, and through them of the entire world (From a speech made on 25-3-29 while inaugurating Shri Laxminarayan Temple.).

I am a Hindu because it is Hinduism which makes the world worth living. (source: **Young India** 1-12-26). I am a Hindu hence I Love not only human beings, but all living beings.

He considered the **Bhagavad Gita** as a book ' **par excellence'** for the knowledge of Truth (God).

Gandhi called the Gita the 'Gospel of Selfless Action'.

"India is to me the dearest country in the world, because I have discovered goodness in it. It has been subject to foreign rule, it is true. But the status of a slave is preferable to that of a slave holder."



“Hinduism is a living organism. One and indivisible at the root, it has grown into a vast tree with innumerable branches. Knowledge is limitless and so also the application of truth. Everyday we add to our knowledge of the power of Atman (soul) and we shall keep on doing so.”

He was a Hindu to the core. Defining his attitude to a prominent Indian Christian, Kali Charan Banerjee (1847-1902) he said:

"I am unable to identify with orthodox Christianity. I must tell you in all humility that Hinduism, as I know it, entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being, and I find solace in the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount....I must confess to you that when doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in

the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon I turn to the Bhagavad Gita, and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita."

(source: **The Collected Works - By M. K. Gandhi** Volume 27, New Delhi, 1968 p. 434-435 and **India and World Civilization** By **D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. Pg 258).

Gandhi wrote in his book **Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth**:

As "philosophically there was nothing extraordinary in Christian principles" no one, much less a Hindu, would ever give it a second look.

(source: **Christian Conversions and abuse of Religious Freedom in India - By Brahm Datt Bharti** p. 20).

Mahatma Gandhi told **Romain Rolland** in Switzerland on his way back to India from the Round Table Conference (1911) that Christianity is an echo of the Indian religion and Islam is the re-echo of that echo."

(source: **India in Primitive Christianity - Arthur Lillie**).

" I have no other wish in this world but to find light and joy and peace through Hinduism."

(source: **Outlines of Hinduism - By T. M. P. Mahadevan** - p. foreword).



"If all The Upanishads and all the other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to ashes, and if only the first verse in the Ishopanishad were left in the memory of the Hindus, Hinduism would live for ever."

(source: **The Upanishads** Translated for the Modern Reader By **Eknath Easwaran.** Nilgiri Press. 1987. pg 205).

Gandhi has written: **"The Gita "struck me as one of priceless worth."**

(source: **The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi** Volume 39 New Delhi 1970 p. 32)

Gandhi was a proud and combative Hindu, his first and foremost loyalty was towards Hindu society and Hinduism, says **Koenraad Elst** in his book **Negationism in India: Concealing the Record of Islam** p. 84).

'The Bhagavad Gita is my mother,' he once said; and the name of Sri Rama was his shield.'

(source: **Freeindia.org**)

He accords the highest honor to Hindu scriptures - the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, the Gita, the Mahabharata, the Ramayan, the Bhagavata. He defends the "much-maligned Brahman" and entertains " not a shadow of doubt" that "if Brahmanism does not revive, Hinduism will perish".

He upholds the "spirit behind idol-worship" and is prepared "to defend with my life the thousands of holy temples which sanctify this land." For him cow protection "is the dearest possession of the Hindu heart" and "no one who does not believe in cow-protection can possibly be a Hindu." The sacred threat has "deep meaning for him" as it is "the sign of the second birth, that is spiritual." **He says that varnashrama is "inherent in human nature, and Hinduism has simply made a science of it."**

(source: **Hindu Dharma - M. K. Gandhi** p. 7-374).

"What the divine author of the Mahabharata said of his great creation is equally true of Hinduism. Whatever of substance is contained in any other religion is always to be found in Hinduism, and what is not contained in it is insubstantial or unnecessary."

(source: **Young India** 27-9-1925).

"Hinduism insists on the brotherhood of not only all mankind but of all that lives."

(source: **Harijan** 28-3-1936).

"Hinduism is like the Ganga,, pure and unsullied at its source but taking in its course the impurities in the way. Even like the Ganga it is beneficent in its total effect. It takes a provincial form in every province, but the inner substance is retained everywhere."

(source: **Young India** 8-4-1926)



" On examination, I have found it to be the most tolerant of all religions known to me. Its freedom from dogma makes a forcible appeal to me inasmuch as it gives the votary the largest scope for self-expression." He saw no reason to for changing his belief or his religion. He found it impossible "to believe that I could go to heaven or attain salvation only by becoming a Christian." "Philosophically there was nothing extraordinary in Christian principles. From the point of view of sacrifice, it seemed that the Hindus greatly surpassed Christians. It was impossible for me to regard Christianity as a perfect religion or the greatest of all religions."

(source: **The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi** Volume 34 New Delhi 1970 p.112- 261).

London Times editorial said on the day after his death: "No country but India and no religion but **Hinduism** could have given birth to a Gandhi."

(source: **India and World Civilization By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. p. 258).

"Hindu Dharma is like a boundless ocean teeming with priceless gems. The deeper you dive the more treasures you find."

(source: **The Essence of Hinduism - By M. K. Gandhi** p. 205).

"Hinduism is like Ganges, pure and unsullied at its source, but taking in its course the impurities in the way".

(source: **Non-Renunciation: Themes and Interpretations of Hindu Culture - By T.N. Madan**)

He affirmed, again, and again not only the fundamentals of Hindu spirituality but also the framework of Hindu culture and social life. He valued "the spirit behind idol-worship" and declared his determination "to defend with my life the thousands of **holy temples which sanctify this land of ours."**

"**Cow-protection is an article of faith in Hinduism.** Apart from its religious sanctity, it is an ennobling creed. Cow protection is the dearest possession of the Hindu heart. It is the one concrete belief common to all Hindus. No on who does not believe in cow-protection can possibly be called a Hindu. It is a noble belief. I endorse every word of what Prof. Vaswani has said in praise of the cow. For me the cow is the personification of innocence. Cow protection means that protection of the weak and helpless."

(source: **Hindu Dharma - M. K. Gandhi** p. 108-18). For more on Gandhi refer to **The Story of my Experiments with Truth**).

"I bow my head in reverence to our ancestors for their sense of the beautiful in nature and for their foresight in investing beautiful manifestations of Nature with a religious significance."

(source: **Glimpses of Indian Culture - By Dr. Giriraj Shah** p. 106).

Thoreau and **Gandhi** both believed in non-violence, had religious temperament, were vegetarians, and admired the teachings of the **Bhagavad Gita**. The appreciated poverty and lived the simple life. **Webb Miller** in his book **I found no peace** p. 240, wrote: “Gandhi received back from America **what was fundamentally the philosophy of India** after it had been distilled and crystallized in the mind of Thoreau.” The nationalist movement of Congress, and its political vision of a free India, was as thoroughly suffused with the **spirit of Hinduism**. Nationalism and religion were thus allied in Gandhi's

teachings. **Gandhi found the substance of India's life in Hinduism.** His political vocabulary of **Ram rajya**, ahimsa, satyagraha, swaraj, bharat mata, swadeshi etc. He passionately rejected the British project of Westernizing India.

(source: **Hindu Scriptures and American Transcendentalists - By Umesh Patri** p 98 -135 and **Dharma, India and the World Order - By Chaturved Badrinath** p. 166 -169).

(For more quotes by Gandhi refer to chapter on **Conversion** and **GlimpseVI**).

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

In spite of the reverence, these intellectuals had for Hinduism, (refer to chapter on Quotes) there seems a constant effort at defamation in the media in the west. Hindu idols are routinely disparaged in all walks of life. At Disney World there is statue of Lord Ganesh in one of the jungle rides! There are no other religious icons of any faith in the park. Recently, News India-Times published a front page story on $10 Express, a Jackson Heights N.Y. shoe store that was selling $5 sandals with images of Shiva, Ganesh, and Gayatri. This week, Sittin' Pretty, a Seattle-based manufacturer of designer toilet seats, is marketing toilet seats decorated with images of Lord Ganesha and Goddess Kali. (for more information go to Deccan Chronicle and rediff.com) Bashing Hinduism on air in Chicago. (for more information go to Hindu-bashing Chicago Radio and TV talk show airs). Offensive image of Lord Ganesha appeared in Australian Financial Review 27 May 02. (refer to Hindu Council of Australia for the image and Yahoo.com for the article). "Media opinions in America, are at best condescending, and patronizing, and at worst disparaging and hostile. Hinduism is routinely branded as polytheistic, caste, women's issues, as exotic, strange, world negating, and cultish." (source: Stereotyping Hinduism in American Education - By Rajiv Malhotra).

Recently, American Eagle Outfitters, a North American clothing retail chain is marketing flip-flops (slippers) with an illustrated depiction of the revered Hindu Lord Ganesha (Ganesh)." Why Hindu gods alone are singled out for such honor. I do not believe the incidents are innocent, harmless or accidental. India has been associated with the spiritual quest since the dawn of civilization; the dullest soul in the world knows the esteem in which gods are held in this land. For a god as universally renowned as Ganesh to land up beneath human feet is to my mind a very intentional insult. **I believe these cultural shock and awe tactics are related to the consistent White Christian goal of eradicating all native faiths and traditions in the world. What better way than by eroding the sanctity of other gods?"** (source: Hindu gods & gospel untruths - By Sandhya Jain - dailypioneer May 5 ' 2003).

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Why such disrespectful treatment to such an ancient and noble religion?



Hindu scriptures such as **Mahabharata,** are often called myths. In reality, the great Hindu epics are formidable in their recording of events over a vast expanse of time. In the early eighties an important archaeological site was found in India, at Dwaraka, the site of the legendary city of Lord Krishna. **Dwaraka** was submerged by the sea right after the death of Lord Krishna. This was regarded as a grandiose metaphor, part of a story filled with great myths. Now, it is discovered that the whole coast of western India sank by nearly 40 feet around 1500 B .C. E. In contemporary world religions, the scriptural stories are not referred to as myths. For example, in Christianity the biblical story of the virgin birth of Jesus is considered true even today.

Stephen Cross, in his book on **Hinduism**, pg 1, says, "It is no secret that we in the West live in a time of spiritual crisis. Western civilization has been guided by Christianity. Now it appears that this period is drawing to a close. Both religious institutions and social structures are in disarray. A great many things that were considered basic assumptions of western thought are being challenged. The reality of the external world, the soul, the linear nature of time.



Swami B. V. Tripurari, in his book, **Ancient Wisdom for Modern Ignorance** points out that, "Those now disenchanted with industrialization and scientific materialism as well as pseudo-spirituality, India's ancient spiritual heritage provides a rich alternative. Eastern philosophy, and the devotional heart of India's Vedanta in particular, can fill the empty shopping bag of our Western accomplishments." Whoever reads the Bhagvad Gita for the first time will be struck by the beauty and depth of this work.

Author **Beatrice Pitney Lamb** has noted: "Recently, increasing numbers of Westerners in revolt against what they have found to be the **shallow, gadget-dominated, spiritually empty civilization of the West** have turned to "Hinduism" in search of greater meaning or purpose in life. There is no doubt that the great Hindu tradition offers profound spiritual insights, as well as techniques for attaining self-realization, detachment, and even ecstasy.

(source: **India: A World in Transition - By Beatrice Pitney Lamb** p. 358).

W. J. Grant wrote: "India indeed has a preciousness which a materialistic age is in danger of missing. Some day the fragrance of her thought will win the hearts of men. This grim chase after our own tails which marks the present age cannot continue for ever. The future contains a new human urge towards the real beauty and holiness of life. When it comes India will be searched by loving eyes and defended by knightly hands."

"**The religion of the Hindus is rich in legend and stupendous allegory. It is a religion of great dignity and beauty. Its wrestlings with reality are as courageous as any in the whole history of mankind..' Indian thought has generally been contemplative, it has seldom been enamored of the material side of life.'**

In the realm of religious philosophy she has given to us the most searching examination of the ethical law the world is ever likely to have. **No Greek was more splendid in his scientific fidelity than the quiet company of Indian thinkers who made the Upanishads and traced the whole beauteous outline of the Eastern spirit. "**

There are cities in India whose grace and charm are matched only by the sweetness of an immemorial religion. Nowhere else in the world have I been so exquisitely invaded by the mystic quality of life."

(source: **The Spirit of India - By W. J. Grant** London published by B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1933 p. vi - 58).

Sir John Woodroffe (1865-1936) the well known scholar, Advocate-General of Bengal and sometime Legal Member of the Government of India, has said: "Indian thought, with its usual profundity and avoidance of arbitrary divisions, regards Philosophy as religious and Religion as philosophical. The "liberty-loving nations of the West" have been in the past greatly, and still are to some extent, behind India in the matter of intellectual and

religious freedom. As has been finely said in India, Satyannasti paro dharmah (there is no religion higher than truth) and as the Vedas have proclaimed, "Truth will conquer." (Satyam jayate).

(source: **Is India Civilized - Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** Ganesh & Co. Publishers 1922 p.44).

According to **President S. Radhakrishnan**, "In the history of the world, Hinduism is the only religion, that exhibits a complete independence and freedom of the human mind, its full confidence in its own powers. Hinduism is freedom, especially the freedom in thinking about God. **"In the search for the supernatural, it is like traveling in space without a boundary or barrier."**

(source: **Bhagavad Gita - By S. Radhakrishnan** pg - 55).

Dr. Matheson wrote: "It is not too much to say that the mind of the West with all its undoubted impulses towards the progress of humanity has never exhibited such an intense amount of intellectual force as is to be found in the **religious speculations of India**.....These have been the cradle of all Western speculations, and wherever the European mind has risen into heights of philosophy, it has done so because the Brahmin was the pioneer. There is no intellectual problem in the West which had not its earlier discussion in the East, and there is no modern solution of that problem which will not be found anticipated in the East."

(source: **Is India Civilized - Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p.138-139).



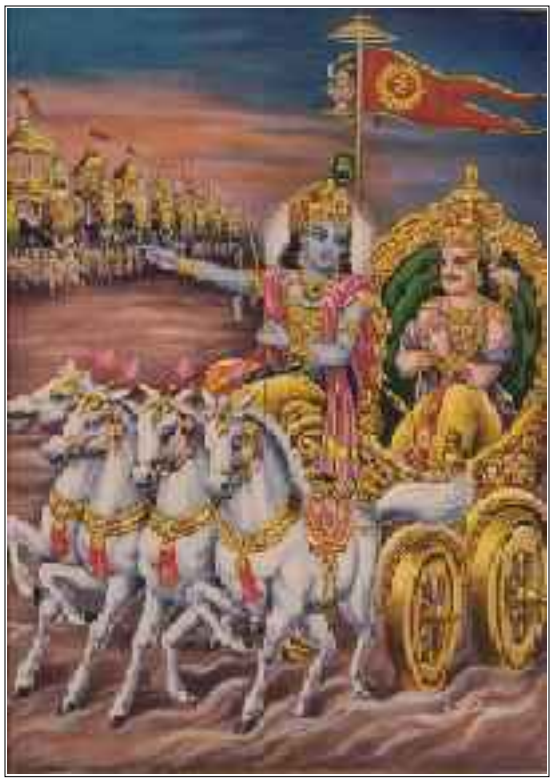
Hinduism may not be called a religion in the sense other religions are known. It is much more than a religion, it is a total way of life. Hinduism has no founder. Its authority is **Eternal Truth**. The cumulative record of metaphysical experimentation. Behind the lush tangle of religious imagery, is a clear structure of thought. Compared to the rugged originality of the Indian traditions, the language of today's philosophers concerned with being often sound a little contrived. Hindus have always been metaphysicians at heart. It is the underlying ideas, and not the images which count. The forms are many, the reality is one. As stated at the outset in the Rig Veda:

"Truth is one, the wise call it by various names."



Hinduism is a monotheistic religion that springs from the Trinity (**Trimurti**). Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva. Three aspects of one God. Creation, preservation, destruction. Many in the west have tried to denounce it as the worship of idols. Swami Vivekananda, said: "If a person wants to drink milk, he uses a cup as he cannot drink it directly. Idols are nothing but symbols through which divinity can be comprehended. It helps undeveloped minds to grasp high spiritual truths.

Lord Krishna said:



"In whatever way men love Me, in the same way they find My love; various are the ways of men, but in the end they all come to Me."

The statue of Nataraja (dance pose of Lord



Shiva) is a well known example for the artistic, scientific and philosophical significance of Hinduism. The dancing Shiva is the most sublime artistic attempt to capture the mystery of the universe in form. The late scientist, **Carl Sagan**, in his book, **Cosmos** asserts that the **Dance of Nataraja** (Tandava) signifies the cycle of evolution and destruction of the cosmic universe (Big Bang Theory).

"It is the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of." Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the seasons and in the birth and death of all living creatures, but also the very essence of inorganic matter.

He further says: **" The most elegant and sublime of these is a representation of the creation of the universe at the beginning of each cosmic cycle, a motif known as the cosmic dance of Lord Shiva. The god, called in this manifestation Nataraja, the Dance King. In the upper right hand is a drum whose sound is the sound of creation. In the upper left hand is a tongue of flame, a reminder that the universe, now newly created, with billions of years from now will be utterly destroyed."**

(source: **Cosmos - By Carl Sagan** p. 213-214).

For modern physicists, then, Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter. Hundreds of years ago, Indian artist created visual images of dancing Shivas in a beautiful series of bronzes. Today, physicist have used the most advanced technology to portray the pattern of the cosmic dance. Thus, the metaphor of the cosmic dance unifies, ancient religious art and modern physics. The Hindus, according to **Sir Monier-Williams,** were Spinozists more than 2,000 years before the advent of Spinoza, and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin and Evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of Evolution was accepted by scientists of the present age.

The French historian **Louis Jacolliot** as quoted by Galav in the **Philosophy of Hinduism** page 17 says, "Here to mock are conceit, our apprehensions, and our despair, we may

read what **Manu** said, perhaps 10,000 years before the birth of Christ about Evolution:

' The first germ of life was developed by water and heat.' (Book I, sloka 8,9)
' Water ascends towards the sky in vapors; from the sun it descends in rain, from the rains are born the plants, and from the plants, animals.' (Book III, sloka 76).

According to **Guy Sorman,** visiting scholar at Hoover Institution at Stanford and the leader of new liberalism in France:

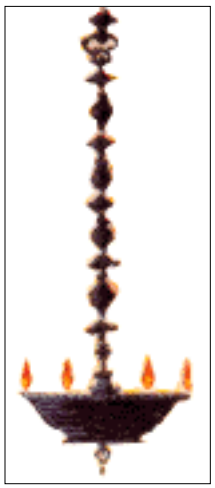
" Temporal notions in Europe were overturned by an India rooted in eternity. The Bible had been the yardstick for measuring time, but the infinitely vast time cycles of India suggested that the world was much older than anything the Bible spoke of. **It seem as if the Indian mind was better prepared for the chronological mutations of Darwinian evolution and astrophysics."**

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** (**'Le Genie de l'Inde**') Macmillan India Ltd. 2001. ISBN 0333 93600 0 p. 195).

The theory of animal life and particularly of man was correctly understood by the ancient thinkers. The **Brihat Vishnu Purana** states that "the aquatic life precedes the monkey life" and that "the monkey life is the precursor of the human life." The same theory was explained in an interesting way by the dashavatara (ten incarnations). But evolution, as everything else, was the manifestation of the supreme spirit (Atman) as is testified by **Chandogya Upanishad.**

(source: **Ancient Indian History and Culture - By Chidambara Kulkarni** Orient Longman Ltd. 1974. p.268).

According to the **Bhagavad-Gita**, Creation has been under way from all eternity as the spontaneous outpouring of the Lord's creative energy, as the workings of his prakriti (primordial Nature). Yet all this spontaneity and freedom, so natural to God, has yet to be discovered and realized by the numberless creatures involved in this process. (It is as if Creation were playing hide-and -seek with itself). were



Hinduism is a positive religion in which there are no infidels or heretics. It does not look with contempt even upon an atheist. It doesn't approve of proselytism as means of increasing the number of its adherents. It contains no childish dogma of sin,_superstition, fear, false hope and damnation like other religions. The serpent which, in Christianity, brought about the Fall of Man and became his lasting enemy, is in Hinduism found entwined around the neck of Shiva, and as the couch upon which Vishnu reclines.

In India, science and religion are not opposed fundamentally, as they often seem to be in the West, but are seen as parts of the same great search for truth and enlightenment that inspired the sages of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Hindu India has also had no history of book-burning, of executing heretics or confining dissidents to lunatic asylums. The Buddha could preach his heterodox doctrine till his old age without ever being persecuted. Even the Greeks who were good in logic and science like the Hindus, put Socrates to death forcing him to drink Hemlock, the poison. You never hear of such things in ancient India.

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) scientist, was condemned of heresy by the Church for his belief that the Earth rotates round the sun. Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) philosopher, was excommunicated and suffered a cruel death for his dangerous ideas. He was kept in a

dark dungeon for eight years by the Church and roasted to death by fire. Later, philosophy and science both disputed Descartes' notions, and even the Church viewed him as a threat to its authority. In fact, in 1663, the Church condemned his books, but by then it was too late. Descartes reasoning helped bring in the Age of Enlightenment throughout Europe and North America. Like in other ancient civilizations, **in Hindu India priests and scientists were often the same persons; the conflict between religion and reason is not the primitive condition** but a contingent historical development in post-classical Europe, paralleled to an extent by the stagnation of Muslim culture from the 12th century onwards.

Hinduism has admittedly been the least politically minded among religions; otherwise the history of India would have been altogether different. Religious persecution too has not disfigured the annals of Hinduism as has unfortunately been the rule with religions in other countries.

(source: **Hindu Culture - By K. Guru Dutt** (with a foreword by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar p. 233).

K. M. Panikkar wrote: "Another major aspect of Indian culture is its open attitude to science. India's religious ideas deal only with the relations of god and man, and, consequently, there are no dogmatic views regarding material aspects of the universe. You are no doubt aware of the tremendous shock to the European world of belief when the discovery of Copernicus, that it is the earth which rotates round the sun, was announced. It took many decades before the discovery could be publicly stated. And yet Aryabhatta had made the same discovery more than a thousand years before the time of Copernicus, without causing any flutter in India. This shows the open attitude of Indian Culture to science was not shared generally even by Europe.

(source: **Essential Features of Indian Culture - By K. M. Panikkar** Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Mumbai.1964.p.14-15).



Hinduism comes before us as an old and authentic path, tested by many centuries of human experience. With its respect for the earth and her bounty. It is truly a joyous religion as those who have witnessed it during its many festivals. **It is based on personal discovery. "Know thy self and be free." In such an open laboratory, Hindu spirituality has grown over the millennia, so diverse and rich, that it defies definition. If the Indian mind went beyond form to the formless, it also reveled in a riotous feast of forms - in a world of imagination. It has flourished in exuberance...**

Klaus L. Klostermaier professor of Religious Studies at the University of Manitoba, Canada says in his book, **A Survey of Hinduism**

"Hinduism has proven much more open than any other religion to new ideas, scientific thought, and social experimentation. Many concepts like **reincarnation, meditation, yoga** and others have found worldwide acceptance. It would not be surprising to find Hinduism the dominant religion of the twenty-first century. It would be a religion that doctrinally is less clear-cut than mainstream Christianity, politically less determined than Islam, ethically less heroic than Buddhism, but it would offer something to everybody. It will appear idealistic to those who look for idealism, pragmatic to the pragmatists, spiritual to the seekers, sensual to the here-and-now generation. Hinduism, by virtue of its lack of an ideology and its reliance on intuition, will appear to be more plausible than those religions whose doctrinal positions petrified a thousand years ago." But man must go beyond the gratification of the senses. He must progress in thought. This cannot come, says **Sri Aurobindo**, "if we chain the spirit to some fixed mental idea or system of religious cult, intellectual truth, aesthetic norm, ethical value, practical action... "

According to **M. S. N. Menon,** "For the Hindus, we are like pilgrims on a long march. Some are in the lead. They have lighted torches in their hands. They are nearer to Bliss. Some are in the rear. They are somewhat in the dark. They are still in the thrill of the senses. And this is how it is going to be for ages. Before us is a great goal - the progressive divination of men. Those who are at the rear will seek to gratify their senses and those who are in the lead will raise their consciousness.



According to **Hans Torwesten**, in his book **Vedanta - Heart of Hinduism**

"A fair number of leading physicists and biologists have found parallels between modern science and Hindu ideas. In America, many writers such as **J. D. Salinger** (An Adventure in Vedanta: J.D. Salinger's the Glass Family), **Henry Miller, Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, and Christopher Isherwood,** were in contact with the Vedanta. Most of them came from elevated intellectual circles which rejected the dogmatism of the Christian Churches yet longed for spirituality and satisfactory answers to the fundamental questions of existence. In Vedanta, they found a wide-open, universal, and philosophically oriented religion where even the penetrating scientific mind could find something to its taste".

European philosophers rhapsodized about the profundity and beauty of these writings. Here they encountered a fusion of philosophy and religion, a deep wisdom and a concern with the ultimate, that had no parallel in either contemporary Western philosophy or Western religion. **George Feuerstein**, in his book **Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita: Its Philosophy and Cultural Setting** says: "The ant-heap behavior of modern human society, with its soul-destroying mechanical routine and organized aggression and violence, is only one of the negative aspects of the present crisis. **Thorough discontentment with the inherited Western - Christian - tradition, especially with the 'God out there' dogma, has kindled a large-scale authentic search for truth in the 'heathen world', above all the spiritual heritage of India.** As was to be expected after the disappointment with Christian Theism, it is more the monistic school, like Advaita-Vedanta and Zen, which captivate the interest of the disillusioned Westerner."

God is not dead in India and not a mere memory of the past. Numerous "living gods" and "Incarnations" are everywhere in India today. It is not poverty that you find here - its the absolute core of a living faith so alien to Westernized minds that it can be seen terrifying. Many people in the West have come to realize more and more that organized and denominationalized Christianity (called **Churchanity** by Hindus) does not even represent the essence of Christianity, let alone that of religion, a new broader, and looser understanding of religion is emerging that approaches the Hindu notion of dharma.

That distinguished thinker **Professor G. Lowes-Dickinson** and author of **An Essay on the Civilizations of India, China & Japan**, in an essay which seeks with justice to define the character of Indian civilization, profoundly remarks, that it is so unique that the contrast is not so much between East and West as between India and the rest of the world. **Thus India stands for something which distinguishes it from all other peoples, and so she calls Herself a Karma-bhumi as opposed to the Bhoga-bhumi of all other peoples.** For this She has been wonderfully preserved until today. Even now we can see the life of thousands of years ago. Standing on the Ghats at Benares or by any village well we are transported into the beautiful antique world.

(source: **Is India Civilized - Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p.136-137).



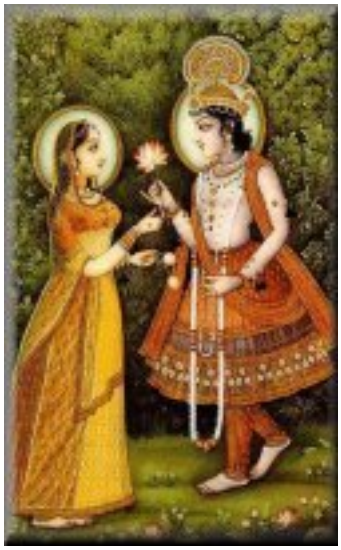
Joseph Campbell, was an avid scholar of spiritual development, in his book **Myths to Live By** states: " We in the West have named our God, or rather, we have had the Godhead named for us in a book from a time and place that are not our own. And we have been taught to have faith not only in the absolute existence of this metaphysical fiction, but also in its relevance to the shaping of our lives." In the Great East, on the other hand, the accent is on experience: on one's own experience, not a faith in someone else's." **In the Christian West, there was that Fall, back there, in the Garden, and we have all been congenital sinners ever since." "Whereas in the East there is the idea of the inherent innocence of Nature,** even in what appears to our human eyes and sentiments to be its cruelties, the World, as they say in India, is God's Play (**Maya**). It is a wondrous, thoughtless play: a rough play, the roughest, cruelest, most dangerous, most difficult with no holds barred."

(source: **Myths to Live By - Joseph Campbell** p. 96).

According to **Sri Aurobindo,** in his book, "**India's Rebirth**" (ISBN 2-902776-32-2) page 141, says:

"The mentality of the West has long cherished the aggressive and quite illogical idea of a single religion for all mankind, a religion universal by the very force of its narrowness, one set of dogmas, one cult, one system of ceremonies, one array of prohibitions and injunctions, one ecclesiastical ordinance. That narrow absurdity prances about as the one true religion which all must accept on peril of persecution by men here and spiritual rejection or fierce eternal punishment by God in other worlds. This grotesque creation of human unreason, the parent of so much intolerance, cruelty, obscurantism and aggressive fanaticism, have never been able to take firm hold of the free and supple mind of India".

To quote **Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan**, "The intolerance of narrow monotheism is written in letters of blood across the history of man from the time when first the tribes of Israel burst into the land of Canaan. **The worshippers of the one jealous God are egged on to aggressive wars against people of alien cults.** They invoke divine sanction for the cruelties inflicted on the conquered. The spirit of old Israel is inherited by Christianity and Islam, and it might not be unreasonable to suggest that it would have been better for Western civilization if Greece had molded it on this question rather than Palestine. Wars of religion which are the outcome of fanaticism that prompts and justifies the extermination of aliens of different creeds were practically unknown in Hindu India."



The Vedas say that " the wise call the One by many names", and exhort us to "let good thoughts come to us from everywhere"; in the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna assures the adherents of all religions that "those who pray with devotion to another god, it is to Me that they pray."

Many foreign groups of people persecuted for their religion came to seek refuge in India. The Parsis have thrived. The heterodox Syrian Christians have lived in peace until the Portuguese came to enlist them in their effort to christianize India. The Jews have expressed their gratitude when they left for Israel because India was the only country where their memories were not of persecution but of friendly co-existence. All these groups were not merely tolerated, but received land and material support for building places of worship. **Yuan Chwang**, the Chinese traveler, reports that at the great festival of Prayaga, King Harsha dedicated on the first day a statue to the Buddha, another to the sun, the favorite deity of his father, on the second, and to Shiva on the third. The famous Kottayam plates of Sthanuravi (ninth century AD) and the Cochin plates of Vijayaragadeva bear eloquent testimony to the fact that the Hindu kings not only tolerated Christianity but granted special concessions to the professors of that faith. Today, The Tibetan Buddhist and their spiritual head, the Dalai Lama have taken refuge in India, from the persecution of Communist China.

As Dutch Indologist **Sjoerd de Vries** writes: "In Indian society, am amazing tolerance vis-a-vis people of unusual opinions has existed for ages.. Only very few instances are known where conflicts erupted for the sake of religion. Not until the advent of Islam did India get acquainted with religious persecution."

(source: **Hindoeisme voor beginners - By Sjoerd de Vries** p. 79).

Infinite tolerance is the hallmark of Hinduism. It firmly believes in "**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**" (the world is one family - an ancient Vedic term). It does not subscribe to just one belief, one philosophy, one dogma but is ready to absorb any thought. That is why it is different from other religions. Secularism in Europe was the denial of religion in matters of State. In Indian context, secularism stands for tolerance of all religions. India is a secular democracy because of its Hindu ethos. No country in the world has harmonized cultures derived from the great religions the way India has. **All cultures have thrived and been transformed in the civilizational crucible of Hindustan. Al-Biruni** (12th c AD), a great scholar of Islam, **marveled at the religious tolerance and lack of theological disputations in India.**

Says **Father Peter Hans Kolvenbach**, former Superior General of the Jesuit Order: “How people with many languages, religions and cultures live together in India is a lesson to learn. India has an important role to play in shaping the destiny of mankind.” Coming as it did from the Jesuit Order, it was high praise. But the children of Macaulay are not impressed. They have not thought of it as a fit subject for study. They prefer to imitate the West. India considered mankind as one large family — **“Vasudaiva Kutumbakam”. There is no scope here for heathens or pagans, for infidels or Darul Harbs. India’s is a universal spirit. Never parochial.**

(source: **Can India be a world model? - By M. S. N. Menon** - Tribuneindia.com).

Hinduism, is the most syncretic of all religions: the original Saibaba of Shirdi had both Hindu and Muslim followers. **Cyril Edwin Mitchinson Joad** (1891-1953) English philosopher and author, has said:

"Indian history has been distinguished throughout by a tendency towards toleration. Other peoples' faith have been preserved, other people's customs respected; and not only preserved and respected, but assimilated. **Such toleration is a very rare thing in the history of mankind, as rare as it is invaluable.** Throughout the whole course of Indian history, the characteristic Indian endeavor has been to look for the common element in apparently different things, the single reality that underlies the apparently many appearances. It is interesting then, to note this same insistence upon unity, the same endeavor to unite many into one as exhibited by the very early lawgivers and administrators of India. At the very beginning of Indian history, we find men trying to reconcile the conflicting ideas held by different people with regard to the right way of living together in society and the right way of conceiving God." **"Whatever the reason, it is a fact that India's special gift to mankind** has been the ability and willingness of Indians to effect a synthesis of many different elements both of thoughts and peoples, to create in short, unity our of diversity." "They are cosmopolitan in outlook, tolerant in behavior, and open minded in thought."

(source: **The Story of Indian Civilization - By C. E. M. Joad** p. 5 - 26).

Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism originated as offshoots of Hinduism. Their founders were neither crucified nor exiled. The ancient history of India attests to the symbiotic existence of multiple religions in that subcontinent. **Religious tolerance has been the norm in India for thousands of years.**

(source: **Proselytization In India: An Indian Christian's Perspective - By C Alex Alexander - sulekha.com**).

"If Hindus were intolerant, there wouldn't be 200 million Muslims in India today. You can hardly say 200 million Muslims are a minority in India? or that Indian government pays each Muslim 20,000 rupees to go to Mecca when Hindus do not get a single paisa to go to Kashi?

(source: **Lets be Hindus First - Letter to the Editor India Abroad** April 19, 02).

Hindu culture is intrinsically secular and tolerant. Not only many Hindu leaders, even **Javed Habib**, one of the BMAC leaders, is on record as saying: **"India has survived as a secular nation because the majority is Hindu."**

(source: **Ayodhya and After - By Koenraad Elst** p. 131).

K. P. Mukherji wrote: "The essential point which Westerners and Westernized Indians have to bear in mind, is that the Hindu Culture is through through synthetic, it aims at the synthesis of the here and hereafter, the world and the other world, the appearance that is many and the reality that is one, the temporal and the eternal, the positive and the transcendental."

(source: **Ancient Indian History and Culture - By Chidambara Kulkarni** Orient Longman Ltd. 1974. p. 266).

According to **Dr. Koenraad Elst**: "Hindus and likewise India make it all the worse for themselves by simply being so tolerant. When it comes to tolerating difference, there is hardly a place like India, as a well-known Muslim (Salman Rushdie) testifies: "I come from an Indian Muslim family, but I experience India as a very pleasant country, whereas in Pakistan I feel ill at ease. You would think it should be the reverse. But in spite of its many

defects, India is a rich and open society, while Pakistan is culturally an impoverished and closed society."

(source: **The Tolerant Hindu** - **Decolonizing the Hindu Mind - by Koenraad Elst**).

Hinduism is not a religion for occasional airings on Sundays or to be pulled out to celebrate births, marriages and deaths. It is part of everyday activity. To survive and flourish over a long period (over more than five millennia) is a striking testimony to Hinduism's ability to adapt itself to changing circumstances, an ability often insufficiently appreciated because of the apparent dominance of traditional attitudes. **Hinduism is by definition (actually it defies definition) formless and seamless; its beauty lies in its refusal to be contained, least of all by national boundaries.** Hinduism continues to show amazing life and vigor. In all the historic encounters between Hinduism and other religions Hinduism has always emerged the stronger and richer and succeeded in absorbing the other elements. According to **Nirad C. Chaudhuri**: "The faith which the Hindus had in their religion never wavered even in its worst days. It has had waxings and wanings which has kept the balance even." " In judging the vitality of Hinduism the point should be emphasized that it has maintained itself through the ages and enforced obedience to itself without support from any kind of organization, secular or spiritual."

(source: **Hinduism: a religion to live by** **- Nirad C. Chaudhari** p. 116-120)

Hinduism is an inclusive faith, with many branches and many spiritual leaders, its strength is the unity which underpins the diversity.



In conclusion, " Hinduism it is said, compares to the River Ganges, which arises from the mighty Himalayas. She descends to the world of man and of everyday life, bringing great floods of life-giving waters to the plains. As she progresses, small tributaries and great streams join her, swelling her volume and joining in her progress to her ultimate home, the infinitude of the ocean. So it is with Hinduism. It is the oldest of the great religions. Rather than a single doctrine or a single system of worship it is a broad confluence of ideas and attitudes."

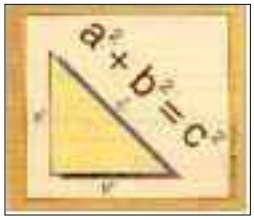
" Into the bosom of the one great sea
Flow streams that come from hills on every side
Their names are various as their springs,
And thus in every land do men bow down
To one great God, though known by many names."

- (**The Folks Songs of Southern India By Gover** 1871 p. 165)

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Did You Know?

Pythagorean Theorem was first postulated by Indian mathematician - Baudhayana



The Formula known today as the Pythagorean Theorem was first postulated by Indian mathematician - Baudhayana in the 6th century C.E. long before Europe's math whizzies. In 497 C.E. Aryabhatta calculated the value of "pi" as 3.1416. Algebra, trigonometry and the concepts of algorithm, square root originated in India. Quadratic equations were propounded by Sridharacharya in the 11th century. The largest number used by Greeks and Romans were 106, whereas Hindus used numbers as big as 10 to the power of 53, as early as 5000 BCE. Even geometry called Rekha Ganita in ancient India, was applied to draft mandalas for architectural purposes and for creating temple motifs.

(for more information please refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture**).

Caste

"There is no superior caste. The Universe is the work of the Immense Being. The beings created by him were only divided into castes according to their aptitude."

- Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, 188

(for more information please refer to chapter on **Caste System**).

Transportation

The Rig Veda, the oldest document of the human race includes references to the following modes of transportation:

Jalayan - a vehicle designed to operate in air and water. (Rig Veda 6.58.3)
Kaara- a vehicle that operates on ground and in water. (Rig Veda 9.14.1)
Tritala- a vehicle consisting of three stories.(Rig Veda 3.14.1)
Trichakra Ratha - a three-wheeled vehicle designed to operate in the air.(Rig Veda 4.36.1)
Vaayu Ratha- a gas or wind-powered chariot. (Rig Veda 5.41.6)
Vidyut Ratha- a vehicle that operates on power.(Rig Veda 3.14.1)

(for more information please refer to chapter on **Vimanas**)

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Hinduism is among the oldest of the world's faiths. It is a total way of life. It is a dharma or way of life evolved by the great sages and seers of ancient India. Its traditions extend back before recorded history. The early phase of the Vedic tradition in India is dated between 10,000 - 7,000 BCE. Yet, in spite of the fact that it first evolved more than 5,000 years ago, Hinduism (Sanatana Dharma) is also very much a living tradition. And as such, Hindus are arguably the most intensely religious people on the earth.

For thousands of years India has been a veritable laboratory of religion: everything imaginable has been tried out, and nothing ever has completely been rejected. In spite of many attacks on Hinduism by varied invaders, in spite of rumors of decay and disarray, Hinduism has outlived all announcements of its impending demise.

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Introduction

The first fundamental principle of Hindu Dharma is that **"the Reality is one without a second." This reality is beyond description by human mind.** Hence it is indicated by a single world, "Brahman". "Infinite, eternal, changeless existence is the All; from that All, All comes forth; to that All, all returns," that is what the Candogya Upanishad (vi.2.1) tells us.

Hinduism may not be called religion in the sense other religions are known. It has no founder. It is much more than a religion. **It is a total way of life.** When religion becomes organized, man ceases to be free. It is not God that is worshipped but the group or the authority that claims to speak in his name. It is not faith, but just social idolatry. God is not like a father in a patriarchal society, who has His favorite children to whom He communicates. This idea seems rather archaic and crude. Hinduism believes in behavior than belief and experience over authority. **Prophetic religion is severe, militant, uncompromising, intolerant, while mystic religions are renouncing, and peaceful. Sir. S. Radhakrishnan** asks, " Is it an accident that Hitler and Mussolini, have been brought up in Roman Catholic societies, where it is blasphemous to criticize infallible authority?"



Hinduism's greatest feature has been its positive ideas and those who do not belong to it are not infidels or heretics. Hinduism does not believe in bringing about a mechanical uniformity of belief and worship by a forcible elimination of all that is not in agreement with a particular creed. Hindus have never conquered, plundered or committed genocides on other peoples and they never will, primarily because the deeper values enshrined in the Sanatana Dharma are against such mindless violence and expansionism. At one level every true Hindu sees his/her self being one with the Universal Self . At a more samsaric level, a Hindu also understands more than any other religionist in the world, the concept of a harmonious global society that should unite, prosper and live in peace. 'lOkAsamastA sukhinO bhavantu' and 'vasudhaiva kuTumbakaM' are not mere empty words spoken by Rsis a long long while ago.

Hindus were the first to discover that truth had many facets. They, therefore, never committed the error of imagining, as some people did, that they knew the ultimate truth, and that no further enquiry was required. Says Dr S. Radhakrishnan: "The Aryan did not possess the pride of the fanatic that his was the true religion." The genius of Hinduism is assimilative. Puritanism is alien to its life and thought. It never opposed scientific enquiry. While all Semitic religions have opposed the pursuit of science at one time or another, India has

always welcomed scientific enquiry. India is not afraid of knowledge. The path of knowledge, the path of enquiry, the **Gyana Marga,** is considered to be one of the ways to salvation by the Hindus. No other religion gives this liberty.

Hinduism encompasses all, finds a place for all, and establishes the functional relations between diverse traditions. Those who are not Hindu in their spiritual orientation still find a place in India by the virtue of this arrangement. Hinduism has not approved proselytism as a means of increasing the number of its adherents. A Hindu does not believe that salvation is to be had only through any one particular religion. God does not refuse his truth, his love and his grace to any who, in sincerity, seek him, wherever they may be and whatever creeds they may profess. All missionary religions, like Islam and Christianity profess that they have the highest truth. **But in Hinduism, religious propaganda is discouraged and frowned upon, for Truth (God) needs no trumpeting.** Hinduism is wholly free from the strange obsession of some faiths that the acceptance of a particular religious metaphysics is necessary for salvation, and non-acceptance thereof is heinous sin meriting eternal punishment in hell.

(source: **The Hindu View of Life - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 24-35).

The history of religions illustrates the tragic effect of intolerant and exclusive faiths. God has no special favorites. God as a jealous one and there will be no peace in the religious world. According to the **Bhagavad Gita**:

"I am alike to all being." "None is hateful or dear to me. But those who worship me with devotion are in me and I in them." " The Rig Veda, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita hold that all paths lead to the summit. "As men approach me so do I accept them. Men on all sides follow my path." God is leading all people of the world on to the fullness of life by diverse paths. **The Hindu seer has no contempt for other religions.** He does not believe that salvation is to be had only through any one particular religion. God does not refuse his truth, his love and his grace to any who, in sincerity, seek him, wherever they may be and whatever creeds they may profess. It is unfair to God's love and mercy to assume that he left millions of men to stagnate for thousands of years, practically without hope in the darkness of ignorance.

(source: **Recovery of Faith - By S. Radhakrishnan** ISBN: 81-7223-145-8 p. 143-172.. **Religion and Culture - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 64).

Esoteric Hinduism has also been a fertile ground for something far more than itself: out of it has grown the most sublime spiritual wisdom that the world has ever known. **India, is the motherland of the spiritual quest. Her ascetic tradition is older than history itself.** Hinduism is not just a religion. **It synonymies the five millennia of India's cultural heritage.** Hindu philosophy in comparison with which, in the words of German Scholar, Schlegel, **"even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans" appears "like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noonday sun faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished."**

(source: **A History of Hindu Civilization During British Rule - By Pramatha Nath Bose** volume I p. x).

The Hindu mind soared to the highest flights, and grasped, some of the grandest principles ever discovered in ancient or modern times. For millennia, individuals on the sub-continent have stepped outside of the conventional norm to conduct their own personal search for the divine. Hinduism, unlike other religions, has continuously reflected the evolving needs of the times and the people. This is true today as it was in the past. In the face of growing consumerism and Western values, the spiritual streams of India still as yet, retain their fertility.



The word Hindu is a geographic rather than a religious term. Hindus call their religion **Sanatana Dharma - 'Eternal law'.**

It is based on the practice of **Dharma, the code of life.** Since Hinduism has no founder, anyone who practices Dharma can call himself a Hindu. **Hinduism lays emphasis on direct Experience rather than on authority. Indian people have been powerfully and continuously affected from ancient times by the idea of religion as direct experience of the Divine.**

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has written: " From the beginning, India believed in the superiority of intuition or the method of direct perception of the supersensible to intellectual reasoning. **The Vedic rishis ' were the first who ever burst into the silent sea' of ultimate being and their utterances about what they saw and heard.** The Kena Upanishad says: "The eye does not go thither, nor speech nor mind. We do not know, we do not understand how one can teach it. It is different from the known, it is also above the unknown." Hindu thinkers are not content with the postulating a being unrelated to humanity, who is merely the Beyond, so far as the empirical world is concerned. From the beginnings of Hindu history, attempts are made to bring God closer to the needs of man. Though it is impossible to describe the ultimate reality, it is quite possible to indicate by means of symbols aspects of it, though the symbolic description is not a substitute for the experience of God."

(source: **The Legacy of India - ed. G.T. Garratt.** p. 256 -286).

An important concept is the search or quest for Truth. **Hinduism is a relentless pursuit of Truth. "Truth is God."**

Knowledge, vision, wisdom, is the goal of the Upanishads. It is a new kind of thinking in which the whole man in implicated. The aim is not intellectual conformity to inherited doctrine, but one of attainment of knowledge. He can question the authority of any scripture, or even the existence of the Divine. Despite being the oldest religion, the truth realized by the seers prove that the Truth and path provided by Hinduism is beyond time. Its concern is with the absolute Truth, not with systems of belief. The absolute Truth is universal, and forever impersonal. No one has a proprietary claim to it. Hinduism is a religion that bears a great intellectual heritage with six schools of classical philosophy. Hinduism extends into every aspect of the believer's life.

Hindus have never been communal. They represent an ancient civilization not known either to draw a boundary between the faithful and the faithless, the blessed and the damned, or to engage in heresy hunting and its counterpart, persecution of other faiths. **J. Abbe Dubois**, (1765-1848) French missionary, has said that India is:

"the only nation perhaps in the universe which has never sunk into barbarism, and which...may deserve to fix the attention of the philosopher."

(source: **Colonial Indology: Sociopolitics of the Ancient Indian Past - By Dilip K. Chakrabarti** p. 87).

To the Hindu, religion is an awareness of ultimate reality, not a theory about it; religion is psychology and method rather than theology and dogma. Hindus have been able to rise above their biological boundaries and roam at will in transcendental realms from which the intellect is forever barred. The spiritual and religious ethos of India is less vulnerable to scientific criticism than the Western creed because it is not connected with history.

(source: **The Soul of India - By Amaury de Riencourt** p.113- 15 and 399).

Narrowness of the spirit, peculiar to Semitic faiths, has been alien to India. Nazism, fascism, and communism have been expressions of the same Semitic spirit in the secular realm. Hindus, are in Western terms, pagans. Religion is a Semitic enterprise and is alien to their spirit and ways. Unlike the traditions of the Middle East, classical **Hinduism is not a religion of the book: it is a 'heard' tradition.** Its scriptures are recited, or sung not read. Though the Rig Veda is very ancient, it was not written down until almost 3,000 years later. The script was available, but the verses were considered so powerful that they were protected from possible misuse by being transmitted orally from master to disciple, father to son. Even today they are treated with the utmost respect. Sacred texts are always covered in a cloth, and if they become damaged, they are not restored, but consigned solemnly to the River Ganga.

"Hinduism has provided a complex and sophisticated philosophy of life and a religion of enormous emotional appeal. Hinduism also inspired and preserved, in Sanskrit and the major regional languages

of India, the vast literature that is India's priceless literary heritage."

(source: **A History of World Societies To 1715- Mckay, Hill, & Buckler** vol. 1 p. 77).

Hinduism, after all, is indigenous, it has shaped Indian society and mentality for thousands of years, it is flexible and, in the opinion of most Hindus, far superior in its philosophy to any other religion or philosophy.

(source: **A Survey of Hinduism - By Klaus K. Klostermaier**. State University of New York Press. 1994 p. 472).

No other living tradition can claim scriptures as numerous or as ancient as Hinduism; none of them can boast of an unbroken tradition as faithfully preserved as the Hindu traditions.

According to **Thomas Berry**, **"In quality, in quantity, in significance for man's intellectual, cultural, and spiritual life, this literature in its totality is unsurpassed among all other literary traditions of the world."**

"**Hinduism is a process** - for this reason, Hinduism must be studied not as a fixed body of doctrine, but as a developing tradition that has changed considerably throughout the centuries and which is still changing in a creative direction. Everything in India makes sense in the light of the changing process. Nothing makes sense without it. Hinduism is still a living, changing process and must be seen as such."

(source: **Religions of India: Hinduism, Yoga, Buddhism - Thomas Berry** p. 3-16).



The most sacred of Hindu texts - **The Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, and the Upanishads -** are all **'sruti'** meaning 'what is heard' from the original Vedic Rishis, whose inspired utterances were passed down. While sruti works are considered to be divine revelations, the **'smriti'**, thought still sacred, are acknowledged to have been crafted by men. They include the epics - **The Ramayana, The Mahabharata - the Dharma Sutras** (of which the most famous are the **Manusmriti**, Laws of Manu) and the **Puranas**.

Idol Worship (Symbolism)

Yes, said he, but just how many gods are there Yajnavalkya?" "Thirty three". "yes," said he, but just how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?" "One."

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III, IX, I

Hindus have represented God in innumerable forms. Each is but a symbol that points to something beyond; and as none exhausts God's actual nature, the entire array is needed to complete the picture of God's aspects and manifestations. Nowhere else in the world do we find such a profusion of gods and goddesses, divine beings and demons, ramifications of genealogies of gods, and manifestations of the divinity in human and animal forms. **But that is only the surface of Hinduism, the colorful appearance of a tradition that has enormous depths.**



Perhaps the first thing to strike a Western observer about Hindu deities is the multiplicity of limbs they display. Nineteenth-century writers, brought up on Greek sculpture, found this grotesque and inexplicable. Yet the reason why the Hindu deities are represented in this way is simple: it is to show that they are gods, that they differ from human beings and have more and greater powers that they. A symbol such as a multi-armed image, graphically portraying God's astounding versatility and superhuman might. The use of symbolism extends to every detail of the image of a deity.

It is therefore, obtuse to confuse Hinduism's images with idolatry, and their multiplicity with polytheism. They are runaways from which the sense-laden human spirit can rise for its "flight of the alone to the Alone." Even village priest will frequently open their temple ceremonies with the following beloved invocation:

O Lord, forgive three sins that are due to my human limitations:
Thou art everywhere, but I worship you here;

Thou art without form, but I worship you in these forms;
Thou needest no praise, yet I offer you these prayers and salutations,
Lord, forgive three sins that are due to my human limitations.

Even if questioned about how many gods there are even an illiterate Hindu villager will answer, **"Bhagvan ek hi hai."** - the Lord is One.

Only in India the mind went beyond monotheism to monism, from **dvaita to advaita** — to a god without form and attributes. One cannot go beyond that.

Behind the lush tangle of religious imagery, is a clear structure of thought. Hinduism, in its plethora of symbols and images**,** is endlessly complex and therefore endlessly misunderstood, but its true mission is both simple and universal: soul-enlightenment. Hinduism is **goal-oriented, not way-oriented.** In other words, its focus is the ultimate attainment, Self-realization, in God. Symbolism helps the seeker to concentrate his mind on the worship and meditation of god.



God's innumerable forms, and the acknowledgement of His Presence in everything, are an expression of the extraordinary vitality of India's collective imagination down through the ages.

Idol or image is a kind of yantra or a device for harnessing the eye and mind on God. As the **Vishnu Samhita** puts it:

"Without a form how can God be mediated upon? If (He is) without any form, where will the mind fix itself? When there is nothing for the mind to attach itself to, it will slip away from meditation or will glide into a state of slumber. Therefore the wise will meditate on some form, remembering, however, that the form is a superimposition and not a reality."

Symbolism in Hinduism is sublime and profound. Each act of Hindu worship reflects some deep spiritual significance.

The Hindu, for his part, is nonplussed by the Western antipathy to spiritual imagery. Don't Christians, have their cross? their images of Jesus and Mary? their paintings of scenes from the Bible? And don't the Jews have their Star of David? their holy tabarnacle? Guru Nanak, the first of the Sikhs gurus, said to Muslims that they bowed to the Black Stone in Mecca, which is also an image.



Where is the harm, the Hindus wonder, in images that remind one of God and that inspire devotion to Him? The value of (symbols and myths) these things lies in their power to recall our minds from the world's distractions to the thought of God and God's love. In singing God's praises, in praying to god with wholehearted devotion, in meditating on God's majesty and glory, in reading about God in the scriptures, in regarding the entire universe as God's handiwork, we move our affections steadily in God's direction.

As **Lord Krishna** said in the **Bhagavad Gita**: **"Those who meditate on Me and Worship Me without any attachment to anything else, those I soon lift from the ocean of death".**

Foreigner have scorned the Hindu love of idols for centuries. What they have never understood is that the **Hindus are not idol worshippers.** They know as anyone - probably more so - that God can never be reduced to an image. What the devotee's gaze is fixed on in **darshan** is the eyes of the idol. Through those eyes streams the power that lives in the image through the grace of God and the invocations of the priesthood. That is why the eyes are always larger in proportion than the rest of the image, and why a red eye is daubed on the stones that are sacred to the goddess of a village. it is not the image, but the power in the image, that is worshipped by the devotee. It is a two-way process: the god sees the devotee, just as the devotee sees the god. In this meeting of eyes, the devotee and the lord become one.

Diane L. Eck, has noted: "**Hinduism is an imaginative, an "image-making, religious tradition in which the sacred is seen as present in the visible world** – the world we see in multiple images and deities, in sacred places, and in people. India is a visual and visionary culture, one in which the eyes have a prominent role in the apprehension of the sacred. For most ordinary Hindus, the notion of the divine as "invisible" would be foreign indeed. **God is eminently visible, although human beings have not always had the refinement of sight to see. Furthermore, the divine is visible not only in temple and shrine, but also in the whole continuum of life – in nature, in people, in birth and growth and death.** Although some Hindus, both philosophers and radical reformers, have always used the terms "nirguna" (quality less) and nirakara (form

less) to speak of the One Bramh. Yet the same tradition has simultaneously affirmed that Bramh is also saguna (with qualities) and that the multitude of "names and forms" of this world are the exuberant transformations of the One Bramh.

(source: **Darsan - Seeing the Divine Image in India** p.10 - 12) Please refer to chapter on **Symbolism in Hinduism**).

Puja



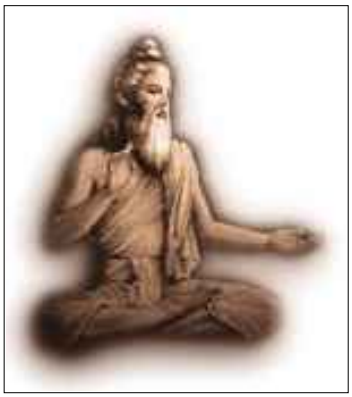
Puja is the daily ritual by which devotees seek communion with the divine. Puja symbolizes a devotee's desire to offer love and devotion to the Lord, thereby surrendering his or her individuality to Him. Hinduism recognizes self-surrender as a supreme path to salvation.

The entire **puja** (worship) is a progressive identification of man and god, culminating in the meeting of eyes and the passing of the flame, the **arati**, that ends the ritual.

The flame is passed before the image of the god, and then brought to the devotees for them to pass their hands through and put them to their eyes. The god sees the face of the individual in the flame, and his power is transmitted through the flame into the person's eyes. Even a blind person goes to the temple for **darshan.** It is not the physical eye, as much as the inner eye, or the third eye that receives the darshan of the lord. The meeting happens in the intuitive, supersensible realm.

(Please visit **ONLINE DARSHAN** for performing Pooja and Aarti.

Hindu Concept of God



The **Rig Veda** has declared the Ultimate Reality (God) as:

"Ekam sat vipraha, bahudha vadanti" (Sanskrit)

"Truth (God) is one, the wise call it by various names"

and exhort us to "let good thoughts come to us from every where" in the **Bhagavad Gita**, **Lord Krishna assures the adherents of all religions that "those who pray with devotion to another god, it is to Me that they pray."**

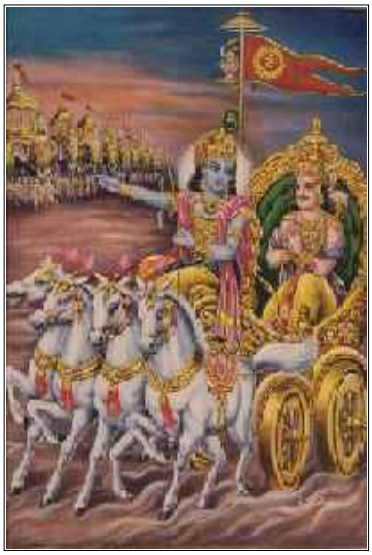
The Truth (God) was called Bramh by the sages. The root of the word Bramh is "Brih" which means to expand. According to the Hindu view, the Supreme Reality can be viewed from two aspects:

Transcendent (impersonal) and **Immanent** (personal).

In the transcendent aspect, the Supreme Reality is called **Nirguna Bramh**, that is Bramh, **without attributes.** "Bramh is He whom speech cannot express, and from whom the mind is unable to reach Him, comes away baffled" states the Taittiriya Upanishad.

Nirguna Bramh is not an object of prayer, but of meditation and knowledge. It cannot be described, and the most one can say is that It is absolute existence, absolute knowledge, and absolute bliss (***sat-chi-ananda***). It is unborn, self-existent, all-pervading, and the essence of all things and beings in the universe. It is immeasurable, unapproachable, beyond conception, beyond birth, beyond reasoning, and beyond thought". God cannot be defined in terms of any specific manifestation, nor indeed in terms of their sum total. He is beyond all possibility of definition. The Bhagavad Gita, the best-known scripture of India, states this point clearly:

"Though I manifest Myself in all things, I am identified with none of them".



In its **Immanent (personal) aspect,** the Supreme Reality, is called **Saguna Bramh.** He is the personal God, the creator, the preserver, and the controller of the universe. In Hinduism, the immanent (personal) aspect of Bramh is worshipped in both male and female forms. In the male form, he is worshipped as Ishvara, Maheshvara, Paramatma, Purusha. In the female form, as the Divine Mother, Durga, and Kali. The Vedic God has no partisan attitude of the jealous and vindictive God.

God in Hinduism is not the creator of the individual soul, (atman). The atman is divine and eternal. **Greater wisdom was never compressed into three words than by the Chandogya Upanishad which proclaimed the true Self of Man as part of the Infinite Spirit - Tat twam asi : That Thou Art".**

In the beautiful words of **Vedanta**: "Samvit or pure consciousness is one and non-dual, ever self-luminous, and does not rise or set in months and years and aeons, past or future."

Hinduism provides for the ultimate Truth but not for a final and last statement of that Truth. Hinduism provides for self-renewal. The concept of **Kalabrahma** or **Kaladharma** is central to the Hindu way of thinking. Thus making for effective use of the built-in mechanism for change for centuries. **It accepts explicitly the inevitably of change with the passage of time.** The past is not superseded but modified according to the demands of the spirit of the times. Thus, the Vedas are followed by the Upanishads and these by the Epics and the Puranas; nothing is final. Hence, Hinduism's striking ability to adapt itself to changing circumstances and conditions.

Hinduism emphasizes Experience of Reality and Truth rather than belief.

It does not believe in concepts of proselytization, heresy hunting, Holy wars, proclamation of chosen people or a jealous God. Hinduism is an inclusive faith which provides for every form of religious experience and belief; there can by no heresy or Kufr in Hinduism.

Sin in Hinduism

Christianity and Judaism are religions of exile: Man was thrown out of the Garden of Eden resulting in his "fall."

Man is not born as a sinner in Hinduism. "Each soul is potentially divine." The Upanishads teach us that Reality is the essence of every created thing, and the same Reality is our real Self, so that each of us is one with the power that created and sustains the universe. In the late nineteenth century, the Dutch poet Willem Kloos (1859-1938) wrote: "*Ik ben een god in het diepst van mijn gedachten*" (I am a god in the deepest of my thoughts).

"God sleeps in the rocks," proclaims the Indian scriptures, "dreams in the plants, stirs toward wakefulness in the animals, and in mankind is awake to his own ego individuality." In the enlightened stage, finally, he awakens to the full reality of who he truly is, in His infinite Self.

As **Willem Kloos** (Johan Theodoor) (1859-1938) Dutch poet and critic, who was the driving intellectual force of the 1880 Dutch literary revival wrote: "Ik ben een god in het diepst van mijn gedachten" (**I am a god in the deepest of my thoughts**).

Both Protestants and Catholics expressed their indignation at this sacrilegious statement.

(source: **Psychology of Prophetism - By Koenraad Elst**).

The goal is to **manifest this divinity** within, by controlling nature (both) external and internal. "This can be done either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy (by one or more) and be free". The doctrine of sin as expounded by Christianity is not accepted by Hinduism. According to Hindu view, man commits sin, only because of his ignorance of his own true nature. Ignorance of Self is the root cause of all evils in the world. Self-knowledge is thus essential for eliminating evil.

Thus, says, **Lord Krishna** in the **Bhagavad-Gita:**



"Even if thou art the worst of sinners thou shalt cross the ocean of sin by the bark of wisdom". (**BG 4.36**)

Freedom and tolerance in Hinduism

Freedom was born in India. Doubt, the mother of freedom, was born with the **Rig Veda,** the most sacred scripture of the Hindus which has the following:

What are words, and what are mortal thoughts!
Who is there who truly knows and who can say,|
Whence this unfathomed world
And from what cause!

Freedom of the mind created the wondrous world of the intellect — the world of Hindu rishis, philosophers, poets and dramatists.

India has had an unrivalled tradition of religious freedom and tolerance. That tradition was born of the consciousness that truth can never be the monopoly of any one sect or creed.

The words of the Rig Veda are world famous: "Let noble thoughts come to us from every side."

The Rishis (sages) realized that each man had to work out his own salvation and that everyone's own spiritual experience is vital to the attainment of the ultimate state of the soul's evolution. A blind obedience to authority is the surest prescription for spiritual paralysis.

Hinduism allows absolute freedom to the rational mind of man. Hinduism never demands any undue restraint upon the freedom of human reason, the freedom of thought, feeling and will of man. Dogmatism, on the other hand, stifles mental elasticity and turns people into "psychological antiques." In Hinduism, the attitude of freedom and generosity to other faiths is bound up with the conviction that the religious life has its source and certainty in the eternal deeps of man's soul.

(source: **Eastern Religions & Western Thought - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 288).

Tolerance: This basic feature of Hindu religion which separates it from revealed religions believing in the finality of their revelations as a fundamental doctrine. While **Lord Krishna** says in the **Gita**:

Ye yathaa maam prapadyante
Taamstathaiva bhajaamyaham.

He proclaims a doctrine which is fundamental to all Hindu thought; that is, religion is not a matter of exclusive dogma. It is a wide tolerance, a feeling that others may be equally right in the methods they follow, that is the essence of Hindu teaching.

(source: **Essential Features of Indian Culture - By K. M. Panikkar** Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Mumbai.1964 p. 6).



Hinduism is a **religion of freedom**. It allows the widest freedom in matters of faith and worship. It allows absolute freedom to the human reason and heart with regard to questions such as the nature of God, soul, creation, form of worship, and goal of life. It does not force anybody to accept particular dogmas or forms of worship. **When religion becomes organized, man ceases to be free. For it is not God that is worshipped but the group or the authority that claims to speak in his name. Thus, it becomes a kind of social idolatry.** Highly individualistic, Hindus have always resisted any regimentation of thought. Religion is an experience. To think that any human being or institution has the monopoly of God's truth is to commit the sin of pride.

Exclusivism and intolerance in matters of faith are features of Semitic religions—Judaism, Christianity, Islam. Contrary to these desert-born religions, **intolerance and persecution were alien to Hinduism.** **Encyclopaedia Brittannica** defines Hinduism as: "In principle, Hinduism incorporates all forms of belief and worship without necessitating the selection or elimination of any. The Hindu is inclined to revere the divine in every manifestation, whatever it may be, and is doctrinally tolerant.... A Hindu may embrace a non-Hindu religion without ceasing to be a Hindu...he tends to believe that the highest divine powers complement each other for the well being of the world and the mankind."

(source: **The Hindu Soul in search of Its Body - Balbir Punj**).

According to **Sri Aurobindo**: "The inner principles of Hinduism, the most tolerant and receptive of religious systems, is not sharply exclusive like the religious spirit of Christianity or Islam. Europe where men have constantly fought, killed, burned, tortured, imprisoned, persecuted in every way imaginable, by human stupidity and cruelty for the sake of dogma....**Hinduism is in the first place a non-dogmatic inclusive religion,** and would have taken even Islam and Christianity into itself, if they had tolerated the process."

(source: **India's Rebirth - By Sir Aurobindo** p. 143).

The great German thinker **Paul Natorp** (1854-1924) reminds us of an Indian (Hindu) teacher who adopts silence as the best expression of the great mystery. Truth exists by its own majesty. Its language is silence. When we sense the consuming heat and the kindling light of his spirit. He creates a mood, a temper rather than a conviction or a belief.

(source: **Religion and Culture - By S. Radhakrishnan** ISBN: 81-222-0012-5 p. 104).

Dr. L. P. Jacks, eminent English cleric, editor of the Hubbert Journals and author of the book **Two Letters** 1934, p. 26, has referred to this feature: "The spiritual men of India, a great and watchful multitude whose spiritual status is un-attainable, are many of them catholics in a deeper sense than we of the West have yet given to the word...."

(source: **Eastern Religions & Western Thought - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 342).

Hinduism allows everybody to reflect, investigate, enquire and cogitate. Hence, all sorts of religious faiths, various forms of worship or Sadhana, diverse kinds of rituals and customs, have found their honorable place side by side within Hinduism, and are cultured and developed in harmonious relationship with one another.

Hinduism, unlike other religions, does not dogmatically assert that the final emancipation is possible only through its means and not through any other. It is only a means to an end, and all means which will ultimately lead to the end are equally approved.



Sir. S. Radhakrishnan has observed, " Hinduism recognizes that each religion is inextricably bound up with its culture and can grow organically. While it is aware that all religions have not attained to the same level of truth and goodness, it insists that they all have a right to express themselves. Religions reform themselves by interpretation and adjustment to one another. **The Hindu attitude is one of positive fellowship, not negative tolerance."**

"As a result of this tolerant attitude, Hinduism itself has become a mosaic of almost all the types and stages of religious aspiration and endeavor. **It has adapted itself with infinite grace to every human need and it has not shrunk from the acceptance of every aspect of God conceived by man, and yet preserved its unity by interpreting the different historical forms as modes, emanations, or aspects of the Supreme."**

(source: **Eastern Religions & Western Thought - By. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan** p 313).

"India did not till recently take to the cult of the nation. We did not make our country a national goddess, with an historic destiny, a sacred mission, and a right of expansion. We did not worship Mother India (Bharatmata) as others do, 'Britannia', 'La France', 'The Fatherland'. We did not tell the people that the enemy of India is the enemy of God and if the enemy had a god, he could only be a false god. Our leaders did not proclaim to be the finest people on earth, the chosen race of the universe"

(source: **Eastern Religions and Western Thought - By Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** p. 54).

In an age that celebrates tolerance and pluralism, the claim that there is the only way to God is offensive and could be considered as "spiritual racism."

The religious hospitality of Hinduism is proverbial. Hinduism is extremely catholic and liberal. This is the fundamental feature of Hinduism. **Hinduism pays respects to all religions**. Hence, its tolerance to all. It does not revile any other religions. It accepts and honors truth, wherever it may come from and whatever garb it may put on. Eastern religions, **Hinduism, Buddhism and others influenced by them have been looking upon different religions not as rivals but as friendly partners in nourishing the spiritual life of mankind.** Their approach to religion has been essentially empirical.

The law of Karma: (laws of cause and effect)

"This vast universe is a wheel. Upon it are all creatures that are subject to birth, death and rebirth. Round and round it turns and never stops. It is the wheel of Bramh. As long as the individual self thinks it is separate from Bramh, it revolves upon the wheel in bondage to the laws of birth, death and rebirth. But when through the grace of Bramh it realizes its identity with him, it evolves upon the wheel no longer. It achieves immortality."

- Svetasvatara Upanishad

Karma is one of the natural laws of the mind, just as gravity is a law of matter. It simply means "cause and effect." What happens to us that is apparently unfortunate or unjust is not God punishing us. It is the result of our past actions. The Vedas, Hinduism's revealed scriptures, tells us that if we sow goodness, we will reap goodness; if we sow evil, we will reap evil. The divine law is: whatever karma we are experiencing in our life is just what we need at the moment, and nothing can happen but that we have the strength to meet it. Even harsh Karma, when faced in wisdom, can be the greatest catalyst for spiritual unfoldment.

The human predicament in the midst of the omnipresent and universal change and suffering is often expressed in Vedanta and Buddhism by the image of the wheel. **Lord Krishna** speaks of the terrible wheel of birth and death which binds the individual down to the phenomenal world of time and circumstance: "The spirit of man when in nature feels the ever-changing conditions of nature. When he binds himself to things ever-changing, a good or evil fate whirls him round through life-to-death. Even Gautam Buddha alludes to the wheel of existence, which he calls **samsara**. In Europe, during the Renaissance, the wheel was absorbed into a popular adage - God is a Circle, whose circumference is nowhere and whose center is everywhere.

(source: **T. S. Eliot Vedanta and Buddhism - By P. S. Sri** p. 35-36).

According to **Nani A. Palkivala** (1920 -) India's best known constitutional lawyer, author, former Indian ambassador to the USA:

"The law of Karma postulates that in this world there are no rewards or punishments; it is simply a case of inevitable consequences. As you sow, so shall you reap. Sometimes others reap what you have sown. There is an interlinking and inter-connection all round and at every level, in time and in space. No one lives, or can possibly live, in isolation. The past is linked to the future, the world to the next, men to their fellow-men, thoughts to actions, actions to reactions, the living spirits to the departed ones. The law of karma governs all."

(source: **India's Priceless Heritage - By Nani A. Palkhivala** 1980 p. 32-33).



To quote in the words of **Sir. S. Radhakrishnan,** philosopher, and former president of India:

“The cards in the game of life are given to us, we do not select them. They are traced to our past karma, but we can call as we please, lead what suit we will, and as we play, we gain or loose. And there is freedom.”

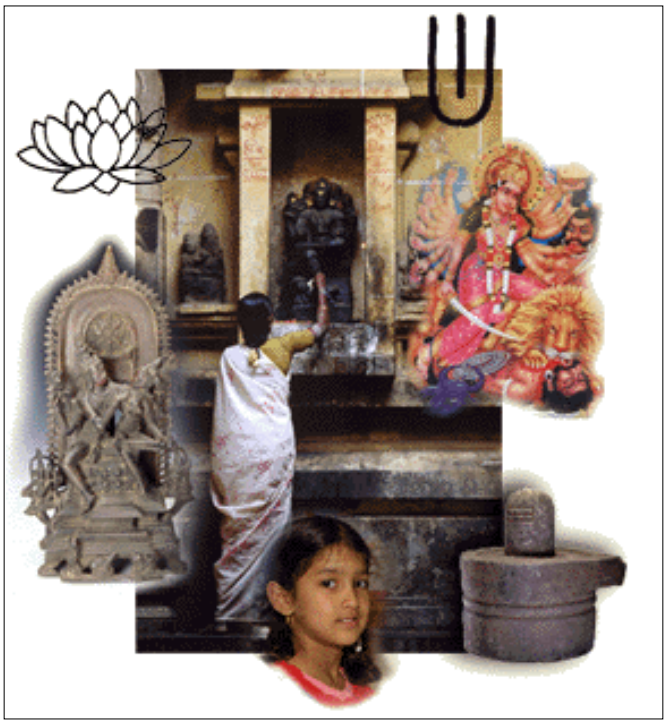
We must also be very careful about our thoughts, because thoughts create, and thoughts also make karmas, good, bad and mixed.

What happens when we die?
According to Hinduism, the body alone dies, the soul never dies. But the path the soul takes is decided upon by the past actions or Karmas. Past actions are attached to the soul and they decide the path of the soul’s travel. So if you are born with a disease or a handicap, it is the result of your past actions done in past lives. If you live a good moral pious life, then you will be born in better situation and ideal life.

According to Hinduism, the soul continues this journey with a heavy load of Karmas, (good or bad) until it exhausts all Karmas by undergoing pain or pleasure sensations in the body. Then the individual soul, will merge with the Absolute Soul or infinite power. This merging process is known as Salvation.

God does not punish us. God created man near to perfection and has given him the free will to decide whatever he wants. There is no such thing as being cursed. Hindus believe even God is bound by the law of Karma once He takes human form. Lord Krishna was killed by a hunter. He was obeying the law of Karma, the unwritten law of the Universe.

Karma is a very just law, too, as it is equal in repayment. Karma, like gravity, treats everyone the same.
Karma is a rational explanation for inequalities among human beings which cannot be given. The possibility of rebirth makes death more acceptable. In fact, the rishi of the Isa Upanishad welcomes death when it comes, in the following words: Let my breadth mix with the eternal air and let my body be burnt. And then I will recount all that happened in the past.



Individual souls, or jivas, enter the world mysteriously; by God's power we may be sure, but how or for what reason we are unable fully to explain. Like bubbles that form on the bottom of a boiling teakettle, they make their way through the water (universe) until they break free into the limitless atmosphere of illumination (liberation). They begin as the souls of the simplest forms of life, but they do not vanish with the death of their original bodies.
In the Hindu view, spirit no one depends more on the body it inhabits that body depends on the clothes it wears or the house it lives in. When we outgrow a suit or find our house too cramped, we exchange these for roomier ones that offer our bodies freer play. **Souls do the same.**

" Worn-out garments Are shed by the body:
Worn-out bodies Are shed by the dweller. "

-

(**Bhagavad-Gita, II:22**)

This process by which an individual **jiva** (soul) passes through a sequence of bodies is known as reincarnation or transmigration of the soul - in Sanskrit **samsara**, a word that signifies endless passage through cycles of life, death and rebirth.

Hinduism believes that God, who is all-loving and merciful, does not punish or reward anyone. He molds our destinies based upon our own thoughts and deeds. Every action of a person, in thought or deed, brings results, either good or bad, depending upon the moral quality of the action, in accordance with the adage, *As you sow, so shall you reap.* Moral consequences of all actions are conserved by Nature. **"God keeps an accurate record of all things good and bad. There is no better accountant on earth,"** says **Mahatma Gandhi.** Until we reach the end of our journey we are subject to the law of Karma which makes out that our desires and acts determines the pace of our progress. Our present state is conditioned by our past and what we do now will determine our future. Death and rebirth do not interrupt this process. Four our present condition, we are ourselves responsible. We not blame God or the existing social order. **Mahabharata** says that there is no external judge who punishes us; our inner self is the judge.

na yaman yamah ity ahuh atma vai yama ucyate
atma samyamito yena yamas tasya karoti kim?

If a person lives a good life on earth, he or she will be born into a better life in the next incarnation. For example, a sinner who leads an immoral life will be born as a poor human or as an animal in the next incarnation. A person born again and again to reap the fruits of his or her own actions. This cycle of birth and death continues until the person attains moksha or freedom from the cycle of birth and death. In all forms of Indian thought, time is symbolized by birth and death. The world is represented by wheel of time, of births and deaths.

Count Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) was a Belgian writer of poetry and a wide variety of essays. He won the 1911 Nobel Prize for literature. In his book **Mountain Paths**, in the doctrine of Karma, he finds "the only satisfactory solution of life's injustices."

Reincarnation

Reincarnation is interlinked with karma: successive lives afford the requisite scope in which the law of karma operates. It is the natural way the soul evolves from immaturity to spiritual illumination. When all the lessons are worked out and all the lessons of life are learnt, one attains enlightenment and *moksha* (liberation). This means you will exist, but will no longer be pulled back to be born in a physical body.

Reincarnation is called **Samsara** in the Vedas and means being bound to the cycle of repeated birth and death. The materially conditioned soul transmigrates through different bodies according to his desires and past activities. It is stated, that as a man sows, so shall he reap.

Lord Krishna said to **Arjuna, " Both you and I have passed through many births. You know them not; I know them all."**



Nonetheless, one is not condemned to stay in this cycle of repeated birth and death forever. There is a way out. In the human form one can attain the knowledge of spiritual realization and attain release from Samsara. This is why every religious process in the world encourages people not to hanker for sensual enjoyments which bind them to this world but to look forwards what is spiritual and gives eternal freedom from Samsara. In fact, the only religion, which does not acknowledge this science of reincarnation is modern day Christianity.

A partial list includes the Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Pythagoras, and Plato, Italy's philosopher and poet of the Renaissance Giordano Bruno (who was later burned at the stake by the Inquisition because of his beliefs), as well as the great French philosopher Voltaire.

Plotinus, Origen, St. Augustine, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, William James, Henri Bergson, Goethe, Hugo, Sand, Blake, Wordsworth, Whitman, Shelley, Kipling, Tennyson, Browning, Alcott, Emerson, Thoreau, Poe, Whitman, Wagner, da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin, Luther Burbank, Edison, Henry Ford, Edgar Cayce and General Patton all believed in reincarnation. Poets, in their moments of inspiration and intuitive insights, have written about rebirth. There are passages in Shelley, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, Rossetti, Longfellow and Whitman, which evince the poet's interest in reincarnation. In a poem to **Evelyn Hope**, a girl whose life was snuffed out at the age of sixteen, poet **Robert Browning** (1812-1889) sang of lives to be:

"I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few;
Much is to learn and much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you."

John Masefield (1878-1967) poet laureate has been explicit in his poem **A Creed**:

"I hold when a person dies
His soul returns again to earth;
Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise,
Another mother gives him birth.
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain
The old soul takes the road again.

(source: **India's Priceless Heritage - By Nani A. Palkhivala** 1980 p. 32-34).

William Wordsworth, the poet, was bold enough to believe in a life beyond death. He succeeded in keeping pessimism at bay by drawing inspiration from the belief that the soul had its beginning elsewhere and lived endlessly.

Some of America's founding fathers, such as Benjamin Franklin, as well as former Presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, also believed in reincarnation. **Benjamin Franklin** stated that "I believe I shall, in some shape or other, always exist; and, with all the inconveniences human life is liable to, I shall not object to a new edition of mine, hoping, however, that the errata of the last may be corrected." Napoleon made mention of his accepting reincarnation as did the German poet Wolfgang von Goethe. In Russia, Count Leo Tolstoy, believed in reincarnation as did such early American philosophers and poets as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, and Charles Dickens, who mention their beliefs in many of their writings.

We can also include U.S. auto magnate Henry Ford, U.S. General George S. Patton, Nobel Laureates Herman Hesse and Isaac Bashevis Singer, Psychologist Carl Jung, British biologist Thomas Huxley, American Psychoanalyst Erik Erikson and Mahatma Gandhi.

Dr. S Radhakrishnan has written: **"The development of the soul is a continuous progress, though it is broken into stages by the baptism of death."**

(source: **The Story of Oriental Philosophy - By L. Adams Beck** p. 46).



Moksha (Freedom or Salvation)

Moksha means freedom from the cycle of birth and death. The ultimate goal of Hindu religious life is to attain freedom from the cycle of birth and death, or union with God. This union is achieved through true knowledge (jnana), devotion (bhakti), or right work (karma). Purity, self-control, truthfulness, non-violence, and compassion toward all forms of life are the necessary prerequisites for any spiritual path in Hinduism. There is no concept of Savior. You have to free yourself by your own effort. No savior can help you achieve God realization without your personal effort.

Four Stages of Life

All cycles in the world we perceive are characterized by the number four, which is the number of the Earth. Like all things terrestrial, man's life thus divides into four periods - the four stages of life. All life has a springtime, summer, autumn, and winter, as also its morning, noon, evening, and night. These four periods of life are called "the four stages of action": the four ashramas.

1. The First Stage of Life : The quest for knowledge (Brahmacharya) - the student
2. The Second Stage of Life: Family Life (Grihastha) - dedicated to domestic affairs.
3. The Third Stage of Life: Retreat into the Forest - (Vana-Prastha) - to devote to study and reflection.
4. The Fourth Stage of Life: Renunciation (Sanyasa) - Renunciation all attachments, the spiritual and physical preparation for death.

Guy Sorman, author and visiting scholar at Hoover Institution at Stanford and the leader of new liberalism in France, has commented on these wise division of life: "Here is a philosophy far removed from the grotesque refusal to grow old in the West, where wisdom has been replaced by cosmetic surgery and psychiatric help."

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** (**'Le Genie de l'Inde**') Macmillan India Ltd. 2001. ISBN 0333 93600 0 p.122).

Six Schools of Philosophy (Darshana)

Indian philosophical thought, in contrast to the Western tradition, has remained more stable and more clearly continuous. In spite of its metaphysical nature and religious overtones, Indian philosophy is essentially practical, aiming at realizing spiritually what is known intellectually. Knowledge without vision is meaningless. Hence, **Indians call their philosophy darshan, vision. Philosophy and religion in India are intertwined, because religion for the Hindu is experience or an attitude of mind, a transformation of one's being, a consciousness of the ultimate reality, not a theory about God. Whatever view of god the Hindu many adopt, he believes that the divine is in man.**

Philosophy, as religion, is seen in India as a means to an end, not as an end in itself. Hence, there is no room for dogma or intolerance in Indian tradition because the roads to truth are more than one. The infinite reality cannot be comprehended by the finite human mind.

(source: **India and World Civilization By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. p. 23 - 25).

The Hindu religious system can be divided into two major systems. The Orthodox system (called astika in Sanskrit) accepts the authority of the Vedas.

1. **Sankhya** - founder Sage Kapila
2. **Yoga** - Sage Patanjali
3. **Mimamsa** - Sage Vyasa / Sage Jaimini
4. **Vedanta** - Shankaracharya, Ramanuja/Chaitanya/ Madhava/Vallabha
5. **Nyaya** - Sage Gautama (not Buddha)
6. **Vaisheshika** - Sage Kanda

The Heterdox (Nastika) system rejects the authority of the Vedas. This system includes Carvaka (materialism), Jainism, and Buddhism. The Carvaka system denies existence of the individual self(atman) apart from the body and rejects the notion of moksha (salvation) for the atman. This system never gained popularity among the Hindus.

Concept of Time



The transcendence of time is the aim of every Indian spiritual tradition. Time is often presented as an eternal wheel that binds the soul to a mortal existence of ignorance and suffering. "Release" from time's fateful wheel is termed **moksha**, and an advanced ascetic may be called **kala-attita** (' he who has transcended time').

Hindus believe that the universe is without a beginning (**anadi**= beginning-less) or an end (**ananta** = end-less). Rather the universe is projected in cycles.

Each cycle is divided into four **yugas** (ages of the world).

Satya yuga	(golden age)	4,000,000 years
Treta yuga	(silver age)	3,600,000 years
Dvapara yuga	(copper age)	2,400,000 years
Kali yuga	(iron age)	1,200,000 years
Pralaya	(cosmic deluge)	4000,000 years
New Creation		400,000 years
Duration of One Cycle		12,000,000 years

Total duration of the four yugas is called a **kalpa**. At the end of kalyuga the universe is dissolved by pralaya (cosmic deluge) and another cycle begins. Each cycle of creation lasts one kalpa, that is 12,000,000 human years (or 12,000 Brahma years). For more on yugas, refer to **One Cosmic Day of Creator Brahma**).

Time in Hindu mythology is conceived as a wheel turning through vast cycles of creation and destruction (pralaya), known as kalpa. In the words of famous writer, **Joseph Campbell:**

"The Hindus with their grandiose **Kalpas** and their ideas of the divine power which is beyond all human category (male or female). Not so alien to the imagery of modern science that it could not have been put to acceptable use."

According to **Carl Sagan**, (1934-1996) astro-physicist, in his book **"Cosmos"** says:

"The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. **It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond, to those of modern scientific cosmology.**



According to **Guy Sorman,** visiting scholar at Hoover Institution at Stanford and the leader of new liberalism in France:

" Temporal notions in Europe were overturned by an India rooted in eternity. The Bible had been the yardstick for measuring time, but the infinitely vast time cycles of India suggested that the world was much older than anything the Bible spoke of. **It seem as if the Indian mind was better prepared for the chronological mutations of Darwinian evolution and astrophysics."**

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** (**'Le Genie de l'Inde**') Macmillan India Ltd. 2001. ISBN 0333 93600 0 p. 195).

Swami Kriyananada (**J. Donald Walters**) World renowned as a singer, composer, and lecturer, founder of the Ananda Village is perhaps the most successful intentional community in the world writes:

"Hindu cosmography, for example born in hoary antiquity, strikes one in certain ways as surprisingly modern. India has never limited its conception of time to a few crowded millennia. Thousands of years ago India's sages computed the earth's age at a little over two billion years, our present era being what is

called the seventh Manuvantra. This is a staggering claim. Consider how much scientific evidence has been needed in the West before men could even imagine so enormous a time scale."

(source: **Crises in Modern Thought: The Crises of Reason - By Swami Kriyananda (J. Donald Walters)** vol. 1 p - 94)

Princeton University's **Paul Steinhardt** and Cambridge University's **Neil Turok**, have recently developed The Cyclical Model.

They have just fired their latest volley at that belief, saying there could be a timeless cycle of expansion and contraction. **It's an idea as old as Hinduism, updated for the 21st century.** The theorists acknowledge that their cyclic concept draws upon religious and scientific ideas going back for millennia — echoing the "oscillating universe" model that was in vogue in the 1930s, **as well as the Hindu belief that the universe has no beginning or end, but follows a cosmic cycle of creation and dissolution.**

(source: **Questioning the Big Bang - msnbcnews.com).**

According to **Alain Danielou**: "The Hindu lives in eternity. He is profoundly aware of the relativity of space and time and of the illusory nature of the apparent world."

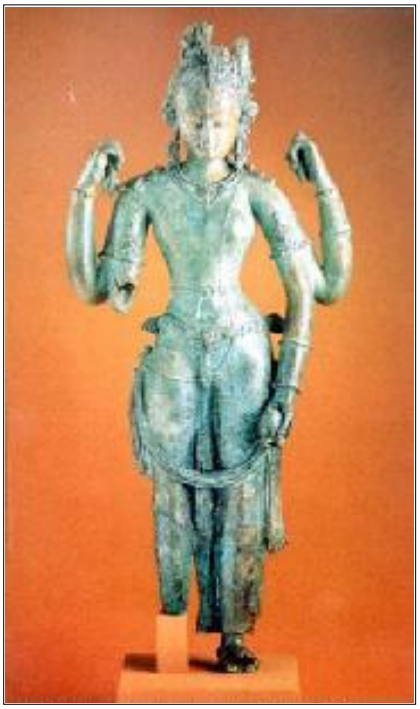
(source: **Virtue, Success, Pleasure, & Liberation : The Four Aims of Life in the Tradition of Ancient India** p. 9).

The Hindus, according to **Sir Monier-Williams,** were Spinozists more than 2,000 years before the advent of Spinoza, and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin and Evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of Evolution was accepted by scientists of the present age.

The French historian **Louis Jacolliot** says, "Here to mock are conceit, our apprehensions, and our despair, we may read what **Manu** said, perhaps 10,000 years before the birth of Christ about Evolution:

' The first germ of life was developed by water and heat.' (Book I, sloka 8,9)
' Water ascends towards the sky in vapors; from the sun it descends in rain, from the rains are born the plants, and from the plants, animals.' (Book III, sloka 76).

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - By T C Galav** p 17).



Sir John Woodroffe, (1865-1936) the well known scholar, Advocate-General of Bengal and sometime Legal Member of the Government of India. He served with competence for eighteen years and in 1915 officiated as Chief Justice. He has said:

"Ages before Lamarck and Darwin it was held in India that man has passed through 84 lakhs (8,400,000) of birth as plants, animals, as an "inferior species of man" and then as the ancestor of the developed type existing to-day. **The theory was not, like modern doctrine of evolution, based wholly on observation and a scientific enquiry into fact but was a rather (as some other matters) an act of brilliant intuition in which observation may also have had some part**."

(source: **Is India Civilized - Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p. 22).

Count Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) was a Belgian writer of poetry and a wide variety of essays. He won the 1911 Nobel Prize for literature. In his book **Mountain Paths**, he says:

"he falls back upon the earliest and greatest of Revelations, those of the Sacred Books of India with a Cosmogony which no European conception has ever surpassed."

(source: **Mountain Paths - By Maurice Maeterlinck**).

The **Laya Yoga Samhita** stated that just as the beams of sunlight entering a room reveal the presence of innumberable motes, so infinite space is filled with countless brahmandas (solar systems). The atomic structure of matter was discussed in the ancient Vaisesika treatises. And in the Yoga Vashista it was stated, in a passage very similar to the foregoing: "There are vast worlds all placed way within the hollows of each atom,

multifarious as the motes in a sunbeam."

(source: **Crises in Modern Thought: The Crises of Reason - By Swami Kriyananda (J. Donald Walters)** vol. 1 p - 95).

Thus, in Hinduism, **science and religion are not opposed fundamentally**, as they often seem to be in the West, but are seen as parts of the same great search for truth and enlightenment that inspired the sages of Hinduism. Fundamental to Hindu concept of time and space is the notion that the external world is a product of the creative play of **Maya** (illusion).

Om

Matter is said to be created from sound and Om is the most sacred of all sounds, the syllable that preceded the universe and from which the gods were made. It is the "root" syllable (mula mantra), the cosmic vibration that holds together the atoms of the world and heavens. Since Om precedes all things, it is used as an invocation to prayer or sacred singing.



Omkar is the most sacred word for the Hindus. For them, it is synonymous with the Supreme Godhead, the Impersonal as well as the Personal God. It is the all-comprehensive Symbol and Name of God. It is also deemed as the *Maha Mantra* , the best aid and means for man to realize God.

Philo (50 BC) an Alexandrian philosopher, who knew of the Indian Gymnosophists set forth the theory of Logos which passed into Christianity in the Gospel of St. John and is verily the Indian conception of **Vak** (word) which is personified in the Vedas as a Divine Power.

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p.12).

There is a Vedic verse as follows :

Prajapati vai idam agra asit
Tasya vak dvitiya asit
Vag vai paramam Brahma

"In the beginning was Prajapati, the Bramh with whom was the Word,
and the Word was verily the Supreme Bramh."

(source: The Pranava Om - The source of Creation - An extract from the book **Art Of God Symbolism - By Swami Chinmayanand** and **Omkaar - The Source of Creation**).



Conclusion:

Hinduism is a religion that is doctrinally less clear cut than say Christianity, politically less determined than Islam. It offers something for everyone, including the atheist. It has delighted its followers, with its richness, its antiquity and its depth. Hinduism, is a philosophy that appeals to reason, love, tolerance, harmony, unity and truth. It motivates us to live life to the fullest, to achieve and realize our goals, keeping in mind that all things are connected in this universe and respecting them thereof. Religion in India is the cultivation of the interior life. It is the attainment of spiritual freedom. In the West, religion is a social phenomenon, a matter of the ecclesia, of the community. The Western mind sees the divine as largely external to man but to the Hindu it is about improving his being, or inner self. Hinduism traditionally does not recognize the borderlines within which religion in the West has been confined for some centuries - politics, social structures, hygiene, science - everything is assimilated and considered part of the divine reality.

Hinduism is alive and vigorous and has withstood attacks from within and without. It seems to be possessed of unlimited powers of renewal. Its historic vitality, the abounding energy which it reveals, would alone be evidence of its spiritual genius.



"O Goddess Earth, the consort of Visnu,
you whose garments are the oceans and
whose ornaments are the hills and mountain ranges;
please forgive me as I walk on you this day."

This shows the utmost respect for the earth....and with such humility.

No other religion can truly claim to be a universal religion, except Hindu religion not in terms of its propagation but because of its broadness, toleration and absorbing abilities.

Hinduism is both monotheistic and polytheistic believing in one God as well as some demigods and is based on scriptures and evolving proven spiritual and mystical experiences of many individual souls. Hindus believe in God and demigods, past and present prophets, saints and sages and their supernatural power belonging to this world and outside this world for their spiritual and material prosperity unlike other religions which believe in God sitting in heaven alone and ruling the world spiritually and materially. It is natural for the Hindu worshipper to address God with a fondness that amounts sometimes to familiarity. **And why not? God is our very own.** The Bengali song says:

"I will follow him (Krishna) to Mathura, where he now dwells. And if I find him, though I know his consciousness is as infinite as the ocean, I will bind him with my sari and drag him home with me!".

What Western hymnist would dare to express himself to god in terms of such intimacy?



and yet, again: Why not? If we really love God, is it not natural to hold him close? The Hindu imagines God smiling from the hearts of trees, from the flowers, from the rocks, from the hearts of clouds. To worship God for the Hindus, means love. It means childlike trust. Indian devotional songs often express such sentiments, as *" I will make Thee prisoner of my heart's love".*

For this reason Hinduism is still strong and surviving and can not decline even against the aggressive conversions carried out most often in disguise in the name of love for the people, social services and education by other foreign religions for the last 2000 years.

For Hinduism is the most ancient expression of Sanatan Dharma, the eternal and universal religion. The true message of Hinduism, is inward, not outward. It is a message of soul-upliftment, of inner purification, and of deepening awareness and love. Behind all the symbolism, Hinduism teaches communion with God.

A need for commitment from all Hindus Worldwide:

In the words of **Prof. Bhagwan S.Gidwani**, in his book "**The Return of the Aryans"**, (ISBN 0-14-024053-5)

" We have inherited an ancient culture. It has faced many waves of invasions, among others, from the Greek, Persian, Pathan, Mongol, French, Dutch and the English. Often with savagery they attempted to suppress our culture; yet the flame of hope burnt brightly against the dark background of foreign rule. Our religion endured, though our land has shrunk to less than half its size compared to the past.



What often saved us in the past was the awareness of our age-old religion and culture and the need to hold fast to it, while weaving and refining it for the future generations to come. What might indeed doom us in the future is the ignorance of our traditions, with no roots to cling to.

Culture is tradition and tradition is memory.

The ancients knew that and that is why Bharat, who led the Sindhu clan, introduced the Memory songs in 5095, to keep alive the knowledge of the past, lest we run the risk of building our future without foundation of the past.

In the era of vanishing worth and fading memory, it is imperative to rekindle the dying embers of life and light in our society. We need to teach the new generation of Hindus about Sanatan Dharma and be proud of it. He who fails to guard his house - be it the scholar, priest or the nation itself - must learn to tolerate an intruder. "

Jai Hind!

(For more refer to **Hinduism - By Arvind Sharma - Encyclopedia Article in Encarta**).

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Did You Know?

Shakti is the Divine power found in everything?



Shakti is the divine feminine power found in everything. One of the things most misconstrued about India and Hinduism is that it's a male-dominated society and religion. It is not. It is a culture whose only words for strength and power are feminine -- ``shakti'' means ``power'' and ``strength.'' All male power comes from the feminine. And Shakti is the fundamental strength of the feminine that infuses all life and is viewed as a goddess. And one of the forms of that goddess is Kali.

Kali is the personification of the most dynamic aspect of feminine strength: We often see her in the horrific form that she assumes to destroy evil and to rescue the universe from destruction. In this photograph, Kali is destroying evil shown in the guise of beauty. Beauty is often beguiling. Kali is often depicted in a form as conqueror, which to many might appear horrific. But to her devotees, she is considered beautiful, maternal and kind.

Contributed by **Stephen Huyler**, art historian, cultural anthropologist, curator at the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, in his book '**Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion**'

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003



Hinduism is often labeled as a religion of 330 million gods. This misunderstanding arises when people fail to grasp the symbolism of the Hindu pantheon. Hindus worship the nameless and formless Supreme Reality (Bramh) by various names and forms. These different aspects of one reality are symbolized by the many gods and goddesses of Hinduism. For example, Brahma (not to be confused with the over-arching Bramh) is that reality in its role as creator of the universe; in Vishnu it is seen as the preserver and the upholder of the universe; and Shiva is that same reality viewed as the principle of transcendence which will one day 'destroy' the universe. These are the Trimurti, the ' three forms,' and they are not so much different gods as different ways of looking at the same God. Each emphasizes a particular aspect or function of the one reality. The forms are many, the reality is one; the principle is very deeply rooted in Hindu thought, and was stated at the very outset in the **Rg Veda**:

They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni
And he is heavenly nobly-winged Garutman.
To what is One, sages give many a title:
They call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan.

It is the same with all the gods and goddesses: they are not rivals but aspects of a single principle. Hindus have represented God in innumerable forms. Each is but a symbol that points to something beyond; and as none exhausts God's actual nature, the entire array is needed to complete the picture of God's aspects and manifestations. It has been said that images are to the Hindu worshipper what diagrams are to the geometrician. The Hindu devotee, while he will generally have one particular form of god - his or her ishta deva, or chosen deity - on whom his devotion centers, moves easily between one god and another. The same idea carries over into the human sphere. Krishna and Rama are not strictly speaking gods, but avatars, 'descents' - human incarnation of Vishnu - since he is the 'upholder' of the world. This idea is brought forth clearly in the following doctrine of the **Artharva Veda**:

" He is the one, the one alone, in Him
all deities become One alone."



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Lord Ram
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Goddess Saraswati
Goddess Durga
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Symbols - Om and Swastika
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Introduction



"Yes, said he, "but just how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?" "Thirty-three." ..."Yes," said he, "but just how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?" "One..." - **Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III, IX, I**

God's innumerable forms, and the acknowledgment of His Presence in everything, are an expression of the extraordinary vitality of India's collective imagination down through the ages.

(source: **Travel through Sacred India** - **By Roger Housden** p. 58).

Idol or image is a kind of yantra or a device for harnessing the eye and mind on God. As the **Vishnu Samhita** (ch 29, v 55-7) an ancient ritual text, persuasively endorses the use of imagery and puts it:

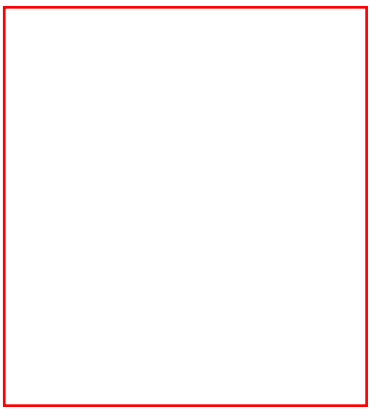
"Without a form how can God be mediated upon? If (He is) without any form, where will the mind fix itself? When there is nothing for the mind to attach itself to, it will slip away from meditation or will glide into a state of slumber. Therefore the wise will meditate on some form, remembering, however, that the form is a superimposition and not a reality."

Symbolism, for two reasons, plays a greater role in the religion and art of India than in those of other nations. For one thing, India's is the oldest continuous civilization in the world. **Its traditions extend back long before recorded history. For another, the Indian mind, having established itself firmly in the belief in a transcendental reality, is completely comfortable with an exuberance in its expression of images and allegories that comes from knowing and accepting that everything is illusory anyway.**

"Aham Brahm asmi (I am Bramh/the spirit or essence of everything)," "Tat twam asi (Thou art that/Bramh alone exists and is the essence of everything), "Aham sa (I am He(Bramh)/an individual is a soul wrapped up in a physical body)," ? Since the unenlightened mind hasn't the capacity to perceive these statements as proceeding from the ultimate refinement of consciousness. **These lofty teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads had to be clothed in symbolism, and presented in allegories.** The purpose of concealing them in part to protect the truth from profanation, and in part also to ensure their endurance during centuries of spiritual darkness. The hope was to suggest to deep truth seekers, at least, that there are levels of truth beyond any of those suggested by orthodox religions.

A painting of Lord Krishna playing his flute awakens devotion in the hearts of Hindu devotees, because it reminds them of God calling the soul to eternal wakefulness in Him.

(source: **The Hindu Awakening: Its Revelation, Its Symbols** - **By Swami Kriyananda (J Donald Walters)** p. 28--49).



The idea of Bramh put forward in the Upanishads is not one which can satisfy the demands of the mind. The 'knowing' of which the Upanishads speaks is of a different order. Bramh-Atman can only be known by identify with it, by direct intuition. It is therefore not surprising that in the period succeeding the Upanishads the idea of Bramh came to be clothed in forms which the human mind and the imagination can grasp. The result was a vigorous development of theism, during which gods and goddesses which today characterize Hinduism assumed much of its character. Gods and goddesses are the varied expressions of the one all-pervasive Reality.

The Hindu deities are not viewed as separate and rival powers, but as different functions, different aspects, different ways of understanding and approaching the one Reality.

Perhaps the first thing to strike a Western observer about Hindu deities is the multiplicity of limbs they display. Nineteenth century writers, brought up on Greek sculpture, found this grotesque and inexplicable. Yet the reason why the Hindu deities are represented in this way is very simple: it is

to show that they are gods, that they differ from human beings and have more and greater powers than we do. Thus, Vishnu is usually shown with four arms, but his avataars or incarnations, Rama and Krishna, who have human forms, are invariably represented with two.

(source: **The Elements of Hinduism - By Stephen Cross** 30 -32).

T. A. Gopinath Rao, author of **Elements of Hindu Iconography** writes: **"It has been said that images are to the Hindu worshipper what diagrams are to the geometrician."**

(source: **The Spirit of Modern India - Edited by Robert A McDermont and V. S. Naravane** p. 136).

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) The late curator of Indian art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, was unexcelled in his knowledge of the art of the Orient, and unmatched in his understanding of Indian culture, language, religion and philosophy. He is the author of ' The Dance of Shiva: Essays on Indian Art and Culture'

To conceive of Hinduism as a polytheistic system is in itself a naivete of which only a Western student, inheriting Graeco-Roman concept of "paganism" could be capable. The Hindu Ishavara (Supreme God) is not a jealous God because all gods are aspects of Him, imagined by His worshippers; in the words of **Lord Krishna**: "When any devotee seeks to worship any aspect with faith, and when by worshipping any aspect he wins what he desires, it is none other than Myself that grants his prayers. Howsoever men approach Me, so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine."

This was the Hindu method; Indian religion adapts herself with infinite grace to every human need.

(source: **The Infinite Grace of Images - The Spirit of Modern India - Edited by Robert A McDermont** and **V. S. Naravane** p. 136 - 149).

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Ganesha - The Lord of Beginnings

Lord Ganesha, popularly known and easily recognized as the Elephant-God, is one of the most important deities of the Hindu patheon. Before every undertaking, be it laying of the foundation of a house, or opening of a store or beginning any other work, Lord Ganesha is first worshipped so at to invoke his blessings.

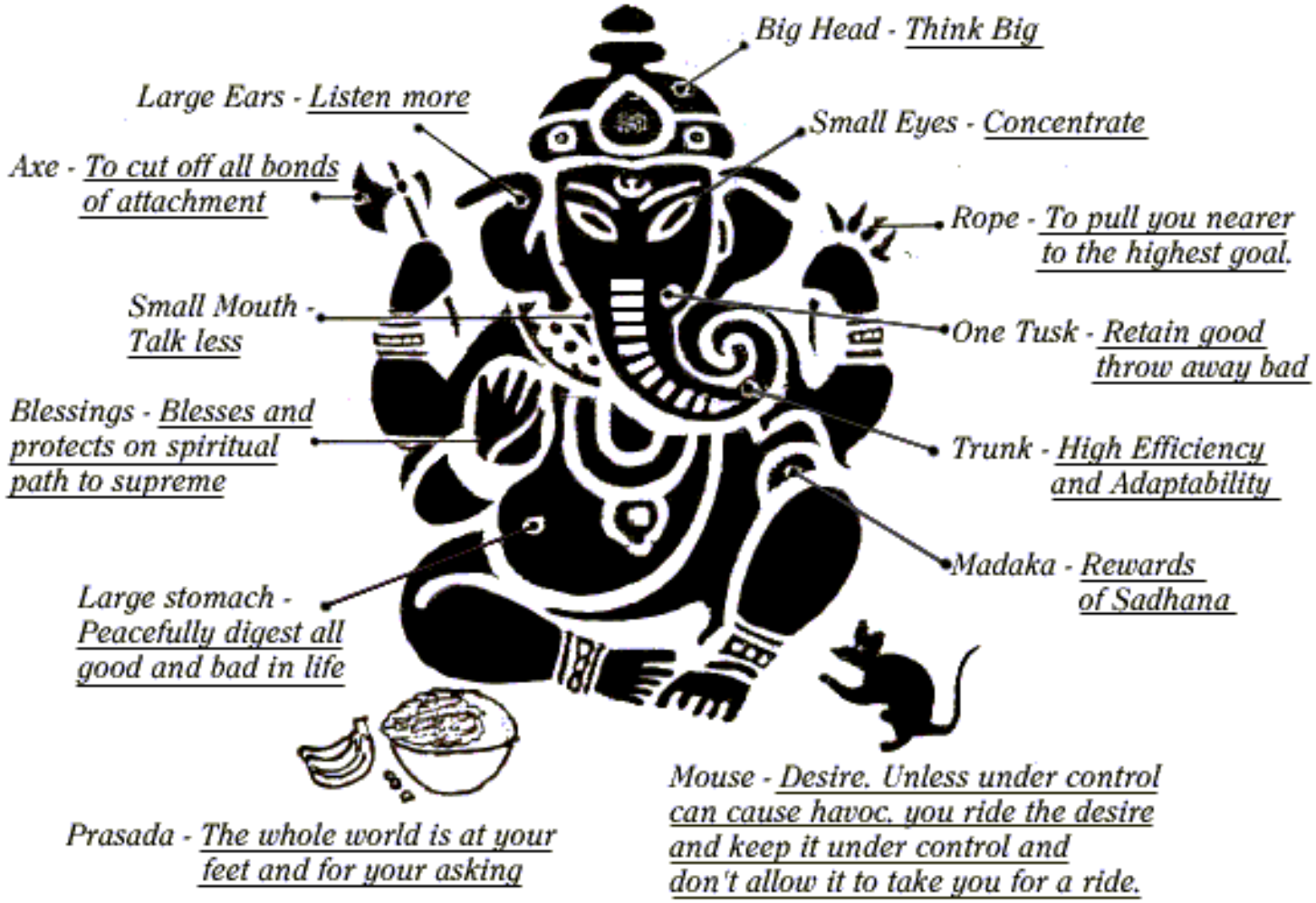
Ganesha has many names. The main ones are Ganapati (lord of the ganas, or attendants), Vighneshwara (controller of all obstacles), Vinayaka (the prominent leader), Gajaanana (elephant-faced), Lambodara (pendant-bellied), and Ekdanta (having one tusk).



Lord Ganesha - the lord of beginnings
(source: Indian Art - By Vidya Dehejia)

Lord Ganesha, also called Ganapati or Vinayaka, is presented in the form of a human body with the head of an elephant. This blend of human and animal parts is a symbolic representation of a perfect human being, as conceived by Hindu sages. His head symbolizes wisdom, understanding, and a discriminating intellect that one must possess to attain perfection in life. By worshipping Ganesha, a Hindu seeks God's blessings for achieving success in one's endeavors in the physical world and for attaining perfection thereafter. **Hence, Hindus worship Ganesha to seek God's blessings before beginning such activities.**

Lord Ganesha is the son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati (a form of Goddess Durga). The other son of Lord Shiva is Karttikeya also known as Muruga, Skanda, Subramanya, Shanmukha. Ganesha has got two wives, one named Siddhi (Success) and the other named Riddhi (Prosperity). One who pleases the Lord, automatically comes in the good books of his two wives. Ganesha, the embodiment of wisdom, is also depicted as the scribe to whom sage Vyasa dictated the Mahabharata. He is accepted as the god of learning and the patron of letters.



The ancient sages, in their infinite wisdom, have designed Hindu deities with specific Vedantic attributes in mind.

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Ganesha was born on the fourth day of the month of Bhadrapad, the sixth month of the Hindu lunar calendar. In the south, especially in Maharashtra people celebrate 'Ganesh Chaturthi' by buying or making of clay image of Ganesha, worshipping the idol at home or a community center and then taking it in a procession to be immersed in a river, lake or sea.

Vighneshwara (Remover or controller of all obstacles), Who is Ganapati/Ganesa? Ganapati is the Self. In a sentence, Ganesa simply means **"Self-realization is but the removal of obstacles to the recognition of the eternal, immanent, inner self, here and now."**

(source: **Ganapati: Song of the Self - By John A. Grimes** p. 194).

Ganesha has been a major deity, since the seventh and eighth centuries, in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. It is from Vinayaka that the old Myanmar name for Ganesha, Mahapinary purha, was derived. Other names with a similar meaning occur frequently in Cambodian inscriptions, such as Vighnesha and Vignesvara, both of which mean "Lord of removing obstacles". A popular temple at Futako Tamagawa, Tokyo, Japan, displays Ganesha far more prominently than Buddha. Ganesha was extremely popular in the art of Indonesian islands, especially of Sumatra and Java and compare favorably with the eighth-century Ellora caves, in images, style and iconography. At Candi Sukuh in central Java, a remarkable fifteenth century relief shows three figures, with a dancing Ganesha in the centre. There are

paintings and stone sculptures of the deity found in China, apart from the textual references to Ganesha in the Chinese Buddhist canon. In Japan, there is the Shingon ritual practice that centers on Ganesha, with texts tracing back to China. In the Tibetan Buddhism, the practice associated with Ganesha, as Buddhist Tantric deity, survives up to this day. In Jainism, Ganesha occasionally found a place alongside Mahabir. The Tibetan Ganesha appears, besides bronzes, in the resplendent Thangka paintings alongside the Buddha. In a single Kathmandu valley of Nepal, there are four principal manifestations of "Binayak" in a protective role: Ashok, Surya, Chandra and Bighna. In that valley, Ganapati guards the Buddhist viharas where bhajans are sung in his praise. In Greece, Janus, the god in Greek mythology after whom the month of January was named, has the head of an elephant. Sometimes, he is depicted as a two-headed deity. Like Ganesha, Janus is worshipped at the beginning of any auspicious occasion. In Sri Lanka, the oldest image of Ganesha is found in the Kantak Chaitya in Mihintale which is dated to 1st century BC. The Ganesha idol at Subrahmanyam temple in Katargama town is still worshipped. People who do not practice Hinduism also visit this temple for this Ganesha is believed to grant the wishes of his devotees. For more refer to chapter on **Suvarnabhumi** and **India and China**.

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Trimurti - (Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu & Lord Shiva)



Trimurti - the three apparently contradictory aspects of existence:
"creation, conservation and dissolution, which are "one and the same thing as to the origin, the significance and the term."

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According to French art historian, **Rene Grousset** (1885-1952) who speaks of the Trimurti statue at **Elephanta Caves**:

"Universal art has succeeded in few materialization of the Divine as powerful and also as balanced. He believed that it is "the greatest representation of the pantheistic god created by the hands of man." He concludes with poetic enthusiasm: "Never have the overflowing sap of life, the pride of force superior to everything, the secret intoxication of the inner god of things been so serenely expressed."

(source: **The India I Love - By Marie-Simone Renou** p. 88-93).

In the words of Rene Grousset, " The three countenances of the one being are here harmonized without a trace of effort. There are few material representations of the divine principle at once as powerful and as well balanced as this in the art of the whole world. Nay, more, here we have undoubtedly the grandest representation of the pantheistic God ever made by the hand of man...Indeed, never have the exuberant vigor of life, the tumult of universal joy expressing itself in ordered harmony, the pride of a power superior to any other, and the secret exaltation of the divinity immanent in all things found such serenely expressed."

(source: **The Civilization of the East – India - by Rene Grousset** p.245-6).

The Hindu Trinity also called Trimurti (meaning three forms), is the **representation of the three manifestations of the Supreme Reality**, as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Brahma symbolizes creation, Vishnu preservation and renewal, and Shiva dissolution or destruction necessary for recreation. It must be understood that the members of the Hindu Trinity are not three different and independent gods, but three aspects of one Supreme Reality called Bramh by the seers of the Upanishads.



1. Lord Brahma - the first member of the trinity though much less important than the other two, namely Vishnu and Mahesha, is manifested as the active creator of this universe. The name Brahma is not found in the Vedas and the Brahmanas, where the active creator is merely known as Golden-embryo **(Hirayna-garbha)** or the Lord of Progeny (Praja-pati). The Mahabharata considers him as born from the embryo which took shape in Vishnu's mind when he began to think of creation.

After the destruction of one universe Vishnu falls asleep, floating on the causal waters. When another universe is to be created, Brahma appears on a lotus, which springs from the navel of Vishnu. Hence Brahma is also called Navel-born (Nabhi-ja) or the Lotus-born (Kinja-ja). When Brahma creates the world it remains in existence for one of his days, which means 2,160,000,000 years in terms of Hindu calendar.

When Brahma goes to sleep after the end of his day, the world and all that is therein is consumed by fire. When he awakes he again restores the whole creation. This goes on till the hundred years of Brahma's life is completed. When this period ends he himself loses his existence, and he all gods and sages, and the whole universe are dissolved into their constituent elements.

Today though Brahma's name is invoked in many religious services, his image is worshipped in only a few temples. Brahma seems to have been thrown into shade probably because in Hindu mind he has ceased to function actively after creation of the world, though he will exert himself again while creating a new universe when this present one will meet its end. Understandably, the legends about this god are not so numerous or rich as those centered round the other two of the trinity.

Brahma has four arms and he holds a lotus flower, his sceptre, his bow parivita, a string of beads, a bowl containing the holy water and the Vedas. He has four heads and is therefore called Chaturanana or Chaturmukha. His vehicle is the swan or goose, the symbol of knowledge. He is therefore said to be riding on the swan (hansa-vahana). He is the source of all knowledge and his consort, **Saraswati**, is the goddess of knowledge.



2. Lord Vishnu is the central and major deity of the trinity. He is the preserver and for all practical purposes he is deemed to be omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. The name Vishnu comes from the root vish, which means to spread in all directions, "to pervade." Hence, Vishnu is the Pervader.

Lord Vishnu symbolizes the aspect of the Supreme Reality (Bramh of the Upanishads) that preserves and sustains the things and beings in the world. He is symbolized by a human body with four arms. He is portrayed as carrying a conch (shankha), a mace (gada), and discus (chakra). He is blue body and wears yellow clothes. The worship of Lord Vishnu is very popular among Hindus, especially among the followers of the Vaishanava tradition (Vaishnavism). He is the second member of the Hindu Trimurti (trinity). He is also known by other names , such as Vasudeva, Hari, Kesava, Purusottama and Narayana.

It is said that Vishnu is the god of Time, Space and Life. It is also said that he is the god of Joy and that his footsteps are impregnated with infinite sweetness and felicity."

The worshippers of Vishnu, known as Vaishnavas, recognize in him the Supreme Being, out of whom emerge Brahma, the active creator, Vishnu himself the preserver, and Shiva or Rudra, the destructor. Vishnu's preserving, restoring and protecting powers have been manifest on earth in a variety of forms, called Avataras, in which one or more portions of his divine attributes were embodied in the shapes of a human being or an animal or a human-animal combined forms. He is bleu-skinned and in all images and relief he is seen in rich ornaments and regal garments. His wife is Lakshmi or Sri, the goddess of wealth and fortune. His place of abode is Vaikuntha (heaven) and his vehicle is Garuda, a giant-sized eagle .

Vishnu is the infinite ocean from which the world emerges. The blue body of the Lord signifies that He has infinite (as the universe) attributes. The Lord is shown standing or lying down on a thousand-headed snake (named **Shesha or Ananta Nag - timeless or ageless snake**). The snake stands with its hoods open over the head of the Lord.

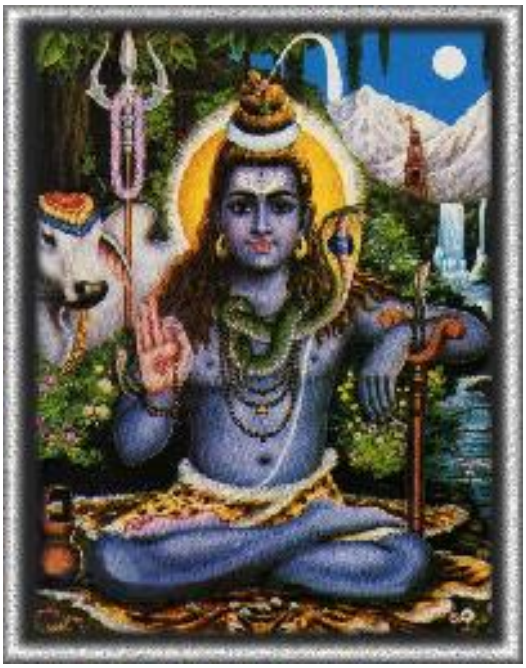
The following ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu are described in Hindu mythology and are popular. These incarnations reveal the help rendered by God during various stages of human evolution. The first two incarnations are in the animal form, the third one is half-human and half-animal, and the fourth and the subsequent ones are all in human form. **These incarnations relate to human evolution, from aquatic life to human life, and are consistent with modern theory of evolution.**

1. **Matsya (fish) -** saves Sage Manu from floods and recovers the Vedas from demons. The only (ancient) temple for Matsya Vishnu's incarnation at the time of the "great flood" is only found at Shankhodhara in Bet Dwaraka.
2. **Kurma (tortoise) -** sustains the earth on his back.
3. **Varaha (boar) -** brings the earth back from the bottom of the ocean where it was dragged down by a demon, known as Hiranyaksha; Varaha kills the demon.
4. **Narasimha (man-lion) -** kills the demon King Hiranyakashipu, who was planning to kill his own son, a devotee of Lord Vishnu.
5. **Vamana (dwarf) -** the first human incarnation of the Lord, kills the demon King Mahabhali, who had

deprived the gods of their possessions.
6. **Parasurama (the warrior with an axe) -** saves Brahmins from the tyranny of the arrogant Khastriya.
7. **Rama** - kills Ravana, the demon king of Lanka.
8. **Sri Krishna** - the most popular incarnation; Krishna's contributions throughout his life include the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna.
9. **Buddha -** Hindus consider Buddha as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and accept his teachings, but do not directly worship him.
10. **Kalkin - (a man on a white horse) -** this incarnation is yet to come and will mark the end of all evil in the world.

(For more on Vishnu avatars refer to **The Hindu Mind - By Bansi Pandit** p. 167 and **A Survey of Hinduism - by Klaus K Klostermaier** p. 146 and 241and **Hinduism - By Linda Johnsen** p. 184-193).

3. Lord Shiva - The Grace and the Terror of God



Lord Shiva represents the complete cyclic process of generation, destruction, and regeneration. The all embracing nature of Lord Shiva is reflected in his 1008 names. Lord Shiva represents the aspect of the Supreme Reality (Bramh of the Upanishads) which continuously recreates, in the cyclic process of creation, preservation, dissolution and recreation. He annihilates evil, grants boons, bestows grace, destroys ignorance, and awakens wisdom in His devotees. He is also called Rudra. In Yajur-Veda, Rudra is also called "Mahadeva."

One of the three great gods of Hinduism, Siva is a living god. The most sacred and most ancient book of India, the Rg Veda, evokes his presence in its hymns; Vedic myths, rituals, and even astronomy itself testify to his existence from the dawn of time. From the dawn of creation, the Great Yogi, the sum of all opposites, has been the guardian of the absolute. **He is the totality of existence - male and female, light and dark, creation and destruction.**

Shiva is shown in various ways. Shiva another well-known name is **Yogiraja**, i.e. the Lord of Yoga.

He is seated on a skin of a tiger, a number of cobras all around his neck, his long matted hair into a mop atop of his head, the crescent that he wears on the mop of his hair, the sacred river **Ganga** falling from his head and flowing by his side who was brought down from heavens by Bhagiratha, the trident (**trishula**), the symbol of his power, the sacred bull (**Nandi**), and the mendicant's bowl. Besides, these symbols another very important physical characteristic of Shiva is his vertical third eye. In **Mahabharata**, the great Hindu epic, the legend of how Shiva got the third eye is given this way. One day his beautiful consort **Parvati** (daughter of the King of Himalayas), stealthily went behind Shiva and playfully placed her hands over his eyes. Suddenly darkness engulfed the whole world and all beings trembled in great fear as the lord of the universe had closed his eyes. Suddenly a massive tongue of flame leapt from the forehead of Shiva; a third eye appeared there and this gave light to the world.

Another popular image of Shiva has no human form but is represented by **Linga - The Linga of Light**

The myth is one of the most popular of the entire **Puranic** corpus and is told many times in various settings. It recounts the first appearance of Shiva linga which pierced the three worlds as a brilliant shaft of light and was witnessed by Brahma and Vishnu long ago.

The **Vedas,** however, testify one by one that neither Brahma nor Vishnu, but Shiva is supreme. As the two stand in disbelief, **a huge column of fire splits the earth between them and blazes up through the sky to pierce the highest heavens.** Astounded, Brahma and Vishnu decide to determine the source and extent of this brilliant pillar of light. Vishnu becomes a boar and burrows deep into the netherworlds. Brahma mounts his goose and flies as far up as the heavens reach. But even after thousands of years they cannot find the bottom or the top of the shaft of light. When they have returned to their starting place, Shiva emerges from the light in

his “partial” bodily form.

The linga of light is thus the image of the supremacy of Shiva. It is as what Mircea Eliade has called the **axis mundi** or **the pillar at the center of the world, originating deep in the netherworlds, cracking the surface of the earth, and splitting the roof of the sky.** In this linga Shiva is not one god among others, but the unfathomable One. This light is the mysterium tremendum which finally cannot be described or comprehended by any or all faces and attributes.

The linga of light was the first linga. After that, Shiva vowed that this unfathomable linga would become small so that people might have it as an emblem for their worship. Wherever, the linga is, there is a tirtha, because the linga by nature is a “crossing place” where the worlds are knit together by the shaft of Shiva. Other deities have murits, images, but only Shiva has the world-spanning form of a linga.”



The word linga means an **emblem, symbol or a mark** and the worship of this shaft alarmed and horrified many early Western visitors to India. In Varanasi, at the famed Kedarnath temple there is a Sivalingam in the main sanctum, which is a low flat rock with speckled light granite on one side, a line of white granite going across the rock and on the other side dark speckled granite. The **Puranic** story is that this lingam represents a plate of rice and lentils. The linga is certainly a bisexual symbol but not a phallic symbol alone. The shaft of the linga of Shiva is set in a circular base, called a "seat." It is the seat of that **divine energy** (shaki) personified as Shiva's **female half** and often called by the proper name **Shakti.**

Many ancient civilizations recognized the wonder of this concept- including the Chinese, who represent it somewhat more abstractly in the symbol of Yin and Yang. Thus it depicts the generative symbol or the fountain-source of light, this Linga represents the Lord of the Universe. The phallus aspect has been overdone by **western scholars** though Linga actually means a 'sign', 'mark' or 'symbol.

(source: **Banaras: City of Light - By Diana L. Eck** p 107-109).

The **Sanskrit-English Dictionary** edited by P. K. Gode and C. G. Karve is widely regarded as an authoritative work and it gives a wide range of meanings for lingam:

"**The primary meaning given is: “A mark, sign, token, an emblem, a badge, symbol, distinguishing mark, characteristic.”**

Shiva-lingam is a sign by which Shiva is symbolized. Note that besides the popular Shiva-lingam of the column or round egg-shaped sign, the Natraja is also the lingam of the dancing Shiva, symbolizing the universe’s creation, sustenance and dissolution. The trishul (“weapon” that pierces the veil of ignorance) is his lingam in the context of yoga, as he is also considered the supreme yogi. The Maitrayaniya-Upanishad (6.10) applies the term lingam to the entire “creation extending from the first principle (mahat)to the particulars (vishesha). It contrasts this with the linga that is “without foundation”, i.e. the unthinkable Reality itself.

In the Mahabharata (12.195.15) the linga is the vehicle, or body, of the transmigrating psyche. The term linga can also denote the phallus or, by extension, the cosmic principle of creativity.

(source: **The Meaning of Lingam - By Rajeev Malhotra**).

God, to us is not the creator who lives apart from the Universe but has manifested Himself as the Universe and pervades everything within. Thus, He is the indweller in all beings, material and energy. He has no form but at the same time, all forms are His. **Linga Purana** states, 'The foremost Linga which is devoid of smell, color,

taste, hearing, touch, etc, is spoken of as prakriti (nature).

Linga means a "mark" in Sanskrit. It is a symbol that points to an inference.

When one sees a big flood in a river, one infers that there had been heavy rain earlier. When one sees smoke, one infers that there is fire. This vast Universe of countless forms is a Linga of the omnipotent Lord. When a Hindu looks at the Linga, his mind is at once elevated and he thinks of the Lord, especially Lord Siva. A Hindu knows that Lord Siva is formless. Lord Siva has no form of his own; and yet, all forms are His forms. Lord Siva pervades all forms. Every form is the form or Linga of Lord Siva. **The Linga is only the outward symbol of the formless being, Lord Siva— Lord Siva incarnate, who is the indivisible, all-pervading, eternal, auspicious, ever-pure, immortal essence of this vast universe, who is the undying soul seated in the chambers of one's heart, who is one's Indweller, innermost Self or Atman and who is identical with the Supreme Brahman.**

(source: **Sivalinga, the Formless Form** - **Hinduismtoday.com** 2001).

Another image of **Ardhanarishwara**, represents Lord Shiva as the **union of substance and energy**, the life principle and **Shakti.**

Shiva, as Destroyer, needs plenty of power and energy. This is what Parvati, or Durga or Shakti as she is called, provides. **It is only the Hindu tradition, which provides, even at the conceptual level, this picture of the male and female principles working together, hand in hand, as equal partners in the universe.** This concept is carried further to its logical climax in the form of Ardhanarishwara, formed by the fusion of Shiva and Shakti in one body, each occupying one half of the body, denoting that one is incomplete without the other.

Shivaratri, i.e. Shiva's Night is the famous festival in honor of Lord Shiva. It is held on the 14th night of the dark half moon in the month of Magha (Jan-Feb).



Marriage of Shiva and Parvati

The most celebrated Shiva motif is that of the **Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance. The Cosmos is His theatre, there are many different steps in His repertory, He Himself is actor and audience.** This is the pose in which Shiva Nataraja has been immortalized in countless beautiful sculptures, especially in South India, each detail of this image is invested with meaning. This image symbolizes the divine activities of God. " Creation

arises from the drum, (sound) protection proceeds from the hand of hope, from fire proceeds destruction, from the foot that is planted upon muyalahan (dwarf) proceeds the destruction of evil, the foot held aloft gives deliverance." His serene smile shows his uninvolved transcendence, the three eyes are interpreted as sun, moon, and fire, or as the three powers of Shiva: will, knowledge, and action. The garland of skulls around his neck identifies him as time, and the death of all beings. Chidambaram is where Shiva is said to dance his cosmic drama.

"Grandest of all such representations symbolizing a synthesis of science, art and religion is the image of Nataraja as the Cosmic Dancer. The central idea of the dance is creation, preservation, destruction, giving rest and release.

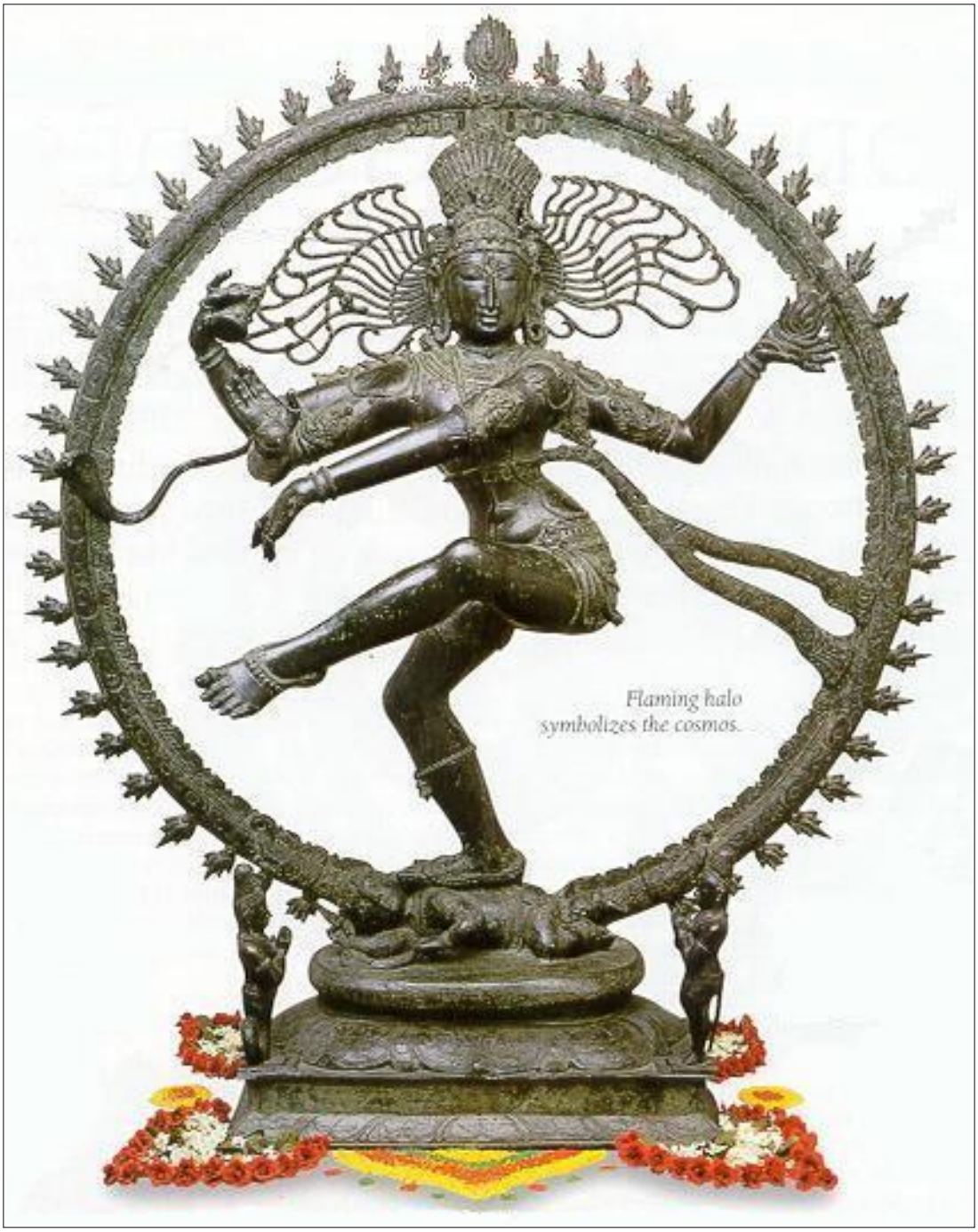
Rene Grousset's (1885-1952) French art historian, gives a fine interpretation of the image:

"Whether he be surrounded or not by the flaming aureole of the Tiruvasi (Pabhamandala) – the circle of the world which he both fills and oversteps – the King of the Dance is all rhythm and exaltation. The tambourine which he sounds with one of his right hands draws all creatures into this rhythmic motion and they dance in his company. The conventionalized locks of flying hair and the blown scarfs tell of the speed of this universal movement, which crystallizes matter and reduces it to powder in turn. One of his left hands holds the fire which animates and devours the worlds in this cosmic whirl. One of the God's feet is crushing a Titan, for "this dance is danced upon the bodies of the dead", yet one of the right hands is making a gesture of reassurance (abhayamudra), so true it is that, seen from the cosmic point of view…the very cruelty of this universal determinism is kindly, as the generative principle of the future. And, indeed, on more than one of our bronzes the King of the Dance wears a broad smile. He smiles at death and at life, at pain and at joy, alike, or rather,..his smile is death and life, both joy and pain…**From this lofty point of view, in fact, all things fall into their place, finding their explanation and logical compulsion. Here art is the faithful interpreter of a philosophical concept.** The plastic beauty of the rhythm is no more than the expression of an ideal rhythm. The very multiplicity of arms, puzzling as it may seem at first sight, is subject in turn to an inward law, each pair remaining a model of elegance in itself, so that the whole being of the Nataraja thrills with a magnificent harmony in his terrible joy. And as though to stress the point that the dance of the divine actor is indeed a sport, (lila) – the sport of life and death, the sport of creation and destruction, at once infinite and purposeless – the first of the left hands hangs limply from the arm in the careless gesture of the gajahasta (hand as the elephant's trunk). And lastly, as we look at the back view of the statue, are not the steadiness of these shoulders which uphold world, and the majesty of this Jove-like torso, as it were a symbol of the stability and immutability of substance, while the gyration of the legs in its dizzy speed would seem to symbolize the vortex of phenomena."

(source: **The Civilization of the East – India - by Rene Grousset** p. 252 - 53).

"Be it in the Vedas, the Upanishads or the Puranas, the Lord Shiva is always referred to with great reverence as well as under different names. The conception of Shiva is not simply that of a godhead whose powers have become concentrated in a single figure dominating a certain period of Indian history. Shiva is identified with the Eternal and All powerful; he is the Primal Soul and the great Soul from which unaccounted other souls have sprung. Shiva is beauty, Shiva is all, he is everywhere. There is no life, no motion and no rhythm without Siva, for he is the Cosmos itself."

(source: **La Danse Hindoue - by Usha Chatterji** Translated from the English By Manah Garreau-Dombasle).



Nataraja, the King of the Dance

An entire cosmology, theology and way of salvation are embodied in this single form. To really see the meanings of Nataraja is to see into the inner workings of our own existence. Though all sacred art in India is deeply symbolic, the one figure of Nataraja can lay the workings of our life before us.

(source: **Travel through Sacred India** - **By Roger Housden** p. 110).

The Form of Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer, **"a symbol of superhuman lyricism by which....medieval India has expressed its heroic adhesion...to Joy, Pain and Universal Force."**

To summarize the whole interpretation of Shiva's dance: The Essential Significance of Siva's Dance is threefold: First, it is the image of his Rhythmic Play as the Source of all Movement within the Cosmos, which is Represented by the arch; Secondly, the Purpose of his Dance is to Release the Countless souls of men from the Snare of Illusion; Thirdly, the Place of Dance, Chidambaran, the Center of the Universe, is within the Heart.

The cosmic activity is the central motif of the dance.

Ananda K Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) the late curator of Indian art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, was unexcelled in his knowledge of the art of the Orient, and unmatched in his understanding of Indian culture, language, religion and philosophy. Praising this grand achievement of art, he writes:

"This conception itself is a synthesis of science, religion and art. In the night of Brahma, Nature is inert, and cannot dance till Shiva wills it. He rises from His rapture, and dancing sends through inert matter pushing waves of awakening sound, and lo! matter also dances appearing as a glory round about Him. This is poetry; but nonetheless, science.

Whatever the origins of Siva's dance, it became in time the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of.

"How amazing the range of thought and sympathy of those rishi-artists who conceived such a type as this, affording an image of reality, a key to the complex tissue of life, a theory of nature, note merely satisfactory to a single clique or race, not acceptable to the thinkers of a country only, but Universal in its appeal to the philosopher, the lover and the artist of all ages and all countries…"

"Every part of such an image as this is directly expressive not of any superstition or dogma, but of evident facts. **No artist of today, however great, could more exactly or more wisely create an image of that Energy which science must postulate behind all phenomena.** "It is not strange that the figure of Nataraja has commanded the adoration of so many generations past; familiar with all skepticisms, expert in tracing all beliefs to primitive superstitions, explorers of the infinitely great and infinitely small, we are worshippers of Nataraja still."

(source: **The Dance of Shiva - By Dr. Ananda K Coomaraswamy** p. 57-66).

The late astrophysicist, **Carl Sagan** (1934-1996) in his book, Cosmos, asserts that the **Dance of Nataraja** (Tandava) signifies the cycle of evolution and destruction of the cosmic universe (Big Bang Theory). "It is the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of." Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the seasons and in the birth and death of all living creatures, but also the very essence of inorganic matter. For modern physicists, then, Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter. Hundreds of years ago, Indian artist created visual images of dancing Shivas in a beautiful series of bronzes. Today, physicist have used the most advanced technology to portray the pattern of the cosmic dance. Thus, the metaphor of the cosmic dance unifies, ancient religious art and modern physics.

He further says: **" The most elegant and sublime of these is a representation of the creation of the universe at the beginning of each cosmic cycle, a motif known as the cosmic dance of Lord Shiva. The god, called in this manifestation Nataraja, the Dance King. In the upper right hand is a drum whose sound is the sound of creation. In the upper left hand is a tongue of flame, a reminder that the universe, now newly created, with billions of years from now will be utterly destroyed."**

(source: **Cosmos - By Carl Sagan** p. 213-214).

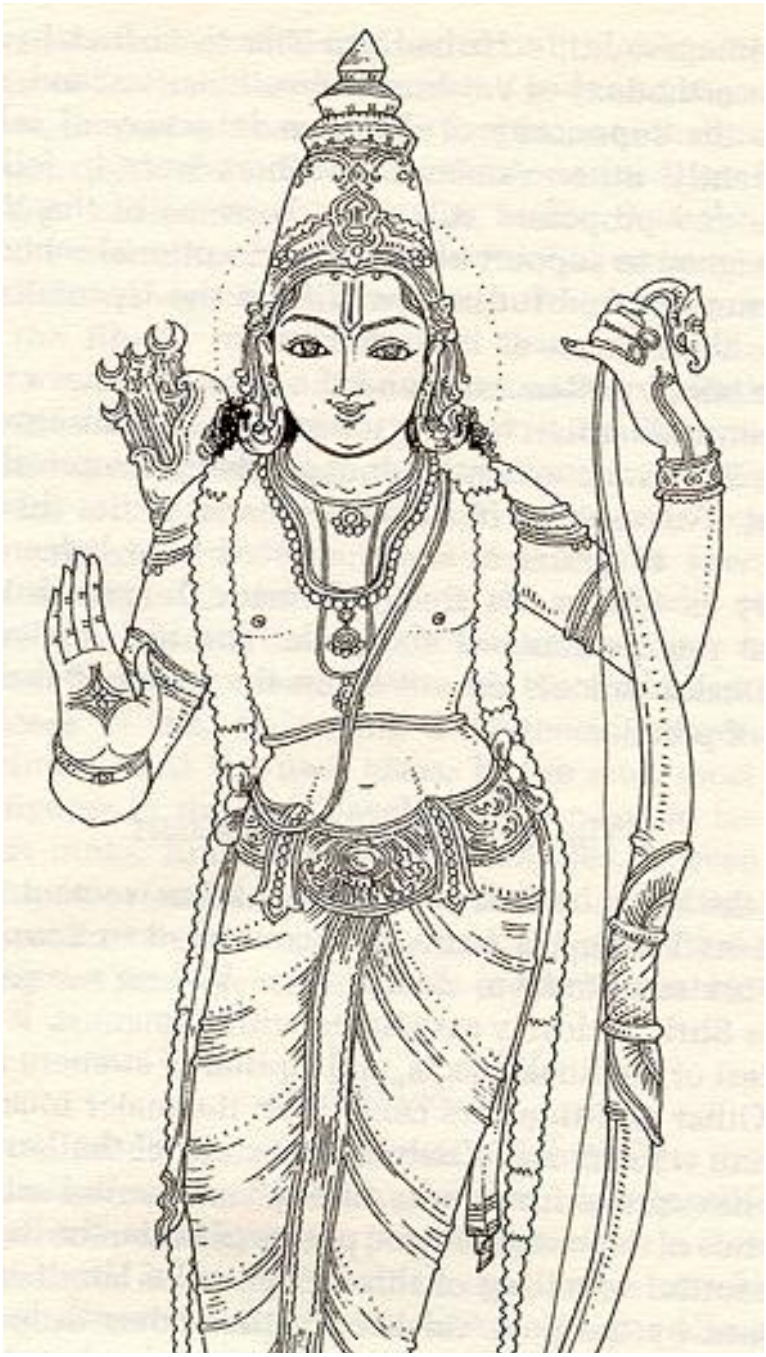
Fritjof Capra (1939 -) Austrian-born famous theoretical high-energy physicist and ecologist wrote:

"Modern physics has thus revealed that every subatomic particle not only performs an energy dance, but also **is** an energy dance; a pulsating process of creation and destruction. The **dance of Shiva is the dancing universe**, the ceaseless flow of energy going through an infinite variety of patterns that melt into one another''.For the modern physicists, then Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter. As in Hindu mythology, it is a continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos; the basis of all existence and of all natural phenomenon. Hundreds of years ago, Indian artists created visual images of dancing Shivas in a beautiful series of bronzes. In our times, physicists have used the most advanced technology to portray the patterns of the cosmic dance."

(source: **The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism - By Fritjof Capra** p. 241-245). For more refer to chapters **Quotes251_270**, **Advanced Concepts**, **Hindu Cosmology** and **Hindu Art**).

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Lord Ram



Lord Ram, the **dark skinned God** - is the seventh Avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu. Born during the second age of the world called Treta Yuga, he is the immortal hero of the great religious epic of India, the **Ramayana**. Lord Ram, the most famous incarnation of God, appeared on Rama-navami (Chaitra 9). He is known as **Maryada Purusottama** and is the emblem righteousness.

Ram occupies a very reverential place in the religious life of India and in the religious history of the world. He is the embodiment of righteousness and is believed to be incarnation of the solar aspect of Lord Vishnu.

The Ramayana was written by **Rishi Valmiki**, who is also considered as the father of epic style of poetry. Innumerable temples are scattered all over India with the images of Ram, his younger brother Lakshman and his consort Sita, and sitting in devotional posture is Hanuman, the greatest devotee of Lord Ram.

Raama was dark; like Vishnu; MeghaVarnam, KaalaMegham, MeghaShyaamam are the various descriptions of Vishnu.

Lord Ram is depicted to be having two arms and not four, which emphasizes the character of Ram as a human being and the way god Vishnu preferred to adopt this form just to re-establish the golden age of justice and happiness. The expression of **Rama Rajya** even today means the reign in which peace and prosperity prevails.

Ram lived during the end of the **Treta Yuga** or the second age of the world, when the sages, the holy men and even gods were terrorized and alarmed by the misdeeds of **Ravana,** the demonic king of Lanka. Ravana had pleased Brahma, who had given the boon of invulnerability from the wrath of



god or goddess. Ravana misused his power, and to provide deliverance, Lord Vishnu promises to descend on the earth in the form of a man by taking birth as a son to Dasharatha, a king of Ayodhya.

The festivals associated with Rama's incarnation and celebrated in India are Ram Navmi, Dussehra and Diwali. The first one is associated with the birth of Lord Rama. Dussehra is the culmination of the ten-day celebrations, organized to exhibit the episodes of the life of Lord Rama. On the tenth day the last episode of Rama's victory over Ravana is shown and the effigies of Ravana, his brother Kumbhakarna and his son Indrajit are burnt amidst loud rejoicing. Diwali is celebrated on the day on which Rama was crowned after his return to Ayodhya with Sita.

According to one of the Upanishads, named **Rama-purv-tapni Upanishad**, "Just as the whole nature of the large banyan tree is contained in its tiny seed, so also the whole universe moving and unmoving, is contained in the seed word Rama."

हरी ॐ , जय राम जी की !

हरी ॐ , जय राम जी की !



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Lord Krishna

The Lotus-Eyed God. Keshava, One Who Has Long, Black Matted Locks. **Krishna, Dark-Complexioned Lord.**



Krishna, the god who delivered the message of the **Bhagavad Gita** (**the timeless masterpiece of Spiritual wisdom**) to **Arjuna**, is worshipped in thousands of temples throughout India.

Krishna, "the Dark One," because of the dark color of his skin, was born to Devaki in prison. As a lovable child, as a shrewd diplomat, as a great sage and even as a fearless man of action, Krishna's personality has fascinated for ages not only Indians but also thinkers of other lands.

Krishna's picture is depicted in so may styles; in fact Lord Krishna has probably been the subject of numerous masterpieces of art. Sometimes he is shown as a child eating butter, at other times he is seen dancing with maidens or playing the flute or advising Arjuna in the battlefield of **Kurukshetra.** Krishna's skin color is blue the color of the sky.

The eighth incarnation of Vishnu, Krishna, has evolved into a distinct and composite persona over the millennia. Krishna devotees ardently look upon him as the Godhead, more emotively evocative than most of the other avatars.

His birthday on the eighth day in the dark fortnight of Sravana, in or around the month of August, is still celebrated with great joy and enthusiasm every year as Janmashtami. In many places, especially in Mathura, where he was born, *jhankis*, comprising glimpses into his childhood episodes, are displayed with lights and images of the divine child. In Maharashtra, pots of curd and buttermilk are hung high in the streets and human pyramids are formed to go up and reach out for their contents, reminiscent of the child Krishna's playful exploits for wresting milk and butter from the pots kept beyond his reach. A similar ceremony is observed in south India, where people climb up poles to win the prize money. The **Jagannath temple** at Puri has wooden images of Jagannath (Krishna), a Balabhadra (Balaram) and Subhadra, their sister.



Lord Krishna's awesome cosmic form

As for the theophany in the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, **Arjuna has a vision of Krishna's awesome cosmic form and feels overwhelmed.** The Lord assures him that those with an unswerving devotion to him, in the true spirit of bhakti, can see him. A complex amalgam of the human and the Divine, he is seen differently by different people. To the Pandavas he was their true friend and guide, to the cowherds he was just one of their own, to the Vrajagopis the highest object of love and the yogis saw him as the absolute truth. The Kurukshetra war symbolizes the perennial fight between the forces of light and darkness. The forces of light are guided by Krishna, the one who embodies cosmic consciousness, the Divine Incarnate who has come to lead humanity toward its greater destiny.

In the **Bhagavad Gita**, Krishna points out that to a warrior nothing is nobler than a righteous war and declares that one should do his duty without any attachment for results. He explains to Arjuna the three noble paths. First, is that of **Yoga** (knowledge), which means yoking mind and body to achieve perfect unity beyond the limits of thought and language; second is that of **Dharma** (righteousness), which means religious duties and customs, while the third is that of **Bhakti** (devotion). Devotion implies love to a personal God and complete surrender to

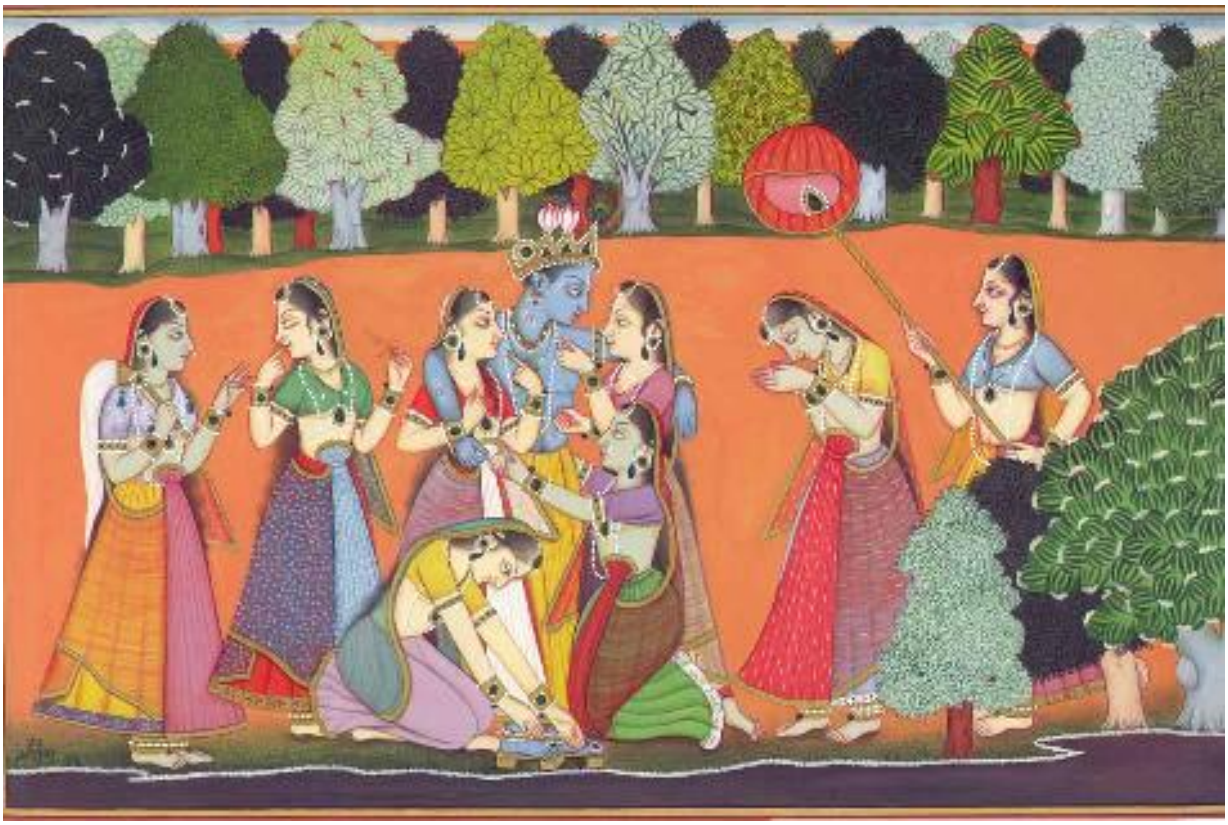
Him. This is the path that commands the strongest approval of Krishna. He says:

"Have your mind in Me, be devoted to Me, to Me shall you come...Though I am unborn, the changeless Self...to save the good and destroy evil doers, to establish the right, I am born from time to time."

Bhakti, as advocated in the Gita entailed total self-surrender to the supreme Lord in the form of Krishna, shorn of the wasteful accessories of costly rites and rituals, as a simple way to salvation, without displacing the methods of moksha through karma and gyana which evolved out of the Vedic religion.

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Krishna and the Gopis: Symbolic representation of a Passionate Lover to Inspire Souls.



Lord Krishna and gopikas

Krishna, the youthful and delightful flute-player: as **Murali-manohar**, "the handsome one with a flute" he is often depicted standing beneath a sacred Kadamba tree, with his flute to his lips, his leg crossed in a graceful pose, a garland of flowers round his neck, a milk cow at his side affectionately licks his foot. It is this image that has inspired much of the devotion of the **Alvar poets - Andal**, for example often imagines herself as one of the Gopis. Full of devotional fervor and charming detail, it has become the classical expression of devotion to Krishna. From then on the imagery of Krishna's love affair with the Gopis became irresistible. It swept across the whole of India as poet after poet poured out his or her devotion to Krishna. For a thousand years the arts of Hindu India - poetry and music, drama, painting and dance - have found their greatest inspiration in this vision of love in the blessed land of Braj.

The notes of Krishna's flute drifting through the woods are the call of the divine. Thus the objective of Bhakti is fulfilled, and the emotional life of man in all its richness and energy is sublimated and lifted onto the plane of the spiritual life. And, as in all real love, the individual forgets himself utterly and entirely: only the object of love, the divine Krishna, the Lord, the inner Self of man, remains.

The **Gita** says: **"God is the immutable center of infinite mobility."** and Krishna is the symbol of this.

Central to Krishna's childhood was his dance with the gopis, called **raasa-lila**, which later became the object of worship by many of the devotional sects. Scenes from raasa-lila are now enacted with great verve not only in

the Mathura-Vrindavan region but also in Assam and Manipur, sometimes in the Manipuri dance style.

The tales of women abandoning their families to run after him served as poetic expressions of the soul's quest for union with divinity. Worshippers of Krishna were expected to neglect all worldly duties to devote themselves single-mindedly to the adoration of the god.

Krishna's popularity derives partly from the fact that unlike other deities, Krishna appears in all the aspects of life usually associated with childhood, adolescence and adulthood--as a flute-playing trickster, lover of cowgirls and, finally, as a royal advisor on statecraft. What's endearing about Krishna is not so much his superhuman deeds but his human characteristics, captured in literature and art against the idyllic, pastoral background that still defines much of the Indian landscape. The Bhakti movement is broad and many-sided, and we can only touch on some of its aspects. It is first seen as distinct form around the fourth century B.C. Vasudeva (the good god), Bhagavan (the Adorable One), Narayana and Hari are several other names.



Numerous heroic incidents happened before Krishna left the human body and returned to his heavenly abode. Legend says that the gods, headed by Brahma and Shiva approached Krishna begging him to return as the latter's mission on earth had been completed. Krishna promised the gods that within seven nights he would complete the destruction of Yadavas and return to his perennial home. Bad omens started appearing in Dwaraka; strong hurricanes, screaming birds, wailing cats and dogs, howling jackals and headless spirits drew the attention of all Yadavas in Dwaraka. Krishna advised the residents to leave Dwaraka and move to Prabhasha, a site further inland.

Only Krishna and Daruka, his charioteer were left. Only those left behind at Dwarka were spared to continue the race of this tribe. Balarama, his brother and companion of Krishna, went to the seashore, performed yoga and left his body returning to his real self, viz. Sheshanaga, the serpent of eternity. Once when Krishna was sitting under a fig tree in a yogic posture a poisonous arrow by a hunter, mistakenly struck the sole of his left leg which served as a prelude for his final departure. He instructed Daruka, his charioteer, to go to Dwaraka and break the news to the residents about his end. Finally the ocean came up and swallowed the city of Dwaraka engulfing everything except the temple. (for more on Dwaraka, please refer to the chapter on **Dwaraka**).

The entire legend of Krishna's life and his *leelas* (deeds) provide a great opportunity for presentation of those events through architecture, poetry, art, music and dancing. The many facets of his endearing activities have fired the imagination of people, which no other incarnation has done. **He is a naughty boy, a romantic lover, a heroic warrior, a shrewd diplomat and a great 'Sanyasi' (ascetic).** Krishna is the impish prankster whose leela brings the country to a standstill. He is not only the pivotal character of an epic, the **Mahabharata**, but also the author of one of the most sacred books of the Hindus - a treasure house of philosophy and a fountain of solace to the troubled hearts.

But while rendering advice to Arjuna at Kurukshetra, Krishna unabashedly reveals — in the **Bhagavad Gita** — that he is infinite, his vibhutis or divine manifestations and opulences being unlimited. No one, not even the gods, can know him completely. Krishna then proceeds to impart what he calls the most sovereign knowledge and profound mystery, contemplating on which alone one can attain moksha or liberation.

Krishna said: "Everything that one can see or know emanates from me. I am...the generating seed of all existence; the source of both the mundane and spiritual wor-lds. All this world is pervaded by me... I am its creator, maintainer and destroyer... **I am antaryami, residing in the heart of every jiva. I am the goal, support, Lord, abode, refuge, and friend of all.** I am immortality and death, being and non-being.

No entity, either moving or non-moving, can exist separately from Me...

"I am the syllable Om. I am Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma. As the substratum of the material universe, I support it; as the presiding authority, I preside over it, and as the controller, I control it; being all-pervasive, I pervade it and as the creator, I am its cause. My vibhutis are endless; what I have described to you is a mere indication of them. And yet, although everything emanates from me, I remain the same, unchanged and transcendental."

It has been said that in Krishna we have the fullest and the most perfect manifestation of the Divine.

Swami Ramdas: "Krishna is an avatar of perfect love. The word Krishna is derived from akarshana which means attraction. So the name itself signifies that Krishna is the Supreme Truth, manifest in human form, to attract the whole world towards Him."

"Such as would be the radiance of a thousand suns bursting forth suddenly in the sky, such was the radiance of that Mighty Spirit. There the son of Pandu beheld the whole world with all its differences, gathered together in the body of that God of gods. "

- **Bhagavad Gita** chapter 18, verses 64-6.

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Goddesses

One of the most striking characteristics of the ancient and multi-faceted Hindu tradition is the importance of goddess worship. No other living religious tradition displays such an ancient, continuous, and diverse history of goddess worship.

Saraswati - The Goddess of Speech

Saraswati means "the essence of one's own self." Saraswati denotes that aspect of the Supreme reality which represents knowledge, learning, and wisdom. In Hindu mythology Saraswati is the divine spouse of Brahma, the god of creation. **Goddess Saraswati** is the embodiment of the mighty **Saraswati River of the Vedas**. Saraswati means "the essence of one's own self." The Sanskrit word '*sara*' means essence and '*swa'* means 'self'. **She is the earliest goddess who is associated with a river in the Indian tradition.** She is the divine spouse of Lord Brahma, the creator. Since knowledge is necessary for creation, Saraswati symbolizes the creative power of Lord Brahma. She is also praised for her ability both to cleanse and fertilize the earth, and has been equated with the goddess of learning, poetry, music, and culture. She is associated with speech- Vac: the goddess of riverlike, streaming speech.



Saraswati - The goddess of learning

Saraswati is typically shown seated on a lotus. Like the swan, the lotus seat of the goddess suggests her transcendence of the physical world. She floats above the muddy imperfections of the physical world, unsullied, pure, beautiful. Although rooted in the mud (like man rooted in the physical world), the lotus perfects itself in a blossom that has transcended the mud. She inspires people to live in such a way that they may transcend their physical limitations through the ongoing creation of culture. Goddess Saraswati is worshiped throughout India and on her special day in spring, Vasant Panchmi, she is worshipped by school children as the patron goddess of learning. The **Benaras Hindu University** was also founded on this day.

Saraswati Vandana is a beautiful poem to art, culture and spirituality. It is a praise of learning and among those who approved the singing of Vande Mataram at the Nagpur Congress was Mahatma Gandhi.

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Goddess Shakti - Parvati/Durga

Shakti, the divine source from which all arises, is thought of as the ' wife' of Shiva. She has many mythological forms. Often she is simply Devi, ' the Goddess ', or Mahadevi, ' the Great Goddess'. She is also Jagad Mata,



'World Mother'; Ambika, 'Gauri' ' Mother'; Uma, who nourishes the world; Parvati, the dutiful wife of Shiva, who seated high in the Himalayas by the side of her Lord represents the stability and continuity of life; the smiling and auspicious Lalita, especially worshipped in South India; the ceaselessly warring Durga; and Kali, the destroyer.

Parvati, which means "she who dwells in the mountains" or "she who is of the mountains" She is the mother of Karttikeya and Ganesha.

Durga -renowned slayer of demons, wife of Shiva personifying Shakti or divine energy.

It is Durga that the Goddess is most widely worshipped and it is she who most fully expresses the energy and complexity of Shakti. Her great festival, Durga Puja or Dussera, lasting for ten days, is an event of great importance. A Distinct group - that of the **Shaktas**, or worshippers of Shakti - center on her, is especially strong in Bengal. For them, the Goddess is the supreme deity, Bramh itself in feminine form. It is the third most popular group within Hinduism, giving place only to the worship of Vishnu and Shiva in importance. The name Durga indicates one who is 'hard to approach' and Durga is represented with a stern expression, suitable to the unswerving force which drives the universe. At once supremely beautiful and fierce, Durga rides upon a lion. She may be pictured with four, eight, ten or twenty arms, and in these she brandishes an impressive array of instruments and weapons - conch, discus, trident, bow, arrow, sword, dagger, serpent, mace and other objects. Each has its specific meaning, and taken together they express the ceaseless activity and complexity of Shakti.



She is first and foremost a slayer of demons. She is the goddess of warfare, and in medieval India military campaigns were commenced on the last day of her festival. In Bengal and some other areas blood sacrifices are made to Durga and to Kali, although, as the only blood sacrifices to survive in Hinduism, they are regarded with distaste by the majority of Hindus. Yet at the same time Durga is the all-merciful Mother who nourishes the universe and bestows both material and spiritual wealth. Full of tenderness to those who turn to her, she is greatly beloved by her devotees.

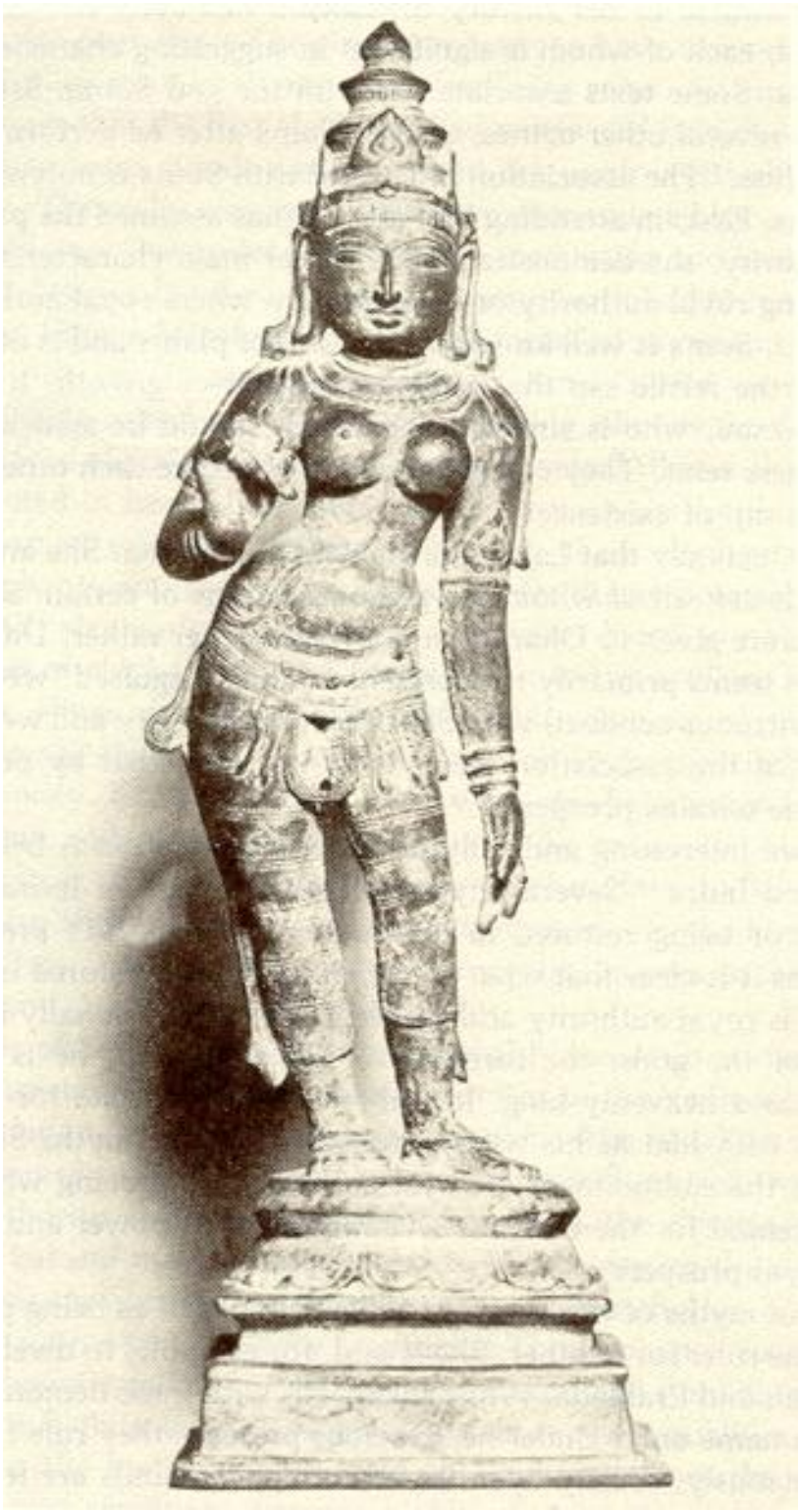
Kali is said to have come forth from the forehead of Durga. If Durga is the fierce side of the Mahadevi, Kail is her terrible aspect: She is represented with a hideous and terrible countenance, dripping with blood, encircled with snakes, bung round with skulls and human heads, and in all respects resembling a fury rather than a goddess.

Explanations are offered for the image, black color refers to her ultimate nature, which lies beyond manifestation and is therefore unknowable, the cremation ground on whihc she is often shown dancing is where all worldly desires are burnt away, the necklace of severed heads is the universe of names and forms which she, as Shiva's power, creates and destroys; she is, as the name Kali suggests, **the destructive aspect of time.**

Kali is life, seen with all its dangers, bloodshed, suffering, fierce, competition, and inevitable destruction.

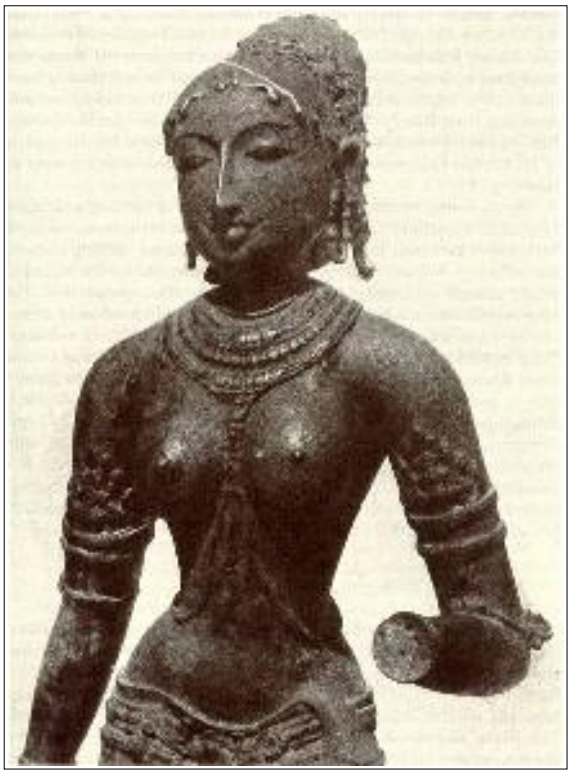
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Goddess Lakshmi - Prosperity and well-being



The goddess Sri, who is also commonly known as Lakshmi and is the consort of Lord Vishnu.

She is associated with prosperity, well-being, royal power, and illustriousness. Lakshmi in the Hindu pantheon of gods and goddesses is personified as the goddess of fortune and also as the embodiment of loveliness, grace and charm. She is seated on a lotus flower though sometimes she is also seen as standing on a lotus. In pictures, gold coins are seen dropping down from the palms of this goddess of prosperity.



Sita

Her emergence in the world is connected with a famous episode in the Hindu myth called **Samudranmanthan** (Churning of the Cosmic ocean), when with great efforts, by churning, the ocean was made to give up all its treasures and benefits to the world. She is the most faithful companion of life, has always appeared as the life partner in every incarnation of Vishnu. When Vishnu assumes his various avatars in order to uphold dharma, she incarnates herself as helpmate, on earth. When Vishnu came as Vamana (the Dwarf), she came to earth as Lotus (Padma), when he came her as Parshuram, Lakshmi followed him as his wife Dhari, when Vishnu appeared as Rama, she came here as **Sita**, and when Vishnu appeared as Krishna, she came in two forms, first as Radha, and later as his wife Rukmini.

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Symbols

Om - the sound of the universe itself.

The imperishable sound
is the seed of all that exists.
The past, the present, the future.
- all are but the unfolding of OM.
And whatever transcends the three realms of time.
That indeed is the flowering of OM.



For millennia, mystics have recounted their experience of this energy, which is said to manifest in our hearing awareness as a humming vibration around and within everything else. In the Sanskrit tradition, this sound is called "Anahata Nada," the "Unstruck Sound." So, sound that is *not* made of two things striking together is the sound of primal energy, **the sound of the universe itself.** And the ancients say that the audible sound which most resembles this un struck sound is the syllable OM. Tradition has it that this ancient mantra is composed of four elements: the first three are vocal sounds: A, U, and M. The fourth sound, unheard, is the *silence* which begins and ends the audible sound, the silence which surrounds it. There are several traditional and allegorical interpretations of this ancient sound.

The loveliest explanation of OM is found within the ancient Vedic and Sanskrit traditions.

"Aum stands for the supreme Reality.
It is a symbol for what was, what is,
And what shall be. A U M represents also
What lies beyond past, present and future."

\- **Mundakya Upanishad**

There is a Vedic verse as follows :

Prajapati vai idam agra asit
Tasya vak dvitiya asit
Vag vai paramam Brahma

"In the beginning was Prajapati, the Bramh with whom was the Word,
and the Word was verily the Supreme Bramh."

Omkar Prayers:

Omkaram bindu samyuktham
Nityam dhyanathi Yoginah
Kamadam mokshadam chaiva, Omkaraya namo namah

****

Swastika - an auspicious symbol



is an auspicious symbol, an elaboration of the equal armed cross, but with the arms bent, hence also called the 'limbed cross'. Its name is said to be a combination of su (well) asti (is) ka (a noun ending) i.e., 'It is well.'

In Hinduism, the swastika is believed to be derived either from the wheel, symbolically reduced to four spokes and set at right angles to indicate the cardinal points, or from the two fire sticks of the Vedic sacrificial fire which were always set down in the form of a cross. As a fire and sun symbol it was also called the fire cross or solar cross.

This symbol was well known among the ancients. The archaeological discoveries in Egypt; in Hissarlik, site of Homer's Troy; in China, Greece, Scandinavia, Scythia, Mexico and Peru have proved its widespread usage.

The swastika symbol is supposed to be marked on the hood of the cobra, and is often associated with the heliolithic culture of snake-worshipping peoples such as the Nagas. It is a symbol of good luck, is often found stamped on various objects or used as motif for border designs on textiles. The rainy season is especially devoted to its honor in Maharashtra, when women draw swastikas on floors and worship them.

(source: **Gods and Goddesses of India - By Kailash Nath Seth and B. K. Chaturvedi** p. 180-181).

According to Belgium scholar, Koenraad Elst, in his book Swastika Saffron: "A good luck asana in yoga named swastikasana is sometimes assumed in meditation in the form of an enclosed as distinct from an outstretched cross. The swastika is and remains the symbol of auspiciousness, of the eternal Cosmic Law (rta). Indeed the swastika is an obvious symbol of cosmic cyclicity, hence of endlessness or eternity. Cyclicity is a luck force in that every decline brings the perspective of future revival, and that eternity lurks behind every fleeting phenomenon. It suggests that the world never started and will never end, that every cycle is preceded and followed by more cycles. For **Jains** even more than for the Hindus and Buddhists, the swastika is part of their identity: **a hand with a swastika on it is the official symbol of Jainism."**

(source: **The Saffron Swastika - By Koenraad Elst** Voice of India ISBN 8185990697).

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Conclusion

Hinduism is greatly misunderstood in the West. Most occidentals do not realize that Hinduism is a monotheistic belief in one God, who as Creator is beyond time, space and physical form. The entire pantheon of Hindu gods and goddesses are merely symbolic representations of different attributes of the One, Unmanifested spirit.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has written: " From the beginning, India believed in the superiority of intuition or the method of direct perception of the supersensible to intellectual reasoning. **The Vedic rishis ' were the first who ever burst into the silent sea' of ultimate being and their utterances about what they saw and heard.** The Kena Upanishad says: "The eye does not go thither, nor speech nor mind. We do not know, we do not understand how one can teach it. It is different from the known, it is also above the unknown." Hindu thinkers are not content with the postulating a being unrelated to humanity, who is merely the Beyond, so far as the empirical world is concerned. From the beginnings of Hindu history, attempts are made to bring God closer to the needs of man. Though it is impossible to describe the ultimate reality, it is quite possible to indicate by means of symbols aspects of it, though the symbolic description is not a substitute for the experience of God."

(source: **The Legacy of India - ed. G.T. Garratt.** p. 256 -286).

Hinduism created a different deity for each of God's numerous qualities to make God seem more real and approachable.

(source: **India Unveiled - By Robert Arnett** p. 8).

Fritjof Capra (1939-) the famous theoretical high-energy physicist has observed:

"The rich Indian imagination has created a vast number of gods and goddesses whose incarnations and exploits are the subjects of fantastic tales, collected in epics of huge dimensions. **The Hindu with deep insight knows that all these gods are creations of the mind, mythical images representing the many faces of reality**. On the other hand, he also knows that they were not merely created to make the stories more attractive, but are essential vehicles to convey the doctrines of a philosophy rooted in mystical experience. The Ultimate reality called Brahman, is the unifying concept which gives Hinduism its essential monistic character in spite of the worship of numerous gods and goddesses.

(source: **The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism - By Fritjof Capra** p.43 and 87).



Image worship is a symbolic worship. It is the worship of supernatural realities through the symbols which are thought to represent them best. It is the translation for the present, of the infinite in terms of the finite, of the spiritual in terms of the material. A great pantheon of gods, goddesses, semi-divine beings and lesser deities unfolds in the countless myths of Hinduism which exist in numerous versions throughout Indian literature, particularly the Puranas and Epics. The myths present the collective wisdom of a timeless, anonymous and many-sided civilization and are much more than just fanciful 'biographies' of the gods. **Like the great philosophical systems of India, the myths of Hinduism, reveal the ultimate reality of the universe by giving symbolic expression to that which cannot be discursively expressed.**

(source: **The Hindu Temple - By George Michell** p. 20).

René Guénon (1886-1951) has pointed out: “In India, in particular, a symbolic image represents one or another of the ‘divine attributes’, which is called pratika, for it is neither an ‘idol’, nor does it take on any qualities from that thing which it really is, an aid to meditation and a supplementary means toward realization.”

(source: **Introduction a l'etude des doctrine hindoues - by René Guénon** p. 209).

Hindus believe in the existence of one and only one Supreme Being (the Bramh of the Upanishads), but worship Him in various forms known as deities or gods (note small g). This worship of many deities (gods) is not polytheism, but monotheistic polytheism. The monotheistic Hindu pantheon is an affirmation that the Supreme Being can be known in many ways and worshipped in many forms. Hinduism recognizes the diversity of the human mind and the potential for a different level of spiritual development in each individual. Hinduism does not, therefore, throw everyone into the pigeonhole of a single creed. The **Mahabharata** declares:

"Just as the rain water that falls from the sky eventually reaches the ocean, so also all the worship offered to Him, by whatever name you wish, or in whatever form you like, ultimately goes to the one ultimate, infinite, Supreme Reality."

(source: **The Hindu Mind - Fundamentals of Hindu Religion and Philosophy for All Ages - By Bansi Pandit** p. 37-38).

Huston Smith has said: " Enter Hinduism's myths, her magnificent symbols, her several hundred images of God, her rituals that keep turning night and day like never-ending prayer wheels. It is obtuse to confuse Hinduism's images with idolatry, and their multiplicity with polytheism. They are 'runways' from which the sense-laden human spirit can rise for its "flight of the alone to the Alone". Even village priest will frequently open their temple ceremonies with the following beloved invocation:

O Lord, forgive three sins that are due to my human limitations:
Thou art everywhere, but I worship you here;
Thou art without form, but I worship you in these forms;
Thou needest no praise, yet I offer you these prayers and salutations,
Lord, forgive three sins that are due to my human limitations.

(source: **The World's Religions** - **By Huston Smith** p. 34).

Diane L. Eck observes: "Hinduism is an imaginative, an "image-making, religious tradition in which the sacred is seen as present in the visible world – the world we see in multiple images and deities, in sacred places, and in people. The notion of darsan call attention as students of Hinduism, to the fact that India is a visual and visionary culture. God is eminently visible, although human beings have not always had the refinement of sight to see. Furthermore, the divine is visible not only in temple and shrine, bit also in the whole continuum of life – in nature, in people, in birth and growth and death. Although some Hindus, both philosophers and radical reformers, have always used the terms "nirguna"(quality-less) and nirakara (formless) to speak of the One Bramh. Yet the same tradition has simultaneously affirmed that Bramh is also saguna (with qualities) and that the multitude of "names and forms" of this world are the exuberant transformations of the One Bramh. Hinduism is sensuous in that it makes full use of the senses – seeing, touching, smelling, tasting and hearing. One "sees" the image of the deity (darsan). One "touches" it with one's hands (sparsa), and one also "touches" the limbs of one's own body to establish the presence of various deities (nyasa). One "hears" the sacred sound of the mantras (sravana). The ringing of bells, the offering of oil lamps, the presentation of flowers, the pouring of water and milk, the sipping of sanctified liquid offerings, the eating of consecrated foods- prasad – these are the basic constituents of Hindu worship, Puja.

(source: **Darsan - Seeing the Divine Image in India - By Diane L. Eck** p. 10 - 12).

Huston Smith says: "Its all together wrong to think that the images are idols as though the copper itself is being worshipped – **they are reminders that the God who dwells in the depth of our souls.** Wherever an alter is raised, there is the center of the universe. The world's axis passes through it, yet no visible alter is no more than a symbol for the one time alter – the human heart and to say the cosmic axis pierces it is to say that it is in direct touch with the infinite. **Man is not just made in the image of God – He is God.** It is difficult for us to fathom the sheer immensity of the Self of notion involved. When we see ritual acts being performed they look like they are directed at some far of celestial potentate – and so they doubtlessly appear to the beginning of the journey – but further along they begin to look like chemical formulae – **a science of transformation to awaken us to the realms of gold that lies buried in our depths** – for we are kings who have fallen victim to amnesia and wander through our kingdom in tatters not knowing who we truly are."

(source: **The Mystic's Journey - India and the Infinite: The Soul of a People – By Huston Smith**).

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Did You Know?

Antiquities from Indian shore - stolen heritage

Fifty-four years past India's independence, Britain continues to be the largest market for precious artifacts leaving the country illegally

Indian temple towns are also an ideal hunting ground for antiquities, where the temple priests are often the chief collaborators. **The panchadhaatu (five metals: gold, zinc, copper, silver, and iron) idols of the gods and goddesses, which are in high demand in the underground markets, are quietly replaced by fakes and taken through the quickest route out of the country.** The theft is rarely discovered because no one but the priest ever goes inside the sanctum sanctorum of the temple.



Tandav: Shiva and the pose of death

"The real enemy is the massive poverty and ignorance at home combined with the high prices that items such as **Chola bronzes** command abroad. Often foreigners, who are likely to be more aware of the true value of antiquities than the impoverished villagers who live near archaeological sites, are involved in the thefts," says Dr D. K. Sinha, retired director of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

"It is possible that many idols that are now in the temples of Tamil Nadu may be fake, with the originals having long been spirited away", says M Ram, the superintendent of the antiquities wing of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Sinha agrees: "Theft or disappearance of ornaments used on deities are not uncommon and simply cannot happen without the knowledge of priests, many of whom consider it their sole right to dispose off temple property".

In one of the uncommon discoveries of such a theft at **Kondhali's 200-year old Taka Deosthan temple**, a devotee who looked into the sanctum sanctorum found the idols of the gods missing.

In the rare case when thefts or sale of stolen artifacts are traced, winning court cases become difficult. Sale often is organized through reputed and powerful institutions such as **Sotheby's**, which conducts a thriving trade in Indian antiquities. (In fact, the CBI has been taking a close look at the activities of agents for Sotheby's who have been scouring the Indian countryside with the connivance of Indian art smugglers for items for their famed auctions.)

However, there are reports of idols that have returned home from sojourns - reports which evoke hope among those concerned about the fate of Indian antiquities. **In one instance, a Nataraja stolen from the Easwaran temple in the Tiruvilakkudi village, Thanjavur, in 1978, was traced with the help of Interpol to the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas and returned to its sacred seat.**

Three ancient idols were found missing from the 13th century **Sri Jagannath temple in Puri** on Sunday, temple administration sources said. One of the missing idols was that of Lord Madan Mohan. The two-feet high idol, made of *Astadhatu* (eight metals) are regarded as a representative of Lord Jagannath have been just recovered.

(source: **Antiquities from Indian shore - Hindustan Times** and **rediff.com**

http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/nov/12puri.htm).



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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

Hinduism has always been an environmentally sensitive philosophy. No religion, perhaps, lays as much emphasis on environmental ethics as Hinduism. The Mahabharata, Ramayana, Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Puranas and Smriti contain the earliest messages for preservation of environment and ecological balance. Nature, or Earth, has never been considered a hostile element to be conquered or dominated. In fact, man is forbidden from exploiting nature. He is taught to live in harmony with nature and recognize that divinity prevails in all elements, including plants and animals. The rishis of the past have always had a great respect for nature. Theirs was not a superstitious primitive theology. They perceived that all material manifestations are a shadow of the spiritual. The Bhagavad Gita advises us not to try to change the environment, improve it, or wrestle with it. If it seems hostile at times tolerate it. Ecology is an inherent part of a spiritual world view in Hinduism.

According to Swami B. V. Tripurari, in his book, **Ancient Wisdom for Modern Ignorance**, " Our present environmental crisis is in essence a spiritual crisis. We need only to look back to medieval Europe and the psychic revolution that vaulted Christianity to victory over paganism to find the spirit of the environmental crisis. Inhibitions to the exploitation of nature vanished as the Church took the "spirits" out of the trees, mountains, and seas. Christianity's ghost-busting theology made it possible for man to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects. It made nature man's monopoly. This materialist paradigm has dominated the modern world for last few centuries. The current deplorable condition demands a spiritual response. A fundamental reorientation of human consciousness, accompanied by action that is born out of inner commitment, is very much needed. One of the measures that could help a great deal to fulfill this need is to regenerate and rejuvenate basic values of Hindu culture and propagate them."

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Articles

Introduction



Throughout the long history of India, Hindus have shared a fascination with, and respect for, Nature and animals. This attitude went beyond the usefulness. It had to do with reverence for all of God' creation. Our ancestors worshipped trees, rivers, birds and stones and connected to the universal principle through Shiva. As we are growing more materialistic, we are losing this connection. Our ancestors saw Nature as being a manifestation of God. There was, therefore, a gratitude towards nature.

The tradition of maintaining sacred groves and sacred trees vanished from most countries, due mainly to the rise of dogmatic religions like Christianity and Islam, which advocated faith in one god and were explicitly for the eradication of ‘pagan’ practices. The underlying theme in Semitic religions is that of a chosen people who have been divinely granted ownership of the earth and all living things, and permission to exploit them. The Semitic perception that humans have more "dignity" than animals has gone a long way into the enormous decimation and extinction of non-human life on our planet not to mention the massacre of non-believing human beings. Hindu philosophy has always had a humane and dignified view of the sacredness of all life, and that humans are but one link in the symbiotic chain of life and consciousness.

According to **Guy Sorman**, visiting scholar at Hoover Institution at Stanford and the leader of new liberalism in France, author of **The Genius of India** (Macmillan India Ltd. 2001. ISBN 0333 93600 0)says:

"The Indian tradition, on the other hand, is that men submit to nature and form part of it, there nature preserves its sacredness, lost in the West since the Industrial Revolution." He further states that the idea of feminism and **ecology came from the 1968 movement, from the meeting between India and the West.** He says: **"There is hardly anything in**

European thought to predispose the West to reject virility, the respect for authority, the mastery over nature. India too has a warrior (khastriya) tradition of virility as exemplified in the **Mahabharata**, only it is secondary. First, comes the veneration of thousands of goddesses - for the Indians, India is above all **Mother India.** India's femininity and sexual ambiguity, is the very antithesis of Western virility. For example, when the British scaled earth's highest peak, the exploit was widely hailed as the **"conquest of the Everest."** It was not realized and is often not realized still, that the word "conquest" was totally out of place in the context of the peak which is considered an object of reverence by many. One does not "conquer" nature. Nature humors at times, man's curiosity. Conquest is, therefore, an irreverent word." **Francis Bacon**, (1561-1626) said: "Nature was to be bound into service and made a 'slave and 'put in constraint.' In short, nature was to be conquered, not enjoyed and certainly not revered. (source: **The Dark Side of Christian History - By Helen Ellerbe** p.155). Nature is to be revered and befriended. 'Paganism' was a term of contempt invented by Christianity for people in the countryside who lived close to and in harmony with Nature, and whose ways of worship were spontaneous as opposed to the contrived though-categories constructed by Christianity's city-based manipulators of human minds.

"I bow my head in reverence to our ancestors for their sense of the beautiful in nature and for their foresight in investing beautiful manifestations of Nature with a religious significance." **- Mahatma Gandhi**

(source: **Glimpses of Indian Culture - By Dr. Giriraj Shah** p. 106).



Kewal Motwani (1899 -) author of several books including **Science and Society in India** has observed:

"Unity between nature and man - **The civilization of India had its birth in the bosom of Mother Nature.** At the time when her history began, India was a land of vast forests. Those forests not only administered to the daily needs of the people, giving them shelter from heat of the sun and ravages to storms, green pastures for cattle and abundant fuel for sacrificial and architectural purposes, but they also made a permanent impression on the minds of the people. **Their religion had no aggressive frontiers**; no walls of brick and mortar set people apart from one another. The people lived in one vast embrace of nature, as one family. **There was no "divide and rule" mentality, no aggressive, ruthless exploitation of nature,** no assertive individualism which has been the characteristic of civilizations nurtured within the city walls. There was harmony within and without, and inward realization of the Eternal became dominant aspiration of people's lives. **There was an attitude of identification, not conflict, a search of the One, not of the many."**

(source: **India: A synthesis of cultures – by Kewal Motwani** p. 47).

According **Dr. David Frawley** eminent teacher and practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine:

"No religion, perhaps, lays as much emphasis on environmental ethics as does Hinduism. It believes in ecological responsibility and says like Native Americans that the Earth is our mother. It champions protection of animals, which it considers also have souls, and promotes vegetarianism. It has a strong tradition of non-violence or ahimsa. It believes that God is present in all nature, in all creatures, and in every human being regardless of their faith or lack of it."

In the ancient spiritual traditions, man was looked upon as part of nature, linked by the indissoluble spiritual and psychological bonds to the elements around him. This is very much marked in the Hindu tradition, the oldest living religious tradition in the world. The Vedas, the oldest hymns composed by great spiritual seers and thinkers which are the repository of Hindu wisdom, reflect the vibrancy of an encompassing world-view which looks upon all objects in the universe, living or non-living, as being pervaded by the same spiritual power. Hinduism believes in the all-encompassing sovereignty of the divine, manifesting itself in a graded scale of evolution. The human race, though at the top of the evolutionary pyramid at present, is not seen as something apart from the earth and its multitudinous life forms.



A Hindu woman performing a religious ceremony around the tulsi plant by D.V. Dhurandhar, Bombay, C.1890 (courtesy V&A Museum, London).

Our natural environment – comprising mountains and hills, rivers and dales, trees and plants – is considered **auspicious enough to provide space for meditation**. There are thousands of spots whose special sanctity is enhanced by the performance of daily rituals. Retreats in the Himalayas or on the river banks shelter sages who are credited with universal knowledge. Especially hallowed are the sources and confluence of rivers. Harmony with the natural world receives strong emphasis as a pervasive element in Indian spiritual beliefs and rituals. Evergreen trees were regarded as symbols of eternal life and to cut them down was to invite the wrath of the gods. Groves in forests were looked upon as habitations of the gods. It was under a banyan tree that the Hindu sages sat in a trance seeking enlightenment and it was here that they held discourses and conducted holy rituals.

The **Artha-Veda** has the magnificent **Hymn to the Earth (Bhumi-Sukta)** which is redolent with ecological and environmental values.



"Earth, in which lie the sea, the river and other waters,
in which food and cornfields have come to be,
in which lives all that breathes and that moves,
may she confer on us the finest of her yield.
Earth, in which the waters, common to all,
moving on all sides, flow unfailingly, day and night,
may she pour on us milk in many streams,
and endow us with luster,
May those born of thee, O Earth,
be of our welfare, free from sickness and waste,
wakeful through a long life, we shall become bearers of tribute to thee.
Earth, my mother, set me securely with bliss in full accord with heaven,
O wise one, uphold me in grace and splendor."

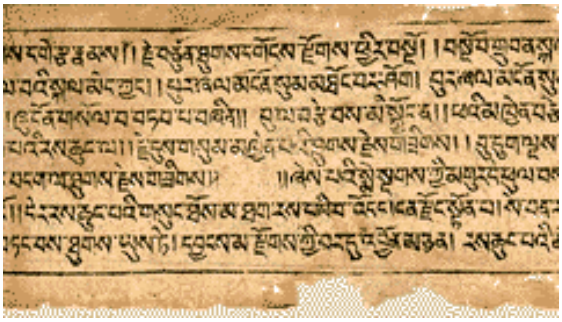
Not only in the Vedas, but in later scriptures, such as the Upanishads, the Puranas and subsequent texts, the Hindu viewpoint on nature has been clearly enunciated. It is permeated by a reverence for all life, and an awareness that the great forces of nature – the earth, the sky, the air, the water and fire – as well as various orders of life including plants, trees, forests and animals, are all bound to each other within the great rhythms of nature. The divine is not exterior to creation, but expresses itself through natural phenomena.

Thus, in the **Mudaka Upanishad** **the divine** is described as follows:

“Fire is head, his eyes are the moon and the sun;
The regions of space are his ears, his voice the revealed Veda,
The wind is his breadth, his heart is the entire universe,
The earth is his footstool,
Truly he is the inner soul of all.”

India is a vast network of sacred places. There are seven sacred rivers, seven sacred mountains, sacred trees and plants, sacred cities. The sacrality of the land of India, gives a sense of unity to this country of so many religions, cultures, races and languages.

The Indian tradition is strongly cosmocentric, where man lives as part of a system in which everything is related to everything else. Creation and destruction take place simultaneously. Materials and energy move from organism to organism. Matter is arranged in precise order in every organism, but in death this order is followed by disorder: cycling of materials through organisms brings order once again. But today, rapidly drifting from our traditions of sustainable use and coexistence, we seem to be entering a man-centered world that implies the decimation of nature.



The **Mahabharata, Ramayana, Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Puranas and Smriti** **contain the earliest messages for preservation of environment and ecological balance. Nature, or Earth, has never been considered a hostile element to be conquered or dominated.** In fact, man is forbidden from exploiting nature. He is taught to live in harmony with nature and recognize that divinity prevails in all elements, including plants and animals.

Atman, the world-soul, is the whole world. **God is in all things, and all things are in God.**

The **Mahabharata** hints that the basic elements of nature constitute the Cosmic Being -- the mountains His bones, the earth His flesh, the sea His blood, the sky His abdomen, the air His breath and agni (fire) His energy. **The whole emphasis of the ancient Hindu scriptures is that human beings cannot separate themselves from natural surroundings and Earth has the same relationship with man as the mother with her child.** Planting and preservation of trees are made sacred in religious functions.

Ancient India sanctified plants, animals as a recognition of biodiversity.

The **Rig Veda** **is a celebration of nature**, its hero the God of Rain. Dawn was beautiful Ushas, dressed in a veil of light crimson, whose dancing appearance is heralded with the fragrance of the flowers. The lotus, said **Kalidasa**, welcomes the touch of the sun. The beautiful Chola temple at Gangaikondacholapuram in Tamilnadu contains a rare and exquisite representation of Surya in a navagraha stone - a lotus encircled by the planets. **But the greatest tribute to the sun was at Konarak, the giant chariot reflecting the Sun God in all his glory.**

In a sculpture in the rock-cut cave temple of Bhaja (2nd century B.C.) Surya, in his chariot, destroys the demon of darkness. Surya is invariably depicted in a chariot driven by seven horses representing the seven days, encircled by a halo, and wearing boots, for his feet could scorch the earth!

Animals were revered too. Kamadhenu was the wish-fulfilling cow, whose offspring are all the cattle on earth. The word "go" or cow was very important: gopura was the entrance to the village, gotra was the clan to which a person belonged, goshti was an assembly of good men, gosarga and godhuli represented dawn and dusk, while gopa and govalla were officials. Krishna even lifts Mount Govardhana to save cattle from Indra's wrath, a recurring theme in Indian art. **But the greatest honour given to animals was their elevation as the vehicles of the gods,** and as the incarnations of Vishnu, roles that are repeated in sculpture and painting. Shiva rode the bull, Vishnu the eagle, Brahma the swan, and so on.

By recognizing the five elements that were essential for life and elevating every species of plant and animal to sanctity, Ancient Indians recognized and respected the importance of biodiversity. **By secularizing rivers and lands, plants and animals, they were scientifically correct.** But today people pollute and destroy with impunity. The earth and its bounties are sacred creations. Unless we revere them and revive a respect for their sanctity, we have little chance of saving them.

(source: **Grounded in wisdom - by Nanditha Krishna - newindpress.com**).



The **Varah Purana** says, "One who plants one peepal, one neem, one bar, ten flowering plants or creepers, two pomegranates, two oranges and five mangos, does not go to hell."
In the **Charak Sanhita**, destruction of forests is taken as destruction of the state, and reforestation an act of rebuilding the state and advancing its welfare. Protection of animals is considered a sacred duty.
Our scriptures warn, **"Oh wicked persons! If you roast a bird, then your bathing in sacred rivers, pilgrimage, worship and yagnas are useless."** In our ancient stories, birds and animals have always been identified with gods and goddesses.
The **Padmapurana** warns: **"A person who is engaged in killing creatures, polluting wells, and ponds and tanks, and destroying gardens, certainly goes to hell." Padmapurana, Bhoomikhanda** 96.7-8

Welfare of all creatures: The Vedantic concept is that of the welfare of all creation, not only of human beings but also of what we call the lower creatures. **Dr. Karan Singh** states:

"In our arrogance and ignorance we have destroyed the environment of this planet. We have polluted the oceans, we have made the air unbreathable, we have desecrated nature and decimated wildlife. But the Vedantic seers knew that man was not something apart from nature, and, therefore, they constantly exhort us that, while we work for own salvation, we must also work for the welfare of all beings."

(source: **Essays in Hinduism - By Dr. Karan Singh** p. 47)

An Indian's relation with nature differs from that of a Western man. In the West, man has separated himself from nature, mastered it, he believes, and used it to serve his own purpose. Love of animals and of nature in the West is a personal attitude, not a natural law. **As the vine embraces, the tree, and could not live without it, so the Hindu unites himself with nature. From nature he came; to nature he returns, as ashes. The relationship between a Hindu and nature is one of adaptation and coexistence rather than of mastery and subjection.**

"As the curtain of the new millennium rises, the drama of life and humans seems tragic. More than six billion people are on a march of materialism, which means that acquisition, accumulation, possessions and consumption of material goods is the ultimate "good" of life. The philosophy assumes that the material resources are unlimited. Human beings are proliferating at the rate of 80 million a year and 90% of the growth is in the developing world. There, almost four out of ten people live at the edge of survival. In India alone, 320 million out of one billion are living marginally. It is not until 2100, according to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), that the Earth's population may stabilize at 10.5 to 11 billion people.



The Earth is endangered, according to a warning from the Union of Concerned Scientists in December 1992. A declared report states that: "Most biological systems, which have sustained life on the planet for millions of years, will collapse some time during the early part of the next century." Everywhere, the human spirit is in revolt. Extinction cannot be the future of this beautiful Earth. The perversion of technological systems must be challenged--a society on the march towards doom must accept the wisdom of the ancients that all life is sacred and its existence rests on the harmony established by evolution in the total scheme of life."

(source: **Hinduism Today - July/August 2000** p 20-23).

The current deplorable condition demands a spiritual response. A fundamental reorientation of human consciousness, accompanied by action that is born out of inner commitment, is very much needed. One of the measures that could help a great deal to fulfill this need is to regenerate and rejuvenate basic values of Hindu culture and propagate them.

(source: **http://www.hindunet.org/alt_hindu/1994/msg00953.html**).

Whatever I dig up of you, O earth,
May you of that have quick replenishment!
O purifying one,
May my thrust never reach
unto your vital points, your heart.
May your dwellings, O earth,
free from sickness and wasting,
flourish for us!
Through a long life watchful,
May we always offer to you our tribute.

— **Atharva Veda**

The ancient Tamil scripture, **Tirukural**, advises in verse 324, "What is the good way? It is the path that reflects on how it may avoid killing any living creature;" and in verse 327, "Refrain from taking precious life from any living being, even to save your own life."

Although Indian philosophers believed that the world goes through a cycle of evolution and decline, it always admonished reverence for life--respect for all forms of life and preservation of biodiversity--a continuation of evolution. The new philosophy of life challenges the arrogance of humans. The Earth is not for humans only. It is for all life--life in its various forms and structures. While individuals have a short and transient existence, evolution continues inexorably. The consciousness and spirits are beyond material existence, beyond time and space. They are eternal, an integral part of Brahman.

The **Rig Veda 1.6.3 states:**

"Nature's beauty is an art of God. Let us feel the touch of God's invisible hands in everything beautiful.
By the first touch of His hand rivers throb and ripple. When He smiles the sun shines, the moon glimmers, the stars twinkle, the flowers bloom.
By the first rays of the rising sun, the universe is stirred; the shining gold is sprinkled on the smiling buds of rose; the fragrant air is filled with sweet melodies of singing birds, the dawn is the dream of God's creative fancy."

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Dharma: ecological balance

The king was the administrator of dharma. He was to be guided by this principle of balance, harmonizing relationships between all kingdoms of nature, mineral, vegetable, animal and man, various groups and administrative units. **Dharma was the underlying principle of political, economic and social relations in a state, and this principle was to be extended even to the earth and its products.** We catch a glimpse of this knowledge of ecological balance in the coronation oath which was administered to a king. **Aitareya Brahmana** gives the promise which Purohita took from the king to the following effect:



"Between the night I am born and the night I die whatever good I might have done, my heaven, my life, my progeny, may I be deprived of it, if I oppress you. (Book viii, chapter 4). **Satapatha Brahmana** states that the king should take consent of the earth at the time of the Rajasuya ceremony thus:

"Mother Prithvi (Earth), injure me not, nor I thee."

It was a bounden duty of the king to see to it that the earth was not subjected to undue strain, her resources not unduly depleted. The earth was the mother, she sustained life with her products.

Somadev in his **Niti Vakyamrita** gives a hymn which it was incumbent upon the king to recite every day:

"I am protecting this cow (earth) which bears the milk of four oceans, whose calf is dharma, whose tail is enterprise (purushartha), whose hoofs are varna and ashrama (four groups and four orders), whose ears are desire and action (karma and artha), whose horns are diplomacy and valor, whose eyes are truth and purity, and whose face is law…I shall not be patient with anyone who injures her."

This is probably the earliest record in all human history of man's clear realization of the ecological state to preserve. Nations that have flouted this most significant fact of social life have disappeared and their wrecks lie scattered along the shores of history. India knew this principle and honored it in practice.

Place of nature in Indian literature

India's attitude to nature was one of comradeship. Flowers, birds, beasts and men shared the one life, facing the same suffering and pain of the upward travail, entertained the same sentiments and affections. **The early Vedic Indians became**

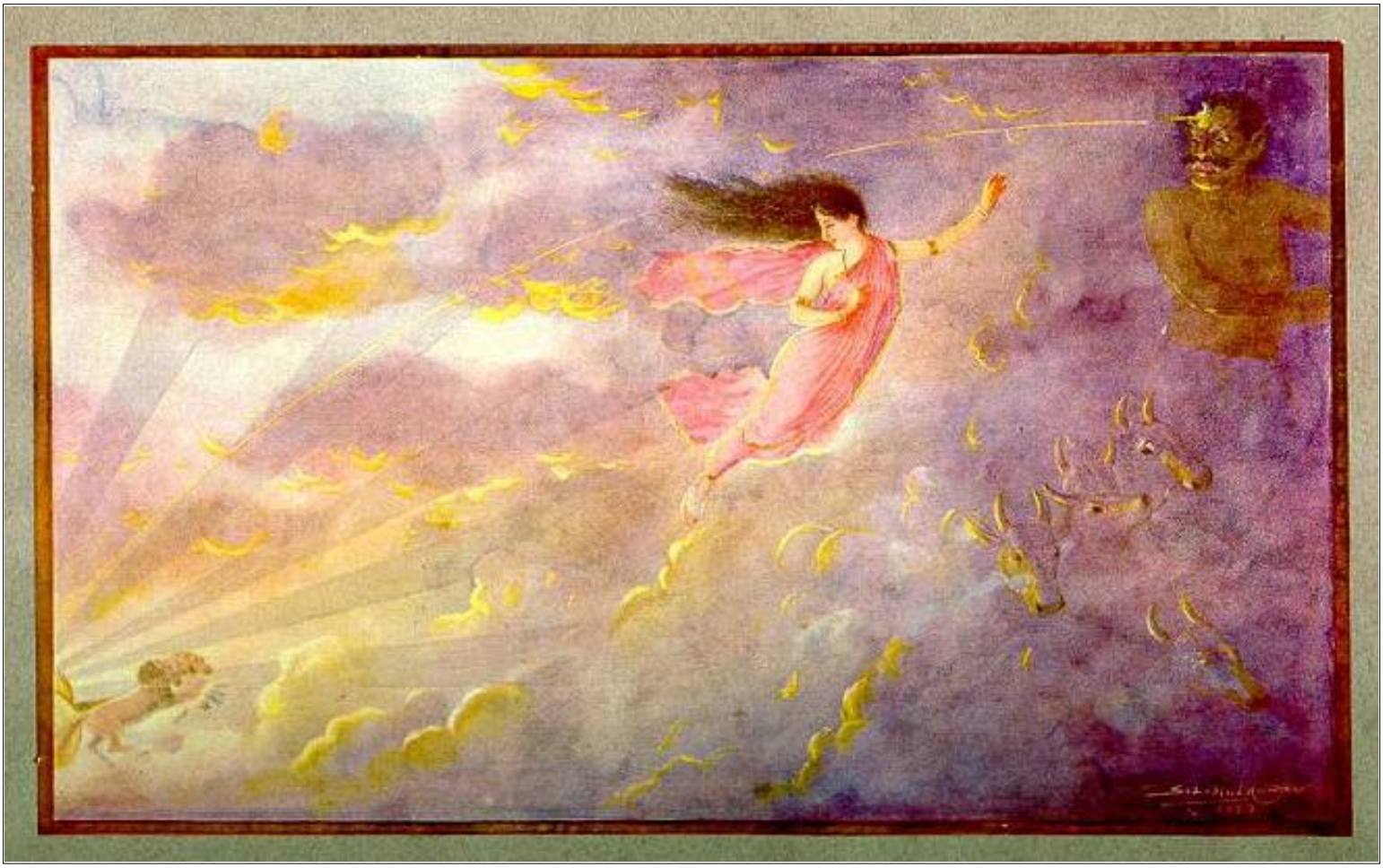
lyrical in their adoration of nature and its manifestations. This is a description of the Dawn in the **Rig Veda**:

Usha, the dawn, is often invoked, and is the subject of some of the most beautiful hymns that are to be found in the lyrical poetry of any ancient nation.

Beautous daughter of the sky!
Hold they ruddy light on high,
Grant us wealth and grant us day,
Bring us food and morning's ray.
White-robed goddess of the morning sky,
Bring us light, let night's deep shadows fly.

This light, most radiant of lights, has come; this gracious one who illumines all things is born. As night is removed by the rising sun, so is this the birthplace of the dawn....We behold her, daughter of the sky, youthful, robed in white, driving forth the darkness. Princess of limitless treasure, shine down upon us throughout the day." - Rig Veda I. 113.

"We gaze upon her as she comes
The shining daughter of the sky
The mighty darkness she uncovers,
And light she makes, the pleasant one that we see."



Usha! (Dawn) Hail, Beautous daughter of the sky!
*(source: **The Splendour That Was 'Ind' - By K T Shah**).*

Of the hymns to other deities, the hymns to those to Usha, the Dawn, are especially beautiful. Some of the loveliest nature poetry of this period is dedicated to her, depicted as a young maiden who comes to mankind in the special characteristics of the dawn. Dawn bring a feeling of hope and refreshment, of entering into the activity of the universe.

The Aryas worshipped Nature. They were fascinated by their natural surroundings. Gods representing the forces of nature are mentioned in the hymns of Rig Veda. Rta was the term used to mean the natural law of the cosmic order and morality. It was the regulator of the whole Universe. The lotus keeps its vigil during the night and opens its heart to the life-giving touch

of the sun in the early morn. The bee and flower play a game of hide and seek. All nature, flowers, trees, birds and deer grieve over Shakuntala's departure from her father's hermitage and her leave-taking is one of the most touching scenes in the drama of Kalidasa. The swan paints a poetic picture of Nala on whom Damyanti had set her heart. The bird Jatayu gives a fight to Ravana to rescue Sita as she is being kidnapped to Lanka. Indian literature is suffused with a feeling of tenderness towards all sub-human manifestations of life.

(source: **India: A synthesis of cultures – by Kewal Motwani** p. 110-111 and 166-167).

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Mountains - The Abode of the Gods

"Of the immovable things
I am the mighty Himalayas".
- Tenth Discourse; Shloka 2.5

In the words of the ancient Indian poet, **Kalidasa:**

"The Himalaya is a great devatatma, a great spiritual presence, stretching from the west to the eastern sea like a measuring rod to gauge the world's greatness." The creativity of this genius was that he was able to see it as a single unity this overwhelmingly powerful image of the mighty Himalayan range.

Even the mention of mountains in India brings the word **Himalaya** immediately to the mind. The Himalayan range as a whole is sacred because it is in the north, which for Hindus is the direction of wisdom and spiritual rebirth. It also includes the highest peaks in the world, which are a sight to inspire awe and wonder in people of any race or creed. Even Mount Olympus in Greek mythology would pale in front of the reverence shown to the Himalayas in the Hindu stories. Neither is Mount Fuji as significant to the Japanese as the Himalayas to Hindus. From times immemorial, the Himalayas have given out speechless invitations to sages, anchorites, *yogis*, artists, philosophers et al. The western Himalayas teems with esteemed pilgrimages so much so that the entire Kumayun range can be called **Tapobhumi** or land of spiritual practices. Where else apart from Kailash and Manas-sarovar in the Himalayas could an all-abnegating Shiva roam with his bull?

From the Himalayas has originated so many life-giving perennial rivers that have sustained such a rich civilization.



Of these the Ganges is the most respected one. **Shankaracharya** (788-820), who propounded the Mayavad doctrine, referred to the holy river as the goddess of divine essence, and established one of the four cardinal hermitages in the Garhwal Himalayas.

Scientist **J C Bose**(1858-1937), also ventured into the Himalayas, as expounded in his sagely philosophical essay **Bhagirathir Utsha Sandhane**, to explore how the Ganges flows down from the "matted locks of Shiva".

Apart from being a natural heritage, the Himalayas is a spiritual heritage for the Hindus. The most visited places of pilgrimage in India are located in the Himalayas. Prominent among them are the Nath troika of **Amarnath, Kedarnath** and **Badrinath.** There are also three seminal Sikh pilgrimage spots in the Uttarakhand Himalayas. **All sages and prophets have found the Himalayas best for spiritual pursuits.** Swami Vivekananda founded his Mayavati Ashram 50 km from Almora. The Mughul emperor Jehangir said about Kashmir, the westernmost extent of the Himalayas: "If there is a paradise on earth, it's here".

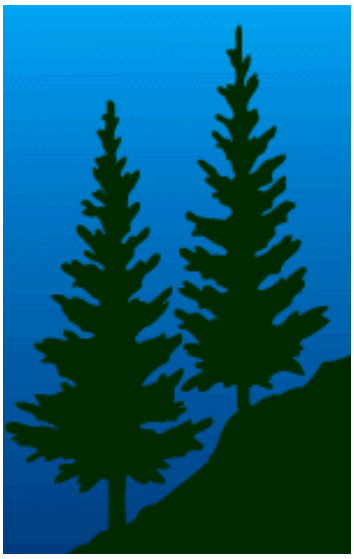
As the loftiest mountains on Earth, the Himalayas have come to embody the highest ideals and aspirations. The sight of their sublime peaks, soaring high and clean above the dusty, congested plains of India, has for centuries inspired visions of transcendent splendor and spiritual liberation.

Invoking such visions, the **Puranas**, ancient works of Hindu stories, have this to say of Himachal, or the Himalayas:

"In the space of a hundred ages of the Gods, I could not describe to you the glories of Himachal; that Himachal where Siva dwells and where the Ganges falls like the tendril of a lotus from the foot of Vishnu. There are no other mountains like Himachal, for there are found Mount Kailas and Lake Manasarovar. As the dew is dried up by the

morning sun, so are the sins of mankind by the sight of Himachal."

The Himalayas are sacred for followers of five Asian religions--**Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and the indigenous Bon tradition of Tibet.** These religions revere the mountains as places of power where many of their most important sages and teachers have attained the heights of spiritual realization. Himalayas are often refered to as **devatma** or God-souled. **Giri-raj** or the King of Mountains, as the Himalayas is often called, is also a deity by itself in the Hindu pantheon. Hindus view the Himalayas as supremely sacred, as a corollary to seeing god in every atom of the universe. The mighty altitude of the Himalayas is a constant remembrance to the loftiness of the human soul, its vastness. a prototype for the universality of human consciousness. Mt Everest being the highest spot on earth has been truly recognised as the crowing glory of the Himalayas. It is the mother goddess for Sherpas, who worship it as Chomolungma while the Nepalese call it Sagarmatha.



Hindus, by far the largest group in India with more than 800 million adherents, regard the entire range as the God Himalaya, father of Parvati, the wife of Siva. King of the mountains, Himalaya lives high on a peak with his queen, the Goddess Mena, in a palace ablaze with gold, attended by divine guardians, maidens, scent-eating creatures and other magical beings. His name, composed of the words hima and alaya, means in the Sanskrit language of ancient India the **"abode of snow."** As a reservoir of frozen water, the body and home of the God Himalaya is the divine source of sacred rivers, such as the Ganges and Indus, that sustain life on the hot and dusty plains of northern India.

The grandeur of Himalayas

Ernest B. Havell has observed: “The Himalayas offer equal opportunities for artistic research: they have always been the pivot of Indian religious art…The Indian order of architecture, the design of Indian temples, and the symbolism of the principal figures in Indian iconography, are all focused in the Himalayas.” Take only a cursory survey of Indian literature, he further says, and you will find that all Indian poetry and mythology, point to the Himalayas as the center of the world, and as the throne of the great gods. According to the **Vishnu Purana**, Brahma has his throne in this region, shaped like the seed-vessel of a lotus. Even in the farthest corners of South India, the Hindu regards the Himalayas, not from the point of view of the mountaineering sportsman, or that of the scientific explorer, but as the Muslim thinks of Mecca and the Christian of Jerusalem.”

(source: **The Himalayas in Indian Art – by E B Havell** v. 4, 6).

W J Grant has written eloquently about scenic India:

"India has stupendous mountains and quiet, village dotted plains. Her rivers sweep majestically on the plains and sing silver songs among the hills. The Himalayas form a great northern battlement with an average height of about 18,000 feet.

The grandeur of this region outwits description, its scale is so baffling. It is a dwelling place for gods. A throne of stupendous whiteness, mystery, power majesty. But above all, mystery – that mystery which no science can banish and no reason conquer. This is where Supernatural walks with regal feet. At Darjeeling, with the majesty of the Himalayas looking down on one’s littleness. It does one no good. The air is pure and strong. The scenic vastness kills petty conceits…”

(source: **The Spirit of India - By W. J. Grant** London published by B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1933 preface and p. 11-13).

E. Kawaguchi, a Japanese Buddhist abbot, was so captivated by the grandeur of the Himalayas near Manosarovar and Mt. Kailas, that he described it as 'unique and sublime.' Mt. Kailas, he says, 'towers so majestically above the peaks around, that I fancied I saw the image of our Mighty Lord Buddha, calmly addressing his five hundred disciples: verily, verily, it was a natural Mandala!'

(source: **Our Heritage and Its Significance - By Shripad Rama Sharma** p. 15-16).

The ancient poets and sages regarded the range as more than a realm of snow; they saw it as an earthly paradise sparkling with streams and forests set beneath beautiful peaks. Above and beyond the earthly paradise of the Himalayas lie the heights of heaven.

1. Mount Kailash: One peak in the Himalayan region stands out above all others as the ultimate sacred mountain for more than half-a-billion people in India, Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan. Hidden behind the main range of the Himalayas at a high point of the Tibetan Plateau northwest of Nepal, Mount Kailas rises in isolated splendor near the sources of four major rivers of the

Indian subcontinent--the Indus, Brahmaputra, Sutlej and Karnali. Hindus also regard Kailash as the place where the divine form of the Ganges, the holiest river of all, cascades from heaven to first touch the Earth and course invisibly through the locks of Siva's hair before spewing forth from a glacier 140 miles to the west.



At only 22,028 feet, Kailash is thousands of feet lower than Everest and other Himalayan peaks. Yet its extraordinary setting and appearance more than make up for its modest height. Kailash retains its grandeur when viewed from a distance. More than any other peak in the Himalayas, it opens the mind to the cosmos around it, evoking a sense of infinite space that makes one aware of a vaster universe encompassing the limited world of ordinary experience. It has served as an inspiration for numerous Hindu temples and shrines in the distant plains of India. **The sight of the peak has a powerful effect, bringing tears to the eyes of many who behold it, leaving them convinced that they have glimpsed the abode of the Gods beyond the round of life and death. Neither Hindus, Buddhists, nor any Tibetans would ever contemplate trying to climb Kailash.**

Hindus view Kailash as the divine dwelling place of God Siva and Goddess Parvati. There, as the Supreme Yogi, naked and smeared with ashes, His matted hair coiled on top of His head, He sits on a tiger skin, steeped in the indescribable bliss of meditation. From His position of aloof splendor on the summit, His third eye blazing with supernatural power and awareness, the lord of the mountain calmly surveys the joys and sorrows, the triumphs and tragedies, the entire play of illusion that make up life in the world below. The power of His meditation destroys the world of illusions that bind people to the painful cycle of death and rebirth. When He rises to dance, He takes on the functions of Brahma and Vishnu and creates and preserves the universe itself.

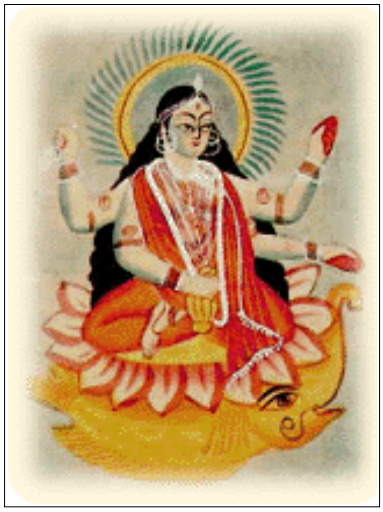
Sagarmatha or Mt. Everest

Why it is called Everest is given in a book "Science and the Raj: 1857-1905" by Deepak Kumar. George Everest was Surveyor General of India from 1830-43. However, in 1852 an Indian named Radhanath Sikdar was one of the first to compute that that peak XV was the highest point on Earth. When Radhanath told Colonel Waugh, the new SGI, Waugh immediately named it Everest after his predecessor and benefactor even though the peak had **local names like Sagarmatha. According to Kumar the Nepalese names were Devadungha and Gaurishankar and the Tibetan name Jamokangkar.**

The Royal Geographical Society approved of the name Everest but the Royal Asiatic Society repudiated it. Later S. G. Burrard, another SGI, admitted that **"when the Gaurishankar controversy opened, the name Everest was an interloper on the map of Asia".** Of course, the racist British, keen to play down the scientific capabilities of Indians, did not mention that it was Raghanath Sikdar in Calcutta who had first realized the importance of peak XV.

2. Goddess of Bliss: Nanda Devi

In addition to the paradise She shares with Siva on Kailas, Parvati has her abode on a number of other mountains. As



Nanda Devi, the **"Goddess of Bliss,"** She dwells in beauty on the lovely peak of that name in the Himalayas northeast of Delhi. The highest mountain in India outside the principality of Sikkim, Nanda Devi soars in alluring curves of rock and ice to culminate in a delicate summit, poised at 25,645 feet above a ring of snow peaks that form a sanctuary protecting the Goddess from all but Her most determined admirers. The only break in their otherwise impregnable wall of rock and snow is the terrifying gorge of the **Rishi Ganga**, one of the sources of the sacred Ganga, named after seven sages of Hindu stories, who fled the oppression of demons to seek refuge with the Goddess before departing this world to become enshrined as seven stars in the constellation of Ursa Major. Shepherds and porters from nearby villages who venture into the area believe that they can sometimes hear the sounds of these sages--drums beating, the blare of trumpets and the eerie barking of dogs. The few foreign mountaineers who manage to penetrate the gorge, inching their way along the sides of sheer cliffs that plunge thousands of feet into the river roaring below, find themselves in a paradise of gentle meadows filled with flowers at the foot of the sacred peak, which stands like a temple in the middle of the sanctuary itself.

Nanda Devi lies in Uttarakhand, the principal area of pilgrimage in the Indian Himalayas. This region ranks second only to Kailash and Manasarovar in the degree of its sanctity for Hindus. Closer to the lowlands and much more accessible, it is visited by many more pilgrims, who come by the tens of thousands to bathe at Gomukh, the glacial source of the Ganga, and to worship at Kedarnath and Badrinath, lofty temples of Siva and Vishnu sequestered in narrow valleys beneath the icy thrones of the Gods themselves. The region is also the favorite haunt of holy men and wandering yogis, who come to follow the example of Siva and meditate in the sharp clear air of the heights, within sight of the peaks that lead to heaven and the goal they seek.



As the Goddess who resides on the highest mountain in the region, Nanda Devi has many shrines and temples dedicated to Her. One of the better-known ones is in the hill station of Almora, which affords one of the best views of the peak itself and the mountains that surround it. Although primarily a benevolent deity, Nanda can take on the form of **Durga,** the wrathful Goddess. The people of the region also view Nanda Devi as a benevolent source of life and renewal. According to ancient Hindu tales, a flood once covered the entire world. A sage named Manu was warned of the impending disaster and built a boat in which he survived. Vishnu incarnated himself as a fish and towed the craft to safety on a mountain peak. As the waters receded, Manu together with his family and the remnants of all living creatures went down the slope to repopulate the Earth. The people of Uttarakhand identify the mountain of the flood as Nanda Devi, and one local group, the Rajis, still regard the peak as the abode of their ancestors. According to one legend, the seven sages accompanied Manu and remained behind to dwell in the company of the Goddess.

3. Annapurna and Machapuchare: Goddess **Parvati** dwells in yet another form on sacred Annapurna One, named like Nanda Devi for the deity said to reside on its summit. A range of peaks that includes Gangapurna, Machapuchare and Annapurnas One through Four, Annapurna rises in one long sweep above the lush green hills of central Nepal. Seen from the tropical valley of Pokhara in the twilight before dawn, the range's peaks appear to float like bluish-gray icebergs on a sea of liquid shadows. Etched with shadowed flutings, the corrugated face of Annapurna One--the highest summit at 26,545-feet--becomes a golden backdrop to the slender pointed peak of Machapuchare, the "Fish's Tail."



Annapurna means in **Sanskrit "She who is filled with food."** Unlike Nanda Devi, who can take on the wrathful form of Durga, Annapurna is regarded as a purely benevolent deity. A kindhearted Goddess of plenty, She is the Queen of Banaras, the holy city of the Hindus on the banks of the Ganga south of Nepal. Each year, after the autumn harvest, the people of Banaras celebrate a festival dedicated to Her called Annakuta, the "Food Mountain," in which they fill Her temple with a mountain of food--rice, lentils, and sweets of all kinds to be distributed to those who come to receive Her blessings.

Within the heart of the range lies a hidden basin of beautiful meadows and glaciers, resembling the sanctuary surrounding Nanda Devi. A curtain of rock and ice draped between mountains soaring to over 26,000 feet completely encloses this natural amphitheater, dropping nowhere lower than 19,000 feet except at one place. There, an incredible gorge 12,000 feet deep slices through this otherwise impregnable barrier, right beneath the overhanging cliffs and glaciers of Machapuchare, one of the loveliest peaks in the Himalayas.

Arunachala of Tamil Nadu



One of the best place to see how mountains are venerated is far to the south, where Arunachala juts out of the Tamil plain, a hundred miles from Chennai. At the foot of Arunachala is the ashram of **Ramana Maharshi,** one of the greatest spiritual masters of this century. Though he died in 1950, Ramana's ashram today is one of the most potent spiritual places in India, drawing people from all over the world. The only writing Ramana ever did consisted of devotional poems to the mountain. Arunchala, he was to say later, is the physical embodiment of Shiva, of God Himself. Why go anywhere else?

According to **Shiv Purana,** Brahma and Vishnu emerged from Shiva, the Unmanifest Source of all. No sooner had they come into form than they began to argue about which of them had the superior role, as the creator, and the protector of the universe. To stop their quarrelling, Shiva manifested as a column of light so radiant that both Brahma and Vishnu were temporarily blinded, and had to stop their bickering.

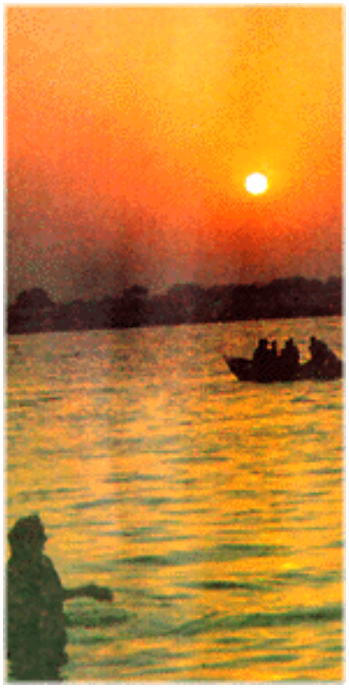
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Rivers/Oceans/Lakes

The rhythm of life is dictated by water and Hindus hold rivers in great reverence. India is a country that not only nurtures the resources nature has bestowed upon it, but also worships them for the all-round prosperity they bring in their wake. Rivers are one such gift which are considered highly sacred throughout the length and breadth of the country. This is primarily because these mighty rivers have perennially been a source of livelihood to millions of people living in areas lying along their courses. No wonder people see in them a manifestation of divine female power (shakti).

Ambitame, naditame, devitame, Sarasvati. O best of mothers, O best of rivers, O best of goddesses, Sarasvati. About 4,500 years ago the Sarasvati was eulogised thus in the Rig Veda.

The rivers are female divinities, food and life bestowing mothers. As such, they are prominent among the popular divinities represented in the works of art of the classical period. The most holy of rivers, the best known and most honored, is the Ganga or Ganges. She is personified as Goddess Ganga. The sacred river Ganga not only provides water for the land; **the water is itself the symbol of life without end.** The river rises from an ice bed, 13,800 feet above the sea level in the Garhwal Himalayas. Devotees traverse long distances to partake and procure the "Gangajal" (water of Ganga), as it is almost thought to be divine. Because the Gangajal procured from the "Har ki Pauri" in Hardwar perennially remains fresh! In mythology, Ganga is depicted as a beautiful young woman, holding a lotus in one hand, cascading down the tresses of Lord Shiva The story of Goddess Ganga is one of the most important themes in Indian mythology which has inspired the artists and sculptors. The doorway of every temple in India is guarded by an anthropomorphic representation of river Ganga.



**'O Mother Ganga, may your water,
abundant blessing of this world,
treasure of Lord Shiva, playful Lord of all the earth,
essence of the scriptures and
embodied goodness of the gods,
May your water, sublime wine of immortality,
Soothe our troubled souls.'**

The ancient city of Allahabad (formerly known as **Prayag**) lies at the confluence of the Ganga (Ganges) and the Yamuna, two sacred rivers that have been cradles of the Indian civilisation. The city is mentioned in the oldest Indian literature such as the Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas. According to Hindu tales, Lord Brahma, the creator chose a place where three of the holiest rivers on earth could meet in harmony. The city is also referred to as `Tirth Raj' or the `king of pilgrimage centers'.

"The Ganga is a living presence, a protector, a healer of ills. The Ganga is as alive as it ever was with the hopes and dreams of an entire culture.

Even Jawaharlal Nehru, that arch-modernists, asked that his ashes be cast into the Ganga at Prayag.

" I am proud of this noble heritage which was and still is ours, and I am aware that I too, like all of us, am a link in that uninterrupted chain which finds its origin in the dawn of history, in India's immemorial past. It is in testimony of this and as a last homage to the cultural heritage of India that I request that a handful of my ashes be thrown in the Ganges at Allahabad, so that they may be borne to the vast ocean that bears on the shores of India."

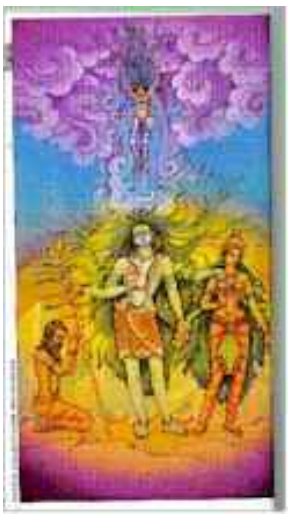
(source: **The India I Love - By Marie-Simone Renou** p.128).

Kashi is the holiest place for Hindus. It is considered holier than the sky.

It is at Kashi that **Count Keyserling** describes the ecstasy that Hindu devotion means.

*"*The whole Hindu world still comes to her banks, to sing, to pray, to wash, to ask favors and blessings, to barter, to die. The Ganga is a living symbol of an ancient culture's way of life and of the sacred dimension of nature itself. Of all the goddesses, Ma Ganga, is the only one without a shadow. She is the unequivocal fountain of mercy and compassion, here in this world only to comfort her children. Her waters are the milk, the nectar of immortality, source of all life, and abundance. Countless flowers are strewn across her body daily; millions of lights set sail every evening upon her waters. While stories of gods and goddesses come and go with the ages, while stories replaces or rivals another, the organic presence of Ganga continues as ever, absorbing her devotees' offerings and ashes in the same way she has done since time immemorial."

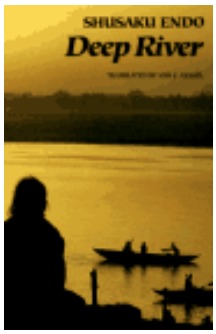
(source: **Travel Through Sacred India - By Roger Housden** p. 22-23).



Of particular sanctity in India are the perennial rivers, among which the Ganga stands first. This river, personified as a goddess, originally flowed only in heaven until she was brought down by **Bhagiratha** to purify the ashes of his ancestors. She came down reluctantly, cascading first on the head of Siva, in order to break her fall, which would have shattered the Earth. Confluences are particularly holy, and the Gangas' confluence with the Yamuna at Allahabad is the most sacred spot in India. Another river of importance is the Saraswati, which loses itself in desert; it was personified as a goddess of eloquence and learning.

Kumbh Mela: The magic of the mystical Ganga. According to devotees, those who come to the river with a prayer, never leave back unsatisfied. *Faith in the power of the river, to heal, to resurrect the dead from the grave.* The recent **Mahakumbh** at Tirthanagari Prayag, has witnessed a mindboggling rush among people, both Indian and foreign, to take a dip in the water of the river, whose origin is as deep as the Himalayas themselves. *"Ganga Maiyya (Mother Ganga)* will take care of us," The belief among the devotees, startles many first timers to this mela. The sheer scale of the Kumbh mela is so mind-boggling. **It's extraordinary to witness this sort of mass spiritual communion between so many people and the river**. The varied images from Kumbh attracts everyone from Boston to Benaras." -- the biggest spiritual event in the globe. **Bishambhar Bhushan,** poor and blind, traveled two days in a cramped train from his village of Dhanvani in central Madhya Pradesh state. Bhushan, 80, scooped up the cold river with his hands, and offered it to the heavens in a centuries-old gesture. "I told Mother Ganga, take me across life, mother," he said, his eyelids twitching with excitement. "My life's ambition is fulfilled."

Together, the Kalpavasis and the Sanyasis, provide a glimpse into the spiritual mindset of the people of India set in their pursuit of salvation. Kalpavasis, are people who survive on minimal food and clothing, and whose number runs into tens of thousands. They sleep in the open during the freezing winter nights on the river banks, revealing the spirit of the Kumbh as much as the sadhus who come in hoards with their respective flag-bearers. In perhaps one of the largest gatherings ever, millions of pilgrims took a dip at the seven ghats at Sangam - the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna - on Wednesday, stretching the administration and the police to their limits, but reinforcing the fact the Indian milieu had not lost touch with the divine.



In his moving novel, **Deep River**, **Shusaku Endo** (1923-1996) a major Japanese author writes about a group of Japanese tourists, each of whom is wrestling with his or her own demons, travels to the **River Ganga** on a pilgrimage of grace. Each has come to India and the holy river Ganga on a spiritual quest, and each discovers that God has "many faces."

(For more on Kumbh mela please refer to the **Trivia** chapter).

"Like a moonless night, like flowerless trees,
such are the countries and regions deprived of the Beneficial virtues of the Ganges.
Like a sunless sky, an earth without mountains, an atmosphere without wind -
thus undoubtedly are the countries and regions that the Ganges does not bathe.
If the wind which has caressed the waves of the Ganges touches a man's skin,
it immediately carries off all the sin he has committed. As small children tormented by hunger crowd around their mother begging, so men here below, desirous of attaining their salvation, hurry
imploringly to the Ganges!"

- such are the virtues of the Ganga celebrated in the **Mahabharata**.

Reverence for Water

Waters contain
All disease-dispelling medicaments,
Useful for the upkeep of our body,
So that we may live long
To enjoy the bright sun.
That there is ambrosia in waters,
There is healing balm in them,
And there are medicinal herbs,
Know this all,
And by their proper use become wiser.

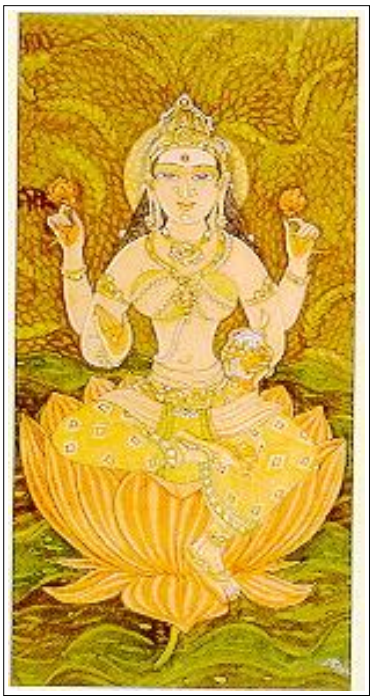
- Rig Veda 1.23

I seek the Lord of the Waters of golden appearance.
May he hear our entreaty and grant us a place of ablution.
Whatever food I have taken in the house of the wicked, whatever gift I have received at the hands of the crafty, whatever sin of thought or word or deed I have committed, from this may Indira, Varuna, Brhaspati and Surya cleanse me again and again.
I have eaten or drunk to excess, or consorted with people of violent ways, may king Varuna wipe it all away.
Thus, rid of impurity and evil and free from my sin, may I find liberation and pass to the world of the Lord of creation.

- **Taittiriya Aranyaka 1.12-13**

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Not far from the foot of the peak itself, at nearly 15,000 feet above sea level, reflecting the light of its snows, repose the calm blue waters of the most sacred lake of Hindu religion and stories -holy **Lake Manasarovar, "Lake of the Mind."** The hardiest of Hindu pilgrims aspire to take the long and dangerous journey over high passes to bathe in Manasarovar's icy waters and cleanse their minds of the sins that threaten to condemn them to the suffering of rebirth.



Goddess Saraswati is the embodiment of the mighty **Saraswati River of the Vedas**. Saraswati means "the essence of one's own self." The Sanskrit word '*sara*' means essence and '*swa'* means 'self'. **She is the earliest goddess who is associated with a river in the Indian tradition.** She is the divine spouse of Lord Brahma, the creator. Since knowledge is necessary for creation, Saraswati symbolizes the creative power of Lord Brahma. She is also praised for her ability both to cleanse and fertilize the earth, and has been equated with the goddess of learning, poetry, music, and culture. She is associated with speech- Vac: the goddess of riverlike, streaming speech.

Saraswati is typically shown seated on a lotus. Like the swan, the lotus seat of the goddess suggests her transcendence of the physical world. She floats above the muddy imperfections of the physical world, unsullied, pure, beautiful. Although rooted in the mud (like man rooted in the physical world), the lotus perfects itself in a blossom that has transcended the mud. She inspires people to live in such a way that they may transcend their physical limitations through the ongoing creation of culture. Goddess Saraswati is worshiped throughout India and on her special day in spring, Vasant Panchmi, she is worshipped by school children as the patron goddess of learning. The **Benaras Hindu University** was also founded on this day.

Brahmputra is the mighty river that dominates the landscape of north-east India. Emanating from the Mansarovar region in the Himalayas, it incessantly gushes down with a massive force through the dense forests of north-eastern states of India, particularly Assam. Brahmputra may not be revered as much as the Ganga is, but she is considered to be more beautiful. Despite its masculine-sounding name, Brahmputra is essentially feminine and exceeds Ganga by a good 450 kilometers in length. The most unique feature of this great river is its navigability at an astounding altitude of ten thousand feet! Like the Ganga, its waters too are snow-fed and are generously rainfed, thus making it flow throughout the year.

The Saraswati, Ganga, Yamuna, Brahmaputra, Krishna, Kaveri, and other rivers represent an ever-flowing stream of celestial grace which purifies and fertilizes the earth.

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Mother Earth/Sun & Planet



"O Goddess Earth, the consort of Visnu,
you whose garments are the oceans and
whose ornaments are the hills and mountain ranges;
please forgive me as I walk on you this day."

In the **Artha-Veda,** composed five-thousand years ago by the Rshis, a hymn to the Earth.

May She, Queen of what has been and will be,
make a wide world for us.
Earth that bears plants of various healing powers,
may she spread wide for us and thrive.

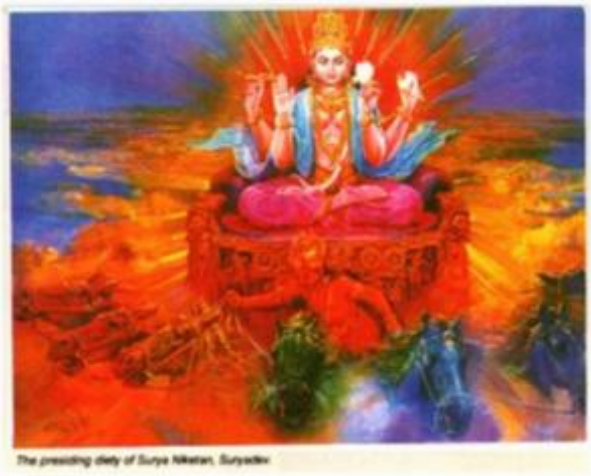
O Earth - brown, black, red and multi-colored
the firm Earth protected by Indra,
on this Earth may I stand -
unvanquished, unhurt, unslain.

This earth, our mother, has nurtured consciousness from the slime of the primeval ocean billions of years ago and has sustained the human race for countless centuries. Will we repay our debts to our mother by converting her into a burnt out cinder circling the sun into eternity?

Rock, soil, stone and dust with these
Earth is held together and bound firm.
My obeisance to gold-breasted Earth...
Rising or sitting, standing or walking,
May we, either with our right foot or our left,
Never totter o the earth. - **Atharva Veda** 12.1.26, 28

Sun/Dawn/Fire/ Worship

"We meditate upon the supreme effulgence of the Divine creative Sun, that he may give impulse to our intelligence." Rig Veda III 62.10



The Sun (Surya) is the visible presence, the vision of the Divine, the cosmic symbol for the Supreme. He is the Divine light and presence that fills all the worlds. The Sun of illumination follows in love affair the Dawn (**Usha**) of awakening. Usha or dawn represents Human aspiration as the Spiritual dawn.

Surya is possibly the most Vedic God. In the RgVeda, he is worshipped as Savitr. As the source of life, light and warmth. He is also the source of inner enlightenment as the famous Gayatri mantra suggests. At dawn, the householder and his wife rise, purify themselves with a bath--usually in a temple pool or a river if one is available--and then make an offering to the fire-god **Agni** in their household fire. Agni represents the consciousness force, the Sacred Fire. The man will then turn towards the rising sun and ask for blessing and understanding.

The **Gayatri mantra** (chant), which forms the core of the Hindu faith, is actually addressed to Surya:



"O splendid and playful sun,
we offer this prayer to thee.
Enlighten this craving mind.
Be our protector.
May the radiance of the divine ruler guide our destiny.
Wise men salute your magnificence with oblations and words of praise."

Lord Rama was also taught, by sage Agastaya, the *Adityahridayam*, a prayer addressed to the sun god.

" The Sun is the foremost physical manifestation of divine creative power. In the glorious morning the faithful bend towards the giver of life in one single gesture of adoration. "

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Plants/Animals



Forests and groves were considered sacred, and flowering trees received special reverence. Just as various animals were associated with gods and goddesses, different trees and plants were also associated in the Hindu pantheon. The **Mahabharata** says that 'even if there is only one tree full of flowers and fruits in the village, that place becomes worthy of worship and respect.'

Hindus see divinity in all living creatures. Animal deities therefore, occupy an important place in Hindu dharma. Animals, for example, are very common as form of transport for various Gods and Goddesses. The entire clan of Shiva is replete with ecological symbolism. Shiva's consort Parvati is considered the daughter of the mountain. She is the personification of Mother Earth. In Hindu stories and iconography, there is a close relationship between the various deities, and their animal or bird mounts. Each divinity is associated with a particular animal or bird, and this lends a special dimension to the animal kingdom.



As the sheep is to Christianity, the cow is to Hinduism. Lord Krishna was a cowherd, and the bull is depicted as the vehicle of Lord Shiva. Today the cow has almost become a symbol of Hinduism. As opposed to the West, where the cow is widely considered as nothing better than walking hamburgers, in India, *the cow is believed to be a symbol of the earth - because it gives so much yet asks nothing in return.* Because of its great economic importance, it makes good sense to protect the cow. It is said Mahatma Gandhi became a vegetarian because he felt cows were ill-treated. Such is the respect for the cow, notes scholar Jeaneane Fowler, that Indians had offered to take in millions of cows waiting for slaughter in Britain as a result of the crisis in beef production in 1996.

Snakes are a symbol of healing and primal energy. In art, the *Naginis* are figures of beauty.Vishnu reclines on the serpent **Ananta** eternally. In Kerala, snakes are worshipped as guardians of the home; and it is said that when a snake enters your life, there will be a new birth of creativity and wisdom. In Bengal, the goddess Manasa, a divine nagini, is worshipped for her powers to vanquish illness. Dogs have always been man's faithful friends, loyal and loving. Yudhishthira refused to enter heaven without his dog. After the Pandavas crossed over to the celestial zones, Yudhishthira's dog became dharma personified. He told Indra, ``This dog, O Lord, is highly devoted to me. He should go with me. My heart is full of compassion for him".

Even e Lord Krishna always wore a peacock feather in his crown.

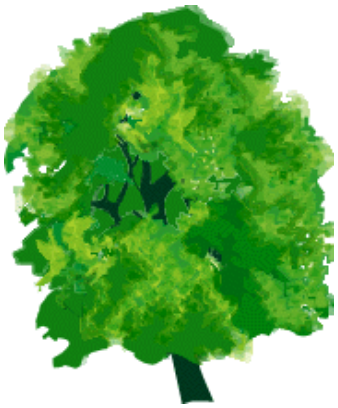


Ganesha, the son of Shiva, is a combination of elephant and man. The elephant is worshipped in this country and even today forms an integral part of many temples and festivals. **Muruka or Subramanyan**, another son of Shiva, also with the trident as his favorite weapon, and the peacock as his vehicle, is a deity of woods and mountains in South India. Animals also appear as independent divine creatures.

Sacred Groves and Trees

The *pipal* tree or *asvatta* (*Ficus religiosa*) has had a conspicuous position in the cultural landscape of north India and human collective memory for more than 5,000 years. It was depicted even on Mohenjo Daro seals. Buddha himself found enlightenment under a *pipal* tree (Mansberger, 1988). Buddha is reported to have been born in a sacred grove, Lumbinivana, full of *sal* trees (Gadgil, 1985).

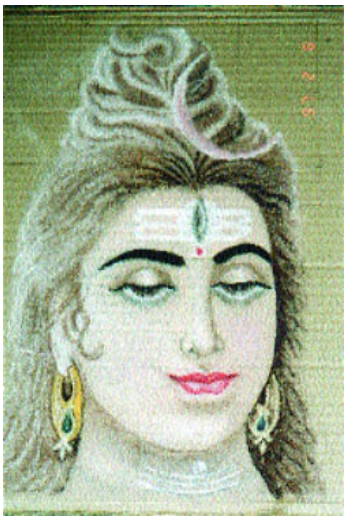
For Hindus the *bel* tree, *Aegle marmelos,* is associated with Shiva, *tulasi* with Vishnu, and fig (*Ficus glomerata*) with Dattatreya, the son of Trimurty.



Nakeera, the Tamil poet of the Sangam period, states that Lord Muruka could be found in the forest, in a place surrounded by water, rivers, tanks, meeting places under trees, new-grown groves, etc. The *kadampa* tree is likened to Lord Muruka himself. Sangam tradition holds that he is the owner of all the hilly tracts with rich groves (Ramachandran, 1990). Ayyappa, Aiyanar and Sasta (all considered to be the same) of south India is essentially a deity of the woods, whose province is to guard the fields, crops and herds of the peasantry and to drive away their enemies.

No temples existed in India during the Vedic period. They were not to be found in the pre-Buddhist period except for wooden ones. The ancient Buddhist sacred place was the *stupa* (Hastings, ed., 1934). The various gods and goddesses whom the indigenous population of peninsular India worshipped were not accustomed to dwell in the secluded atmosphere of temples; they loved the open air. *Even today, for the gramadevata (village goddess) of south India there are no temples in many villages.* The deity may be in the shadow of a big tree. Generally they are lodged in small shrines. In a good number of villages no object is placed to represent the deity and the tree itself is regarded as the embodiment of the deity.

An interesting stage in the transformation of the sacred tree into the anthropomorphic form was observed by the Italian traveller Della Valle, who visited India in 1623–25. He found in Surat the worship of Parvati in the form of a tree. Her face was painted on the tree and offerings were of vegetable origin (Wheller and Macmillan, 1956).



In the personification of Lord Shiva, for instance, we may observe the evolution of Indian traditional thought of living in partnership with nature. He is as old as Indian thought and his origin probably merges with oblivion in the Indus Valley culture. He has mountains and wild places as his abode. His entangled hair symbolizes the primeval untamed forest. The **Ganga** originating from his tress depicts the watershed function of sacred groves. Serpents coiled around his neck symbolize coexistence with the denizens of the ecosystem. By his trident and leopard skin attire he brings to our mind the picture of the hunter-gatherer. This destruction is followed by creation; incorporating the elements (*bhutas*) from Mother Earth sprouts crops and grasses and once again forests. The sacred grove, on the other hand, was aboriginal forest which enhanced overall landscape heterogeneity and thereby greater plant and animal diversity. The necklace of *rudraksha* (*Elaeocarpus* spp.) adorning Shiva's neck also highlights his links with the forest.

Various trees, fruits and plants have special significance in Hindu ritual. Hindu religious scripts, stories, and rituals have attempted to drive home the importance of preserving nature by deifying it through the centuries. **Lord Krishna** says in the **Bhagavad Gita** (9.26):

Patram Pushpam phalam toyam, yo mey bhaktya prayachchati Tadaham bhakt yupahrutam asnaami prayataatmanaha

I accept a leaf, flower, fruit or water Or whatever is offered with devotion.

The **neem** tree is sacred and its flower is offered to God and eaten on New Years day although it is sour. The **bilva** tree, its flowers and fruits are very sacred for Shiva worship. The **tulsi** plant is regarded as the abode of Krishna and is important in all pujas. **Sandal wood**, its paste and oil are important in worship of gods.

All plants and flowers have medicinal value in the Hindu system of medicine (ayurveda) brought by the divine medicine man **Dhanvantari** during **Samudra mathana (churning of oceans).**



The **coconut** tree and the coconut are sacred and are offered to God during worship. **Mango** leaves are used as festoons during pujas and auspicious events. All flowers and leaves of plants are used during worship for pushpa puja and patra puja. The **lotus** is a sacred flower and plant for Hindus. The **banana** plant and leaves are used for ornamentation and worship.

The 'tulsi' plant or Indian basil is an important symbol in the Hindu religious tradition. The name 'tulsi' connotes "the incomparable one". Tulsi is a venerated plant and Hindus worship it in the morning and evening. Tulsi grows wild in the tropics and warm regions. Dark or *Shyama* tulsi and light or *Rama* tulsi are the two main varieties of basil, the former possessing greater medicinal value. Of the many varieties, the *Krishna* or *Shyama* tulsi is commonly used for worship.

Tulsi As A Deity



The presence of tulsi plant symbolizes the religious bent of a Hindu family. A Hindu household is considered incomplete if it doesn't have a tulsi plant in the courtyard. Many families have the tulsi planted in a specially built structure, which has images of deities installed on all four sides, and an alcove for a small earthen oil lamp. Some households can even have up to a dozen tulsi plants on the verandah or in the garden forming a "tulsi-van" or "tulsivrindavan" - a miniature basil forest.

Vaishavites or believers of **Lord Vishnu** worship the tulsi leaf because it's the one that pleases Lord Vishnu the most. They also wear beaded necklaces made of tulsi stems. The manufacture of these tulsi necklaces is a cottage industry in pilgrimages and temple towns.

Tulsi As An Elixir: Apart from its religious significance it is of great medicinal significance, and is a prime herb in Ayurvedic treatment. Marked by its strong aroma and a stringent taste, tusli is a kind of "the elixir of life" as it promotes longevity. The plant's extracts can be used to prevent and cure many illnesses and common ailments like common cold, headaches, stomach disorders, inflammation, heart disease, various forms of poisoning and malaria. Essential oil extracted from *karpoora* tulsi is mostly used for medicinal purposes though of late it is used in the manufacture of herbal toiletry.

According to Jeevan Kulkarni, author of *Historical Truths & Untruths Exposed*, when Hindu women worship tulsi, they in effect pray for "less and less carbonic acid and more and more oxygen - a perfect object lesson in sanitation, art and religion". The tulsi plant is even known to purify or de-pollute the atmosphere and also works as a repellent to mosquitoes, flies and other harmful insects. Tulsi used to be a universal remedy in cases of malarial fever. Prof Shrinivas Tilak, who teaches Religion at Concordia University, Montreal has made this historical citation: In a letter written to *The Times*, London, dated May 2, 1903 Dr George Birdwood, Professor of Anatomy, Grant Medical College, Bombay said, "When the Victoria Gardens were established in Bombay, the men employed on those works were pestered by mosquitoes. At the recommendation of the Hindu managers, the whole boundary of the gardens was planted with holy basil, on which the plague of mosquitos was at once abated, and fever altogether disappeared from among the resident gardners."

Tulsi In Legends: According to one legend, Tulsi is also mentioned in the stories of Meera and of Radha immortalised in Jayadev's Gita Govinda. The story of Lord Krishna has it that when Krishna was weighed in gold, not even all the ornaments of Satyabhama could outweigh him. But a single tulsi leaf placed by Rukmani on the pan tilted the scale. In the Hindu stories, tulsi is very dear to Lord Vishnu. Tulsi is ceremonially married to Lord Vishnu annually on the 11th bright day of the month of Karttika in the lunar calendar. This festival continues for five days and concludes on the full moon day, which falls in mid October. This ritual, called the 'Tulsi Vivaha' inaugurates the annual marriage season in India.

(source: **http://hinduism.about.com/religion/hinduism/library/weekly/aa062000a.htm**).

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Conclusion:

So long as this land,
Will have mountains, forests and pastures
That long will the Earth survive,
Sustaining you and the coming generations.

- **Devistotra. A Hindu Shastra**



Harmony with nature is an important aspect of Indian culture. The mountains, rivers, trees, flowers and animals have a special significance in Indian life. There is no mountain range in India from the Himalayas to Sahyadri which is not somehow integrated with Indian life. The Himalaya is the devatatma and the mount Kailasa is the abode of Shiva. The Vindhyas are also sacred; the Aravaliis with Mount Abu and Amba Devi are centers of pilgrimage. When we come to the rivers, it is not only the Ganga and Yamuna that are sacred, but Narmada, Godavari, Kaveri and others are also holy. To each locality its river is sacred as Ganga. The Peepal, Banian, Neem trees, Tulasi etc., are also the useful part of our life. **In fact the Hindu culture, like the Hindu temple, is permeated with reverence for nature.** It is the harmony of man and nature that is the basic concept of our life and culture.

What is needed today is to remind ourselves that nature cannot be destroyed without mankind ultimately being destroyed itself. Centuries of rapacious exploitation of the environment has finally caught up with us, and a radically changed attitude towards nature, is now not a question of spiritual merit or condescension, but of sheer survival. This earth, so touchingly looked upon in the Hindu view as the Universal Mother, has nurtured mankind up from the slime of the primeval ocean for billions of years.

Let us recall the ancient Hindu dictum:

"The earth is our mother, we are all her children." Mountains are mystical realms of Gods, heaven and spiritual masters. Trees and termites, all of Nature has been venerated by ancient Hindus, Greeks, Native Americans and other Pagan religions around the world. They worshipped Nature and to treat the forces of Nature as heavenly superhuman powers. Zeus, Apollo the Sun god, has his own attending ministers; Minerva, the Goddess of wisdom, a western Saraswati, for whom learning springs from the head of love."

" God sleeps in the rocks, proclaims the Hindu scriptures, "dreams in the plants, stirs toward wakefulness in the animals, and in mankind is awake to his own ego individuality. "

" Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam -- The Whole Universe is one Family. "

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'West has always benefited from Indian medicine'

PANAJI: If you thought the benefits of medicine flowed into India via a one-way street, American researcher Timothy Walker would like to convince you that is not the case. This researcher of early European colonial history is currently scouring the archives of Goa to show how Indian medicine influenced the West.

"Indian medicine's influence on Portugal was fairly wide. You had echoes of Indian or ayurvedic practices that come into Portuguese usage. And you can see those echoes reflected in the medicines that Portuguese physicians and surgeons are supplying and prescribing for patients in Indian hospitals and infirmaries," Walker said.

What got him particularly interested is the differences between "popular" and "university trained" medicine. "For my doctoral program, I focused on early modern Europe and colonial America. My dissertation work was on Portugal in the 17th and 18th century. I looked at how popular medicine was being oppressed by licensed physicians and surgeons," he says.

In turn, he got led to India "because at that time a lot of the medicines coming out of India were being shipped to Portugal." Finally, he began looking how Indian medicine influenced European medicine, via Portugal - the earliest European colonial power in Asia.

Goa has one of the richest archives of early colonial history, because the Portuguese settled here in the early 16th century. Walker is locating interesting examples of drugs that were shipped out to Portugal in early colonial times.

Indian influences are also noticeable in drugs in Portuguese pharmacies. "You can see it (the influence of Indian medicine on the west) thorough documentation from the 17th and 18th century," says Walker.

Tamarind, for example, is a plant widely used in ayurveda. It is applied in Portuguese hospitals. It is used as a cooling agent, in combination with other medicinal plants to help the absorption of those plants and it is used in a poultice, placed on the skin.

Early Portuguese colonies in India proved to be the first meeting grounds for the east and the west, particularly Goa and the enclaves of Daman and Diu around the coastline of present day Gujarat, he says.

There's a lot of scholarship in the west that speaks of the way Western medicine was brought to the east, and of how 'scientific' medicine was taught to Indian people. But what is often not so strongly appreciated is how much the West learnt from the east," he points out.

Walker says he has been able to locate documents that show the extent of Portuguese buying medicines from local merchants and traders. "So you have a lot of opportunities for shared medical knowledge, which I don't think was the same case with other colonial powers that were in India at the time.

"In terms of documentation, you have a real gem here in Panjim. He points out there were 12,000 to 15,000 volumes of material that relatively are in very good condition. It has been well preserved and well catalogued.

"This probably is the best source of documentation for people who want to look at this whole question of the West meeting the east specially in the early stages." (IANS).

(source: http://www.timesofindia.com/300501/30indi34.htm)

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Ashwagandha next on patent hunters list
http://www.timesofindia.com/today/16home7.htm

HYDERABAD: **Neem. Turmeric. Now, Ashwagandha. American and Japanese companies have discovered another Indian treasure -- and they are patenting it.**

According to the officials of the department of science and technology, seven American and four Japanese firms have filed for grant of patents on formulations containing Ashwagandha or extracts of the plant.

Fruits, leaves and seeds of the Indian medicinal plant *withania somnifera* have been used for ages in the Ayurvedic system as aphrodisiacs, diuretics and for restoring loss of memory, the officials said.

The Japanese patent applications are related to the use of Ashwagandha as a skin ointment for cosmetic purposes and for promoting fertility. Natreon of the United States has obtained a patent for "an extract obtained from the Ashwagandha plant taken from steep rocks in the Himalayan mountains", officials of the patent facilitating cell said in their report.

The report said another US establishment, the New England Deaconess Hospital, has taken a patent on an Ashwagandha formulation claimed to "alleviate symptoms associated with arthritis".

"One thing which is very obvious from the above study," the report concluded, "is that Ashwagandha plant is catching attention of scientists and more and more patents related to Ashwagandha are being filed or granted by different patent offices of the world since 1996." *(PTI)*

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Abduction of Turmeric - Pirates in the garden of India

The war began thus: In May, 1995 the US Patent Office granted to the University of Mississippi Medical Center a patent [#5,401,504] for "Use of Turmeric in Wound Healing."





Well, well, well. Some discovery, that. Indians grow up with a constant awareness of turmeric. It permeates their life. It is an easy and generous plant [curcurma longa] that grows throughout the sub-continent. The tuber when dried keeps practically forever. Its decoction is a stubborn dye. It is a condiment that adds character to Indian food and helps digestion. Turmeric powder heals open wounds. Drunk with warm milk, it stems coughs, cures colds and comforts throats.

Indians paint doorways with turmeric paste as an insecticide. Women in the south make a depilatory skin cream with it. Add the juice of fresh lime to dry turmeric, let it marinate for three days, dry it in the sun and grind it to a fine powder and voila, you have the brilliant red kunkum that 'dots' Indian women's foreheads and surrounds the gods in the temples. Roots are exchanged between people as a formal symbol of goodwill. Indians place freshly uprooted plants at the altar during Pongal and offer worship .

For Indians turmeric is a benevolent goddess. For sound reasons, it transpires. Indian physicians had always packed their kits with turmeric. Now West's formal research was confirming many of its virtues. It is now believed to be able to treat dysentery, arthritis, ulcers and even some cancers. It is also found to protect the liver. Turmeric's grace is stunning cancer researchers. COX-2 inhibitor drugs have been known to block an enzyme called cyclooxygenase-2 which aggravates arthritis. Dr. Mitch Gaynor at the Strang Cancer Prevention Center, New York uses these drugs in cancer treatment to impede this undesirable enzyme. Turmeric goes one step further: Dr. Chintalapally V. Rao of American Health Foundation, Valhalla, NY believes that while COX-2 inhibitor drugs battle the enzyme, the curcurmin element in turmeric prevents even the formation of the enzyme. Consider the implication of 'turmeric patent' #5,401,504. If an expatriate Indian in America sprinkles turmeric powder -- just as her ancestors in India have done for centuries-- on her child's scrape, she would in fact be infringing US patent laws and was open to prosecution.

(source: **Goodnewsindia.com**).

Curry Spice May Inhibit Tumor Growth A compound found in the curry spice turmeric may suppress production of a protein that spurs tumor growth in the body, researchers report. The researchers mixed human pancreatic cancer cells with different amounts of curcumin, which is the substance that gives turmeric its yellow color.

(source: **Yahoo News.com**).

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Hundreds of herbs used for centuries by traditional healers in India could soon be on western pharmacy shelves. Clinical trials have shown that herbal remedies for asthma, diabetes and even sexually transmitted diseases may be effective. may be effective. The council is looking at treatments for a range of other conditions used for over a thousand years by practitioners of Ayurveda and Siddha medicine.

Professor Ranjit Roy Chaudhury, a member of the council, said that in some cases the herbs may be more effective than Western-style medicines. "We have plants for bronchial asthma, hepatitis and arthritis," he said.

(source: **Doctors investigate Indian herbs** - BBC - Sept 30 2002).

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India Losing on Patents ?

Indraprasth, Dec 8 (UNI) - **After Neem, turmeric and jamun, now it is cow's urine, traditionally used for medicinal purposes in India, which has been patented in the United States as a distilled bio-enhancer.**

The government was aware of this fact and was considering the steps to be taken in this regard, official sources said here.

Cow's urine is a component of 'Panch Gawya,' a mixture of cow's milk, curd, ghee, urine and dung, used from ancient times as a component of food and medicine. It is also used in various ayurvedic medicines.

Though there was no separate strategy for popularizing use of Panch Gawya, it was being popularised as part of the popularisation of the Indian System of Medicine and Health medicines, they said. Now with the patenting of Cow's urine has confirmed the belief of naturopaths that it has got medicinal properties which enhances the life span. Former Prime Minister Morarji Desai was among the staunch supporters of cow' urine.

Earlier, the patenting of turmeric and neem in the US had created a furore in the country as people protested the patenting of traditional Indian knowledge abroad.

Recently, the **Jamun fruits that has been widely used in the Indian system for treatment of diabetes, has been patented in the US.**

(source: **Cow's urine patented in US as bio-enhancer - The Hindu** December 6' 02).

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Monsanto's chapati patent raises Indian ire NEW

Monsanto, the world's largest genetically modified seed company, has been awarded patents on the wheat used for making chapati - the flat bread staple of northern India.

The patents give the US multinational exclusive ownership over Nap Hal, a strain of wheat whose gene sequence makes it particularly suited to producing crisp breads. Another patent, filed in Europe, gives Monsanto rights over the use of Nap Hal wheat to make chapatis, which consist of flour, water and salt.

Environmentalists say Nap Hal's qualities are the result of generations of farmers in India who spent years crossbreeding crops and collective, not corporate, efforts should be recognised. Greenpeace is attempting to block Monsanto's patent, accusing the company of "bio-piracy".

After the Basmati patent controversy, it is now the turn of Indian wheat, which the US agro produce major Monsanto is attempting to register under its patent name in Europe, where the wheat had once become so popular that it had won first prize for four consecutive years between 1916 and 1920.

The Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, an NGO, has moved the Supreme Court alleging that the Centre had failed to take the matter vigorously with the European Patent Office (EPO), and sought a direction to the government to take necessary action. The NGO has accused Monsanto of “blatant violation” of patent system while filing a claim before the EPO. **It said the Indian wheat variety had originated in the Indian sub-continent as a result of over a thousand years of “indigenous” knowledge and practice by the farmers. Any intervention by an outside entity to claim patent of the produce, was violative of the World Trade Organisation norms.**

(source: **Monsanto's chapati patent raises Indian ire** - guardian.co.uk and **After Basmati, it’s now the turn of wheat** - tribuneindia.com).

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Now, a US patent for atta chakkis

Patent relates to method of producing flour used for rotis

New Delhi, December 9: Now it is the turn of *atta chakkis*. The traditional knowledge of producing atta has become a victim of the patent rights regime. Hundreds of *atta chakkis* and modern flour millers and wheat exporters may fall into the trap being laid by a Nebraska-based company, ConAgra.

The US Patent Office has granted patent rights to ConAgra Inc for the “method for producing an atta flour” vide no 6,098,905.

The patent application filed by ConAgra said “the present invention relates to a method for producing an *atta* flour, which is typically used to produce Asian breads such as *chapati* and *roti*. Deputy DG of ICAR, Dr Mangla Rai, said that not only **attempts should be made to document and preserve our traditional knowledge but also we should make innovations on the basis of our traditional knowledge and patent the same.**

Dr O. P. Agarwal, advisor and head of R&D, CSIR said, “The filing of such patents rights by foreign companies should be a wake-up call for us to not only go for documentation of our traditional knowledge on a war footing but also to immediately identify areas of traditional knowledge which are likely to fall as an easy prey to piracy in a fast growing industrial economy.”

(source: **Now, a US patent for atta chakkis** - Indian Express December 8 '02).

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The Mahakumbh: Its Sacred Significance
By Pankaj Dixit
http://www.timesofindia.com/today/20edit5.htm

WATER is the basis of all life on earth. Of the Panchmahabhut or the five natural elements, water is considered to be the key to life. Human beings feel a close affinity to it, since three-fourths of the human body is constituted of water. In this respect, our body is like a microcosm, as the surface of the earth (the macrocosm) is constituted similarly, being three-fourths, water.

The confluence of three rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati at Prayag stands for the meeting of Ida, Pingala and Sushumna Nadis at Muladhar Chakra known as Yukta Triveni. Kumbha symbolises the arousing of six chakras to reach Ajna Chakra where these three nadis meet again to form the Mukta (Liberation) Triveni for yogis.



The Ganga always flows and rushes very fast to the sound of Gama-Gam (meaning go-go) while the Yamuna moves slowly with a placid flow to the sound of Yam-Yam (meaning control-control). Likewise whether one acts fast in life or acts after deliberate thinking, it must be decided by his knowledge and temperament. And both these aspects should be supported by the invisible Saraswati, the faculty of Jnan (knowledge). The meeting of these three rivers in the spiritual realm represents the three gunas or qualities of the native, i.e. Sattvic or subtle represented by Saraswati; Rajasic or the vibrant Ganga; and Tamasic or the dark Yamuna. These three rivers also signify the three saktis, Mahalakshmi, Mahakali and Mahasaraswati; the three sacred fires of sacrifice; the three Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh; and the three notes of music, Sa for Saraswati; Re for Yamuna; and Ga for Ganga.

Further deep in the spiritual sphere, these three rivers represent the three phases of time i.e. present, past and future; the triangle or minimum space enclosed in time; Nad, Bindu and Kala; and the three humours, vata, pitta and kapha. The Triveni also denotes the three basic philosophies of the Gita, i.e. Jnan Yoga, Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga.

The Kumbha occurs in a cycle of every 12 years - the most sacred or auspicious time is calculated on the basis of a specific planetary configuration, considering its cosmobiological effect on the human body and mind. Various astronomical conjugations during Kumbha represent various stages of the solar cycle which has a direct influence on human beings and the biosphere. The ritual bath or snan on specific days i.e. full moon, new moon and Basant Panchami have been specifically prescribed on the basis of the bio-effects of lunar phases. The imposed electromagnetic fields on water are transmitted into the human beings taking bath in the Holy Prayag giving them great health benefits. The number 12 here signifies time or Kal as there are 12 adityas, 12 zodiac signs, 12 months, and 12 Jyotirlingas (self-emergent sivalingas). The entire world exists in time, moves in time and space, and is controlled by time. According to Atharvaveda, Kumbh is the representation of space situated in Kal supervising all of us. Spiritually the holding of Kumbha at an interval of 12 years symbolises the need for purifying the body by sublimating the inherent vices of the 12 sense organs, i.e. Panchkarmendriyas (five organs of action), Panchjnanedriyas (five organs of perception, the mind and the intellect - and thereby to arouse the six psychic centres or chakras separated from each other at a distance of 12 angulas for attaining the Amrit Kumbha or pitcher of nectar.



There is another mystical explanation of the Kumbha. The human head and neck form an inverted pitcher or Kumbha from where Amrit or nectar flows downwards into the body. The two eyes represent the sun and moon gods, the nostrils represent Ganga and Jamuna, the tongue is Vani or Saraswati and it spans 12 angulas of space.

Astrologically during Kumbha the three grahas, Jupiter, Sun and Moon, play a prominent role in the two Zodiac signs, Taurus and Capricorn respectively. The presence of Sun in Capricorn or Makara signifies the Swadhishtan Chakra, the centre of procreation representing the water element. Makara also signifies the Kama as Kamdev, popularly knows as Makaradhwaj. Accordingly Madam Blavatsky in her famous book Sacred Doctrine records that Capricorn is universal intelligence, which is transformed into human intelligence through water. It is therefore that one of the famous **Shahi Snans** occurs on Basant Panchami, the day of Kamdev. Likewise Jupiter's or Jiva's (life force) presence in Taurus signifies the creative power of universe, Shiva Shakti or the Male and female forces.

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Trees with spiritual attributes
Pran Nevile
http://www.tribuneindia.com/20011021/spectrum/main5.htm

From time immemorial, certain trees and plants in India have been invested with divine attributes. Hindus were taught to worship and revere trees and plants in the belief that it would influence their own personal well-being. Evergreen trees were regarded as symbols of eternal life and to cut them down was to invite the wrath of the gods. Groves in forests were looked upon as habitations of the gods.

The banyan tree occupies the pride of place amongst the sacred trees of India. It has aerial roots that grow down into the soil forming additional trunks. It is, therefore, called *bahupada*, the one with several feet. It symbolizes a long life and also represents the divine creator, Brahma. It is invariably planted in front of temples. The numerous stems of the banyan tree are even regarded as the home of gods and spirits. It was under a banyan tree that the Hindu sages sat in a trance seeking enlightenment and it was here that they held discourses and conducted holy rituals. Some banyan trees reached a height of over 100 feet and more than 1000 feet in circumference. No wonder, it is stated that 10,000 men could be covered by a single tree. We come across a mention of the banyan tree in many travelers' accounts.

Bishop Heber (1825) was so impressed by the sight of this tree that he exclaimed: **"What a noble place of worship". Travelers' tales even inspired the great English poet Milton to give description of the banyan tree in Paradise Lost in the following lines.**

The fig-tree at this day to Indians known
In Malabar or Deccan, spreads her arms,
Branching so broad and long, that on the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillar'd shade,
High over-arched and echoing walks between."

In Hindu mythology, the tree is called *Kalpavriksha*, the tree that provides fulfillment of wishes and other material gains. The worship of the tree is also represented in a Buddhist sculpture with its long hanging roots dropping gold pieces in vessels placed below.

Another great tree of India is the *peepul* to be found all over the country. **Known for its antiquity, it finds a mention in many Hindu scriptures as a sacred tree whose worship is regarded as homage to the Trinity — Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.** The tree is treated as a Brahmin and special offerings made to it in the morning and lamps lit there in the evening. The tree is also associated with the old *vedic* ritual of lighting a sacrificial fire with a twig of the peepul tree.



Indian women engaged in the ceremony of tree worship by William Carpenter, Rajpootana C.1850 (courtesy V&A Museum, London).

Even now, village women may be seen worshipping the tree by watering its roots and placing some milk and eats for the serpents and insects residing there. Every village has its special *peepul* tree and the village elders hold their councils beneath its hallowed foliage. The most famous of these trees is the sacred *peepul* at Gaya under which Buddha sat when he attained Enlightenment. Since then the *peepul* tree is also called the *Bo* or the *Bodhi* tree and Prince Sidharath came to be known as Buddha. It is also believed to be a symbol of fertility and women worship it for progeny. The tree waves its leaves in an uncanny way and their trembling with a fluttering sound is attributed to spirits agitating in each leaf. This puts fear of the gods into the hearts of common folk.

The banyan and the *peepul* trees are symbols of the male and ceremoniously married to those of the female category. **James Forbes**, in his **Oriental Memoirs** (1813), mentions about a wedded banyan tree or the Palmyra and Burr tree united, that he saw at Salsette.

The *bilva* or oak-apple and the *Asoka* trees are associated with different deities. The Asoka tree is sacred to Kama, the god of love, and according to folklore, its buds will open up in full bloom when the foot of a young beautiful maiden touches its roots. The *bilva* with its three leaves resembling the *trishul*, or the trident held by Lord Shiva finds mention in Hindu mythology. Its fruit is a blood purifier.

Besides the sacred trees, there are some sacred plants, notably the *tulsi* plant which is found everywhere in sandy and fallow lands. It is an ancient variety of the basil. *tulsi* is considered to be the wife of Vishnu and worshipped by the Hindus. In homes, *tulsi* is grown in pots and womenfolk offer daily *puja* and pour an oblation of Ganges water. A mere touch of the plant is believed to purify the person and giving a twig of *tulsi* to anyone is considered as a protection from dangers and difficulties. *Tulsi* leaves are also put in the mouth of a dying man for the salvation of the soul. Among other virtues of the *tulsi* are its medicinal properties. Its leaves have a pleasing aroma and act as a cough elixir and cordial. Leaves are also eaten to help digestion and prevent other maladies like cold and chill. No wonder, the Hindus deified the plant for its numerous qualities.

Darbha or *kusha* is a sacred grass essential in all sacrifices. This plant is found in damp marshy ground. It is rough to the touch and pointed at the top. According to an old legend, it was produced at the time of the churning of the ocean by the gods and demons. It is also said that the gods while drinking *amrita* or the nectar of immortality shed some drops on this grass which thus became sacred.

There is a mention of it in the Hindu scriptures and the epics. The *Kusha* grass is therefore worshipped by Brahmins and used in various religious ceremonies as it is believed to have the virtue of purifying everything.

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Patent Your Heritage NEW

Globalization has made it easier for companies in wealthy countries to take advantage of poor countries by filing patents for crops, medicines and chemicals that traditional cultures have been cultivating and using for centuries. This year, the poor countries have figured out a way to fight back: they are creating digital libraries for their ancient cultural knowledge.

India, probably the largest victim, is cataloging its traditional knowledge on a protected Web site and on DVD's it will send to patent examiners worldwide. The next time someone proposes patenting the use of a traditional Indian herb or spice for a particular medicinal purpose, examiners will be able to see if Indian Ayurvedic medicine described the process centuries ago.

In June, the United Nations' World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) unveiled a Web site with parts of the Indian digital library, as well as a database of patents based on traditional medicine granted in Beijing to Chinese inventors. WIPO is urging other countries to catalog their cultural and biological patrimony, and is asking patent examiners to search these databases when considering relevant applications.

India began the project after it had to spend almost four years fighting a basmati rice patent granted in America to a company called RiceTec, and two years to get another American patent, on the healing properties of turmeric, revoked. "There are 2,000 or 3,000 cases of misappropriation of our traditional knowledge in Washington alone," says V. K. Gupta, the driving force behind India's digital database. "It would cost us a billion dollars to invalidate these wrong patents in court. We needed defensive protection."

The United States patent office, not surprisingly, sees its mission as encouraging innovation through the generous granting of patents, and those who disagree can slug it out before a judge. Woefully overstretched examiners have only a few hours to see whether an idea is new, and they cannot reject a patent application on common sense alone. "Patent offices have terrible problems knowing who's doing what where, especially outside their home countries," says Greg Aharonian, a San Francisco patent consultant. And traditional knowledge -- which often exists only orally -- is especially hard to pin down.

Ayurvedic medicine is written -- in verse. The Indian database translates the verses from Sanskrit to modern languages, updating the names of plants and diseases and grouping them into standard patent classifications. Digital libraries for other Indian traditional medicines are in the works.

(source: **Patent Your Heritage** - http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/15/magazine/15PATE.html).

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Did you Know?

Sissa's request and Chess

Among the fascinating legends told about the origin of chess is the story of Sissa, a scientist and the inventor of the game. In western India, Raja Balhait had asked his advisers to create a game that demonstrated the values of prudence, diligence, foresight, and knowledge. Sissa brought a chessboard to the raja and explained that he had chosen war as a model for the game because war was the most effective school in which to learn the values of decision, vigor, endurance, circumspection, and courage. The raja was delighted with the game and ordered its preservation in temples. He considered its principles the foundation of all justice and held it to be the best training in the art of war.



The raja said to his subject Sissa, "Ask any reward. It will be yours." Being a scientist, Sissa felt rewarded by the pleasure his invention was giving others; but the kind insisted, and finally Sissa said, "Give me a reward in grains of corn on the chessboard (ashtapada). On the first square one grain, on the second two, on the third four, on the fourth double of that, and so on until the 64th and last square."

The raja would not hear of it. He insisted that Sissa ask for something of more worth than grains of corn. But Sissa insisted he had no need of much and that the grains of corn would suffice. Thereupon the raja ordered the corn to be brought; but before they had reached the 30th square, all the corn of India was exhausted. Perturbed, he looked at Sissa, who laughed and told his raja that he knew perfectly well he could never receive the reward he had asked because the amount of corn involved would cover the whole surface of the earth to a depth of nine inches.

The raja did not know which to admire more: the invention of chess or the ingenuity of Sissa's request. The number involved is 18,446,744,073,709,551,615 grains. This number had been previously calculated by the early Indian mathematicians, who incidentally, had invented the decimal system long before it reached the Arabs and Europe.

(source: **Feast of India: A Legacy of Recipes and Fables - By Rani** p. 84).

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In India science and religion are not opposed fundamentally, as they often seem to be in the West, but are seen as parts of the same great search for truth and enlightenment that inspired the sages of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Thus, in the Hindu scientific approach, understanding of external reality depends on also understanding the godhead. In all Hindu traditions the Universe is said to precede not only humanity but also the gods. Fundamental to Hindu concepts of time and space is the notion that the external world is a product of the creative play of *maya (illusion).* Accordingly the world as we know it is not solid and real but illusionary. The universe is in constant flux with many levels of reality; the task of the saint is find release (*moksha*) from the bonds of time and space.

Unlike the West, which lives in a historical world, India is rooted in a timeless universe of eternal return: everything which happens has already done so many times before, though in different guises. Hinduism arose from the discoveries of people who felt that they had gained an insight into the nature of reality through deep meditation and ascetic practices. Science uses a heuristic method that requires objective proof of mathematical theories. Yet both have proposed similar scenarios for the creation of the universe. Here is a look at Creation, Maya, Churning of Milky Ocean, Shiva's Cosmic Dance, Serpent of Infinity and a few articles on Hindu Cosmology.



Professor Arthur Holmes (1895-1965) geologist, professor at the University of Durham. He writes regarding the age of the earth in his great book, **The Age of Earth** (1913) as follows:

"Long before it became a scientific aspiration to estimate the age of the earth, many elaborate systems of the world chronology had been devised by the sages of antiquity. The most remarkable of these occult time-scales is that of the ancient Hindus, whose astonishing concept of the Earth's duration has been traced back to Manusmriti, a sacred book."

When the Hindu calculation of the present age of the earth and the expanding universe could make Professor Holmes so astonished, the precision with which the Hindu calculation regarding the age of the entire Universe was made would make any man spellbound.

(source: **Hinduism and Scientific Quest - By T. R. R. Iyengar** p. 20-21).

Alan Watts, a professor, graduate school dean and research fellow of Harvard University, drew heavily on the insights of Vedanta. Watts became well known in the 1960s as a pioneer in bringing Eastern philosophy to the West. He wrote:

"To the philosophers of India, however, Relativity is no new discovery, just as the concept of light years is no matter for astonishment to people used to thinking of time in millions of kalpas, (A kalpa is about 4,320,000 years). The fact that the wise men of India have not been concerned with technological applications of this knowledge arises from the circumstance that technology is but one of innumerable ways of applying it."

It is, indeed, a remarkable circumstance that when Western civilization discovers Relativity it applies it to the manufacture of atom-bombs, whereas Oriental civilization applies it to the development of new states of consciousness."

(source: **Spiritual Practices of India - By Frederic Spiegelberg** Introduction by **Alan Watts** p. 8-9).



Dick Teresi author and coauthor of several books about science and technology, including **The God Particle**. He is cofounder of **Omni** magazine and has written for Discover, The New York Times Magazine, and The Atlantic Monthly. He says

"Indian cosmologists, the first to estimate the age of the earth at more than 4 billion years. They came closest to modern ideas of atomism, quantum physics, and other current theories. India developed very early, enduring atomist theories of matter. Possibly Greek atomistic thought was influenced by India, via the Persian civilization."

The cycle of creation and destruction continues forever, manifested in the **Hindu deity Shiva, Lord of the Dance,** who holds the drum that sounds the universe's creation in his right hand and the flame that, billions of years later, will destroy the universe in his left. Meanwhile Brahma is but one of untold numbers of other gods dreaming their own universes.

The 8.64 billion years that mark a full day-and-night cycle in Brahma's life is about half the modern estimate for the age of the universe. The ancient Hindus believed that each Brahma day and each Brahma night lasted a kalpa, 4.32 billion years, with 72,000 kalpas equaling a Brahma century, 311,040 billion years in all. That the Hindus could conceive of the universe in terms of billions.

The similarities between Indian and modern cosmology do not seem accidental. Perhaps ideas of creation from nothing, or alternating cycles of creation and destruction are hardwired in the human psyche. Certainly **Shiva's percussive drumbeat** suggests the sudden energetic impulse that could have propelled the big bang. And if, as some theorists have proposed, the big bang is merely the prelude to the big crunch and the universe is caught in an infinite cycle of expansion and contraction, then ancient Indian cosmology is clearly cutting edge compared to the one-directional vision of the big bang. **The infinite number of Hindu universes is currently called the many world hypothesis,** which is no less undocumentable nor unthinkable.

(source: **Lost Discoveries: The Ancient Roots of Modern Science - By Dick Teresi** p. 159 and 174 -212). For more refer to chapter **Advanced Concepts**).

Huston Smith (?) born in China to Methodist missionaries, a philosopher, most eloquent writer, world-famous religion scholar who practices Hatha Yoga. He has said in Hinduism:

"The invisible excludes nothing, the invisible that excludes nothing is the infinite – the soul of India is the infinite."

"Philosophers tell us that the Indians were the first ones to conceive of a true infinite from which nothing is excluded. **The West shied away from this notion.** The West likes form, boundaries that distinguish and demarcate. The trouble is that boundaries also imprison – they restrict and confine."

"India saw this clearly and turned her face to that which has no boundary or whatever." "India anchored her soul in the infinite seeing the things of the world as masks of the infinite assumes – there can be no end to these masks, of course. If they express a true infinity." And It is here that India's mind boggling variety links up to her infinite soul."

"India includes so much because her soul being infinite excludes nothing." It goes without saying that the universe that India saw emerging from the infinite was **stupendous**."

While the West was still thinking, perhaps, of 6,000 years old universe – India was already envisioning ages and eons and galaxies as numerous as the sands of the Ganges. The Universe so vast that modern astronomy slips into its folds without a ripple."

(source: **The Mystic's Journey - India and the Infinite: The Soul of a People – By Huston Smith**).

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Creation

Hinduism is the only religion that propounds the idea of life-cycles of the universe. It suggests that the universe undergoes an infinite number of deaths and rebirths. Hinduism, according to **Carl Sagan**, *"... is the only religion in which the time scales correspond... to those of modern scientific cosmology. Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of the Brahma, 8.64 billion years long, longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang"*



Long before **Aryabhata** (6th century) came up with this awesome achievement, apparently there was a mythological angle to this as well -- it becomes clear when one looks at the following translation of **Bhagavad Gita** (part VIII, lines 16 and 17),

"All the planets of the universe, from the most evolved to the most base, are places of suffering, where birth and death takes place. But for the soul that reaches my Kingdom, O son of Kunti, there is no more reincarnation. One day of Brahma is worth a thousand of the ages [yuga] known to humankind; as is each night."

Thus each *kalpa* is worth one day in the life of Brahma, the God of creation. In other words, the four ages of the *mahayuga* must be repeated a thousand times to make a "day ot Brahma", a unit of time that is the equivalent of 4.32 billion human years, doubling which one gets 8.64 billion years for a Brahma day and night. This was later theorized (possibly independently) by Aryabhata in the 6th century. The cyclic nature of this analysis suggests a universe that is expanding to be followed by contraction... a cosmos without end. This, according to modern physicists is not an impossibility.

(source: **Astronomy and Mathematics in Ancient India**).

Hinduism is not a single religion, rather it is a multifaceted matrix of beliefs, philosophies, practices, myths and epics. Within this matrix there are many myths of cosmogenesis. **The Sanskrit word for**

creation is srishti, which means projecting a gross thing from a subtle substance. Srishti does not mean bringing out existence from non-existence or creating something from nothing. Creation implies something arising from nothing, or non-existence becoming existence. Hindus declare that non-existence can never be the source of creation. Thus, the universe is more accurately said to be the projection of the Supreme Being rather than a creation.

To the Vedic sages, creation indicated that point before which there was no Creator, the line between indefinable nothingness and something delineated by attributes and function, at least. Like the moment before the Big Bang Theory. These concepts preoccupy high wisdom, the Truth far removed from mere religion. The Bible begins with the Creation. Before the Creation, however, there was the Creator, but does even He know what was there before He existed ?

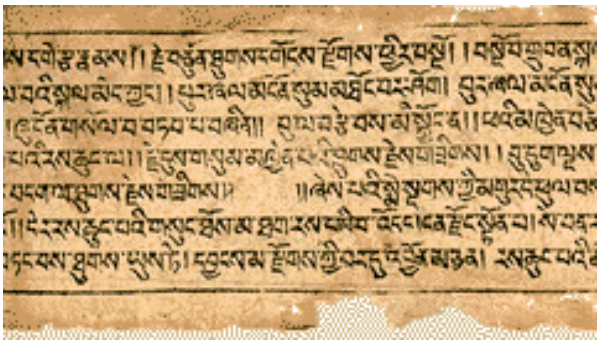
Long before such philosophical questions occurred to other historical peoples, **Vedism** posited the existence of something more ultimate than the one God. Whatever must have created Him. That is presuming the absolute and basic reality. Or is it?

Hymn 129 of the **Rig Veda** speaks:

नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्तदानीं नासीद्रजो नो व्योमा परोयत्
किमावरीवः? कुह कः शर्मन्नं वह? किमासीद गहनं गभीरम्...

> Hymn 109 says: " Then neither Being nor not-Being existed, neither atmosphere, nor the firmament, nor what is above it . . . The One breathed windless by its own power. Nought else but this existed then.
>
> In the beginning was darkness swathed in darkness: all this was but unmanifested water. Whatever was, that One coming into being, hidden by the void, was generated by the power of heat.
>
> In the beginning desire which was the first seed of mind overcovered it. Wise seers, searching in their hearts, found the bond of Being in Not-Being . . ." (**Rig Veda** Griffith 575-6)

In this hymn the One, may refer to the creator god Brahma, his breathing and desire bring the world into existence. Before this was a void which can be described only by a paradox, Being nor Not-Being.



Creation accounts in the Vedas speak of a cosmic egg or embryo from which " the lord of creation" was born as the great oceans heated up. But later hymns were increasingly skeptical of such symbolism; the tenth book of the **Rig Veda** includes a verse asking,

" Who truly knows, who could here declare when was born, whence comes this creation?'

Cyclic Creation

In one of the story of **The Upanishads,** referred to by **Joseph Campbell** in his series of interviews with Bill Moyers, Brahma is the creative force behind a series of universes:



Brahma sits on a lotus, the symbol of divine energy and divine grace. The lotus grows from the navel of Vishnu. who is the sleeping god, whose dream is the universe. . . . Brahma opens his eyes and a world come into being . . . Brahma closes his eyes, and a world goes out of being. (Campbell 63)

This story is similar to some modern ideas on the creation of the universe in continuous cycle, like the one proposed by **John Wheeler**, all constants and laws of previous cycles are lost at the end of the contracting phase, and new universes can be created in an infinite number of cycles.

Princeton University's **Paul Steinhardt** and Cambridge University's **Neil Turok**, have recently developed The Cyclical Model.

They have just fired their latest volley at that belief, **saying there could be a timeless cycle of expansion and contraction. It's an idea as old as Hinduism, updated for the 21st century. The theorists acknowledge that their cyclic concept draws upon religious and scientific ideas going back for millennia — echoing the "oscillating universe" model that was in vogue in the 1930s, as well as the Hindu belief that the universe has no beginning or end, but follows a cosmic cycle of creation and dissolution.**

(source: **Questioning the Big Bang - msnbcnews.com).**

A 9th century Hindu scripture, The **Mahapurana by Jinasena** claims the something as modern as the following: (translation from [5])

"Some foolish men declare that a Creator made the world. The doctrine that the world was created is ill-advised, and should be rejected. If God created the world, where was he before creation?... How could God have made the world without any raw material? If you say He made this first, and then the world, you are faced with an endless regression... Know that the world is uncreated, as time itself is, without beginning and end. And it is based on principles."

(source: **Astronomy and Mathematics in Ancient India**).

Continuous Creation



Another view of creation expressed in Hindu literature is the idea that being is **eternal. The universe was not created, it will not be destroyed. It simply is.** This selection from the second teaching of the **Bhagavad-Gita,** speaks of this type of creation:

"Indestructible is the presence that pervades all this; no one can destroy this unchanging reality. It is not born, it does not die; having been, it will never not be; unborn, enduring, constant, and primordial, it is not killed when the body is killed."

The beauty as well as the horror of this ground of being is revealed to Arjuna later in the Gita when Krishna reveals his true form as the god Vishnu. Vishnu is usually referred to as the preserver, the background behind all being. **Stephen Hawking** in describing his mathematical model of the universe has used a similar description.

Whereas in Western religions a creator god precedes man and the universe, the Hindu gods are preceded by creation; the origin of the world is envisaged not so much as an act of creation but as one of organization, the making of order out of chaos. The universe is often said to be born from the sacred syllable **Om**, or from an inert void in which " there was neither being nor non-being ... death nor non-death", a single principle from which emerged the diversity of life. From this void desire was born, and from desire

came humans, gods and creation."

(Note: For more on yugas, refer to **One Cosmic Day of Creator Brahma**).

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Maya or Illusion

For many thousands of years, it is argued, the mystics have had a cosmological and epistemological view of things that the Western world is just beginning to understand. Cosmologically, Western science has understood only recently that the universe is extremely old. In 1965 the temperature of the universe was measured for the first time, resulting in our present estimate of the age of the universe as 15 billion years old. In the ancient literature of the India one does not, of course, find such precise figures. Instead there are analogies such as the following. Imagine an immortal eagle flying over the Himalayas only once every 1,000 years; it carries a feather in its beak and each time it passes, it lightly brushes the tops of the gigantic mountain peaks. The amount of time it would take the eagle to completely erode the mighty Himalayas is said to be the age of the present manifestation of the universe. **Such a conception of time, which predates modern science by thousands of years, is thought to be remarkable, especially when it is compared to the slow realization of Western science and religion to the possibility of a less humanlike time scale.**



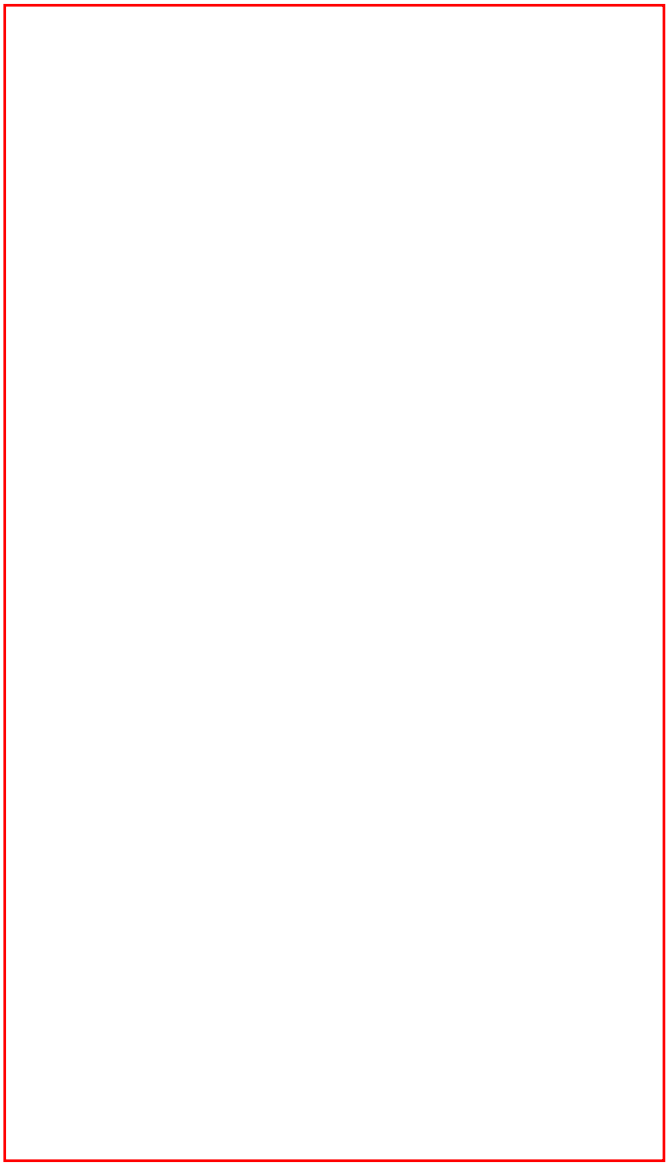
Eastern mysticism is also consistent with the results of quantum physics. The mystics have always rejected the idea of a hidden clocklike mechanism, sitting out there, independent of human observation. The number one truth is that reality does not consist of separate things, but is an indescribable, interconnected oneness. Each object of our normal experience is seen to be but a brief disturbance of a universal ocean of existence. **Maya** is the illusion that the phenomenal world of separate objects and people is the only reality. For the mystics this manifestation is real, but it is a fleeting reality; it is a mistake, although a natural one, to believe that maya represents a fundamental reality. Each person, each physical object, from the perspective of eternity is like a brief, disturbed drop of water from an unbounded ocean. The goal of enlightenment is to understand this--more precisely, to experience this: to see intuitively that the distinction between me and the universe is a false dichotomy. The distinction between consciousness and physical matter, between mind and body, is the result of an unenlightened perspective.

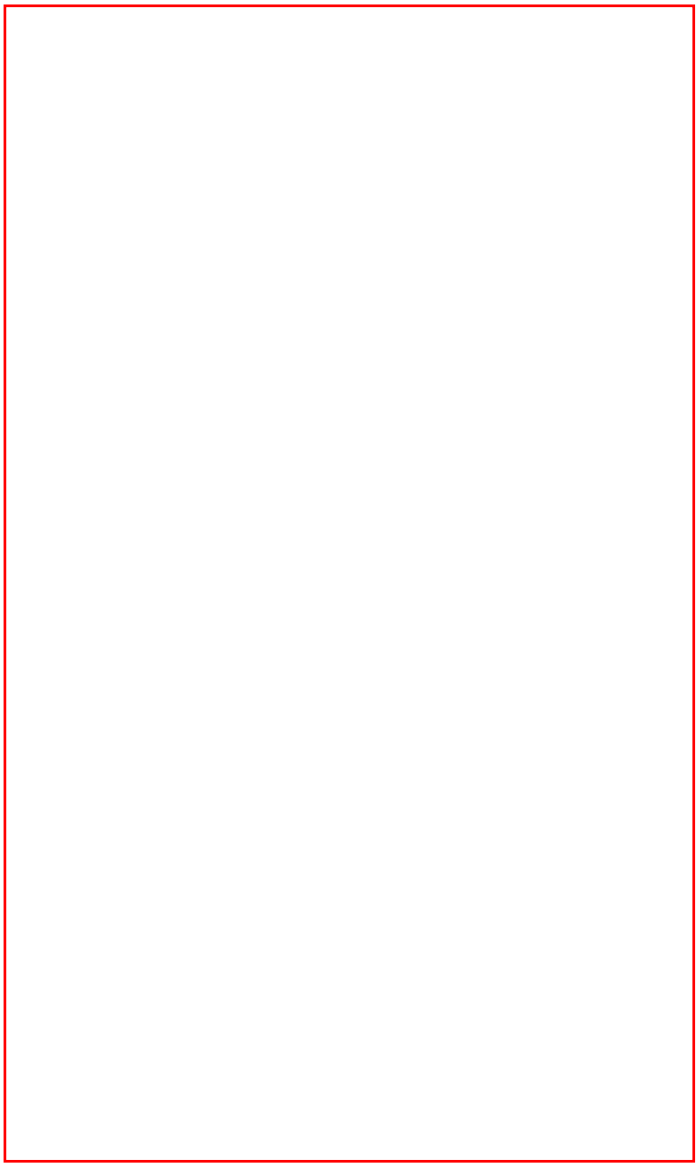
Maya (Sanskrit: "illusion") is a fundamental concept in Hindu philosophy, notably, in the Advaita (Non-dualist) school of the orthodox system of Vedanta. **Maya denotes the power of wizardry with which a God can make human beings believe in what turns out to be an illusion;** by extension it later came to mean the powerful force that creates the cosmic illusion that the phenomenal world is real.

Maya, as per Hindu thought, is illusion, and what mankind understands to be reality is in fact the dream of Brahma. Brahma is the creator and great magician who dreams the universe into being. The dream itself is maintained by Vishnu, the Preserver, who uses maya to spin the complex web that we know as reality. It is not that the world itself is an illusion, only our perception of it. Whereas we suppose the universe to be made up of a multitude of objects, structures and events, the theory of maya asserts that all things are one. Rational categories are mere fabrications of the human mind and have no ultimate reality.

In much of Hindu thought maya is illusion, and what humankind understands to be reality is in fact the dream of Brahma. He is the creator god and great magician who dreams the universe into being. The dream itself is maintained by Lord Vishnu, the Preserver, who uses maya to spin the complex web that we know as reality. It is not that the world itself is an illusion, only our perception of it. Whereas we suppose the universe to be made up of a multitude of objects, structures and events, the theory of maya asserts that all things are one. Rational categories are mere fabrications

of the human mind and have no ultimate reality.





The symbol is that of Ananta, the great Adisesha of infinity and eternity, which is always represented, coiled up in a horizontal figure of 8 just like the leminiscate.

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Modern Indian spiritual teachers assert that if the West had followed the Greek philosopher Heraclitus rather than Plato, the history of ideas would be very different and the concept of maya would be central to Western as well as to Eastern thought. Although Plato's teaching resembles maya when he writes that "the visible world is a pale shadow of a true reality beyond", he believed that each aspect of the world had a separate, distinct identity. Heraclitus posited instead a theory which was based on the assumption of the inseparable interconnectedness of the universe. His theory of Becoming asserts that all things are in a state of constant flux; always in the process of becoming something else. This hypothesis is echoed today, some 2,500 years later, by **Chaos Theory**, which the American science writer James Gleick defined as "the science of process rather than state, of becoming rather than being".

Maya is thus that cosmic force that presents the infinite Brahman (the supreme being) as the finite phenomenal world. Maya is reflected on the individual level by human ignorance (ajñana) of the real nature of the self, which man has mistaken for the empirical ego but which is in reality identical with Brahman.



So why does all this worldly illusion exist? **Ramakrishna** called the world, "The Great Play of the Mother of the World." This is the "play" of Matter--the material world. It is somewhat like a stage play. We are all creatures of spirit with various coatings of matter hiding the spirit from the light. As we act out our Karmic roles in this great play, we remove the coatings of matter and release the light within us. The more light we accumulate within us, the more we can see the light hidden in other people and things. In reality, the whole world play exists for us to seek God Consciousness. All people are either striving toward the light or hiding from it. Those who are hiding are caught up in the Maya.

So, everything which has existence, everything in the phenomenal world is Maya. It is safe to say that "Everything is Maya." How does that affect us in our daily life? It affects the choices we make and therefore the Karma we make for ourselves as a result of those choices. So how should we deal with the Maya of existence? We should try to look for the Reality behind the veils of Maya. Primal Energy is the Infinite Transcendental Essence which permeates all existence. It is like Infinity in manifestation, if such a thing were possible. But to carry this analogy further where it is more understandable, we can best see everything in the universe as a differentiation or gradation of Primal Energy.

Thus, at the root of all existence--all Maya--is Primal Energy. Primal Energy is also the Great Aum, "The Word," or even God, if you will. Thus, when Hindus clasp their hands together and bow towards each other, they are saying, in effect, "The God within me greets the God within you."

Water of Illusion

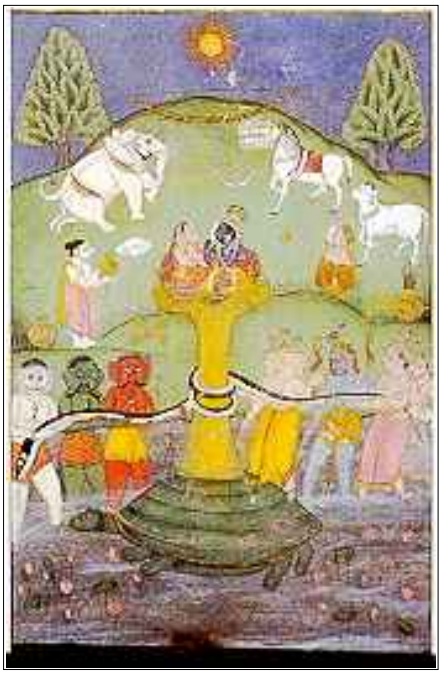


The Greek philosopher Heraclitus used a river as an analogy for his Theory of Becoming, teaching that one cannot step into the same river twice. Maya, too, is often associated with water, the medium that forever changes as it flows from place to place. Water is often a symbol and an agent of illusion. **When Lord Vishnu is compelled to lift the veils of maya for the benefit of his followers, water is never far away.**

A well-known Hindu parable tells of a sage **(Narada)** who underwent such rigorous penance that he felt entitled to demand fro **Lord Vishnu** the secret of maya. The god responded by ordering the mortal to dive into a nearby river. When the sage emerged, he did so as a woman, oblivious of her former existence. After a lifetime of success and failure, happiness and tragedy, she finally threw herself in despair onto the funeral pyre of her husband who had been murdered. The fire was instantly quenched by water. The sage regained his former body, and in that moment Lord Vishnu appeared. " This is Maya," he said, and the sage came to understand the nature of illusion and the workings of the universe.

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Churning of the Milky Ocean or Samudra-Manthana



In this great story of **Samudra-Manthana,** the Devas and the Asuras, the bright and the dark powers, both combined to churn the milky ocean to obtain the elixir of immortality. We do not have the absolute dichotomy of good and evil that is there in the Semitic traditions; the bright and dark powers, the Devas and the Asuras, are, in fact, related within the whole theory of duality. Promising them a share, they invited the demons (Asuras) to take the tail of the serpent Vasuki, wrapped about the giant churning pole like a rope. The pole was fixed to the bottom of the ocean and the waves it made in twisting one way and the other way threatened to destroy the three worlds. Lord Vishnu incarnated himself as a tortoise Kurma, taking the pole on his back to prevent the commotion. Glorious treasures emerged from the churned milk: Kamadhenu, the all-giving cow; Kalpavrksa, the wish-fulfilling tree; Accaisrava, the divine horse; Airavata, the divine elephant; Mahalaxshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. These and other great gifts appeared and were happily divided between Asuras and Devas. The ultimate objective was the pot of ambrosia, the elixir of immortality, the amrta kalasa.

Suddenly, a terrible poison the came forth. **Lord Shiva,** the great primal divinity, aloof from avarice and materialism of the Devas and Asuras, appeared. He collected the poison in a cup, and as he drank it his throat turned blue, hence one of the names of Shiva is nilakantha, the blue-throated one.

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

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Shiva Natarja (Cosmic Dance)



Throughout southern India, Lord Shiva is worshipped as Shiva Nataraja, Lord of the Dance. In the words of **Ananda Coormaraswamy**, a pioneering Hindu philosopher and historian of Indian art, Shiva's dance is the **"clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast."** The image of Shiva as Nataraj is indelibly stitched into the Indian imagination.

According to **Sir Jacob Epstein** (1880-1959), leading English Sculptor. After studying with Rodin in Paris, he revolted against the ornate and pretty in art, producing bold, often harsh and massive forms in stone and bronze. His best-known pieces include the Oscar Wilde Memorial (1911; Père-Lachaise, Paris), a marble Venus (1917; Yale Univ., New Haven, Conn.), and a Madonna and Child (Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, London).

Epstein has written about **Shiva Nataraja**:

"Shiva dances, creating the world and destroying it, his large rhythms conjure up vast aeons of time, and his movements have a relentless magical power of incantation. Our European allegories are banal and pointless by comparison with these profound works, devoid of the trappings of symbolism, concentrating on the essential, the essentially plastic."

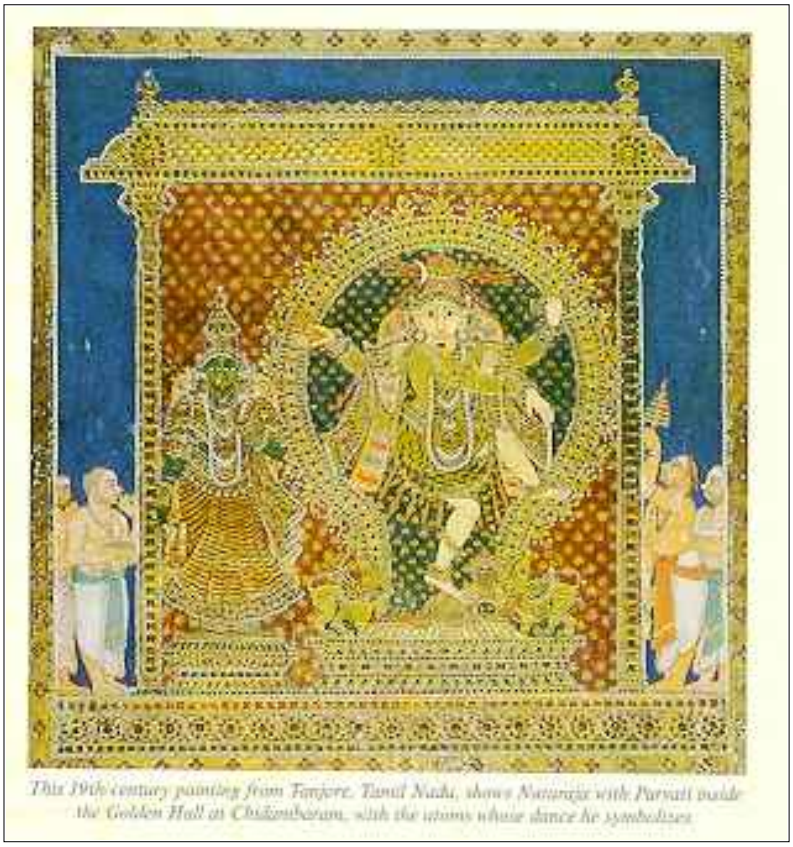
(source: **Let There Be Sculpture - By Sir Jacob Epstein** 1942 p. 193).

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) first prime minister of free India, was more than a deeply moral human being. He yearned for spiritual light. He was particularly drawn to Swami Vivekananda and the Sri Ramakrishna Ashram. In his book **- A Discovery of India** he wrote:

"**The statue of Nataraja (dance pose of Lord Shiva) is a well known example for the artistic, scientific and philosophical significance of Hinduism."**

(source: **A Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 214).

The late scientist, **Carl Sagan**, in his book, **Cosmos** asserts that the **Dance of Nataraja (Tandava)** signifies the cycle of evolution and destruction of the cosmic universe (Big Bang Theory). **"It is the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of."** Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the seasons and in the birth and death of all living creatures, but also the very essence of inorganic matter. For modern physicists, then, Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter. Hundreds of years ago, Indian artist created visual images of dancing Shiva's in a beautiful series of bronzes. Today, physicist have used the most advanced technology to portray the pattern of the cosmic dance. Thus, the metaphor of the cosmic dance unifies, ancient religious art and modern physics.



This 19th-century painting from Tanjore, Tamil Nadu, shows Nataraja with Parvati inside the Golden Hall at Chidambaram, with the atoms whose dance he symbolizes

Shiva's dance is a symbol of the unity and rhythm of existence. The unending, dynamic process of creation and destruction is expressed in the energetic posture of Shiva. He dances in a ring of fire that refers to the life-death process of the universe. Everything is subject to continual change, as energy constantly assumes new forms in the "play" (lila) of creation, except the god himself whose dance is immutable and absolute. The pictorial allegory of Nataraja indicates the so-called "five acts" of the deity: the creation of the universe, its sustenance in space, its final dissolution at the end of the cycle of four world ages (yugas), the concealment of the nature of the godhead, and the bestowal of true knowledge.

Fritjof Capra (1939 -) Austrian-born famous theoretical high-energy physicist and ecologist wrote:

"Modern physics has thus revealed that every subatomic particle not only performs an energy

dance, but also **is** an energy dance; a pulsating process of creation and destruction. The **dance of Shiva is the dancing universe**, the ceaseless flow of energy going through an infinite variety of patterns that melt into one another''.For the modern physicists, then Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter. As in Hindu mythology, it is a continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos; the basis of all existence and of all natural phenomenon. Hundreds of years ago, Indian artists created visual images of dancing Shivas in a beautiful series of bronzes. In our times, physicists have used the most advanced technology to portray the patterns of the cosmic dance."

(source: **The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism - By Fritjof Capra** p. 241-245).



The posture and balance of Nataraja's dancing form show Lord Shiva in the aspect of tamas, the expansive centrifugal force that creates and destroys the universe. This is the first of the three "tendencies" (gunas) that permeate the universe in Samkhya philosophy. Tamas (darkness), symbolized by Shiva, is responsible for the constant birth, change and death of all living things; the force sattva (tranquility) represented by Vishnu the Preserver, holds the atoms of every object together. These two "tendencies" - one holding the atoms of the universe together and the other ripping them apart - create a " friction " (rajas) that "vibrates" the world's atoms and creates the gravity to hold them to the earth. This is the third tendency, symbolized by the deity Brahma. It is the building stuff both of matter and of subtle energies such as perception and thought.

Consciousness inhabits all living things and has permeated the universe since it was created from its original bindu (energy center). The first stave of the universe was filled by "space" : the potential area in which the world will "expand" with the energy of Shiva's aspect as tamas. At the end of Kali Yuga (the current age of ignorance), the expansion accelerates, everything merges and Shiva performs the terrible tandava dance of destruction.

The most important Shiva image during the **Chola dynasty** was that of **Shiva as Lord of the Dance, or Shiva Nataraja.** In this form, Shiva is a summation of Indian religion, philosophy and culture. Shiva's dance is of cosmic significance and represents five principle manifestations of eternal energy: Creation, Destruction, Preservation, Salvation, and Illusion. He holds in his upper right hand a small drum, the symbol of the sound of creation. In his upper left hand is a flame representing the final destruction of the universe. His lower right hand makes the gesture "fear not." With his lower left hand he points to his raised left foot, the place of refuge and salvation for the devotee. His right foot is planted on the back of the demon Apasmara Purusha, the personifying illusion of ignorance over whom Shiva triumphs. In Shiva's hairdo sits the river goddess Ganga, the personification of the Ganges river which is said to spring forth from Shiva's head.



The dancing lord Shiva represents the constant process of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. He trods on the dwarf, symbolic of Ignorance, which must be eliminated if a believer is to attain release from the eternal cycle of birth and death. In Shiva's upper hands are a drum, symbol of creation, and fire, symbol of destruction. This magnificently modeled bronze image is a superb example of Chola workmanship.

The entire Universe is then engaged in movement and endless activity, in an uninterrupted cosmic dance of energy. In Hindu iconography the images that represent this dance are shown with Nataraja dancing with four arms and waving hair and should be read as pictorial allegories.

The upper right hand holds a small drum shaped as a clepsydra, which according to Zimmer keeps the rhythms of sound, the vehicle of the word transmitting revelation tradition and enchantment. The opposite hand, on the top left, with fingers postured as half moon, (ardhachandra mudra), carries a Flame, the element of destruction of the world on the palm of the hand. In the balance of the hands creation and destruction are shown as counterweights in the game of the cosmic dance made evident even by the quietness and serenity of Shiva's face at the centre between the two hands. The second right hand is making the gesture of 'motto fear ' that gives peace and protection, while the last left hand, suspended at the height of the breast, points toward the left foot symbolising liberation from the enchantment of Maya.

Universally regarded as the quintessential image of Hindu art and culture, representations of the god Shiva dancing in joyous abandonment within a circle of flames graphically depict his five cosmic acts of creation, preservation, destruction, unveiling of illusion, and liberation of the soul. His creative aspect is symbolized by the hourglass-shaped drum, in his proper upper right hand, which reproduces the primordial sound of creation. Shiva’s preservation of the universe is suggested by his lower right hand held in the gesture of reassurance and safety. The flame in his upper left hand and that encircling the aureole represent the fire by which he destroys the universe in order to recreate it. He lifts the veil of illusion through his engendering act of dancing. His liberation of the soul is shown by his upraised left leg, which tramples on a prostrate infant signifying forgetfulness and is thus a source of grace.



While Shiva is believed to dance in various forms and locales for differing purposes, in this pose as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja), he is praised by the renowned eighteenth-century South Indian poet **Thayumanavar** as performing the **“Dance of Bliss in the Hall of Consciousness.”** The dance of bliss is specifically associated with **Chidambaram, the sacred center of Nataraja worship**, where Shiva is said to have first performed it in order to convert a group of holy men who were engaged in heretical practices. Chidambaram is also the site of the great twelfth-century temple specifically dedicated to Shiva’s aspect as Lord of the Dance. The temple has a silver image of the dancing god as its main icon, and the gateway around the complex is adorned with sculpted depictions of the 108 basic postures of classical Indian dance, Bharata Natyam, which has been performed since at least the second century B.C.

South Indian copper alloy images such as this were originally carried in processions during religious festivals; ropes were inserted through the square holes in the base to tie it to support poles. The distinctive elliptical shape of the aureole and slender figural style indicate that it is one of the earliest surviving images of this type.



As Shiva Nataraja, Lord of the Dance, Shiva enacts the end of the world. He is the symbol of death but only of death as the generator of life and as a source of that creative power ever renewed by **Vishnu and Brahma.**

He evokes the most intense adoration from devotees for he fascinates even as he terrifies. He dances for cosmic re-creation. Shiva's dance of bliss is the catalyst for the destruction of one period of time and the creation of a new cosmos. He has a third eye in the center of his forehead, the skull and crescent moon in his headdress.

He has long, matted hair and there is a small female figure of the river goddess Ganga in the loose locks of hair twirling around head. The Indian genius for expressing movement in sculpture derives in large part from the high aesthetic value that dancing holds in Indian tradition. It is the posturings and movements of the dance that inspire the imagination of the sculptor. The four arms display the powers of Shiva. The upper right holds the drum or vibrant rattle of creation. The upper left holds the flame of destruction. The lower right hand is raised in the gesture of protection. The lower left hand points to the upraised foot that symbolizes escape from illusion, represented by the dwarf whom he crushes beneath his right foot. The drum is a symbol of rhythm and sound. The matted hair symbolizes his power (like Samson). Crescent moon is the symbol of growth and birth

Einstein and Shiva's cosmic dance

There is a striking resemblance between the equivalence of mass and energy, symbolized by Shiva's cosmic dance and the Western theory, first expounded by Einstein, which calculates the amount of energy contained in a subatomic particle by multiplying its mass by the square of the speed of light:
E = mc2.

(source: **India: Living Wisdom - By Richard Waterstone** p.135)

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The Serpent of Infinity

The late scientist, **Carl Sagan**, in his book, **Cosmos** asserts that the **Dance of Nataraja**

(Tandava) signifies the cycle of evolution and destruction of the cosmic universe (Big Bang Theory).

"It is the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of." Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the seasons and in the birth and death of all living creatures, but also the very essence of inorganic matter.



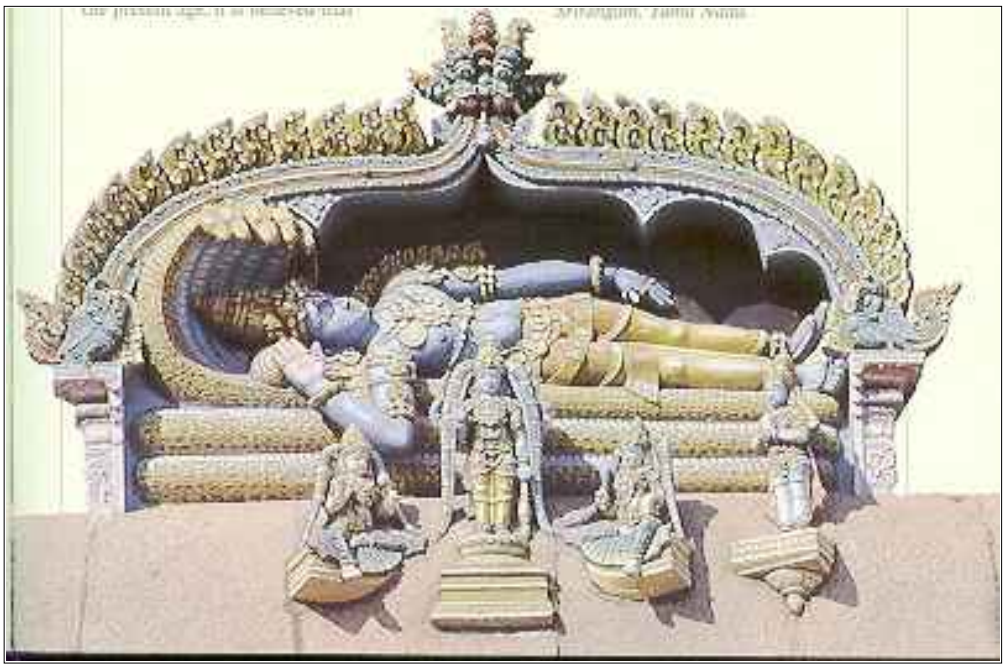
For modern physicists, then, Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter. Hundreds of years ago, Indian artist created visual images of dancing Shiva's in a beautiful series of bronzes. Today, physicist have used the most advanced technology to portray the pattern of the cosmic dance. Thus, the metaphor of the cosmic dance unifies, ancient religious art and modern physics. The Hindus, according to Monier-Williams, were Spinozists more than 2,000 years before the advent of Spinoza, and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin and Evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of Evolution was accepted by scientists of the present age.

"The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. **It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond, to those of modern scientific cosmology.** Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years long. Longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang. And there are much longer time scales still."

"The most elegant and sublime of these is a representation of the creation of the universe at the beginning of each cosmic cycle, a motif known as the cosmic dance of Lord Shiva. The god, called in this manifestation **Nataraja, the Dance King.** In the upper right hand is a drum whose sound is the sound of creation. In the upper left hand is a tongue of flame, a reminder that the universe, now newly created, with billions of years from now will be utterly destroyed."

(source: **Cosmos - By Carl Sagan** Random House ISBN 0375508325 p. 213-214).

According to Hindu belief, the universe is destroyed at the end of each **kalpa** (life of the creator god, Brahma). Between the destruction of the world and its re-creation, at the end of each cycle, Lord Vishnu is said to rest in the coils of Ananta, the great serpent of Infinity, while he waits for the universe to recreate itself. At the end of Kali Yuga, the present age, it is believed that Lord Vishnu will descend in the form of the tenth and final avatar - as Kalki, the warrior, riding upon a white horse. He will destroy ignorance, drive invaders from India, and save the good from whom the people of the golden age, the Satya Yuga will descend.



For more than a century European and American scholars have held to the conclusion that Indian astronomy must somehow have been borrowed from the Greeks following the invasion of Alexander the Great, even though the Indians have no tradition of this, and Indian astronomy has a form quite unlike Greek astronomy. This conclusion is supported by the following facts:

- there was extensive trade between India and the West during the Hellenistic period
- Indian astronomical science is united with a form of astrology very similar to that cultivated by the Greeks during the Hellenistic period
- there are no historical records or accurate chronology to substantiate the Indian's own traditions of the origin of their astronomical science
- These scholars concede that Hindu cosmological time cycles, the form around which Indian astronomy is built, are indigenous to Indian culture, but they believe them to be crude number speculations.

Count Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) was a Belgian writer of poetry, a wide variety of essays. He won the 1911 Nobel Prize for literature. In his book **Mountain Paths**, says:

"he falls back upon the earliest and greatest of Revelations, those of the Sacred Books of India with a Cosmogony which no European conception has ever surpassed."

(source: **Mountain Paths - By Maurice Maeterlinck**).

Swami Kriyananada (**J. Donald Walters**) World renowned as a singer, composer, and lecturer, founder of the Ananda Village is perhaps the most successful intentional community in the world writes:

"Hindu cosmography, for example born in hoary antiquity, strikes one in certain ways as surprisingly modern. India has never limited its conception of time to a few crowded millennia. Thousands of years ago India's sages computed the earth's age at a little over two billion years, our present era being what is called the seventh Manuvantra. This is a staggering claim. Consider how much scientific evidence has been needed in the West before men could even imagine so enormous a time scale."

(source: **Crises in Modern Thought: The Crises of Reason - By Swami Kriyananda** (**J. Donald Walters)** vol. 1 p - 94)

According to **Guy Sorman,** visiting scholar at Hoover Institution at Stanford and the leader of new liberalism in France:

" Temporal notions in Europe were overturned by an India rooted in eternity. The Bible had been the yardstick for measuring time, but the infinitely vast time cycles of India suggested that the world was much older than anything the Bible spoke of. **It seem as if the Indian mind was better prepared for the chronological mutations of Darwinian evolution and astrophysics."**

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** (**'Le Genie de l'Inde**') MacMillan January 2001 ISBN 0333936000 p.195).

For many thousands of years, it is argued, the mystics have had a cosmological and epistemological view of things that the Western world is just beginning to understand. Cosmologically, Western science has understood only recently that the universe is extremely old. In 1965 the temperature of the universe was measured for the first time, resulting in our present estimate of the age of the universe as 15 billion years old. In the ancient literature of the East one does not, of course, find such precise figures. Instead there are analogies such as the following. Imagine an immortal eagle flying over the Himalayas only once every 1,000 years; it carries a feather in its beak and each time it passes, it lightly brushes the tops of the gigantic mountain peaks. The amount of time it would take the eagle to completely erode the mighty Himalayas is said to be the age of the present manifestation of the universe. Such a conception of time, which predates modern science by thousands of years, is thought to be remarkable, especially when it is compared to the slow realization of Western science and religion to the possibility of a less humanlike time scale.

Eastern mysticism is also consistent with the results of quantum physics. The mystics have always rejected the idea of a hidden clocklike mechanism, sitting out there, independent of human observation. The number one truth is that reality does not consist of separate things, but is an indescribable, interconnected oneness. Each object of our normal experience is seen to be but a brief disturbance of a universal ocean of existence. **Maya** is the illusion that the phenomenal world of separate objects and people is the only reality. For the mystics this manifestation is real, but it is a fleeting reality; it is a mistake, although a natural one, to believe that maya represents a fundamental reality. Each person, each physical object, from the perspective of eternity is like a brief, disturbed drop of water from an unbounded ocean. The goal of enlightenment is to understand this--more precisely, to experience this: to see intuitively that the distinction between me and the universe is a false dichotomy. The distinction between consciousness and physical matter, between mind and body, is the result of an unenlightened perspective.

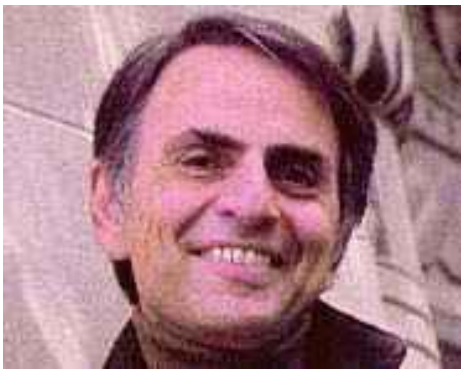
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'Hindu cosmology's time-scale for the universe is in consonance with modern science'
The Rediff Special / Carl Sagan
http://www.rediff.com/news/jan/29sagan.htm



Carl Sagan, *the distinguished Cornell University astronomer and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, who succumbed to his battle against cancer on December 15, in fact lived for millions of years in the relative time scale of experience.*

This legend in his own lifetime was a first grade philosopher, poet, scientist and a splendid example of human greatness all rolled into one.

His true genius lay in the many esoteric philosophical and scientific endeavours which only specialists can really appreciate. But he became an instant pop science icon when he co-authored COSMOS*, a television series devoted to astronomy and space exploration.*

A part of that awesome series was shot in India. In the early eighties, Sagan met then Indian diplomat Placido P D'Souza *and in a conversation explained the India connection and the relevance of Gandhi.*

You have been host of the television programme *COSMOS* which deals with astronomy and science exploration. And yet India figured in this programme. Could you tell us how India fits into this series?
Let me first say something about the series in general, and something about the Indian part of the series. The television series *COSMOS* is designed to breach the barrier that many people feel about science. They cannot understand it, and it is foreign to them in approach and content. Our experience is that children grow up with an absolute zest and passion for science, and something happens to discourage some of them - sometimes many of them - from pursuing this interest.

We thought it was our job to excite the children, and reawaken the interest in science of adults. So we will use any approach to gain people's attention, and show them that science is something not just that they can understand, but that they can become excited about and can use as part of the way they view the world.



The series has been extraordinarily successful. It has been shown in a year or two in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. I hope some day it will be shown in India. The tenth episode of *COSMOS* is largely about cosmology - the study of the universe in a perspective in which the Earth is like a grain to stand in vast beach or desert - and the way we approach the subject is through Hindu cosmology.

We have done that for several reasons. We went to Tamil Nadu for the festival called Pongal. Like festivals all over the world, it celebrates the changing of the seasons, and remind us that our ancestors were astronomers, who kept calendars and watched the skies. It was essential for extremely practical matters: when to sow seeds and to harvest grain. It was a matter of life and death to be an astronomer.



But the main reason that we oriented this episode of *COSMOS* towards *I***ndia is because of that wonderful aspect of Hindu cosmology which first of all gives a time-scale for the Earth and the universe -- a time-scale which is consonant with that of modern scientific cosmology. We know that the Earth is about 4.6 billion years old, and the cosmos, or at least its present incarnation, is something like 10 or 20 billion years old. The Hindu tradition has a day and night of Brahma in this range, somewhere in the region of 8.4 billion years.**

As far as I know. It is the only ancient religious tradition on the Earth which talks about the

right time-scale. We want to get across the concept of the right time-scale, and to show that it is not unnatural. In the West, people have the sense that what is natural is for the universe to be a few thousand years old, and that billions is indwelling, and no one can understand it. The Hindu concept is very clear. Here is a great world culture which has always talked about billions of years.

Finally, the many billion year time-scale of Hindu cosmology is not the entire history of the universe, but just the day and night of Brahma, and there is the idea of an infinite cycle of births and deaths and an infinite number of universes, each with its own gods.

And this is a very grand idea. Whether it is true or not, is not yet clear. But it makes the pulse quicken, and we thought it was a good way to approach the subject.



And then the Chola bronzes in Tamil Nadu were very lovely to film, and gave us a visual approach to go along with the intellectual approach. It was also a way of de-provincialising our presentation. After all, we claim that science is an endeavor of the human species. To shoot the whole film in the United States or Western Europe would have been extremely provincial. We shot in Japan and 12 or 14 other countries, besides India. Let me also say that the subsidiary benefit for my wife and me is that we had a chance to visit India for the first time, and especially Tamil Nadu which we enjoyed enormously.

You mentioned the Chola bronzes and I see also that in your book *COSMOS* one of the chapters called 'The edge of forever' begins with a picture of Nataraja. Could you say something to explain its relevance in that chapter?
The traditional explanation of the Nataraja is that it symbolises the creation of the universe in one hand and the death of the universe in the other - the drum and the flame - and after all, that is what cosmology is all about. So in addition to being artistically exquisite, the Nataraja provides exactly the kind of symbolism that we wanted. The Nataraja that is photographed in the book *COSMOS* is in a museum in Pasadena, California, but it will be returned to India at some specified time within the next decade.

What were your general impressions about India?
I was absolutely delighted with Tamil Nadu. First of all, there was the sense of an intact cultural framework. I did not have the sense of people greatly alienated from their society - you certainly see a great deal of that in the West. I had a sense of people caring for each other, an intact social fabric, and technology coming along quite fast. Not just large industrial parks.



In a way what impressed me most was the widespread use of the bicycle, not only for carrying agricultural products and manufactures from one place to another, but also as a means for young people to visit neighbouring villages, and a sense of exuberant communication, because now people are not closed in a small village. They have a much wider range of places that they have access to.

We spent some time in Madras and in Bombay. But these were slow stages to get us to Tamil Nadu. We saw mainly tourist things which were certainly pleasant, but we did not have the sense of getting to know the people. We could have, but it did not work out that way, whereas in Tamil Nadu we got to know the people.

I will give you an example. Here we are at 6:30 or 7 in the morning - a group of us consisting of cameramen, soundmen, writers, directors, producers and me, who go marching single file by a pond in which there are lovely lily and lotus blossoms. Going to two small temples of the bull god (Nandi). A boy, less than 10 years old, saw us coming, looked at us, dove into the pond and came up near a lotus flower. He then swam back with it, climbed out of the pond, went up to my wife, gave her the lotus blossom and introduced himself, saying "Hello, my name is…" I forget what his name was. It was done with such elegance and charm and with no thought of reward, but just a sensibility which I found very impressive. Anyway we loved it. How colorful it was…



I must also say the sari is a kind of work of art, especially seeing hundreds of them all together. Also, women washing the saris gives a kind of swatch of color to the landscape… I thought it was wonderful… I had a sense of a healthy society. I didn't know to what extent this is characteristic or not, but I was very impressed and would love to have a chance to go back…

Well, you know you have a standing invitation to visit India…Was that your first visit?

Yes. I had been invited before by a number of people, including J B S Haldane, a British biologist in Bhubaneshwar. I knew him well in the last few years of his life. He even made me promise to visit him in Orissa, but he died before I had a chance to do so.

Did you know any other Indian scientists?

Oh, yes. I knew Vikram Sarabhai who spent a year at Cambridge, Massachusetts, when I was on the Harvard faculty. I was a student of the world-renowned astrophysicist Subramanian Chandrasekhar at the University of Chicago. An old friend from the graduate school days in Kameshwar Wali, now a Professor of Physics at Syracuse University. For 17 years a close colleague who has been working with me in laboratory experiments on the origins of life is Bishun Khare. So I had a succession of fairly close friendships with Indians. I have always felt some natural affinity, I suppose.

Have you seen the Gandhi film?

Yes. It well deserved the Academy awards. I though it was splendid on many different levels. One is the idea that there are ways for the people to move governments by unconventional approaches including civil disobedience - but not only civil disobedience - at a time when, in my view, the people of at least some countries have much more sensible views about the nuclear arms are than their governments. They can affect the policies of governments that seem to be slow-moving, intractable and riddled with a bureaucracy that is decades behind the times.



Also, the American civil rights, movement, of course, was powerfully influenced by the degree to which Martin Luther King, Jr admired Mohandas Gandhi, and I think that it is important for us, Americans, to remember that connection… of the time when events in India were relevant to events in the United States. That kind of thing seems to me to be extremely important.

It has been argued that this kind of movement is all right in a colonial situation and in very special circumstances, but when you have functioning democracies, is it valid to adopt what could be considered extra constitutional measures? Right… or the opposite question: in a country like Nazi Germany, would civil disobedience have in any way been effective? Would the leaders of civil disobedience not have been executed and nothing would have changed? They are both good questions, and my answer is that the approach of Gandhi*ji* is not precisely applicable in every political situation. However, the reminder that there are conventional ways of affecting the perceptions of masses of people on issues of the greatest importance is very important reminder.



In democracies - you talk about functioning democracies - there are traditions. For example, the approaches to the nuclear arms race are institutionalised, and progress is made very slowly. Armaments are increased easily, decreased with great difficulty, and people think about historical analogies of Munich in 1938 and so on without fully having come to grips with the fact that the invention of nuclear weapons has changed everything. And for that reason I think that something other than politics is necessary when all nations and the human species are faced with the extremely grave possibilities of a nuclear war.

I am not saying that civil disobedience is necessarily the answer. But one thing which was so impressive about Gandhi*ji* was the way he was able to communicate to large numbers of people and to excite people's passion and courage. There was a great deal of courage needed to have followed him, especially in the early days of his movement.

I think something along those lines is needed worldwide if we are to break out of this impasse in the nuclear arms race.



Also, I thought the movie was beautifully filmed, and in many places, extremely moving. Maybe the most moving for me was the scene toward the end, in which Gandhi*ji* says to the despairing man who has killed children in a riot: "I know a way out of hell". I found that an enormously moving approach to the problem, that the way for a Hindu, to make recompense for participating in the riots, is to raise a Muslim child as a Muslim and vice versa.

I thought it was a superb movie and well deserving of the acclaim it has gotten here and elsewhere.

It has certainly made an impact, and moved people to think about Gandhi and India. To the extent that it has made people think a little, it has served its purpose. I agree, it demonstrates that extremely unconventional approaches are practical politics. Surely Gandhi has made major achievements in practical politics by methods that the British discounted immediately, and were proved wrong. It is good to remember that…

Placido P D'Souza is a former member of the Indian Foreign Service and currently editor of *New*

India Digest.

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Chidambaram



Chidambaram, the site of Shiva's cosmic dance, has been the center of Shaivite art and thought for over a millennium. Its great temple, built by successive southern Indian dynasties between the 8th and 12th centuries A.D. is dedicated to Shiva Nataraja, and is said to be the site of his legendary dance in the presence of his consort Parvati. Shiva's dancing icon resides in the Golden Hall, a symbol of the nucleus of the atom and of the center (bindu) of the universe. The Upanishads, Vedas, Puranas and other sacred Hindu texts are represented by parts of the temple complex, the temple as a whole standing for the totality of Hindu knowledge. Shiva's dance to Parvati is celebrated in a great festival in December.

Significance: Chidambaram is one of the most ancient and most celebrated of shrines in India. It is of great religious as well as historic and cultural significance. Chidambaram is associated with Nataraja, or Shiva in his Ananda Tandava pose (the Cosmic Dance of bliss) in the cosmic golden hall and the hall of consciousness (Chit Sabha). Shiva is also worshipped in the "formless form" of the Chidambara Rahasyam, while the temple is known for its Akasa Lingam, an embodiment of Shiva as the formless Space. The word "Koyil" or temple in the Tamil Saivite tradition refers to none other than the Chidambaram Nataraja temple.



Antiquity: The origins of this vast temple are buried in antiquity. Literature talks of a tradition of Shiva (Nataraja) worship in existence even as early as the Sangam period (very early on in the

Christian era), and the Tamil Saints have sung its fame when an established worship tradition was in place. The later Chola Kings (Aditya I and Parantaka I) adorned the roof of the shrine with gold, and the other Chola Kings treated Nataraja as their guardian deity and made several endowments to the temple as temple inscriptions testify. The Pandya Kings who followed them, and the later Vijayanagar rulers made several endowments to the temple. There is a stone image of Krishnadevaraya in the North Gopura which he is said to have erected. In the wars of the 18th century, this temple was used as a fort, especially when the British General Sir Eyre Coote unsuccesfully tried to capture it from the Mysore Kings. During this period, the images of Nataraja and Sivakamasundari were housed in the Tiruvarur Tyagaraja temple for safety.



Muthuswamy Deekshitar, one of the foremost composers in the Karnatic Music tradition sings the glory of this temple in his kriti 'Ananda Natana Prakasam'. The Alwar Poems of the Naalayira Divya Prabandam sing the glory of Vishnu, whose image is also housed in this temple, and his shrine is referred to as 'Tiruchitrakootam'. Adi Sankara is said to have presented a Spatika Lingam which is still under worship in this temple. Sekkizhaar's Periya Puranam, describing poetically the life of the Saivite Saints (63 in number) was composed in the 1000 pillared hall, and was expounded by the author himself in the presence of the Chola emperor Kulottunga II, who had comissioned the work, amidts great festivity and fanfare.

Each of the four most revered Saivite Saints (Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Manikkavacakar) has worshipped at Chidambaram, and the bulk of Manikkavacakar's work is in praise of Shiva at Chidambaram. Accordingly, their images are placed in the temple entrances corresponding to their points of entry into the temple. (Sambandar - South, Appar - West, Sundarar - North and Manikkavacakar - East).

Legends associated with this temple: Aadi Sesha, the serpent (couch) of Vishnu, heard from Vishnu the grandeur of Shiva's cosmic dance. Filled with irrepressable desire to witness this dance in person at Chidambaram, Seshan descended to the earth as Patanjali (the one who descended). Vyagrapaadar, another devotee of Shiva prayed to obtain the tiger's claws so that he could obtain with ease the sacred Vilva leaves meant for Shiva's worship at Chidambaram. At the appointed hour, Shiva (with Sivakami) granted to Patanjali and Vyagrapaadar, a visual treat in the form of his Cosmic Dance of Bliss, to the accompaniments of music played by several divine personalities in the Hindu pantheon. This Dance of Bliss is said to have been witnessed by Vishnu, and there is a Govindaraja shrine in the Natarajar temple commemorating this. The dance of bliss of Shiva, is also said to have been enacted upon Shiva's (Bhikshatana) victory over the married ascetics of Daruka Vanam.



Yet another legend, commemorating the dance duel between the doyens of dance Shiva and Kali is associated with Chidambaram. Shiva is said to have lifted his left foot towards the sky in the Urdhuva Tandava posture, a definite male gesture, which out of adherence to protocol, Kaali could not reciprocate, thereby causing Shiva to emerge victorious, delegating Kaali to the status of a primary deity in another temple in the outskirts of Chidambaram. This legend is portrayed in the Nritta Sabha, one of the halls within the Chidambaram temple.

There is another recent legend associated with this temple. The sacred Tamil works of the Nayanmaars had been missing for several years, and it was during the period of Raja Raja Chola (the builder of the Grand temple at Tanjavur) that formal research was initiated to trace these fine works of devotional literature. These works of the Saivite Saints - rich in musical content were recovered in a dilapidated state in one of the chambers in this vast temple, after the monarch brought images of the Saint trinity in procession to the temple.



In Hindu cosmology we are all manifestations of the divine, playing at life, forgetting, as children forget themselves in the middle of a game, that we are aspects of divinity at play. In the game, as in the delusions from which the Buddha of legend hoped to free the world, we experience ourselves as distinct personalities; to be liberated is to understand that the game, the personality, our individual suffering, are not the big picture. That we die and are reborn with each moment that passes. That death and birth are aspects of one another, just as creation and destruction are both embodied in Shiva, a single Hindu deity. That we are not separate from the great cosmic dance.

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Did You Know

A Celtic Deity



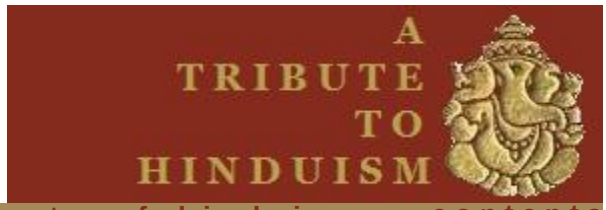
Like their Indo-European Hindu counterparts, many of the Celt's Deities are depicted in full lotus posture, as on this enamel piece. The stylized swastika pattern on the chest is identical to Hindu versions. Even the vocabulary is amazingly similar. The following are just a few examples:

Sanskrit	Old Irish
arya (freeman)	aire (noble)
naib(good)	noeib (holy)
badhira (deaf)	bodhar (deaf)
names (respect)	nemed (respect)
raja (king)	righ (king)

The ancient Irish law system, The Laws of the Fenechus, is closely parallel to the Laws of Manu.

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The Vedas have guided Indian civilization for thousands of years. They are the pillars of Hinduism. "Veda is the source of all Dharma" declares Manusmirti (2.6.) There is no major religion on the planet, which has not been influenced by the Vedas. The creation stories of all major religions are based on Vedas. Though all other religions have forgotten their Vedic root or have been forgotten, there is one religion, Hinduism, that has kept the flame of the Vedic wisdom burning continuously. Vedas which means ' knowledge' contain a good deal of scientific knowledge that was lost over millennia, which needs to be recovered. The Vedic sages had discovered the subtle nature of reality, and had coded it in the form of the Vedas.

According to Raja Ram Mohan Roy, author of Vedic Physics, "The knowledge contained in the Vedas is very abstruse, and is well beyond the comprehension of ordinary human beings. Therefore Vedic sages coded the knowledge in a simple form in which it could be understood by everyone. The Rig Veda itself testifies that it has a hidden meaning in verse 4.3.16. Sage Bharata in his Natyasastra 2.23 refers to the sages who knew the hidden meaning of the Vedas. This coding of knowledge proved to be very successful in disseminating the knowledge to common folks. This would also explain why extraordinary steps were taken to preserve the Vedas, and the honor given to the Vedas by Hindus, even though its meaning is little understood today. "On the eve of the "Mahabharata War" our ancestors believed that their knowledge was in danger of being lost. They could have written it down, but writings could be destroyed. Therefore, it was memorized and passed on orally. Today, the Avesta, religious scripture of ancient Iranians, only a fraction of it is available. Alexander captured Iran in 326 B.C. and after a bloody war, destroyed each copy of the Avesta available."

Author Dick Teresi says "Indian cosmologists, the first to estimate the age of the earth at more than 4 billion years. They came closest to modern ideas of atomism, quantum physics, and other current theories. India developed very early, enduring atomist theories of matter. Possibly Greek atomistic thought was influenced by India, via the Persian civilization."



Introduction
Advanced Scientific Concepts in Hindu Literature:
Sphericity of Earth, Earth as Flat at poles, Sun the center of the Solar System, Atoms, Universal Time Scale, The Expanding Egg, Concept of Trinity, Hundred thousandths of a second, Airplanes, Description of Tides, Botany and Biology, Electricity and others.
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Legend of Vikramaditya
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Introduction

Max Muller, in his book **In History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature**' (p. 557) observed: " In the Rig-Veda we shall have before us more real antiquity than in all the inscriptions of Egypt or Ninevah....the Veda is the oldest book in existence...."

Louis Jacolliot (1837-1890), who worked in French India as a government official and was at one time President of the Court in Chandranagar, translated numerous Vedic hymns, the **Manusmriti,** and the Tamil work, **Kural** His masterpiece, **La Bible dans l'Inde**, stirred a storm of controversy. He praised the Vedas in his Sons of God, and said,:

"The Hindu revelation, which proclaims the slow and gradual formation of worlds, is of all revelations the only one whose ideas are in complete harmony with modern science. "



Jacolliot feels India has given to the West much more than she is credited with when he says:

" Besides the discoverers of geometry and algebra, the constructors of human speech, the parents of philosophy, the primal expounders of religion, the adepts in psychological and physical science, how even the greatest of our biological and theologians seem dwarfed! Name of us any modern discovery, and we venture to say that Indian history need not long be searched before the prototype will be found on record. Here we are with the transit of science half accomplished, and all our Vedic ideas in process of readjustment to the theories of force correlation, natural selection, atomic polarity and evolution. And here, to mock our conceit, our apprehension, and our despair, we may read what **Manu** said, perhaps 10,000 years before the birth of Christ:

' The first germ of life was developed by water and heat.' (**Manusmriti -** Book I, sloka 8,9)

' Water ascends towards the sky in vapors; from the sun it descends in rain, from the rains are born the plants, and from the plants, animals.' (**Manusmriti** - Book III, sloka 76)

(source: **Krishna and Christ - By Louis Jacolliot** p. 15).

Sir John Woodroffe (1865-1936) the well known scholar, Advocate-General of Bengal and sometime Legal Member of the Government of India. He served with competence for eighteen years and in 1915 officiated as Chief Justice. He has said:

"Ages before Lamarck and Darwin it was held in India that man has passed through 84 lakhs (8,400,000) of birth as plants, animals, as an "inferior species of man" and then as the ancestor of the developed type existing to-day. **The theory was not, like modern doctrine of evolution, based wholly on observation and a scientific enquiry into fact but was a rather (as some other matters) an act of brilliant intuition in which observation may also have had some part**."

(source: **Is India Civilized - Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** Ganesh & Co. Publishers Date of Publication: 1922 p. 22).

"To the philosophers of India, however, Relativity is no new discovery, just as the concept of light years is no matter for astonishment to people used to thinking of time in millions of kalpas, (A kalpa is about 4,320,000 years). The fact that the wise men of India have not been concerned with technological applications of this knowledge arises from the circumstance that technology is but one of innumerable ways of applying it."

It is, indeed, a remarkable circumstance that when Western civilization discovers Relativity it applies it to the manufacture of atom-bombs, whereas Oriental civilization applies it to the development of new states of consciousness."

(source: **Spiritual Practices of India - By Frederic Spiegelberg** Introduction by **Alan Watts** p. 8-9).

Mr. Thorton, in his book **History of British India**, states: **" Hindus are indisputably entitled to rank among the most ancient of existing nations, as well as among those most early and most rapidly civilized....**ere yet the Pyramids looked down upon the Valley of the Nile... when Greece and Italy, these cradles of modern civilization, housed only the tenants of the wilderness, India was the seat of wealth and grandeur..."

(source: **Proof of Vedic Culture's Global Existence - By Stepehn Knapp** p. 7).

Count Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) was a Belgian writer of poetry, a wide variety of essays. He won the 1911 Nobel Prize for literature. In his book **Mountain Paths**, says:

"he falls back upon the earliest and greatest of Revelations, those of the Sacred Books of India with a Cosmogony which no European conception has ever surpassed."

(source: **Mountain Paths - By Maurice Maeterlinck**).

Huston Smith (?) born in China to Methodist missionaries, a philosopher, most eloquent writer,

world-famous religion scholar who practices Hatha Yoga. He has said in Hinduism:

"The invisible excludes nothing, the invisible that excludes nothing is the infinite – the soul of India is the infinite."



"Philosophers tell us that the Indians were the first ones to conceive of a true infinite from which nothing is excluded. **The West shied away from this notion.** The West likes form, boundaries that distinguish and demarcate. The trouble is that boundaries also imprison – they restrict and confine."

"India saw this clearly and turned her face to that which has no boundary or whatever." "India anchored her soul in the infinite seeing the things of the world as masks of the infinite assumes – there can be no end to these masks, of course. If they express a true infinity." And It is here that India's mind boggling variety links up to her infinite soul."

"India includes so much because her soul being infinite excludes nothing." It goes without saying that the universe that India saw emerging from the infinite was **stupendous**."

While the West was still thinking, perhaps, of 6,000 years old universe – India was already envisioning ages and eons and galaxies as numerous as the sands of the Ganges. The Universe so vast that modern astronomy slips into its folds without a ripple."

(source: **The Mystic's Journey - India and the Infinite: The Soul of a People – By Huston Smith**).

Dick Teresi (?) author and coauthor of several books about science and technology, including **The God Particle**. He is cofounder of **Omni** magazine and has written for Discover, The New York Times Magazine, and The Atlantic Monthly.

"The big bang is the biggest-budget universe ever, with mind-boggling numbers to dazzle us – a technique pioneered by fifth-century A.D. **Indian cosmologists, the first to estimate the age of the earth at more than 4 billion years.**

The cycle of creation and destruction continues forever, manifested in the **Hindu deity Shiva, Lord of the Dance,** who holds the drum that sounds the universe's creation in his right hand and the flame that, billions of years later, will destroy the universe in his left. Meanwhile Brahma is but one of untold numbers of other gods dreaming their own universes.

The 8.64 billion years that mark a full day-and-night cycle in Brahma's life is about half the modern estimate for the age of the universe. The ancient Hindus believed that each Brahma day and each Brahma night lasted a kalpa, 4.32 billion years, with 72,000 kalpas equaling a Brahma century, 311,040 billion years in all. That the Hindus could conceive of the universe in terms of billions.

The similarities between Indian and modern cosmology do not seem accidental. Perhaps ideas of creation from nothing, or alternating cycles of creation and destruction are hardwired in the human psyche. Certainly **Shiva's percussive drumbeat** suggests the sudden energetic impulse that could have propelled the big bang. And if, as some theorists have proposed, the big bang is merely the prelude to the big crunch and the universe is caught in an infinite cycle of expansion and contraction, then ancient Indian cosmology is clearly cutting edge compared to the one-directional vision of the big bang. **The infinite number of Hindu universes is currently called the many world hypothesis,** which is no less undocumentable nor unthinkable.

The Indians came closest to modern ideas of atomism, quantum physics, and other current theories. India developed very early, enduring atomist theories of matter. Possibly Greek atomistic thought was influenced by India, via the Persian civilization. **The Rig-Veda, is the first Indian literature to set down ideas resembling universal natural laws. Cosmic law is connected with cosmic light, with gods, and, later, specifically with Brahman.** It was the Vedic Aryans... who gave the world some of the earliest philosophical texts on the makeup of matter and the theoretical underpinnings for the chemical makeup of minerals. Sanskrit Vedas from thousands of years before Christ implied that matter could not be created, and that the universe had created itself. Reflecting this, in his **Vaiseshika** philosophy, **Kanada** (600 B. C) claimed that elements could not be destroyed. Kanada's life is somewhat a mysterious, but his name is said to mean "one who eats particle or grain" likely referring to his theory that basic particles mix together as the building blocks for all matter. Two, three, four, or more of these elements would combine, just as we conceive of atoms doing. The Greeks would not stumble on this

concept for another century."

"In India, we see the beginning of theoretical speculation of the size and nature of the earth. Some one thousand years before Aristotle, the **Vedic Aryans** asserted that the earth was round and circled the sun. A translation of the **Rig Veda** goes: " In the prescribed daily prayers to the Sun we find..the Sun is at the center of the solar system. ..The student ask, "What is the nature of the entity that holds the Earth? The teacher answers, "**Rishi Vatsa holds the view that the Earth is held in space by the Sun."**



"Two thousand years before Pythagoras, **philosophers** in northern India had understood that gravitation held the solar system together, and that therefore the sun, the most massive object, had to be at its center." "Twenty-four centuries before Isaac Newton, the Hindu **Rig-Veda** asserted that gravitation held the universe together. The Sanskrit speaking Aryans subscribed to the idea of a spherical earth in an era when the Greeks believed in a flat one. The Indians of the fifth century A.D. calculated the age of the earth as 4.3 billion years; scientists in 19th century England were convinced it was 100 million years."

(source: **Lost Discoveries: The Ancient Roots of Modern Science - By Dick Teresi** p. 159 and 174 -212). For more refer to chapter **Hindu Cosmology**).

India had a thriving civilization capable of sophisticated astronomy long before Greece, Egypt, or any other world culture. For more than a century scholars have debated the antiquity of the Vedas and their related literature, the Brahmanas and Puranas. Incontrovertible evidence that such "advanced" astronomical concepts as precession, heliocentrism, and the eclipse cycle are encoded in these ancient texts, passages of which make perfect sense only if these astronomical keys are known. Based on internal evidence in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, it is likely to establish dates--and even places--for the events described in these famous epics and thus place India, or the roots of civilization.

A Rg Vedic hymn to the Asvins (Mercury and Venus), quoted in the **Mahabharata**, also refers to the twelve zodiacal signs. **Zodiacal signs are mentioned in the Rig Veda, thus, they precede Greco-Babylonian astronomy.** The earliest reference to the zodiacal signs is, therefore, in the **Rig Veda**, not in Babylonian literature. This completely upsets the rather smug history of astronomy as conceived by the western scholars of the past couple of centuries. It is obvious that the Rig Vedic seers were not mere observers in the sense the Babylonian were. They had theorized about their observations, beating the Greeks by over a thousand years in this process.

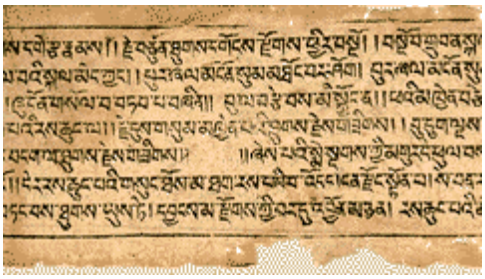
By deciphering the astronomical events and alignments contained in symbolic form in these ancient texts, question many if not all of the assumptions governing Indo-European prehistory. The astronomical significance of many Hindu deities, the system of lunar asterisms used to mark time, the identity of the Asvins, and the sophisticated calendar of the ancients that harmonized solar and lunar cycles.

With the rise of modern science it should have been feasible to crack the Vedic code at least three decades earlier, but here lies the greatest tragedy of India. Under the Marxist grip Indian intellectuals have been made ashamed of their heritage, and most educated Hindus are ready to parade with the banner " We are ashamed of being Hindus" at the drop of a hat. Most educated Indians - including scientists have no clue as to what is in the Vedas. The Vedas are written in Sanskrit and most educated Indians can not understand it as there is a conspiracy to finish Sanskrit and everything else that Hindus should be proud of. There are very few Vedic scholars left in India.

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Advanced Scientific Concepts in Hindu Literature

The Rig Veda is the oldest Indian text and one of the oldest surviving in the world. This collection of hymns of sages like Vasistha, Visvamitra, Agastya, Dirghatmas, and others was compiled over a span of a few hundred years. The verses of the Rig Veda form a code that, properly interpreted, reveals an amazing amount of astronomical knowledge, which is unbelievable when we consider their antiquity - 1500 B. C. being a conservative estimate. In fact, the Rig Veda shorn of its allegory and metaphorical camouflage, is the oldest textbook of modern astronomy.



From this approach it follows that the Rig Veda seers were scientists in the modern sense. Pre-Rig Veda astronomers, had, in fact measured the sphericity of the Earth, established the heliocentric theory in its modern form, and explained the seasons astronomically. Advanced concepts like the causes of auroral displays were also understood. *The Rig Veda is according to astronomical grounds, more than five thousand years old.* The Rig Veda repeatedly refers to Earth and the heavens as "bowls" thus suggesting that the sphericity of Earth was recognized. This can be confirmed by several hymns as well. Several hymns are attributed to the Aswins, which are the planets Mercury and Venus. A Rig Veda hymn to the Asvins, quoted in the Mahabharata, also refers to

the twelve zodiacal signs. Undoubtedly, the twelve zodiacal signs were known. Thus, the earliest reference to the zodiacal signs is, therefore, in the Rig Veda, not in the Babylonian literature.

Sphericity of Earth:

The existence of rather advanced concepts like the sphericity of Earth and the cause of seasons is quite clear in Vedic literature. For example, the **Aitareya Brahmana** (3.44) declares:



"The Sun does never set nor rise. When people think the Sun is setting (it is not so). For after having arrived at the end of the day it makes itself produce two opposite effects, making night to what is below and day to what is on the other side…Having reached the end of the night, it makes itself produce two opposite effects, making day to what is below and night to what is on the other side. In fact, the Sun never sets…."

Earth as Flat at Poles:

"Twenty-four centuries before Isaac Newton, the Hindu Rig-Veda asserted that gravitation held the universe together. The Sanskrit speaking Aryans subscribed to the idea of a spherical earth in an era when the Greeks believed in a flat one. The Indians of the fifth century A.D. calculated the age of the earth as 4.3 billion years; scientists in 19th century England were convinced it was 100 million years."

(source: **Lost Discoveries: The Ancient Roots of Modern Science - By Dick Teresi** p. 7 - 8).

It is quite remarkable that the **Markandeya Purana** (54.12) speaks of Earth as being flattened at the poles and bulging at the equator, that is, not perfectly spherical.



The **Vishnu Purana,** in an obvious elaboration of the above quotation from the Aitareya Brahmana, also speaks of antipodes of Earth and indeed implies the existence of Earth's rotation. In addition, even more elementary concepts like the phases of Moon and the cause of twilight were well understood, as was the fact that the blue sky is nothing but scattered sunlight. (cf. **Markandeya Purana,** 78.8, or 103.9)

Sun the center of the Solar System:

Dick Teresi has observed that:

"The Vedas recognized the sun as the source of light and warmth, the source of life, and center of creation, and the center of the spheres. This perception may have planted a seed, leading Indian thinkers to entertain the idea of heliocentricity long before some Greeks thought of it. An **ancient Sanskrit** couplet also contemplates the idea of multiple suns:

"Sarva Dishanaam, Suryaham Suryaha, Surya."

Roughly translated this means, "There are suns in all directions, the night sky being full of them," suggesting that early sky watchers may have realized that the visible stars are similar in kind to the sun. A hymn of the **Rig Veda**, the **Taittriya Brahmana**, extols, nakshatravidya (nakshatra means stars; vidya, knowledge)."

"Two thousand years before Pythagoras, philosophers in northern India had understood that gravitation held the solar system together, and that therefore the sun, the most massive object, had to be at its center. "

(source: **Lost Discoveries: The Ancient Roots of Modern Science - By Dick Teresi** p. 1 and 130).



One frequently encounters the concepts of the Sun being at the center of the solar system (cf **Markandeya Purana,** 106. 41). All this pales, however, before the concept, startlingly similar to the twentieth-century model, of an oscillating universe, or more accurately, a universe being cyclically created and destroyed, with just about the right time period of about 10,000 million years.

(cf. **Mahabharata Santi Parva, or Markandeya Purana,** 81, 57-58).

The **Rig Veda** repeatedly asks, **"How is it that though the Sun is not bound and is directed downwards, it does not fall?"** A question asked by Isaac Newton more than three thousand years later, and no one else, because the Greeks had furnished the crystal spheres to which these objects were attached!

When we talk of gravity, Newton comes to our mind, but in the text **Surya Sidhantha** dated around 400 AD, **Bhaskaracharya** described it stated. "objects fall on the earth due to one force. The Earth, planets, constellations, moon and sun are held in orbit because of that one force".

"Seven horses draw the chariot of Surya". Rg Veda 5. 45. 9



These seven horses are the seven colors compromising light. These seven colors become visible in a rainbow or when light passes through a prism.

Vedic literature used large numbers and employed modern decimal enumeration, compared with the primitive Greek and Roman arithmetic. The first recorded evidence of "Hindu" numerals is at least as old as the Ashoka's edicts, circa 250 B. C.

Not just astronomy, but other physical concepts appear in quite a developed form in ancient Indian literature. These include atomism, superposition of various sound notes, the division of time into very small units of the order of a 100,000th of a second, and so on.

The **Laya Yoga Samhita** stated that just as the beams of sunlight entering a room reveal the presence of innumberable motes, so infinite space is filled with countless brahmandas (solar systems). The atomic structure of matter was discussed in the ancient Vaisesika treatises. And in the Yoga Vashista it was stated, in a passage very similar to the foregoing: "There are vast worlds all placed way within the hollows of each atom, multifarious as the motes in a sunbeam."

(source: **Crises in Modern Thought: The Crises of Reason - By Swami Kriyananda (J. Donald Walters)** vol. 1 p - 95).

Modern physics confirmed that the sun's rays travel in a curved way, but not in a straight line. Our ancestors told that the sun's chariot was drawn by seven horses tied by snakes. As the movements of the snakes are crooked and curved, so also the sun's ray. The phenomenon is described in a metaphysical poetic line bhujagana mita sapta turaga. The chapter on light says that there are seven colors in the white ray of the sun. Artharveda says that there are seven types of sun's rays, sapta surayasya rasmayah.

The law of gravitation discovered by Brahmagupta anticipated Newton by declaring **"all things fall to the earth by law of nature; for it is the nature of the earth to attract and keep things."**

(source: **Hinduism and Scientific Quest - By T R. R. Iyengar** p. 153-154 South Asia Books ASIN 8124600775).



Marquis Pierre Laplace (1749-1827) French mathematician, philosopher, and astronomer, a contemporary of Napoleon. **Laplace** is best known for his nebular hypothesis of the origin of the solar system. wrote:

"Nevertheless the ancient reputation of the Indians does not permit us to doubt that they have always cultivated astronomy, and the remarkable exactness of the mean motions which they assign to the Sun and the Moon necessarily required very ancient observation."

Yaqubi, Shiite historian, wrote in the ninth century: **"Hindu are more exact in astronomy and astrology than any other people.**

Atoms:

In the realm of physics, remarkable contributions have been made by Indian scientists. **Kanada,** the founder of the **Vaisesika system of philosophy**, expounded that the entire matter in this world consists of atoms as many in kind as the various elements. Kanada's atom would then correspond to the modern atom. Some Jain thinkers went a step further. They thought that all atoms are the same kind and variety emerged because they entered into different combinations. Kanada taught that light and heat are variations of the same reality. **Vacaspati** interpreted light as composed of minute particles emitted by substances and striking the eyes. This is a clear anticipation of the corpuscular theory of light, which was proposed by Newton but rejected till the discovery of the proton.

(source: **Hinduism and Scientific Quest - By T R. R. Iyengar** p. 153-154 South Asia Books ASIN 8124600775).

Other discoveries of modern technology is that of atomic energy and its by-products. Most people agree that no civilization before us had knowledge of such things. **But time and time again we find in the Vedic literature descriptions of weapons that had a similar amount of energy as the atomic bombs we use today. And to what else would these next few verses from the Artha-veda be referring if they are not a description of the basic principles of atomic energy?**

"The Atomic energy fissions the ninety-nine elements, covering its path by the bombardments of neutrons without let or hindrance. Desirous of stalking the head, i.e. the chief part of the swift power, hidden in the mass of molecular adjustments of the elements, this atomic energy approaches it in the very act of fissioning it by the above-noted bombardment. Herein verily the scientist know the similar hidden striking force of the rays of the sun working in the orbit of the moon. " (**Artha-Veda,** 20.41.1-3)

J. Robert Oppenheimer, (1904-1967) Scientist, philosopher, bohemian, and radical. A theoretical physicist and the Supervising Scientist Manhattan Project, the developer of the atomic bomb said: He is most remembered for his work with Albert Einstein on the first atomic bomb.



Only seven years after the first successful atom bomb blast in New Mexico, Dr. Oppenheimer, of **The Manhattan Project,** who was familiar with ancient Sanskrit literature, was giving a lecture at Rochester University. During the question and answer period a student asked a question to which Oppenheimer gave a strangely qualified answer:

Student: Was the bomb exploded at Alamogordo during the Manhattan Project the first one to be detonated?

Dr. Oppenheimer: **"Well -- yes. In modern times, of course.**

"Berlitz goes on to quote a number of passages from the **Mahabharata** that describe the impact of a weapon that I suspect must be the **brahmaastra,** although he neither names the weapon nor cites those sections of the text from which his quotations are drawn (he lists Protap Chandra Roy's translation of 1889 in his bibliography):...a single projectile Charged with all the power of the Universe.

An incandescent column of smoke and flame As bright as ten thousand Suns Rose in all its splendor.....it was an unknown weapon, An iron thunderbolt, A gigantic messenger of death, Which reduced to ashes. The Entire race of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas....the corpses were so burned As to be unrecognizable. Their hair and nails fell out; Pottery broke without apparent cause, And the birds turned white. After a few hours all foodstuffs were infected.....To escape from this fire. The soldiers threw themselves in streams to wash themselves and their equipment...

One is reminded of the yet unknown final effect of a super-bomb when we read in the Ramayana of a projectile:

...So powerful that it could destroy
The earth in an instant -
A great soaring sound in smoke and flames...
And on it sits Death...

(source: **Doomsday 1999 A.D. - By Charles Berlitz** Doubleday; March 1981 ASIN 038515982X p. 118-122).

Oppenheimer described the thoughts that passed through his mind when he witnessed the first atomic test explosion.

"Of a thousand suns in the sky if suddenly should burst forth the light, it would be like unto the light of that Exalted One. (**Bhagvad Gita** XI,12)
" Death am I, cause of destruction of the worlds, matured and set out to gather in the worlds there" (**Bhagvad Gita** XI 32)

For example, the **Vishnu Purana** in an insightful passage declares,



"How can reality be predicated of what is subject to change, and reassumes no more of its original character? Earth is fabricated into a jar; the jar is divided into two halves; the halves are broken to pieces, the pieces become dust; the dust becomes atoms…."

Universal Time Scale:

The late scientist, **Carl Sagan**, in his book, **Cosmos** asserts that the **Dance of Nataraja (Tandava)** signifies the cycle of evolution and destruction of the cosmic universe (Big Bang Theory). "It is the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of." Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the seasons and in the birth and death of all living creatures, but also the very essence of inorganic matter.

For modern physicists, then, Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter. Hundreds of years ago, Indian artist created visual images of dancing Shiva's in a beautiful series of bronzes. Today, physicist have used the most advanced technology to portray the pattern of the cosmic dance. Thus, the metaphor of the cosmic dance unifies, ancient religious art and modern physics. The Hindus, according to Monier-Williams, were Spinozists more than 2,000 years before the advent of Spinoza, and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin and Evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of Evolution was accepted by scientists of the present age.

"The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. **It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond, to those of modern scientific cosmology.** Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years long. Longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang. And there are much longer time scales still."

" The most elegant and sublime of these is a representation of the creation of the universe at the beginning of each cosmic cycle, a motif known as the cosmic dance of Lord Shiva. The god, called in this manifestation **Nataraja, the Dance King.** In the upper right hand is a drum whose sound is the sound of creation. In the upper left hand is a tongue of flame, a reminder that the universe, now newly created, with billions of years from now will be utterly destroyed."

(source: **Cosmos - By Carl Sagan** Random House ISBN 0375508325 p. 213-214).

Fritjof Capra (1939 -) Austrian-born famous theoretical high-energy physicist and ecologist wrote:

"Modern physics has thus revealed that every subatomic particle not only performs an energy dance, but also **is** an energy dance; a pulsating process of creation and destruction. The **dance of Shiva is the dancing universe**, the ceaseless flow of energy going through an infinite variety of patterns that melt into one another''.For the modern physicists, then Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter. As in Hindu mythology, it is a continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos; the basis of all existence and of all natural phenomenon. Hundreds of years ago, Indian artists created visual images of dancing Shivas in a beautiful series of bronzes. In our times, physicists have used the most advanced technology to portray the patterns of the cosmic dance."

(source: **The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism - By Fritjof Capra** p. 241-245).

Princeton University's **Paul Steinhardt** and Cambridge University's **Neil Turok**, have recently developed The Cyclical Model.

They have just fired their latest volley at that belief, **saying there could be a timeless cycle of expansion and contraction. It's an idea as old as Hinduism, updated for the 21st century. The theorists acknowledge that their cyclic concept draws upon religious and scientific ideas going back for millennia — echoing the "oscillating universe" model that was in vogue in the 1930s, as well as the Hindu belief that the universe has no beginning or end, but follows a cosmic cycle of creation and dissolution.**

(source: **Questioning the Big Bang - msnbcnews.com**). (For more on yugas, refer to **One Cosmic Day of Creator Brahma**).

Hinduism is the only religion that propounds the idea of life-cycles of the universe. It suggests that the universe undergoes an infinite number of deaths and rebirths. Hinduism, according to **Carl Sagan**, "... is the only religion in which the time scales correspond... to those of modern scientific cosmology. Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of the Brahma, 8.64 billion years long, longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang"

Long before **Aryabhata** (6th century) came up with this awesome achievement, apparently there was a mythological angle to this as well -- it becomes clear when one looks at the following translation of **Bhagavad Gita** (part VIII, lines 16 and 17),

"All the planets of the universe, from the most evolved to the most base, are places of suffering, where birth and death takes place. But for the soul that reaches my Kingdom, O son of Kunti, there is no more reincarnation. One day of Brahma is worth a thousand of the ages [yuga] known to humankind; as is each night."

Thus each *kalpa* is worth one day in the life of Brahma, the God of creation. In other words, the four ages of the *mahayuga* must be repeated a thousand times to make a "day ot Brahma", a unit of time that is the equivalent of 4.32 billion human years, doubling which one gets 8.64 billion years for a Brahma day and night. This was later theorized (possibly independently) by Aryabhata in the 6th century. The cyclic nature of this analysis suggests a universe that is expanding to be followed by contraction... a cosmos without end. This, according to modern physicists is not an impossibility.

(source: **Astronomy and Mathematics in Ancient India**).

Professor Arthur Holmes (1895-1965) geologist, professor at the University of Durham. He writes regarding the age of the earth in his great book, **The Age of Earth** (1913) as follows:

"Long before it became a scientific aspiration to estimate the age of the earth, many elaborate systems of the world chronology had been devised by the sages of antiquity. **The most remarkable of these occult time-scales is that of the ancient Hindus, whose astonishing concept of the Earth's duration has been traced back to Manusmriti, a sacred book."**



When the Hindu calculation of the present age of the arth and the expanding universe could make Professor Holmes so astonished, the precision with which the Hindu calculation regarding the age of the entire Universe was made would make any man spellbound.

(source: **Hinduism and Scientific Quest - By T. R. R. Iyengar** p. 20-21).

Swami Kriyananada (**J. Donald Walters**) World renowned as a singer, composer, and lecturer, founder of the Ananda Village is perhaps the most successful intentional community in the world writes:

"Hindu cosmography, for example born in hoary antiquity, strikes one in certain ways as surprisingly modern. India has never limited its conception of time to a few crowded millennia. Thousands of years ago India's sages computed the earth's age at a little over two billion years, our present era being what is called the seventh Manuvantra. This is a staggering claim. Consider how much scientific evidence has been needed in the West before men could even imagine so enormous a time scale."

(source: **Crises in Modern Thought: The Crises of Reason - By Swami Kriyananda** (**J. Donald Walters)** vol. 1 p - 94)

" Another point illustrating the advanced nature of the Vedic Aryan civilization is their conception of the universal time scale. The time factor is calculated as affecting various levels of the universe differently. For example, a day for the demigods is equal to six months for humans on planet earth. And a year is calculated as 360 human years, while 12,000 years of the gods is said to be but one blink of the eye of Maha Vishnu. For Lord Brahma, the highest of all the demigods, his day equals one thousand cycles of the combined four ages of Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali-yugas. This amounts to *4.3 billion years,* at the end of which is his night when there is a partial annihilation of the universe, which includes the earth. After an equal number of years, Brahma's day begins again, and that which is destroyed is again created or revived.

For example in the **Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna** tells Arjuna:

" All the worlds from Brahma's world (the universe) are periodic. Arjuna.
They, those who know the day and night, know that the day of Brahma is a thousand yugas long and a night is a thousand yugas long.
From the unmanifested, all the manifest things spring forth on the arrival of the day (of Brahma). On the onset of night all these sink into what is called the unmanifested.
Partha, (Arjuna), this multitude of created things having existed over and over again and helplessly destroyed at the onset of night, spring forth on the onset of day."



All this sounds a little like the modern theory of an oscillating universe that begins with a big bang that all matter flying out until the outrushing matter comes to a halt and collapses back into a tiny speck, leading to another big bang, and so on. An entire cycle according to present-day cosmological ideas could take 10,000million to 20,000 million years. **It seems incredible that the ancient Hindus could hit upon this idea thousands of years ago.** Some biased scholars have tended to dismiss this agreement of the order of length of the cycle as a mere coincidence.

"Interestingly, modern science has estimated that the age of the earth is about 4 billion years. Scholars feel it is uncanny that the Vedic Aryans could have conceived of such a vast span of time over 3,500 years ago that would be similar to the same figure estimated by science today."

(source: **The Secret Teachings of the Vedas - By Stephen Knapp** p. 25).

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Zero to Infinity in Indian Mysticism

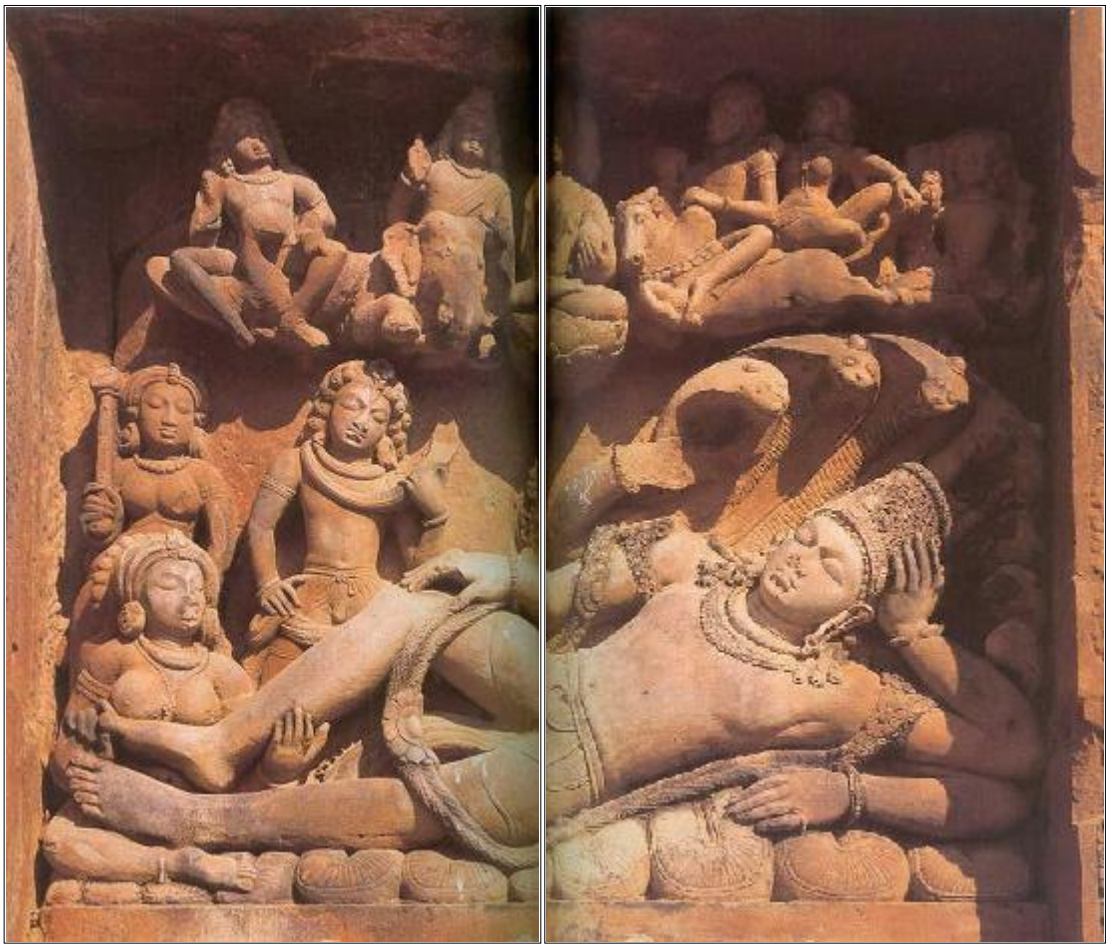
Ananta is Sanskrit for infinity.

It is equated with the Supreme Brahman — infinitely powerful and so infinitely free. It is bigger than any quantity that can be imagined; it is bigger than any finite number. Infinity is one of the fundamental axioms upon which contemporary mathematics is based.

Sanskrit grammar and interpretation in ancient India were closely linked to the handling of high value numbers. Studies relating to poetry and metrics initiated sastragnaas or scientists to both arithmetic and grammar. Grammarians were just as competent at calculations as professional mathematicians. Indian sastragnaas or scientists, philosophers, astronomers and cosmographers — in order to develop their arithmetical, metaphysical and cosmological speculations concerning ever higher numbers — became at once mathematicians, grammarians and poets. They gave their spoken counting system a truly mathematical structure which had the potential to lead directly to the discovery of the decimal place-value system.

Negative numbers had been rejected as solutions of problems in early times. They were eventually admitted in Hindu practical mathematics through problems involving money transactions, since the idea of receiving and owing money was a simple and obvious one — a negative number could be interpreted as a debt. Objection to negative numbers continued up to the early 19th century. Negative numbers are the mirror image of positive numbers. The invention of Cartesian geometry brought the X, Y co-ordinates and numbers came to be represented on a graph. Today, the series of negative natural numbers go up to infinity.

In Indian mysticism, the concept of infinity and zero are very closely linked. In the Isavasya Upanishad, there's a line: "Poornasya poornam aadaya poornameva visish-yate". To mathematically explain this, we have to assume that the first poornam represents infinity and the second, zero. In Sanskrit, poornam means both full and zero. Indian mathematicians knew perfectly well how to distinguish between these two notions which are mutually contradictory and which are the inverse of each other. They knew that division by zero gave them infinity.



The symbol is that of Ananta, the great Adisesha of infinity and eternity, which is always represented, coiled up in a horizontal figure of 8 just like the leminiscate.

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The symbol for infinity is called the leminiscate. English mathematician John Wallis introduced this symbol for the first time in 1655. Hindu mythological iconography contains a similar symbol representing the same idea. **The symbol is that of Ananta, the great Adisesha of infinity and eternity, which is always represented, coiled up in a horizontal figure of 8 just like the leminiscate.**



Wallis was not aware that this symbol, in Indian mythology, referred to infi-nity and eternity. How did two diverse civilisations use the same symbol to denote infinity, without either of them realising its use by the other? In many cosmogenics the interlace symbolises the very nature of creation, energy and all existence. It evokes samsara or the eternal cycle of birth and rebirth. Eternal and infinite (ananta) are symbols of non-thought. Their value is entirely emotional. They act on our sensitivity. They invoke the peculiar sensation of the inability to imagine.

The concept of infinity has always remained an enigma. The Taittiriya Upanishad says: yatho vacho nivartante, apraapya manasa saha — where mind and speech return (being) unable to comprehend. In Indian cosmology, Ananta refers to the Adisesha or the great serpent on which Lord Vishnu reclines, taking His yoga nidra or anantasayanam. A Tamil azhwar paasuram (verse) says that Ananta acts as an umbrella when Vishnu walks, as a simhasana (throne) when He sits, as sandals when He stands, and as a bed when He reclines.

***

" **I am the nucleus of every creature, Arjuna; for without me nothing can exist, neither animate nor inanimate."**

- Bhagavad Gita 10.39

"Vishnu is the highest and most immediate of all the energies of Brahman, the embodied Brahman, formed of the whole of Brahman. On him this entire universe is woven and interwoven: from him is the world, and the world is in him; and he is the whole universe.

Vishnu, the Lord, consisting of what is perishable as well as what is imperishable, sustains everything, both spirit and matter, in the form of his ornaments and weapons. "

- Vishnu Purana 1.22

(source: **Zero to Infinity in Indian Mysticism - by T R Rajagopalan - timesofindia.com**).

The concept of time used by modern historical scientists, including archeologists, strikingly resembles the traditional Judeo-Christian concept. And it strikingly differs from that of the ancient Indians and Greeks It can nevertheless be safely said that the cosmological concepts of several of the most prominent Greek thinkers involved a cyclic or episodic time similar to that found in the **Puranic literature of India.**

For example, we find in **Hesiod's** (lived 8th century BC - Greek poet), Works and Days a series of ages (gold, silver, bronze, heroic, and iron) similar to the Indian yugas. He traces the history of the world through five stages, from the Golden Age to his own age of iron, which according to Hesiod was characterized by suffering and lawlessness. In both systems the quality of human life gets progressively worse with each passing age.

In **On Nature Empedocles** speaks of cosmic time cycles. In Plato's dialogues there are descriptions of revolving time and recurring catastrophes that destroy or nearly destroy human civilization. **Aristotle** said in many places in his works that the arts and sciences had been discovered many times in the past. In the teachings of Plato, Pythagoras, and Empedocles on transmigration of souls, the cyclical pattern is extended to individual psychophysical existence. According to **Voltaire**, " The Greeks, before the time of Pythagoras, traveled into India for instruction." (**The Philosophy of History**, p. 527).

Ancient literature like the Puranas and Vedas do contain allegory. In some passages, it is transparent. For instance, in Mahabharata, refers to an old lady who spins a fabric with 360 black threads and 360 white threads while a white horse stands by. The old lady is of course time. The black and white threads are night and day, and the white horse is the Sun. Incidentally, the origin of this symbolism is in the Vedic hymns of the Rig Veda. (1.64).



Unless we recognize the fact that the Vedic hymns and the Puranic story of Vedic origin are deliberate camouflage and allegory - a code, in fact - we cannot interpret them or understand their true meaning. To do otherwise would lead us to the same kind of *ridiculous conclusion* reached by British astronomer, Patrick Moore, who wrote, "The Vedic priest in India believed that the world to be supported upon twelve massive pillars, during the hours of darkness, the Sun passed underneath, somehow managing to thread its way between the pillars without hitting them. According to the Hindus, Earth stood on the back of four elephants, the elephants in turn rested upon the back of a huge tortoise, while the tortoise itself was supported by a serpent floating in a limitless ocean. One cannot help feeling sorry for the serpent.!"

In fact, after the chaff is removed, the Puranas have a kernel and exhibits what may be termed a reverse symbolism. The twelve pillars that support the world are evidently the twelve months of the year, and they are specifically mentioned in the Vedic hymns. The four elephants on which Earth rests are the Dikarin, the sentinels of the four directions. These in turn rest, in turn, on a tortoise and a serpent. The tortoise is Vishnu's Kurma or tortoise avatar and symbolizes the fact that the Earth is supported in space in its annual orbit around the Sun. Finally, the coiled serpent represents Earth's rotation. Vishnu, or the Sun, himself rests upon a coiled snake - the Ananta, or Adisesha, which represents the rotation of the Sun on its own axis.

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The Expanding Egg



Sanskrit is a beautiful language. Each word in Sanskrit tells its meaning itself. Each word has been thought carefully. Sanskrit is not a product of evolution from an earlier language. It has been designed to be what it is. When Vedic sages coded the knowledge of particle physics and cosmology, they were well aware of the possibility that one day the code may be lost due to the decline of their civilization. Therefore they chose the words carefully to provide vital clues about the code. (Note: To learn more about Sanskrit refer to the chapter on Sanskrit)

Take the example, the expanding universe. The word for universe in Sanskrit is "Brahmanda", which is made by joining of words "Brahma" and "Anda". Brahma is derived from root "Brha" meaning to expand and "Anda" means egg. Thus " Brahmanda" means expanding egg.

A 9th century Hindu scripture, The **Mahapurana by Jinasena** claims the something as modern as the following: (translation from [5])

"Some foolish men declare that a Creator made the world. The doctrine that the world was created is ill-advised, and should be rejected. If God created the world, where was he before creation?... How could God have made the world without any raw material? If you say He made this first, and then the world, you are faced with an endless regression... Know that the world is uncreated, as time itself is, without beginning and end. And it is based on principles."

(source: **Astronomy and Mathematics in Ancient India**).

Concept of Trinity



In Hinduism, Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesa form a trinity. Brahma is the creator of the universe, Vishnu the protector and Mahesa (Shiva) the destroyer. Brahma means expansion, and expansion of the universe takes place with the creation of matter and energy, thus Brahma is creator. Vishnu is the life-principle of the universe, who is not different from the universe, thus he is the protector. Mahesha or Mahadeva or Shiva is Vedic god Rudra representing radiation. As radiation is the result of annihilation of particles, he is related to destruction. But what is annihilated is born again as another set of particles, and this dance of creation and annihilation continues. This is the cosmic dance of Shiva, and therefore he is called Nataraja, Lord of the dancers.

Hundred thousandths of a second:

So also, the **Brihadaranyaka Upanishad** (2.4.7ff.) dwells at length on the following theme,

" As when a drum is beaten, one cannot distinguish its various particular notes, but they are included in the general note of the drum or in the general sound produced by different kinds of strokes…" Similarly,

the **Puranas** define the paramanu, which is on the order of a few hundred thousandths of a second.

Airplanes:



Among all the different sciences mentioned, it may be surprising to find a reference to airplanes. But actually, the mention of airplanes is found many times throughout Vedic literature, including the following verse from the **Yajur-Veda** describing the movement of such machines:

" O royal skilled engineer, construct sea-boats, propelled on water by our experts, and airplanes, moving and flying upward, after the clouds that reside in the mid-region, that fly as the boats move on the sea, that fly high over and below the watery clouds. Be thou, thereby, prosperous in this world created by the Omnipresent God, and flier in both air and lightening." **Yajur Veda**, 10.19). For more on airplanes refer to chapter on **Vimanas**).

Description of Tides:

The **Vishnu Purana** gives a quite an accurate description of tides:



"In all the oceans the water remains at all times the same in quantity and never increases or diminishes; but like the water in a cauldron, which in consequence of its combination with heat, expands, so the waters of the ocean swell with the increase of the Moon. The waters, although really neither more nor less, dilate or contract as the Moon increases or wanes in the light and dark fortnights….."

India has left a universal legacy determining for instance the dates of solstices, as noted by 18th century French astronomer **Jean-Sylvain Baily**, (1736–93) 18th century French astronomer and politician. His works on astronomy and on the history of science (notably the *Essai sur la théorie des satellites de Jupiter*) were distinguished both for scientific interest and literary elegance and earned him membership in the French Academy, the Academy of Sciences, and the Academy of Inscriptions. **Bailly** said:

"The movement of stars which was calculated by Hindus 4,500 years ago, does not differ even by a minute from the tables which we are using today." And he concludes: "The Hindu systems of astronomy are much more ancient than those of the Egyptians - even the Jews derived from the Hindus their knowledge."

Botany and Biology:

In addition to the physical sciences, very interesting and modern concepts of botany and biology, including the concepts of micro-organisms, are also encountered in these ancient texts, for example, in the **Mahabharata:**



“They (trees) drink water by their roots. They catch diseases of diverse kinds. Those diseases again are cured by different operations… as one can suck up water through a bent lotus stalk, trees also, with the aid of the wind, drink thorough their roots. They are susceptible to pleasure and pain, and grow when cut or chopped… they are not inanimate…

Vrihi and other so-called seeds of rice are all living organisms…again (men) …while walking about hither and thither kill innumerable creatures hidden in the ground by trampling on them; and even men of wisdom and enlightenment destroy animal life, even while sleeping or in repose themselves… the Earth and the air all swarm with living organisms.”

Electricity

The ancient text of **Agastya Samhita** describes the method of making electric battery, and that water can be split into oxygen and hydrogen.

(Source: **The Celestial Key to the Vedas: Discovering the Origins of the World's Oldest Civilization** - By Dr. B. G. Sidharth is director of India's B. M. Birla Science Center. He has over 30 years of experience in

astronomy and science education and is a frequent consultant to astronomy journals and science centers around the globe. He lives in Hyderabad, India.
Vedic Physics: Scientific Origin of Hinduism - By Raja Ram Mohan Roy p- 198-199).
The Secret Teachings of the Vedas - By Stephen Knapp).
Hinduism and Scientific Quest - By T R. R. Iyengar).

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Rediscovering Vedic Science:



According to **Romain Rolland,** (1866-1944) French Nobel laureate, professor of the history of music at the Sorbonne and thinker. He authored a book on the " **Life of Ramakrishna**".

" Religious faith in the case of the Hindus has never been allowed to run counter to scientific laws, moreover the former is never made a condition for the knowledge they teach, but there are always scrupulously careful to take into consideration the possibility that by reason both the agnostic and atheist may attain truth in their own way. Such tolerance may be surprising to religious believers in the West, but it is an integral part of Vedantic belief."

Not only do the Vedas contain a high level of philosophical and spiritual knowledge, but they also hold information on material science. The Vedic literature includes such works as the Ayur-Veda, the original science of wholistic medicine as taught by Lord Dhanvantari; Dhanur-veda, the military science as taught by Bhrigu; Gandharva-veda, which is on the arts of music, dance, drama, etc.. by Bharata Muni, Artha-sastram, the science of government, and the Manu-samhita, the Vedic lawbook.

There is also the **Sulbha sutras,** which contains the Vedic system of mathematics. These sutras are a supplement of the Kalpasustras, which shows the earliest forms of algebra. The Vedic form of mathematics is much more advanced than that found in early Greek, Babylonian, Egyptian, or Chinese civilizations. In fact, the geometrical formula known as the Pythagorean theorem can be traced to the Baudhayana, the earliest form of the Shulba Sustras prior to the 8th century B. C. It was this Indian system that originated the decimal system of tens, hundreds, etc., and the procedure of carrying the remainder of one column over to the next. It also provided a means of dividing fractions and the use of equations and letters to signify unknown factors. These Indian numbers were used in Arabia after 700 AD. and then spread to Europe where they were called the Arabic numerals. It is only because Europe changed from Roman numerals to these Arabic numerals that originated in India that many of the developments in Europe in the fields of science and math were able to take place. (source: **The Secret Teachings of the Vedas - By Stephen Knapp** p. 25) Stephen Knapp a Vedic scholar, has also been to India several times and traveled extensively throughout the country.

Ancient Inscriptions:

A German linguist **Kurt Schildmann,** a native of Heiderhof, says his study of ancient inscriptions discovered in the caves of Peru and the United States shows that they are similar to ancient Indus Valley Sanskrit, suggesting that seafarers from India may have reached the Americas thousands of years ago. He describes the Indus civilization as a forerunner of other world civilizations. While doing "epigraphic research" on the Crespi collection of Cuenca, Peru, Schildmann discovered Sanskrit in inscriptions found in Peru and in the Burrows cave in southern Illinois. Russel Burrows accidentally discovered the cave, a retired colonel of the U.S. armed forces, on April 2, 1982.

Schildmann had noticed the similarity between the language of the inscriptions in Peru and the Burrows' cave after having deciphered the inscriptions in the Indus Valley. He also deciphered an icon found in the Burrows' cave, on which he said many details depicted the "wisdom of the Indus culture". Schildmann was struck by the drawing of an elephant on top of a "Pyramid", with three lines of a legend. He deciphered the legend as "PIL", that was 6000 years old ancient Sanskrit word for an elephant. He concluded, the ancient Indian engraved texts on gold plates and hid them to honor the gods and address the succeeding generations.
(source: **http://members.aol.com/coorg777/india9.html**)

Conclusion:

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, (1850-1919), famous American poet and journalist. **Wilcox** poems have been collected in volumes such as **Poems of Pleasure** (1897) and **Maurine and Other Poems** (1888) states:

" India - the land of Vedas, the remarkable works contains not only religious ideas for a perfect life, but also facts which science has proved true. Electricity, radium, electronics, airship, all are known to the seers who founded the Vedas."

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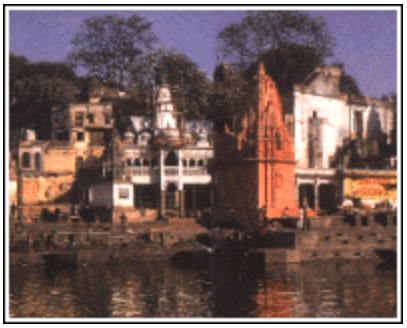
Legend of Vikramaditya:

Ujjain is a city in the state of Madhya Pradhesh. City of Ujjain (one who conquers with pride) was once ruled by the legendary king Vikramaditya.



King Vikramaditya was known for his valor and impeccable justice. His court was adorned by nine famous courtiers called Navaratna (nine gems), who were great scholars in different fields of knowledge. (Kalidasa became the most brilliant of the `nine gems' at the court of Vikramaditya of Ujjain.) Despite extensive effort, Vikramaditya can not be identified with any known historical king. Ujjain is famous for the temple of *Mahakala.* There is no temple in India, where Mahakala is worshipped.

Is there a meaning behind the legend of Vikramaditya and the worship of Mahakala? The real meaning is revealed by considering the meaning of these words. Vikramaditya is made by joining prefix "Vi" to words "Krama" and "Aditya". "Krama" means order, "Aditya" means sun and prefix "Vi" means deviation. Therefore, etymologically Vikramaditya means the change in the course of the sun. What is significant is Ujjain is located on the tropic of cancer. Thus, sun comes to Ujjain during its northward journey, changes its course, and starts its southward journey. Vikramaditya is sun itself changing its journey at Ujjain. Nine gems in the court of Vikramaditya are nine planets of Solar system.



Mahakala is made by joining words, Maha, great, and Kala, time. *Thus, Mahakala means Time the great.* Ujjain was known as Ujjayini in ancient times and was the capital of ancient empire Avanti. Ujjayini was the center of Indian civilization for several centuries and famous for its astronomical observatory. Ujjayini was equivalent of Greenwich, from where time was synchronized all over India and even abroad. New day commenced when it was six a.m. in Ujjayini. When it is six in the morning in Ujjain, it is midnight in Britain. It is from this ancient system of changing date in the morning in Ujjain that changing date at midnight has been arrived at.

As time was synchronized in a large part of the world according to Ujjayini standard time, it was only natural to designate the god of Ujjain as god time himself, and therefore the name **Mahakala, Time the great.**

The rise and fall of Hinduism is connected to the rise and fall of science. The spirit of Hinduism is logic and skepticism. Hinduism was raised on the foundation of science and freedom of inquiry. There is not a single incident of a scientist being persecuted by religious authorities in India as was the case in the West. Hinduism has never indulged in suffocation of scientific thoughts, instead it has incorporated science in religion.

(source: **Vedic Physics** - **By Raja Ram Mohan Roy** p- 198-199)

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Articles

Indian Idealist Metaphysics - By Paul Brunton

The ancient Hindus took their philosophic statements in the nature of a revelation from on high, as issuing forth from their seers as a result of a personal self-experience in the spiritual domain. Our Western scientists have no such experience, and if they are approaching similar conclusions, it is because they are working their way from the profoundest depths of this material world up to its farthest frontier where the ions elude them and vanish into mystery……the wisest men of the ancient East and the modern West…are beginning to arrive at precisely the same conclusions.

This **Indian doctrine declares human cognition of the entire manifold universe to be illusionary in character.** The vast multitude of tangible objects and tangible creatures which we so plainly witness around us were said to be the product of the constructive imagination of the One Hidden Self. Man and

his material environments were but finite dreams passing through the mind of the Infinite Dreamer. Consequently all that we know of the world is nothing more or less than a series of idea held in our consciousness. Thus we arrive at a completely idealistic metaphysics which, because of its very nature, must apparently remain for ever purely speculative and beyond the scope of the finest instruments which can be devised to prove or disprove. **Nevertheless the strangeness and unfamiliarity of the doctrine fascinated the Indian mind to an amazing extent.** That this early foreshadowing of modern idealistic philosophy was not merely a worthless superstition is evidenced by the fact that some brilliant minds of the West have been equally fascinated and perplexed.

This doctrine, curiously enough, hardly rears its head in The Vedas but appears with strong bold outlines in the post-Vedic books such as The **Yoga Vasishta**, in the Buddhist philosophical scriptures, and in the numerous writings of **Shankara, the father of the grandest Hindu philosophical revival of ancient times.**

The earliest Vedic mention is in the **Svetasvarara Upanishad**, where the following lines occur:

“Now one should know that Nature is illusion,
And that the Mighty Lord is the illusion-maker.”

The **Aitareya Upanishad** says:

“Creatures, plants, horses, cows, men, elephants, whatsoever breathes, whether moving or flying and, in addition, whatsoever is immovable – all this is led by mind and is supported on mind. Mind is the final reality.”

The basis of this doctrine is that things cannot exist independently of the perceiver's mind, that the entire phenomenal world of experience is a creation within the perceiving mind, as is a dream, and hence, from the highest metaphysical standpoint, an idea or mental appearance. The author of The **Yoga Vasishta** presents the teaching in another way, asserting that the world is relative to the mind and must therefore be mental in character if the possibility of its being known is to be achieved.

"The subject cannot be aware of the object unless they are related. And there cannot exist any relation between two heterogeneous things. Relation implies identity, for it cannot be possible between two utterly different objects. The cognition of the object by the subject therefore establishes their substantial identity. If they were utterly different from each other, knowledge would not have been possible; the subject would ever remain unaware of the object as a stone of the taste of sugar." "The whole world is merely ideal. It does not exist except in thought. It arises and exists in the mind. The whole universe is the expansion of the mind. It is a huge dream arisen within the mind. It is imagination alone that has assumed the forms of time, space and movement."

"The reality of things consists in their being thought. The objective world is potentially inherent in the subject, as seeds of a lotus exist in the flower, as oil in sesamum seeds. All objects are related to the subject from which they proceed. They appear to be different from it, but are not so in reality. The world experience is nothing in reality but a dream."

The author of Yoga Vasishta realizes that such a solipsism is difficult to maintain and so lends his support to the Upanishadic assertion that "the Mighty Lord", God, is the true illusion-maker, and that the idea of the created world is put into our minds by the Divine One.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote the following verse:

“Illusion works impenetrable,
Weaving webs innumerable,
Her gay pictures never fail,
Crowds each other, veil on veil,
Charmer who will be believed
By man who thirsts to be deceived.”

Bishop George Berkeley (1865-1753) Famous Irishman and bishop of the Church of England and a prominent empiricist philosopher, in **The Principle of Human Knowledge**, proceeds to claim that the universal creation being mental, must have been brought into being within the mind of a Cosmic Thinker, thus strangely **echoing a passage already quoted from the Indian Yoga Vasishta.**

Arthur Schopenhauer, who in his turn developed the same theme in the vigorous volumes of **The World as Will and Idea**. He says:

“He to whom men and all things have not at times appeared as mere phantoms of illusions has no capacity for philosophy…”

“The world is my idea – this is a truth which holds good for everything that lives and knows, though man alone can bring it into reflective and abstract consciousness…”

Coming to more recent times, we find echoes of the familiar **Hindu comparisons of the dream and waking worlds** in the writings of **F. H. Bradley, E. Douglas Fawcett, Dr. F.C. Schiller**, and **Lord Bertrand Russell**.

One of the greatest 19th century scientists was **Thomas Henry Huxley** (1825-1895) physiologist,

anatomist, anthropologist, agnostic, educator, distinguished zoologist and advocate of Darwinism, the following quotations from his work, **Collected Essays** vol. VI, serve to show **how much ancient Indian philosophy anticipated modern Western thought.**

"To sum up. If the materialist affirms that the universe and all its phenomena are resolvable into matter and motion, Berkeley replied, 'True; but what you call matter and motion are known to us only as forms of consciousness; their being is to be conceived or known; and the existence of a state of consciousness, apart from a thinking mind, is a contradiction in terms. I conceive that this reasoning is irrefragable.

"…the simple ideas we receive from sensation and reflection are the boundaries of our thoughts, beyond which the mind, whatever efforts it would make, is not able to advance one jot."

Sir Arthur Eddington (1882-1944) important astrophysicists of his time, wrote in **Time, Space and Gravitation**:

"All through the physical world runs that unknown content, which must surely be the stuff our consciousness. Here is a hint of aspects deep within the world of physics, and yet unattainable by the methods of physics. And, moreover, we have found that where science has progressed the furthest, the mind has but regained from Nature, that which the mind has put into Nature.

Sir James Berkeley writes:

"The Universe can be best pictured as consisting of pure thought, the thought of what, for want of a wider world, we must describe as a mathematical thinker."

Hyman Levy (1889-1975) Mathematician, philosopher and humanist, in **The Universe of Science**, declares that "the underlying reality of the universe is never perceived. A mere appearance is experienced so that what the mind pictures is not reality but its superficial structure."

While Western psychologists carry out most of their experiments upon other persons, the **proponents and exponents of Indian system are expected, and do, carry out their experiments upon themselves first and foremost.** And because man is a key to the universe, because the mind of man is somehow linked with the Mind behind creation, the way to understanding of the universe must finally embrace the thorough understanding of the mystery behind man.

(source: **Indian Philosophy and Modern Culture - By Paul Brunton** London Rider & Co. Paternoster House, E. C p 1-92).

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Back to the Vedas: Gateway to Peace
By Narayani Ganesh
http://www.timesofindia.com/today/15edit5.htm

' WHY do birds prefer to stay on treetops during the night? Why aren't they seen on the ground after nightfall? According to ancient Hindu scriptures, birds possess special and sensitive powers of perception. At night, they `see' the surface of the earth in flames. These flames reflect the intense energy trapped by the planet as a result of absorbing heat from the sun's rays all day long.

The Vedas are replete with such tidbits, encapsulating a heady mix of science, logic, deduction and belief, claim Vedic scholars. Here's another piece of information that is expressed in beautiful verse: What can one do when faced with a dry season, when rains are eagerly awaited; when farmers look skywards, pleading with an unseen Power, praying for a good harvest? Get to the bottom of a dried up water body. Plough your fields with the rich natural fertiliser that can be easily accessed from these water beds. The soil from here is saturated with the dung and dirt from animals which frequented the place; with compost from leaves, twigs and natural wastes that have sunk and have been assimilated into this soil.

Therefore, Vedic tips on how to deal with real-life situations may not all be outdated. Modern environmentalists and ecologists sometimes advocate what has already been talked about in Vedic scriptures. though couched in sophisticated technical and scientific terms. The Vedas are peppered with numerous tips on how to achieve welfare for all by working in conjunction with nature. `Vedathil illadhadhu logathil illai' -- You can discover nothing on this earth that is not already present in the Vedas -- so goes a popular *Tamil* saying which is seconded by Vedic scholars who have studied these scriptures in great depth and detail.

Vedic pundits aver that slokas or verses are composed and structured in a manner that their correct rendition can evoke rains in times of drought. Conversely, there are special slokas which when chanted with precision and in the right spirit can actually make the rains cease when there is too much of it. There's more. Slokas like the aprathiratha sooktam mantra chanted repeatedly right at the battle front, can actually will the enemy to retreat, never to return, claim Vedic pundits.

Waxing eloquent on the power of Vedic chanting for universal welfare, a group of 12 eminent Vedic pundits have congregated at the Sri Krishna temple in the Capital from different parts of the country. They are participating in a Sampoorna Yajurveda Ghana Parayanam, an event that has been organised for the first time in Delhi. The Parayanam is a 29-day, eight-hours-a-day rendition of the verses of the Yajur Veda in the Ghana style, which is the most difficult of the five traditional methods of recitation.

Handed down from generation to generation since the Vedic age through the guru-shishya parampara, committing to memory and reciting these verses comes from years of arduous practice. The five methods of recitation are Mula or Samhita, Pada, Krama, Jata and Ghana. Ghana, the last one, requires rendition in a complicated combination set to a rhythmic tone and is believed to possess high potency when chanted by Ghanapatins. The tempo goes like this: For Ghana, it is 1-2, 2-1, 1-2-3, 3-2-1. The five methods are progressive in scale of difficulty. For example, the tempo for Jata is: 1-2, 2-1, 1-2 following the pattern of a braid, as the name suggests. Also important is the timbre and tone. The number of students opting for the study of the Vedas up to the Ghana stage is dwindling. Hence this form of Vedic recitation is rare.

Sri S Krishnamurthy Ghanapatigal from Sathanur, Tamilnadu, says: ``The Vedas inform humankind about what is needed and what is not. They convey what is not observable with the eyes or the mind. They address not just brahmins and kings; they are equally applicable to the army, to students, to agriculturists -- in short, entire humankind. It is structured for the well-being of entire humanity, of all life. If they spell out ideas to improve agriculture, they also talk about behavioural psychology".

``At the UN Millennium Summit, we are happy that religious leaders from different faiths and regions converged to talk about peaceful conflict resolution. In fact, the Vedas have a formula for conflict resolution, too. The aikamathya sooktam is a mantra in verse which when recited wherever there is conflict, can actually create an atmosphere conducive for peaceful and lasting resolution".

(The scholars can be contacted at the Alakananda Dharmik Samaj, Sri Balavenugopalakrishna Temple till 17 September, R-2, Institutional Area, Alaknanda, New Delhi 110 019, Phone 6282730).

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The Different Routes of Modern Science and Indian Ancient Science (excerpts)
Indian Ancient Science – BARC Newsletter
http://www.barc.ernet.in/webpages/letter/newsletter_year_2000/

Mathematics

The science of mathematics starts from counting of numbers. The present versatile system of decimal numbers needed two fundamental discoveries: the *concept of zero* and the *principle of place value in powers of the radix*. And both of these were discovered in India. The place value system made the sexagesimal numbers of Babylonians obsolete (its only remains are 1 hour=60 minutes, and 1 minute=60 seconds). And now the Roman numbers are also getting gradually replaced by Arabic numerals on the place value pattern. The present numerals are called Arabic not because they were invented in Arab but because Indian things had to go via Arabian countries to Europe.

Similar to these two concepts, there is a very fundamental concept of infinity. In modern mathematics, infinity has been taken as an infinite extension of large numbers. In India, the concept of infinity was given deep attention in ancient times. It was found that infinity is not just a number but it is as tangible as any reality of general experience, and many of its properties were enumerated. In mathematical language, it can be defined as a universal set which is a proper subset of its every proper subset. Modern mathematics may enrich itself by working out the implications of such a definition of infinity.

Phonetics

Very extensive work was done in the science of phonetics in ancient India, and finer shades of sounds produced in the pronunciation were standardized. The entire Panini's *Shiksha* and most of his grammar is phonetics only. However, in the West, the science of phonetics came up only recently. The application of sound recording systems and techniques of observing vocal organs in action through X-rays, have given a good deal of clarity to its concepts. The Indian ancient phonetics can benefit significantly if it employs some modern concepts and terminology. For example, many ancient Acharyas struggle with words to define what is *Udatta* vowel, and *Un-Udatta* vowel. Their round- about definitions do not accurately communicate what they intend. Following modern terminology, we can define simply that *Udatta* is high frequency vowel sound and *Un-Udatta* is low frequency vowel sound.

Similarly in *Shastriya Sangeet*, the relations of *Saptak* and the change of sound from *sa* to *ni* can be more clearly explained as ascending frequency in geometric progression; and the various *Tals* can be described as chrono-patterns of sound pulses with partial symmetry. Such applications of modern scientific terminology, instead of the vague and round-about old descriptions, can simplify the comprehension of this valuable Indian ancient art which also has scientific foundations.

The unification of Indian ancient science of Phonetics with modern information theory and the binary computer logic has led this author to evolve the *Phonetic Number System* of radix 128 with mono-sound numerals and word-like numbers. Based on this system, a merely six digit self-checking Phonetic Code, pronounced though six soft sound characters, can identify about 6000 crore population, uniquely and perpetually.

Metaphysics and Philosophy

In modern times, the subject of philosophy is considered to be speculation into the unseen and mostly unknown or unknowable. It has very little concern with tangible things of relevance. But in ancient India,

philosophy (*Darshan*) was treated at par with science. Its study was supposed to give clear vision of life and nature as a whole, leading to a more coherent theoretical knowledge and harmonious practical living. The culmination of Indian philosophy is said to be Vedanta. Its sources are *Brahma Sutras*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Upanishads*, and the voluminous book *Yoga Vasishtha*. Vedanta claims to have reached such a high state of unification of nature beyond which no further unification is possible.

In physics, unified theories, with tremendous efforts, have got only partial success in unifying some forces of nature. In this background, it may be asked if the ideal of Vedanta, the highest state of unification, is ever achievable. Such an objection can be circumvented by redefining Vedanta, that it is *Asymptote to Knowledge*. It describes that most fundamental concept towards which all the basic concepts of various branches of knowledge approach and meet at infinity. But that state of unification can be intuitively grasped in a finite life-span. It is like the asymptote to an open curve which is tangent to the curve at infinity but remains at a finite distance from the origin.

Much of the confusion in Vedanta, employing mostly contradictory statements, can be removed by developing it as an axiomatic theory starting from a single postulate. In respect of its relation with the empirical world, Vedanta is supported by *Sankhya*. It represents the practical limit of unification in terms of two basic elements: *Consciousness* (*Chetan*) and *Inertness* (*Jada*). These two concepts make it possible to design binary computerizable models of basic physical or metaphysical entities.

The interrelationship of these concepts has a good deal of analogy with the modern field theory. There is one basic abstract field of the ultimate entity which has two states, consciousness and inertness. These different states behave as two distinguishable entities. Their interplay has dispersed as well as localized aspect. Its dispersed aspect is mind, and the localized aspect is body-consciousness. The system is incessantly dynamic and is represented by repetitions of many processes. Analogous to this is the electromagnetic field which has two kinds of forces: electrical and magnetic. Its dispersed aspect is undulations of wave and localized aspect is photon which is always dynamic. Now arises a question, whether photons have consciousness? However, experiments done in the University of Denver, Colorado, to test this have remained inconclusive.

Life Sciences

According to the Indian ancient science, in the field of consciousness, there are many levels. Every material system, whether apparently living or non-living, is at some level of consciousness. The so- called inanimate matter occupies the lowest level at which there is a very small zero-point consciousness. The direction of evolution is towards higher and higher freedom. Its manifestation starts from freedom of movement, and culminates in the freedom of selection of one's own destiny.

Medical Sciences

Modern traditional medical science studies the physical and chemical patterns in a large number of people and makes a broad standard for healthy people. For example, after the measurement of the blood pressure of large number of people, a broad standard can be made. Ailments are associated with departure from these standards, and they can be corrected by appropriate physical and/or chemical means.

According to Indian medical science, called Ayurveda, life is a dynamical system in which in the healthy state, there is a harmony of many chemical and physical processes. The number of these processes have been broadly classified into three called *Dosh*: *Kaph*, *Pitta*, and *Vata*. Every food and eatable can be classified into many categories depending upon which Dosh or combination of Doshas, it decreases or increases or maintains in balance. The symptoms of disease indicate which of the Doshas have increased or decreased. The administration of the compensating remedy gives the cure. Ayurveda claims to have discovered the basic principles of many other systems of treatment like allopathy, homeopathy, acupuncture, etc. But these systems were not developed to higher levels in ancient India.

The surgery described by Dhanvantari and Sushrut has become obsolete with the advent of sophisticated tools and equipment in modern surgery. But the basic principles of Ayurveda hold. They are like phenomenological theory of matter. For example, the mechanical and thermal properties like elasticity, density, specific heat, etc of gold are determined by the atomic structure of gold atoms. But a goldsmith need not go into all these details. For him the bulk properties are sufficient to make a beautiful ornament. In the same way, simplifying all the chemical process of the body in terms of increase, decrease, or balance of three Doshas suffices to restore health in a large number of cases. That is why the medical formulations of *Charak Samhita* still have relevance. But, in the light of changed environment, many of the ancient formulations need verification and standardization. However, Ayurvedic thumb rules for longevity and good health have withstood the test of time.

Cosmology

Modern theoretical cosmology begins with the application of general relativity to the universe as a whole by Einstein in 1917. The experimental cosmology begins with observation of red shift, proportional to distance, in the light of galaxies by Hubble in 1929. The red shift has been explained in terms of Doppler's shift of receding galaxies. This explanation means that the universe is expanding isotropically. It implies that if we go backwards in time, then the universe was smaller, and at a certain time, the entire mass energy was concentrated at a point. G. Gamow in 1946 postulated that the universe was not only smaller but also hotter in the past. In the point like state, the temperature was infinite. With a sudden big bang, the energy was thrown out which subsequently led to the formation of stars and galaxies. What was prior to big bang, cannot be answered by physics.

To eliminate the big bang singularity, a steady state cosmology was put forward by Bondi and Gold in 1948, in which it was postulated that the universe has been like this all the time. But to maintain a constant density of matter in spite of the expansion, creation of matter as hydrogen atom into free space was postulated. A comprehensive C-field cosmology and a new theory of gravitation was developed by Fred Hoyle and J. V. Narlikar.

However, the steady state cosmology, though intellectually satisfying, did not satisfactorily explain the cosmic background radiation, predicted earlier by G. Gamow, and experimentally detected by Penzias and Wilson in 1965. Since then the steady state cosmology has gone into oblivion. The present standard cosmology is that of the hot big bang. It explains three main cosmological observations: receding galaxies, thermal background radiation, and nucleosynthesis of light elements. But suffers from the problem of singularity and many other inconsistencies.

Turning to the Indian ancient view on this subject*, Mahabharat* says (Adi-Parva, 1st Chapter, 40-41): "This beginningless and endless time cycle *(Kal-Chakra*) moves externally like a perpetual flow in which beings take birth and die but there is never birth or death for this. The creation of gods is briefly indicated as thirty-three thousand, thirty-three hundred, and thirty- three."

Again in *Mahabharat* itself, Bhagwad Gita describes a cyclic universe as (VIII-18): "All embodied beings emanate from the Unmanifest at the commencement of Brahma's day; at the commencement of his night, they merge in the same subtle body of Brahma, known as the Unmanifest."

These and many other statements imply that the Indian ancient view is that the universe is eternal as well as of finite age. The inference depends upon the point of view of the observer. If one observes the universe as a contemporary observer, then on the whole the universe is found to be like this only. But, if it is explored archaeologically, then it will be found to have a beginning at a point of time. Hence a unified cosmology, integrating the essential elements of steady state and big bang cosmologies, conforms better with the Indian view.

In ancient India, this integration was achieved by the concept two extra time-like dimensions. Thus the universe is a six dimensional continuum of three space, one time, and two time-like dimensions. This concept gives a logical symbol for the universe: that is two interpenetrating triangles. This figure has been verbally indicated in the above statement of *Mahabharat* that the creation is briefly indicated as thirty-three thousand, thirty-three hundred, thirty-three. Six times repetitions of three is the indirect technique of communication of Ved Vyas. The 5th and 6th dimensions have been called *Chittakash* and *Chidakash* in *Yogavasishtha*. The six dimensional universe represents higher symmetry in the two basic extensions of nature, space and time.

Physics

The Indian ancient view classifies the visible world into five elements: space, light or fire, and three states of matter (solid, liquid, and gas) represented by earth, water, and air. They are related to five senses and their five subtle forms called *Tanmatra* through a process called *Panchikaran*. Everything, irrespective of size and shape, has besides its physical body, a subtle body which is a bundle of abstract qualities and exists conceptually in the non-physical space called *Chittakash*. The subtle body in the *Chittakash* behaves like mind, and is free from many limitations of the physical space.

It is obvious to see many conceptual analogies in the two views of matter at the fundamental level. In quantum mechanics, the dynamics of a system is conceived in the abstract Hilbert space; in ancient India, it was conceived in the abstract *Chittakash.* Near the limit of fineness, inferences of the horizontal route (space-light-matter) and the vertical route (time-sound-mind) come very close to each other. Some experimental investigation into the interrelation of consciousness, mind, matter and light have been reported from Princeton University, Standford University (California), and University of Denver (Colorado).

Chemistry

The science of chemistry in India has been a great sufferer due to the destruction of the Indian ancient literature. The long heavy iron pillar near the Kutub Minar at Delhi, standing in the sunshine and rain for more than about 2000 years without getting rusted, is ample proof that chemistry and metallurgy were sufficiently advanced in ancient India. Similarly, the long and heavy statue of Buddha in the lying pose at Kushinagar near Gorakhpur, which still shines like gold in spite of remaining buried for many centuries, is a challenge to metallurgy. Similarly, many other monuments also hide great chemical secrets.

Much of the chemical knowledge is empirical rather then deductive. This is true of modern chemistry as well. Hence simply knowing a few basic principles is not enough to arrive at the process of producing the desired material. The actual method has to be either rediscovered, or may possibly be found in some hidden literature after extensive and minute survey.

Military Science

The biggest loss of ancient skills have been in the field of military science. The main reason for this loss was perhaps the *Mahabharat* war. There was so much loss of life in that war that people became allergic to things related to war. A large number of warriors were killed. Those who survived were demoralized. Almost the entire war skills, which needed regular practice and refinement, died out. Now we can get only very superficial descriptions of those weapons from *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat* which are basically literary works, and not scientific.

The weapons of ancient India can be put up into three broad categories. First is that of conventional weapons like swords, spears, bows and arrows, etc. Being simple, they survive to this age. The second were explosive based, delivered either through some projective system, or other means. They were called *Agniban.* The third were super weapons called *Brahmastra*, etc. *Brahmastra* was a sure hit weapon from which there was no escape. It had to be used in the rarest of the rare circumstances.

Brahma means creator of the universe. In the context of the war, it indicates a weapon designed through the knowledge of the creation of matter. According to *Yogashashtra* and some other writings, every particle of a block of matter is being incessantly created and dissolved. In between two occasions of creation, it remains momentarily in Chittakash in its subtle form. There its properties are more mind-like. Hence it can be acted upon by the mind of an aspirant provided it can go to that subtle state at which the matter particle has reached.

In any lump of inorganic matter, the creation and annihilation of particles is random. By mental command, they can be brought into coherence. The coherent lump can behave as a single quantum particle. With the coherence, all the constituent particles of the lump are created or annihilated simultaneously. They go to the Chittakash, and appear in the physical space, collectively. When they are in the mental form in Chittakash, they can be induced to have their next appearance in the physical space at the desired location, may be the body of an enemy. This travelling of the lump of matter is through non-physical space, so physical obstructions of walls and bunkers or long distances are no protection against this weapon.

Quantum teleportation recently reported by some physicists, is the nearest analogue to the working of *Brahmastra*. It is speculated by physicists that perhaps quantum teleportation may be the ultimate process in the control of dynamics of matter. However, so far the technique of quantum teleportation has reached the level of transmitting only states of photon. But even that has generated much excitement among physicists and has become a hot topic of research. It is anticipated to have applications in developing extremely fast computers, and communication of secured information making eaves dropping almost impossible.

In ancient India, some similar process seems to have been realised to the level of transmitting bigger masses through the phenomena of matter coherence. Just as coherence of electromagnetic waves produces very powerful laser light with unusual properties, in the same way coherence of matter can produce objects with unusual properties.

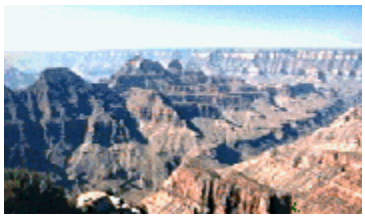
(please refer to the full text at the site given above)

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Did you Know?

How the Grand Canyon became Indian?



Clarence Edward Dutton, a captain of ordinance in the U.S. army, geologist-poet and a Yale man, Dutton was deeply influenced by the philosophies of India. It was Dutton who likened the snow-covered peaks of the canyon walls to the Hindu gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. There is even a Hindu amphitheatre which Dutton likened to the "profusion and richness which suggests an Oriental character." Dutton found the Shiva Temple the grandest of all, and most majestic in aspect....All round it are side gorges sunk to a depth nearly as profound as that of the main channel...In such a stupendous scene of wreck, it seemed as if the fabled 'destroyer' might find an abode not wholly uncongenial."



For Geologist Clarence Dutton, the harsh landscape of the Grand Canyon would come to be regarded as "the coliseums, temples, and statuary of an inspired nature," a place of divine presence. It's thanks largely to Dutton that so many of the Canyon's features are named after figures in world religion)

According to Professor Stephen J. Payne, professor of history at the Arizona State University and author of the book - **How the Canyon Became Grand** - there is " no explicit explanation for naming the peaks after Hindu gods, only implicit." He likens the naming the peaks to the historical fact of the time. "When there was a growing awareness and respect in the West, particularly Europe, towards Indian philosophies, not economies of the past."



India's Big Old Dam?

THE GRAND ANICUT, KALLANAI, is the Oldest Dam in the World that is still in use today. It is located on the Cauvery River, 24 km from Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu.



This masonry dam was built in the 2nd Century by Chola King Karikalan and is 1,082 feet long with a maximum height of 18 feet and is 40-60 feet wide. It was remodeled and fitted with sluice gates in 1899-1902. For nearly two millennia it has irrigated a million acres of land. India had more land under irrigation in ancient times than it does today.

(Source: **Hinduism Today May/June 2000**)

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Sound (nada) is believed to be the heart of the process of creation. In Hinduism, the sacred syllable Om embodies the essence of the universe - it is the "hum" of the atoms and the music of the spheres - and sound in general represents the primal energy that holds the material world together. Nada Brahma is a primal word in Indian spirituality, a primal word that also refers to India's great classical music. Since the most ancient times, music in India has been practiced as a spiritual science and art, a means to enlightenment. Sangita, which originally meant drama, music and dance, was closely associated with religion and philosophy. At first it was inextricably interwoven with the ritualistic and devotional side of religious life. The recital and chant of mantras has been an essential element of vedic ritual throughout the centuries. According to Indian philosophy, the ultimate goal of human existence is moksha, liberation of the atman from the life-cycle, or spiritual enlightenment; and nadopasana (literally, the worship of sound) is taught as an important means for teaching this goal. The highest musical experience is ananda, the “divine bliss.” This devotional approach to music is a significant feature of Indian culture.

The origin of Indian music is enshrined in beautiful tales and legends. It is common Hindu practice to attribute the beginning of a branch of learning to a divine origin through the agency of a rishi. Shiva, also called Nataraja, is supposed to be the creator of Sangita, and his mystic dance symbolizes the rhythmic motion of the universe. Curt Sachs (1881-1959) who played the leading role among early modern scholars in the field organology -- the study of musical instruments and their musical and cultural contexts, has said, that the South Indian drum tambattam that was known in Babylonia under the name of timbutu, and the South Indian kinnari shared its name with King David's kinnor. Arrian, the biographer of Alexander, also mentions that the Indian were great lovers of music and dance from earliest times.

Sir Yehudi Menuhin (1916-1999), American-born violinist, one of the foremost virtuosos of his generation, has written: "We would find all, or most, strands beginning in India; for only in India have all possible modes been investigated, tabulated, and each assigned a particular place and purpose. Of these many hundreds, some found their way to Greece; others were adopted by nomadic tribes such as the Gypsies; others became the mainstay of Arabic music. Indian classical music, compared with our Western music, is like a pure crystal. It forms a complete perfected world of its own, which any admixture could only debase. It has, quite logically and rightly, rejected those innovations which have led the development of Western music into the multiple channels which have enabled our art to absorb every influence under the sun. Freedom of development in Indian music is accorded the performer, the individual, who, within fixed limits, is free to improvise without any restraint imposed externally by other voices, whether concordance or discordant - but not to the basic style, which exclude polyphony and modulation."

Author Claude Alvares has said, that the Indian system of talas, the rhythmical time-scale of Indian classical music, has been shown (by contemporary analytical methods) to possess an extreme **mathematical complexity.** The basis of the system is not conventional arithmetic, however, but more akin to what is known today as pattern recognition.

Indian music is art nearest to life. That is why Irish poet William Butler Yeats (1856-1939) a 1923 Nobel Laureate in Literature, has aptly described Indian music "not an art but life itself."





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Introduction

"Even if he be an expert in the Revealed and the traditional scriptures, in literature and all sacred books, the man ignorant of music is but an animal on two feet."

"He who knows the inner meaning of the sound of the lute, who is expert in intervals and in modal scales and knows the rhythms, travels without effort upon the way of liberation.
- (**Yajnavalkya Smriti** III, 115).

***

Sound (nada) is believed to be the heart of the process of creation. In Hinduism, the sacred syllable **Om** embodies the essence of the universe - it is the "hum" of the atoms and the music of the spheres - and sound in general represents the primal energy that holds the material world together. **Sangita**, the Indian tradition of music, is an old as Indian contacts with the Western world, and it has graduated through various strata of evolution: primitive, prehistoric, Vedic, classical, mediaeval, and modern. It has traveled from temples and courts to modern festivals and concert halls, imbibing the spirit of Indian culture, and retaining a clearly recognizable continuity of tradition. Whilst the words of songs have varied and altered from time to time, many of the musical themes are essentially ancient.

The music of India is one of the oldest unbroken musical traditions in the world. It is said that the origins of this system go back to the Vedas (ancient scripts of the Hindus). Sangita, which originally meant drama, music and dance, was closely associated with religion and philosophy. At first it was inextricably interwoven with the ritualistic and devotional side of religious life. The recital and chant of mantras has been an essential element of Vedic ritual throughout the centuries. According to Indian philosophy, the ultimate goal of human existence is moksha, liberation of the atman from the life-cycle, or spiritual enlightenment; and **nadopasana (literally, the worship of sound)** is taught as an important means for teaching this goal. The highest musical experience is ananda, the “divine bliss.” This devotional approach to music is a significant feature of Indian culture. The Indian music tradition can be traced to the Indus (Saraswati) Valley civilization. The goddess of music, **Saraswati,** who is also the goddess of learning, is portrayed as seated on a white lotus playing the **vina.**



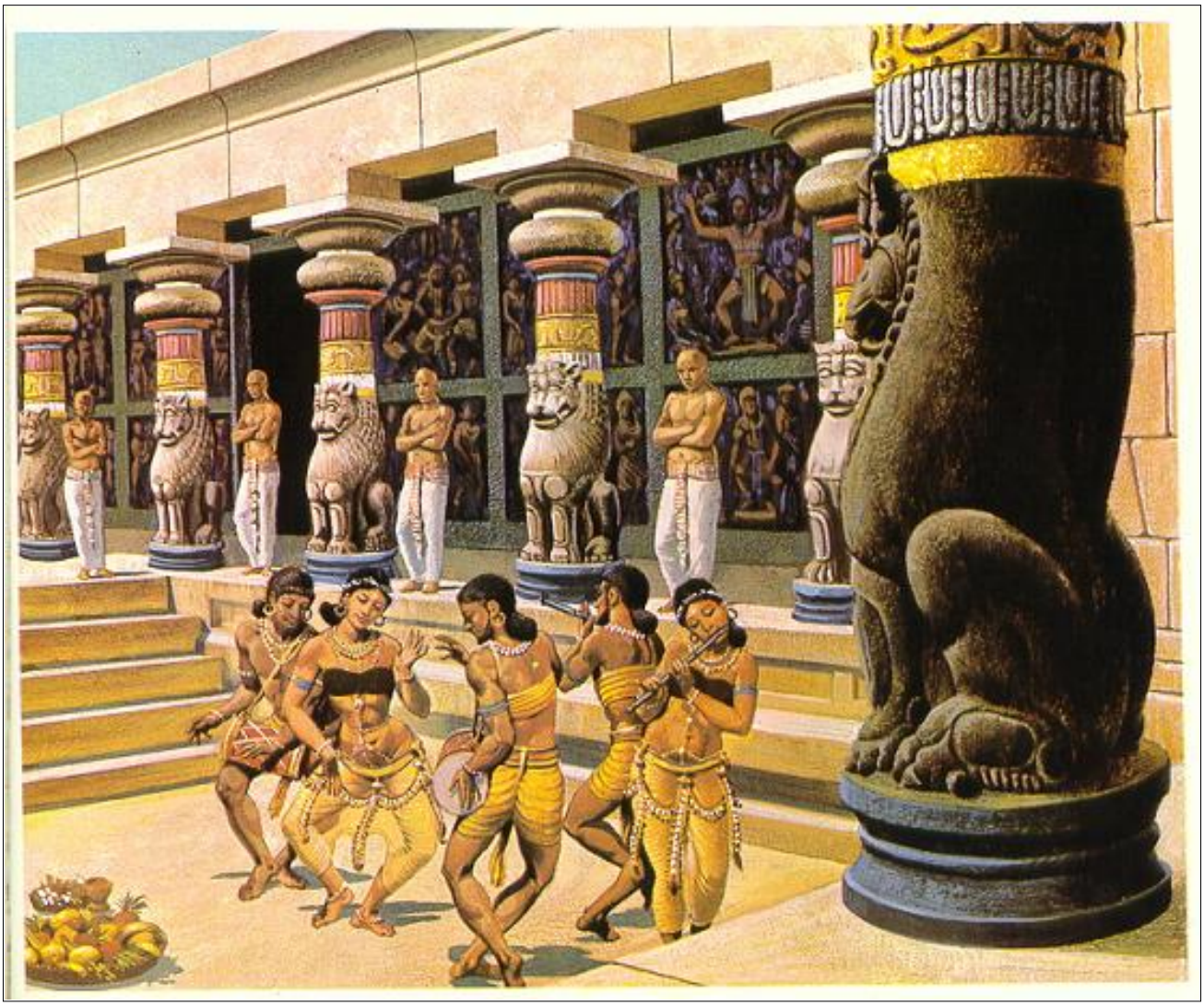
Bow-harps and Flutes - Amaravati A.D. 200. - Vina in the hands of Goddess Saraswati
(source: The Legacy of India - edited by G. T. Garrett).

Alain Daneliou has written: "Under the name of **Gandharva Vedas**, a general theory of sound with its metaphysics and physics appears to have been known to the ancient Hindus. From such summaries

The ancient Hindus were familiar with the theory of sound (Gandharva Veda), and its metaphysics and physics. The hymns of the Rig Veda contain the earliest examples of words set to music, and by the time of the Sama Veda a complicated system of chanting had been developed. By the time of the **Yajur Veda**, a variety of professional musicians had appeared, such as lute players, drummers, flute players, and conch blowers.

The origin of Indian music is enshrined in beautiful tales and legends. It is common Hindu practice to attribute the beginning of a branch of learning to a divine origin through the agency of a rishi. Shiva, also called Nataraja, is supposed to be the creator of Sangita, and his mystic dance symbolizes the rhythmic motion of the universe. He transmitted the knowledge of cosmic dance to the rishi Bharata, through one of his ganas. Tandu. The dance is called tandava and Bharata thus became the first teacher of music to men, and even to apsaras, the heavenly dancers. Similarly, the rishi Narada, who is depicted as endlessly moving about the universe playing on his vina (lute) and singing, is believed to be another primeval teacher of music.

Buddhist texts also testify to the prevalence of Sangita, both religious and secular, in early India. Music in India, however, reached its zenith during the **Gupta period**, the classical age of the Indian art and literature.



Music in India, however, reached its zenith during the Gupta Empire, the classical age of the Indian art and literature.

Indian music is based upon a system of *ragas* and is improvised or composed at the moment of performance. The notes which are to convey certain definite emotions or ideas are selected with extreme care from the twenty-five intervals of the *sruti* scale and then grouped to form a raga, a mode or a melodic structure of a time. It is upon this basic structure that a musician or singer improvises according to his feeling at the time. Structural melody is the most fundamental characteristic of Indian music. The term *raga* is derived from Sanskrit root, ranj or raj, literally meaning to color but figuratively meaning to tinge with emotion. The essential of a raga is its power to evolve emotion. **The term has no equivalent in Western music, although the Arabic maqam iqa corresponds to it**. Oversimplified, the concept of raga is to connect musical ideas in such a way as to form a continuous whole based on emotional impact. There are, however, mixed ragas combined in a continuous whole of contrasting moods. Technically, raga is defined as "essentially a scale with a tonic and two axial notes," although it has additional characters.

Musical notes and intervals were carefully and mathematically calculated and the Pythagorean Law was known many centuries before Pythagoras propounded it. They were aware of the mathematical law of music.

(source: **India: A synthesis of cultures – by Kewal Motwani** p. 78-95).

The word raga appears in **Bharata's Natyasastra**, and a similar concept did exist at the time, but it was **Matanga** (5th century) who first defined raga in a technical sense as "that kind of sound composition, consisting of melodic movements, which has the effect of coloring the hearts of men." This definition remains valid today. Before the evolution of the raga concept in Bharata's time, jati tunes with their fixed, narrow musical outlines constituted the mainstay of Indian music. These were only simple melodic patterns without any scope for further elaboration. It was out of these jati tunes that a more comprehensive and imaginative form was evolved by separating their musical contents and freeing them from words and metres.



Music lessons

Indeed a raga is basically a feeling, the expression of which has come to be associated with certain notes and twists of melody. A musician may compose in the same raga an indefinite number of times, and the music can be recognized in the first few notes, because the feelings produced by the musician's execution of these notes are intensely strong. The effect of Indian music is cumulative rather than dramatic. As the musician develops his discourse in his raga, it eventually colors all the thoughts and feelings of the listeners. Clearly, the longer a musician can dwell on and extend the theme with artistic intensity the greater the impact on the audience.

Alain Danielou (1907-1994) head of the UNESCO Institute for Comparative Musicology wrote:

""Unlike Western music, which constantly changes and contrasts its moods, Indian music, like Arabic and Persian, always centers in one particular emotion which it develops, explain and cultivates, upon which it insists, and which it exalts until it creates in the hearer a suggestion almost impossible to resist. The musician, if he is sufficiently skilled, can "lead his audiences through the magic of sound to a depth and intensity of feeling undreamt of in other musical systems."

(source: **Northern Indian Music - By Alain Danielou** Praeger, 1969 p. 115).



Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy has written: "Indian music is essentially impersonal, reflecting "an emotion and an experience which are deeper and wider and older than the emotion or wisdom of any single individual. Its sorrow is without tears, its joy without exultation and it is passionate without any loss of serenity. It is in the deepest sense of the word all human."

(source: **The Dance of Shiva - By Ananda Coomaraswamy** p. 94).

It is an art nearest to life; in fact, **W. B. Yeats** called Indian music, **"not an art, but life itself," although its theory is elaborate and technique difficult.**

The possible number of ragas is very large, but the majority of musical systems recognize 72 (thirty-six janaka or fundamental, thirty six janya or secondary). New ragas, however, are being invented constantly, as they have always been, and a few of them will live to join the classical series. Many of the established ragas change slowly, since they embody the modes of feeling meaningful at a particular time. It is for this reason that it is impossible to say in advance what an Indian musician will play, because the selection of raga is contingent upon his feelings at the precise moment of performance.

Indian music recognizes seven main and two secondary notes or svaras. Representing definite intervals, they form the basic or suddha scale. They can be raised or lowered to form the basic of suddha scale. They can be raised or lowered to form other scales, known in their altered forms as vikrita. The chanting of the Sama Veda employed three to four musical intervals, the earliest example of the Indian tetrachord, which eventually developed into a full musical scale. From vaguely defined musical intervals to a definite

tetrachord and then to a full octave of seven suddha and five vikrita was a long, continuous, and scientific process. For instance, **Bharata's Natyasastra**, the earliest surviving work on Indian aesthetics variously dated between the second century B.C. and the fourth century A.D., in its detailed exposition of Indian musical theory, refers to only two vikrita notes, antara and kakali. But in the **Sangita Ratnakara**, an encyclopedia of Indian music attributed to **Sarngadeva** (1210-1247), the number of vikritas is no less than nineteen; shadja and panchama also have acquired vikritas. It was during the medieval period that **Ramamatya** in the south, and **Lochana-kavi** in the north in his **Ragatarangini** refered to shadja and panchama as constant notes. Indian music thus came to acquire a full fledged gamut of mandra, madhya, and tar saptak.

The scale as it exists today has great possibilities for musical formations, and it has a very extensive range included in the microtonal variations. The microtones, the twenty-two **srutis**, are useful for determining the correct intonation of the notes, their bases, and therefore their scales (**gramas**). The Indian scale allows the musician to embellish his notes, which he always endeavors to do, because grace plays the part in Indian music that harmony does in European music.

Whilst Indian music represents the most highly evolved and the most complete form of modal music, the musical system adopted by ore than one-third of mankind is Western music based on a highly developed system of harmony, implying a combination of simultaneously produced tones. Western music is music without microtones and Indian music is music without harmony. The strongly developed harmonic system of Western music is diametrically opposed in conception and pattern to the melodic Indian system. Harmony is so indispensable a part of Western music today that Europeans find it difficult to conceive of a music based on melody alone. Indians, on the other hand, have been for centuries so steeped in purely melodic traditions that whilst listening to Western music they cannot help looking for a melodic thread underlying the harmonic structures.



Indian musical instruments are remarkable for the beauty and variety of their forms, which the ancient sculptures and paintings in caves of India have remained unchanged for the last two thousand years.

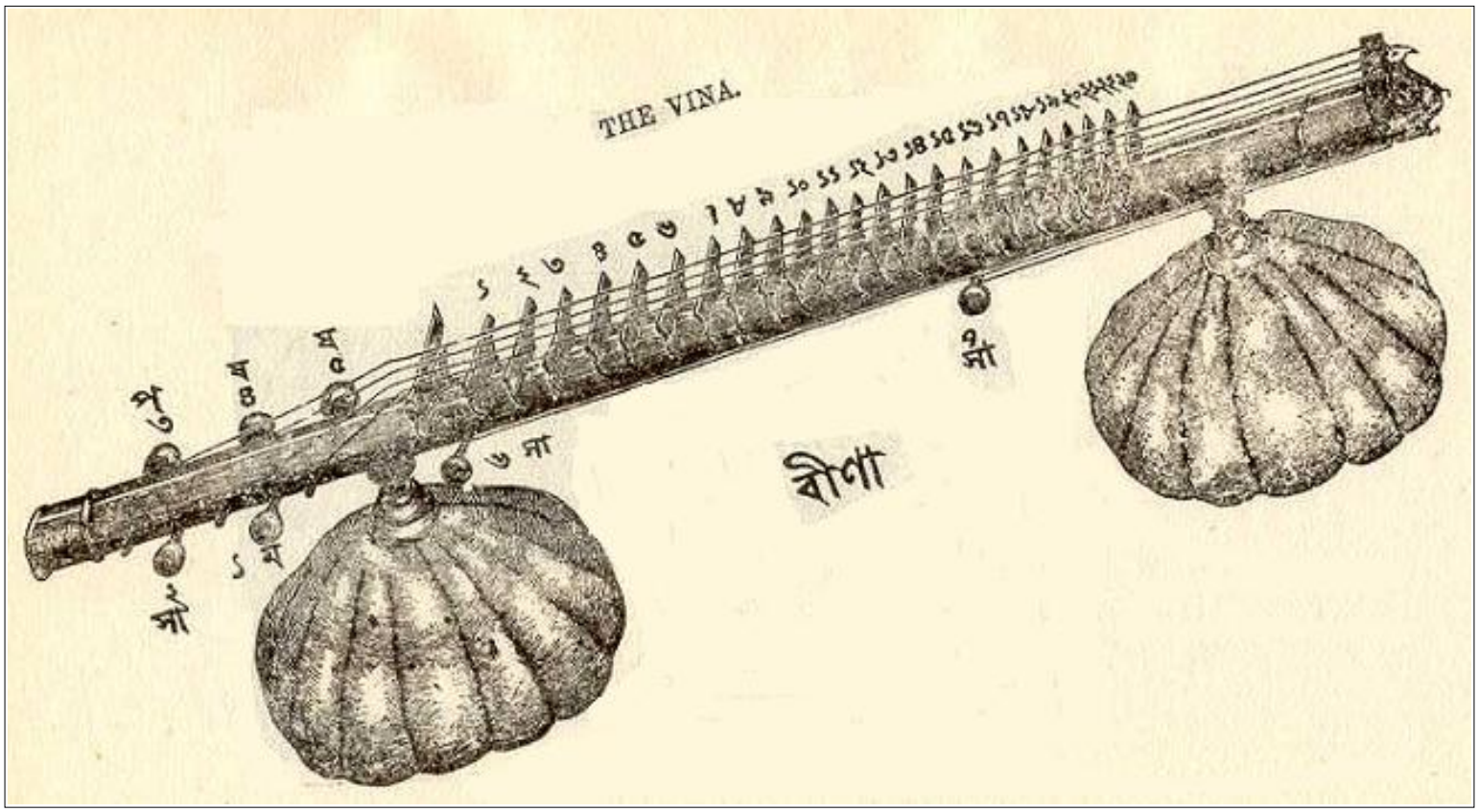
The fundamental and most important difference between the European and Indian systems of rhythm is respectively one of multiplication and addition of the numbers two and three. The highly developed tala, or rhythmic system with its avoidance of strict metre and its development by the use of an accumulating combination of beat subdivisions, has no parallel in Western music. On the other hand, the Indian system has no exact counterpart to the tone of the tempered system, except for the keynote, of Western music. Consequently, just and tempered intonations are variously conceived which eliminate the possibility of combining the melodic interval theory of the sruti system with the Western modulating, harmonic, arbitrarily tempered theory of intervals. With its tempered basis, larger intervals, and metred rhythms, Western music, is more easily comprehended than Indian music, which seems to require a certain musical aptitude and ability to understand its use of

microtones, the diversification of the unmetred tala, and the subtle and minutely graded inflection.

Western music, as it appears today, is a relatively modern development. The ancient Western world was aware of the existence of a highly developed system of Indian music. According to **Curt Sachs** (1881-1959) author of **The History of Musical Instruments** (W W Norton & Co ASIN 0393020681) it was the **South Indian drum tambattam that was known in Babylonia under the name of timbutu, and the South Indian kinnari shared its name with King David's kinnor, Strabo referred to it, pointing out that the Greeks believed that their music, from the triple point of view of melody, rhythm, and instruments, came to them originally from Thrace and Asia.**

Arrian, the biographer of Alexander, also mentions that the Indians were great lovers of music and dance from earliest times. The Greek writers, who made the whole of Asia, including India, the sacred territory of Dionysos, claimed, that the greater part of music was derived from Asia. Thus, one of them, speaking of the lyre, would say that he caused the strings of the Asian cithara to vibrate. Aristotle describes a type of lyre in which strings were fastened to the top and bottom, which is reminiscent of the Indian type of single-stringed ektantri vina.

Curt Sachs considers India the possible source of eastern rhythms, having the oldest history and one of the most sophisticated rhythmic development. It is probably no accident that Sanskrit, the language of India, is one in which there is no pre-determined accent upon the long and short syllables; the accents are determined by the way in which it falls in the sentence. Sanskrit developed in the first thousand years B.C. Each section of the ancient holy book, the Rigveda, has a distinct rhythm associated with each section so that the two aspects are learned as one.



The ancient Vina: This one instrument alone is sufficient evidence of the development to which the art had attained even in those early days.

The vina is really neither a lute nor a harp, although it is commonly translated in English as lute. Generally known in its construction as bow-harp, the vina must have originally been developed from the hunting bow, a type of musical bow, pinaka, on which a tightly drawn string was twanged by the finger or struck with a short stick. To increase the resonance a boat-shaped sound box was attached, consisting of a small half-gourd of coconut with a skin table or cover, through which a bamboo stick was passed longitudinally, bearing a string of twisted hair resting on a little wooden bridge placed on the skin table. This was the ekatari, or one-stringed lute of India, which soon produced its close relative, the dvitari or two-stringed lute. Later, additional strings were inevitably added. Whilst it is possible to trace the passage of the slender form of the fingerboard instrument, pandoura, from Egypt to Greece, it was not until they came into contact with the Persians that the Greeks became acquainted with the bow, a fact which may reinforce the view of the Indian origin of the Greek lute.

Although many varieties of the vina have been evolved, it existed in its original form, now extinct, in the vedic and pre-vedic

times. This is known from the excavations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. There is sufficient evidence that some of these musical instruments were constructed according to the heptatonic, sampurna, scale with seven notes. However, in the other contemporary civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, similar instruments have been found. The vina is often shown in the hands of the musicians on the early Buddhist sculptures at Bhaja, Bharhut, and Sanchi and is still in use in Burma and Assam. In Africa, it is used by many Nilotic tribes. A bow-barp, known as an angle-harp, closely resembling the Indian vina can be seen in the mural paintings at Pompeii.



The two earliest Greek scales, the Mixolydic and the Doric, have an affinity to early Indian scales. Some recent British writers, for example the editors of The New Oxford History of Music, have attempted to exclude Indian influence by making the somewhat strange suggestion that the term "India" meant countries much nearer. Whilst the evidence pointing to the direct influence of India on Greek interest in Indian art. In addition, there are parallels between the two systems, which may or may not be connected. **It is certainly true that the seven note scale with three octaves was known in India long before the Greeks were familiar with it. Pythagoras scheme of cycle of the fifth and cycle of the fourth in his system of music is exactly the same as the sadjapancama and saja-madhyama bhavas of Bharata.** Since Bharata lived several centuries after Pythagoras, it has been suggested that he borrowed the scheme from Pythagoras. At the same time it has been pointed out that Indian music, dating as it does from the early Vedic period, is much anterior to Greek music, and that it is not unlikely that Pythagoras may have been indebted to Indian ideas. In almost all other fields of scholarship in which he was interested, a close identity between his and the older Indian theories has already been noted.

Whilst no title of any Sanskrit work on music translated at Baghdad is available, **there is not doubt that Indian music influenced Arab music.** The well-known Arab writer **Jahiz**, recording the popularity of Indian music at the Abbasid Court, mentions an Indian instrument known as kankalah, which was played with a string stretched on a pumpkin. This instrument would appear to be the kingar, which is made with two gourds. Knowledge of Indian music in the Arab world is evidenced by an Arab author from Spain, who refers to a book on Indian tunes and melodies. Many technical terms for Arab music were borrowed from Persia and India. Indian music, too, was influenced in return, incorporating Persio-Arab airs, such as Yeman and Hiji from Hijaz. At the beginning of their rise to power, the Arabs themselves had hardly any musical system worth noting and mainly practiced the existing system in the light of Greek theory. Since Indian contact with western Asia had been close and constant, it would appear likely that the Arabic maqam iqa is the Persian version of the Indian melodic rhythmic system, **traga tala, which had existed for more than a thousand years before maqam iqa was known.**



Yehudi Menuhin (1916-1999) had one of the longest and most distinguished careers of any violinist of the twentieth century. He was convinced that:

""We would find all, or most, strands beginning in India; for only in India have all possible modes been investigated, tabulated, and each assigned a particular place and purpose. Of these many hundreds, some found their way to Greece; others were adopted by nomadic tribes such as the Gypsies; others became the mainstay of Arabic music. However, none of these styles has developed counterpoint and harmony, except the Western-most offshoot (and this is truly our title to greatness and originality), with its incredible emotional impact corresponding so perfectly with the infinite and unpredictable nuances, from the fleeting shadow to the limits of exaltation or despair, or subjective experience. Again, its ability to paint the phenomena of existence, from terror to jubilation, from the waves of the sea to the steel and concrete canyons of modern metropolis, has never been equalled."

(source: **Indian and Western Music - Yehudi Menuhin** / **Hemisphere**, April 1962, p. 6.).

"Indian music has continued unperturbed through thirty centuries or more, with the even pulse of a river and with the unbroken evolution of a sequoitry."

(source: **The Music of India - By Peggy Holroyde** p. 119).

Peter Yates (1909 -1976) music critic, author, teacher, and poet, was born in Toronto, had reason when he said that **"Indian music, though its theory is elaborate and its technique so difficult, is not an art, but life itself."**

(source: **The Dance of Shiva – by A K Coomaraswamy** p. 79-60).

"Despite predisposition in India's favor, I have to acknowledge that Indian music took me by surprise. I knew neither its nature nor its richness, but here, if anywhere, **I found vindication of my conviction that India was the original source."**

"Its purpose is to unite one's soul and discipline one's body, to make one sensitive to the infinite within one, to unite one's breath of space, one's vibrations with the vibrations of the cosmos."

(source: **Unfinished Journey - By Yehudi Menuhin** p. 250 - 268).

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History of Music

The beginnings of Indian music are lost in the beautiful legends of gods and goddesses who are supposed to be its authors and patrons. The goddess **Saraswati** is always represented as the goddess of art and learning, and she is usually pictured as seated on a white lotus with a vina, lute, in one hand, playing it with another, a book in the third hand and a necklace of pearls in the fourth.



The technical word for music throughout India is the word sangita, which originally included dancing and the drama as well as vocal and instrumental music. Lord Shiva is supposed to have been the creator of this three fold art and his mystic dance symbolizes the rhythmic motion of the universe.

In Hindu mythology the various departments of life and learning are usually associated with different rishis and so to one of these is traced the first instruction that men received the art of music. **Bharata** rishi is said to have taught the art to the heavenly dancers - the Apsaras - who afterwards performed before Lord Shiva. The **Rishi Narada**, **who wanders about in earth and heaven, singing and playing on his vina,** taught music to men. Among the inhabitants of Indra's heaven we find bands of musicians. The Gandharvas are the singers, the Apsaras, the dancers, and the Kinnaras performers on musical instruments. From the name Gandharva has come the title Gandharva Veda for the art of music.

Among the **early legends of India** there are many concerning music. The following is an interesting one from the Adbuta Ramayana about **Narada rishi** which combines criticism with appreciation.

"Once upon a time the great rishi Narada thought himself that he had mastered the whole art and science of music. To curb his pride the all-knowing Vishnu took him to visit the abode of the gods. They entered a spacious building, in which were numerous men and women weeping over their broken limbs. Vishnu stopped and enquired of them the reason for their lamentation. They answered that they were the ragas and the raginis, created by Mahadeva; but that as a rishi of the name of Narada, ignorant of the true knowledge of music and unskilled in performance, had sung them recklessly, their features were distorted and their limbs broken; and that, unless Mahadeva or some other skillful person would sing them properly, there was no hope of their ever being restored to their former state of body. Narada, ashamed , kneeled down before Vishnu and asked to be forgiven."

Vedic Music

It is a matter of common knowledge to all music lovers that Indian classical music has its origin in the Sama Veda. Yet the singing of the Sama Veda has practically disappeared from India. What is heard nowadays is sasvara-patha and not sasvara-gana, that is to say, only musical recitation of the Sama Veda, not its actual singing.

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The Origins of Hindu Music

“animals tamed or wild, even children, are charmed by sound. Who can describe its marvels?” (Sang. Darp. I-31).

Under the name of **Gandharava Veda**, a general theory of sound with its metaphysics and physics appears to have been known to the ancient Hindus. From such summaries as have survived till modern times, it seems that the properties of sound, not only in different musical forms and systems but also in physics, medicine, and magic. The rise of Buddhism with its hostility towards tradition brought about a sharp deviation in the ancient approach to the arts and sciences, and their theory had often to go underground in order to avoid destruction. It was at this time that the Gandharva Veda, with all the other sacred sciences, disappeared; though the full tradition is said to survive among the mysterious sages (rishis) who dwell in Himalayan caves.

When the representatives of the old order, who had been able to maintain their tradition under ground through the centuries of persecution, arose again, their intellectual and cultural superiority was in many fields so great that Buddhism was defeated. In hardly more than a few decades, Buddhism, by the mere strength of intellectual argument, was wiped out from the whole Indian continent over which it had ruled for a thousand years. It was then (during 6th and 7th century) that an attempt was made, under the leadership of Shankaracharya, to restore Hindu culture to its

ancient basis.



Megh raga

A number of eminent Brahmins were entrusted with the task of recovering or re-writing the fundamental treatises on the traditional sciences. For this they followed the ancient system which starts from a metaphysical theory whose principles are common to all aspects of the universe, and works out their application in a particular domain. In this way the theory of music was reconstructed. In this way the theory of music was reconstructed.

Musical theory and theory of language had been considered from the earliest times as two parallel branches of one general science of sound. Both had often been codified by the same writers. The names of **Vashishtha, Yajnavalkya, Narada, Kashyapa, Panini** are mentioned among these early musicologist-grammarians. **Nandikeshvara** was celebrated at the same time as the author of a work on the philosophy of language and of a parallel work on music. His work on language is believed to be far anterior to the Mahabhashya of Patanjali (attributed to the 2nd century B.C.) into which it is usually incorporated, though it is thought to be probably posterior to Panini, who lived no later than 6th century B.C. The chronology of works on music would seem, however, to place both Panini and Nandikeshvara at a much earlier date. The work of Nandikeshvara on the philosophy of music is now believed to be lost but fragments of it are undoubtedly incorporated in later works. At the time of the Buddhist ascendancy, when so much of the ancient lore had to be abandoned, grammatical works were considered more important than musical ones.

A part of Nandikeshvara's work on dancing, the **Abhinaya Darpana**, has been printed (Calcutta 1934) with English translation by M. Ghosh). An earlier translation by Ananda Coomaraswamy appeared under the title The Mirror of Gesture (Harvard Univ. Press. 1917).

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The Antiquity of Indian Music

The period extending from the Mahabharata war to the beginnings of Buddhism may well have been one of the greatest the culture of India has known, and its influence extended then (as indeed it still did much later) from the Mediterranean to China. Traces of its Mediterranean aspect have been found in the Cretan and Mycenean remains as well as in Egypt and the Middle East.

The Vedas, which until the beginning of this period had been transmitted orally, were then written down, and later on, the Epics and Puranas. Most of the treatises on the ancient sciences also belong to the age, though many may have been to a certain extent re-shaped later on. Ananada K. Coomaraswamy, in his book, Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon, speaks of this "early Asiatic culture and as far south as Ceylon….in the second millennium B.C.."

The ancient **Kinnari Vina** or Kin, for example, became known in China as the Khin, a stringed instrument said to have been played by the first Emperor, Fu-Hi (circa 3000 BC), The Kin is further mentioned in ancient Chinese chronicles such as the Chi Ki (2nd century B.C) in reference to events of the 6th or 7th century. According to the Li Ki, Confucius (551-478) always had his Khin with him at home, and carried it when he went for a walk or on a journey.

In Genesis, (iv, 21 and xxxi, 27) a stringed instrument of the same kind is called Kinnor. David used to play the Kinnor as well as the nebel (flute).





Shiva, Yoga-Dakshinamurti with Rishis, Snake dancers, and Musicians - The Art Institute of Chicago.

The antiquity of Indian theatrical art and musical theory was well known to the ancient world. According to **Strabo** (Geography X, II 17) the Greeks considered that music, "from the triple point of view of melody, rhythm and instruments" came to them originally from Thrace and Asia. "Besides, the poets, who make of the whole of Asia, including India, the land or sacred territory of Dionysos, claim that the origin of music is almost entirely Asiatic. Thus, one of them, speaking of the lyre, will say, that he causes the strings of the Asiatic cithara to vibrate." Many ancient historians spoke of Dionysos (or Bacchos) as having lived in India.

The many stories that tell how the various styles of North Indian music were invented by musicians of the Muhammadan period have probably **no basis in reality**. Under Muslim rule, age-old stories were retold as if they had happened at the court of Akbar, simply to make them more vivid, and in conformity with the fashion of the day. Such transferences of legend are frequent everywhere. In Western countries, many a pagan god in this way became a Christian saint and many ancient legends were rearranged to fit into Christian world. Some episodes in the life of the Buddha, for example, found their way into the Lives of the Saints where the Buddha appears under the name of St. Josaphat.

The impartial ear of sound-measuring instruments makes one marvel at the wonderful accuracy of the scales used by the great "Ustads" of Northern India – **scales which in everyway confirm with the requirements of ancient Hindu theory.**

To say that they pertain to, or have been influenced by, the Arab or the Persian system shows a very superficial knowledge of the subject. These systems, originally mostly derived from Indian music, have become so reduced and impoverished in comparison with it that no one can seriously speak of their having had any influence on its development. In fact the whole of the theory and most of the practice of Arab as well as Persian music is the direct descendant of the ancient Turkish music. At the beginning of the Muslim era, the Arabs themselves had hardly any musical system worth the mentioning, and all the Arabic theoreticians – Avicenna, (born about 980 A. D) Al Farabi, Safi ud'din, and others – are claimed by the Turks as Turkish in culture if not always in race. In fact, they merely expounded in Arabic the old Turkish system was well known to medieval Hindu scholars who often mention it (under the name of Turushka) as a system closely allied to Hindu music. The seventeen intervals of the octave, as used by the Arabs, are identical with seventeen of the twenty-two Indian shrutis, and there is no modal form in Arabic music which is not known to the Hindus.

(source: **Northern Indian Music - By Alain Danielou** Praeger, 1969 volume I p. 1-35).

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The Development of Scale

All music is based upon relations between sounds. These relations can, however, be worked out in different ways, giving rise to different groups of musical systems. The modal group of musical systems, to which practically the whole of Indian muisc belongs, is based on the establishment of relations between diverse successive sounds or notes on the one hand and, on the other, upon a permanent sound fixed and invariable, the "tonic".



Indian music like all modal music, thus exists only by the relations of each note with the tonic. Contrary to common belief, modal music is not merely melody without accompaniment, nor has a song or melody, in itself, anything to do with mode. The modes used in the music of the Christian Church are modes only in name, though they may have been real modes originally. But much of Scottish and Irish music, for example, is truly modal; it belongs to the same musical family as Indian music and is independent of the Western harmonic system.

Music must have been cultivated in very early ages by the Hindus; as the abridged names of the seven notes, via, **sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni**, are said to occur in the Sama Veda; and in their present order. Their names at length are as follows:

Shadja, Rishabha, Gandhara, Madhyama, Panchama, Dhaivata, Nishada.

The seven notes are placed under the protection of seven Ah'hisht'hatri Devatas, or superintenting divinities as follows:

Shadja, under the protection of **Agni**
Rishabha, of **Brahma**
Gandhara, of **Saraswati**
Madhyama, of **Mahadeva**
Panchama, of **Sri or Lakshmi**
Dhaivata, of **Ganesa**
Nishada, of **Surya**

"The note Sa is said to be the soul, Ri is called the head, Ga is the arms, Ma the chest, Pa the throat, Dha the hips, Ni the feet. Such are the seven limbs of the modal scale." (**Narada Samhita** 2, 53-54).

"Shadja is the first of all the notes and so it is the main or chief note." Datilla explains that the Shadja (the tonic) may be established at will at any pitch (on any shruti) and that, by relation with it, the other notes should be established at the proper intervals.

The Hindus divide the octave into twenty two intervals, which are called Sruti, by allocating four Sruti to represent the interval. The sruti or microtonal interval is a division of the semitone, but not necessarily an equal division. This division of the semitone is found also in ancient Greek music. It is an interesting fact that we find in Greek music the counterpart of many things in Indian music. Ancient India divided the octave into twenty two and the Greek into twenty-four. The two earliest Greek scales, the Mixolydic and the Doric show affinity with early Indian scales. The Indian scale divides the octave into twenty-two srutis.

Gramas

Indian music is traditionally based on the three gramas. First reference to Grammas or ancient scales is found in the Mahabharata and teh Harivamsa. The former speaks of the 'sweet note Gandhara', probably referring to the scale of that name. The Harivamsa speaks enthusiastically of music 'in the gramaraga which goes down to Gandhara', and ot 'the women of Bhima's race who performed, in the Gandhara gramaraga, the descent of the Ganges, so as to delight mind and ear.'

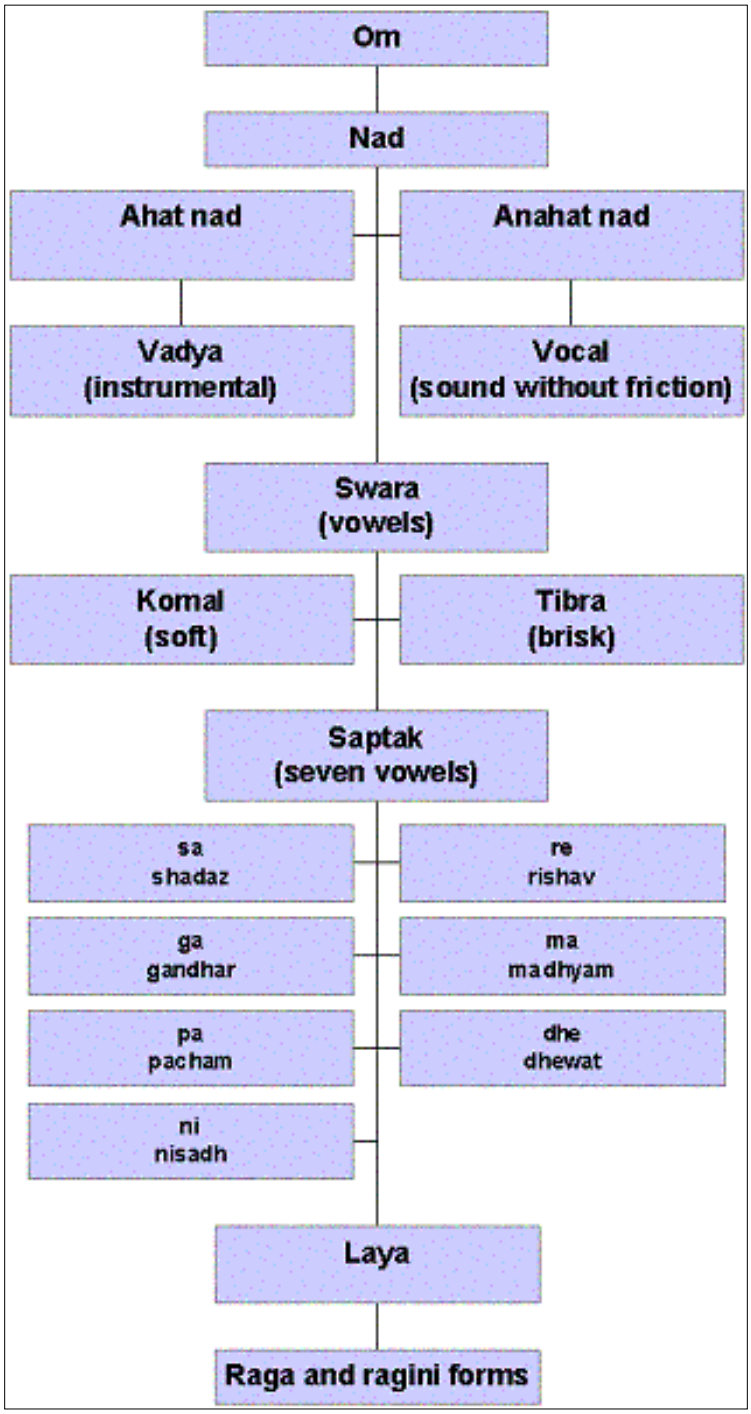
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The Nature of Sound

"Sound (Nada) is the treasure of happiness for the happy, the distraction of those who suffer, the winner of the hearts of hearers, distraction of those who suffer, the winner of the hearts of hearers, the first messenger of the God of Love. It is the clever and easily obtained beloved of passionate women. May it ever, ever, be honored. It is the fifth approach to Eternal Wisdom, the Veda."

- **Sangita Bhashya**.

Sound is said to be of two kinds, one a vibration of ether, the other a vibration of air. The vibration of ether, which remains unperceived by the physical sense, is considered the principle of all manifestation, the basis of all substance. It corresponds with what Pythagoras called the "music of the spheres" and forms permanent numerical patterns which lie at the very root of the world's existence. This kind of vibration is not due to any physical shock, as are all audible sounds. It is therefore called **anahata, "unstruck"**. The other kind of sound is an impermanent vibration of the air, an image of the ether vibration of the same frequency. It is audible, and is always produced by a shock. It is therefore called **ahata or "struck"**.



Thus, the **Sangita Makaranda** (I 4-6) says: "Sound is considered to be of two kinds, unstruck and and struck; of these two,

the unstruck will be first described. "Sound produced from ether is known as 'unstruck'. In this unstruck sound the Gods delight. The Yogis, the Great Spirits, projecting their minds by an effort of the mind into this unstruck sound, depart, attaining Liberation."

"Struck sound is said to give pleasure, 'unstruck' sound gives Liberation." (**Narada Purana**).

But "this (unstruck sound) having no relation with human enjoyment does not interest ordinary men." (**Sang. Ratn** 6.7.12).

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Raga - The Basis of Melody

"I don not dwell in heaven, nor in the heart of yogis. there only I abide, O Narada, where my lovers sing." **(Narada Samhita I.7).**

"That which charms is a raga." (**Sang. Darpan** 2-1).

Each raga or mode of Indian music is a set of given sounds called notes (svara-s) forming with a permanent tonic certain ratios. To each of these ratios is said to correspond a definite idea or emotion. The complex mood created by the mixture and contrast of these different ideas or emotions is the mood or expression of the raga. The harmonious relations which exist between the notes and which can be represented by numerical ratios do not exclusively belong to music. The very same relations can be found in the harmony which binds together all the aspects of manifestation. These ratios can express the change of the seasons and that of the hours, the symphony of colors as well as that of forms. Hence the mood of a raga can be accurately represented by a picture or a poem which only creates an equivalent harmony through another medium. The expression of a raga is thus determined by its scale. It results from the expressions of each of the intervals (shrutis) which the different notes form with the tonic.

The Raga poems: Poems describing the mood of the raga are found in a number of **Sanskrit works of music.** References to them in other works seem to show that many of them were originally part of a treatise (now believed lost) by Kohala, one of the earliest writers on music.

Raga is the basis of melody in Indian music and a substitute for the western scale. **"It is the attempt of an artistic nation to reduce the law and order the melodies that come and go on the lips of the people."** In Raga Vibodha, it is defined as 'an arrangement of sounds which possesses varna, (color) funishes gratification to the senses and is constituted by musical notes." says Matanga.

Indian ragas are also supposed to be able to reproduce the conditions and emotions associated with them. The **Dipak raga** is supposed to produce flames in actuality; and a story is told of the famous musician named **Gopal Naik (Baiju Bawara)** who, when ordered to sing this by the Emperor Akbar went and stood in the Jamuna up to his neck and then started the song. The water became gradually hotter until flames burst out of his body and he was consumed to ashes. The **Megh mallar raga** is supposed to be able to produce rain. It is said that a dancing girl in Bengal, in a time of drought, once drew from the clouds with this raga a timely refreshing shower which saved the rice crop. **Sir W. Ousley,** who relates many of these anecdotes, says that he was told by Bengal people that this power of reproducing the actual conditions of the raga is now only possessed by some musicians in western India.

In connection with the sciences of raga, Indian music has developed the art of raga pictures. **Mr. Percy Brown**, formerly of the School of Art, Calcutta, defines a raga as **"a work of art in which the tune, the song, the picture, the colors, the season, the hour and the virtues are so blended together as to produce a composite production to which the West can furnish no parallel."**



Vina player from Mysore

It may be described as a musical movement, which is not only represented by sound, but also by a picture. **Rajah S M Tagore**, thus describes the pictorial representations of his six principal ragas. **Sriraga** is represented as a divine being wandering through a beautiful grove with his love, gathering fragrant flowers as they pass along. Near by doves sport on the grassy sward. **Vasanta raga**, or the raga of spring, is represented as a young man of golden hue, and having his ears ornamented with mango blossoms, some of which he also holds in his hands. His lotus-like eyes are rolling round and are of the color of the rising sun. He is loved by the females. **Bhairava** is shown as the great Mahadeva (Shiva) seated as a sage on a mountain top. River Ganga falls upon his matted locks. His head is adorned with the crescent moon. In the center of his forehead is the third eye from which issued the flames which reduced Kama, the Indian Cupid, to ashes. Serpents twine around his neck. He holds a trident in one hand and a drum in the other. Before him stands his sacred bull - Nandi. **Panchama raga** is pictured as a very young couple in love in a forest. **Megh raga** is the raga of the clouds, and the rainy season. It is the raga of hope and new life. The clouds hang overhead, and already some drops of rain have fallen. The animals in the fields rejoice. This raga is said to be helpful for patients suffering from tuberculosis. **Nattanarayana** is the raga of battle. A warrior king rides on a galloping steed over the field of battle, with lance and bow and shield. **Lakshmana Pillay** has said: "Thus, each raga comes and goes with its store of smiles or tears, of passion or pathos, its noble and lofty impulses, and leaves its mark on the mind of the hearer."

Sir Percy Brown read a paper on the raga which he called **Visualized Music**. He described it as a combination of two arts, music and painting. He mentioned a miniature painting which was called 'the fifth delineation of the melody **Megh Mallar Saranga**, played in four-time at the time of the spring rains. He wrote: "Todi ragini is one of the brides of Vasanta raga. The melody of this raga is so fascinating that every living creature within hearing is attracted to it. as the raga has to be performed at midday."

This art seems to have come originally from northwest India. The Indian tendency is to visualize abstract things.

The six principal ragas are the following:

1. Hindaul - It is played to produce on the mind of the bearer all the sweetness and freshness of spring; sweet as the honey of the bee and fragrant as the perfume of a thousand blossoms.

2. **Sri Raga** - The quality of this rag is to affect the mind with the calmness and silence of declining day, to tinge the thoughts with a roseate hue, as clouds are glided by the setting sun before the approach of darkness and night.

3. **Megh Mallar** - This is descriptive of the effects of an approaching thunder-storm and rain, having the power of influencing clouds in time of drought.

4. **Deepak** - This raga is extinct. No one could sing it and live; it has consequently fallen into disuse. Its effect is to light the lamps and to cause the body of the singer to produce flames by which he dies.

5. **Bhairava** - The effect of this rag is to inspire the mind with a feeling of approaching dawn, the caroling of birds, the sweetness of the perfume and the air, the sparkling freshness of dew-dropping morn.

6. **Malkos** - The effect of this rag are to produce on the mind a feeling of gentle stimulation.

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 371).

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Tala or Time Measure

Claude Alvares has written: "The Indian system of talas, the rhythmical time-scale of Indian classical music, has been shown (by contemporary analytical methods) to **possess an extreme mathematical complexity.** The basis of the system is not conventional arithmetic, however, but more akin to what is known today as pattern recognition."

To quote **Richard Lannoy** author of **The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society**:

"In the hands of a virtuoso the talas are played at a speed so fast that the audience cannot possibly have time to count the intervals; due to the speed at which they are played, the talas are registered in the brain as a cluster configuration, a complex Gestalt involving all the senses at once. While the structure of the talas can be laboriously reduced to a mathematical sequence, the effect is subjective and emotional.....The audience at a recital of Indian classical music becomes physically engrossed by the agile patterns and counter-patterns, responding with unfailing and instinctive kinesthetic accuracy to the terminal beat in each tala."



Their ability with instruments is repeated with the voice. The extraordinary degree of control of the human voice has been described by the musicologist, Alain Danielou, who has stated that Indian musicians can produce and differentiate between minute intervals (exact to a hundreth of a comma, according to identical measurements recorded by Danielou at monthly recording sessions). This sensitivity to microtones is, from the purely musicological point of view, of little importance, like the mathematical complexity of the talas. Nevertheless, as Lannoy puts it:

"It is an indication of the care with which the "culture of sound" is developed, for Hindus still believe that such precision in the repetition of exact intervals, over and over again, permits sounds to act upon the internal personality, transform sensibility, way of thinking, state of soul, and even moral character."

(source: **Decolonizing History: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West 1492 to the Present Day - By Claude Alvares** p. 73-74).

"In other words, **the Hindu has never divorced the physical from the spiritual**; these 'ancient physiologists' ascribed an ethical significance to physiological sensitivity. The aristocratic cult of kalokagathia, 'beautiful goodness', has never been abandoned in India, even if its metaphysic bears little resemblance to the kalokagathia of the ancient Greeks.

(source: **The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society - By Richard Lannoy** p. 275).

Musical time in India, more obviously then elsewhere, is a development from the prosody and metres of poetry. The insistent demands of language and the idiosyncrasies of highly characteristic verse haunt the music, like a 'presence which is not to be put by.' 'The time-relations of music are affected both by the structure of the language and by the method of versification which ultimately derives from it.' says one student of Indian music from the west. Until late, there was practically no prose in India and everything had to be learnt through the medium of verse chanted to regular rules. Both in Sanskrit and in the vernacular all syllables are classified

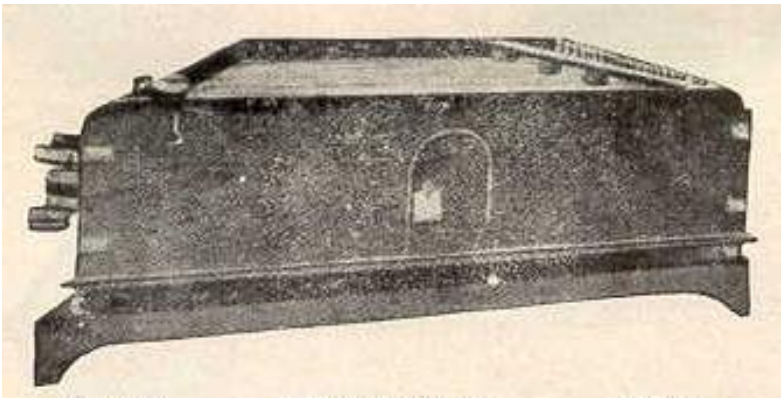
according to their time-lengths, the unit of time being a matra. Very short syllables of less than a matra also occur.

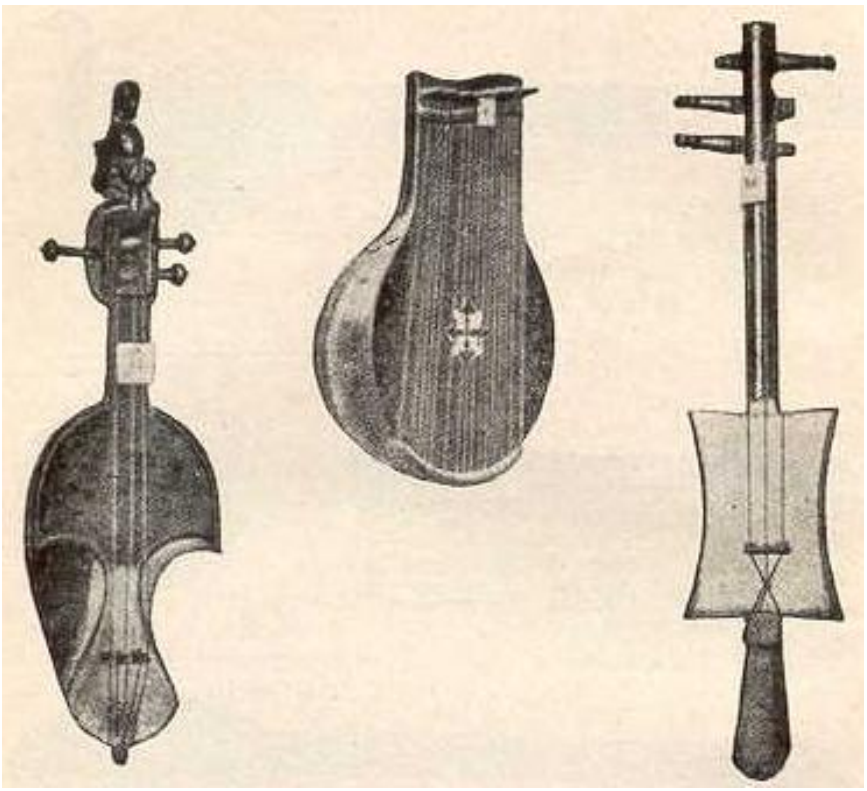
Great stress has always been laid by Indian grammarians upon giving 'the exact value' to syllables inverse; and as there is no accent at all in Indian verse the time-length is all important. **This may account for the great development of time-measures in Indian music.** **Rajah S M Tagore** says that the word tala refers to the beating of time by the clapping of hands. Sometimes it is also done by means of small hand-cymbals, which are called tala or kaitala or kartal (hand-cymbals).

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Musical Instruments and Sanskrit Writers on Music

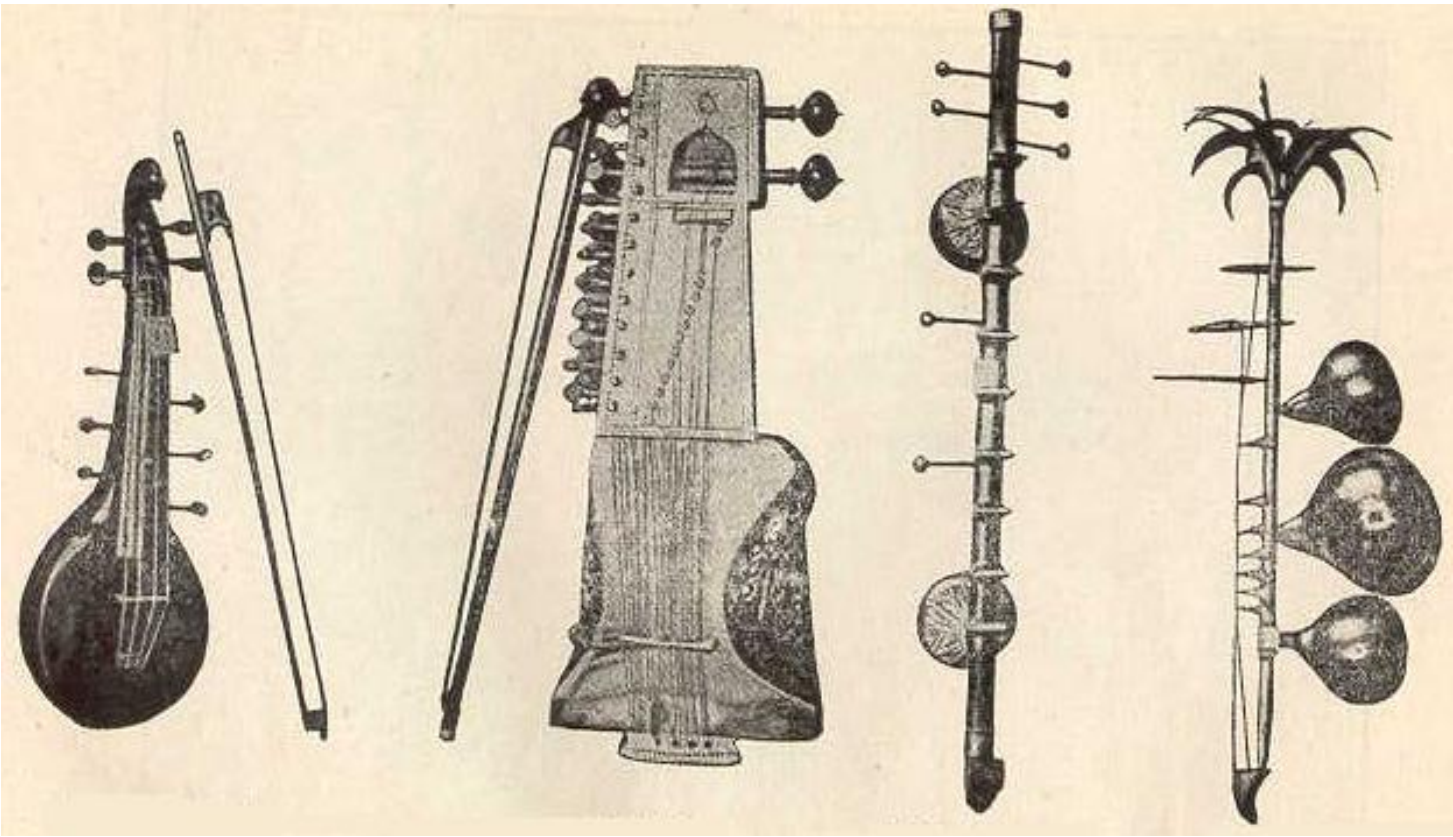
The **Vedic Index** shows a very wide variety of musical instruments in use in Vedic times. Instruments of percussion are represented by the **dundubhi**, an ordinary drum; the **adambara**, another kind of drum, **bhumidundubhi**, an earthdrum made by digging a hole in the ground covering it with hide; **vanaspati,** a wooden drum; **aghati,** a cymbal used to accompany dancing. Stringed instruments are represented by the **kanda-vina**, akind of lute; **karkari**, another lute; **vana**, a lute of 100 strings; and the **vina,** the present instrument of that name in India. **This one instrument alone is sufficient evidence of the development to which the art had attained even in those early days.** There are also a number of wind instruments of the flute variety, such as the tunava, a wooden flute; the nadi, a reed flute, bakura, whose exact shape is unknown. 'By the time of the Yajur Veda several kinds of professional musicians appear to have arisen; for lute-players, drummers, flute-players, and conch-blowers are mentioned in the list of callings.'



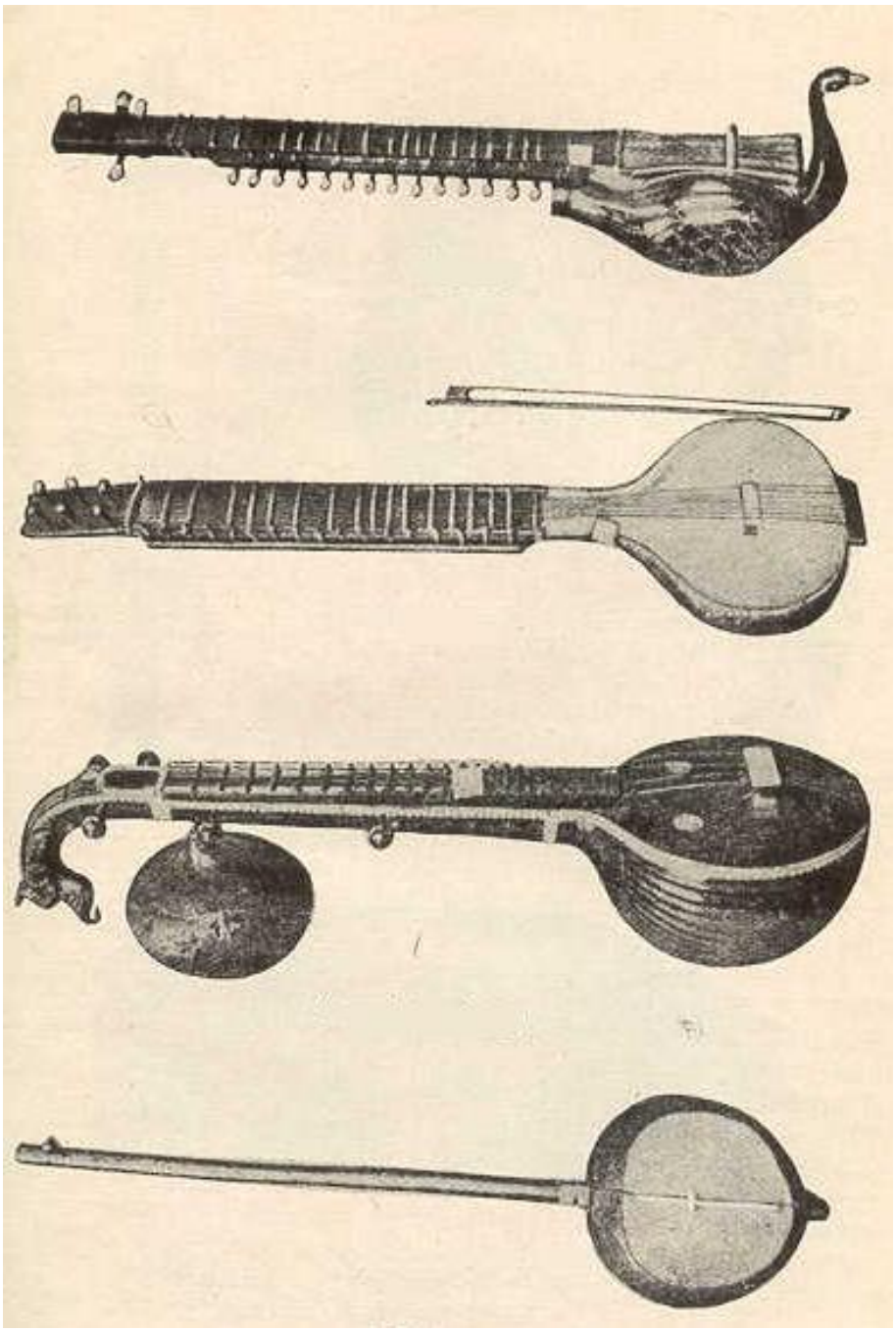


Kalyayana-vina *Sarinda* *Katyayana-vina* *Chikara*

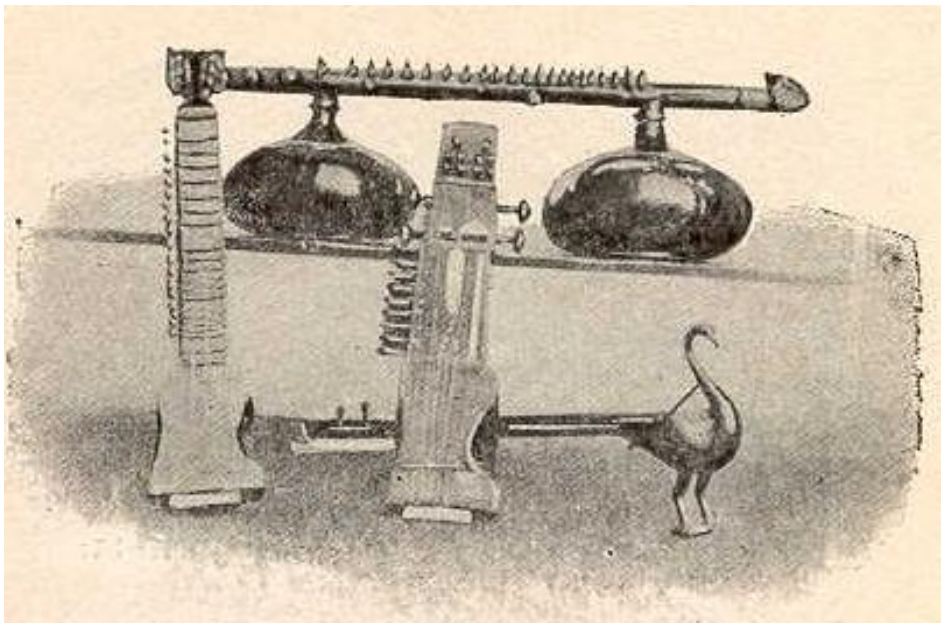
That vocal music had already got beyond the primitive stage may be concluded from the somewhat complicated method of chanting the **Sama Veda**, which goes back to the Aryan age. These hymns of the Rig Veda and Sama Veda are the earliest examples we have of words set to music. The Sama Veda, was sung according to very strict rules, and present day Samagah - temple singers of the Saman - claim that the oral tradition which they have received goes back to those ancient times. The Chandogya and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishads both mention the singing of the Sama Veda and the latter also refers to a number of musical instruments.

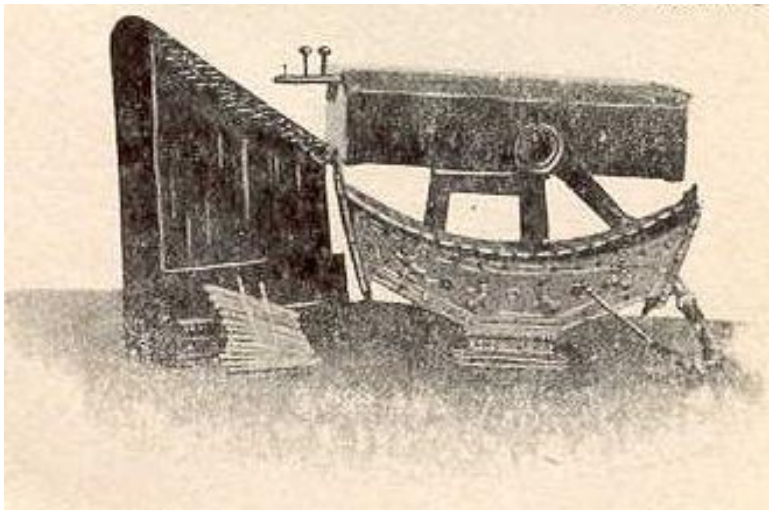


Sarangi (Bengal) *Sarangi* *Mahati Vina* *Kinnari*



Mayuri Esraj Vina (Southern) Ektar





Group of stringed instruments: Dilruba, Bin Sarangi and Peacock sitar *Some ancient instruments: Svaramandala. Brahma cina, Kural and Bastram*

Drumming

The drum is one of the most important of Indian musical instruments. It provides the tonic to which all the other instruments must be tuned. It is a royal instrument having the right of royal honors. The drums used in India are innumerable. **Mrs. Mann** says: "The Indian drummer is a great artist. He will play a rhythm concerto all alone and play us into an ecstasy with it." "The drummer will play it in bars of 10, 13, 16, or 20 beats, with divisions within each bar flung out with a marvelous hypnotizing swing. Suggestions of such rhythm beaten out by a ragged urchin on the end of an empty kerosene oil-can first aroused me to the beauty and power of Indian music."

The Indian drummer can obtain the most fascinating rhythm from a mud pot, and some of them are great experts at this pot-drumming. The **mridanga** and **tabla** are both played in the same way, the only difference being that, in the case of the table, the two heads are on two small drums, and not on the same drum. The **Mridanga** or **Mardala** is the most common and probably the most ancient of Indian drums. It is said to be invented by Brahma to serve as an accompaniment to the dance of Shiva, in the honor of his victory over Tripurasura; and Ganesha, his son, is said to have been the first one play upon it. The word Mridanga or Mardala means 'made of clay' and probably therefore its body was originally of mud. Other drums include Pakhawaj, Nagara or Bheri or Nakkara, Dundubhi Mahanagar or Nahabet, Karadsamila, Dhol, Dhoki, Dholak and Dak. Damaru, Nidukku, or Budhudaka, Udukku, Edaka and many others.

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In the **Ramayana** mention is frequently made of the **singing of ballads**, which argues very considerable development of the art of music. The poem composed by the sage Valmiki is said to have been sung before King Dasratha. The Ramayana often makes use of musical similes. The humming of the bees reminded him of the music of stringed instruments, and the thunder of the clouds of the beating of the mridanga. He talks of the music of the battlefield, in which the twanging and

creaking of the bows takes the place of stringed instruments and vocal music is supplied by the low moaning of the elephants. Ravana is made to say that "he will play upon the lute of his terrific bow with the sticks of his arrows." Ravana was a great master of music and was said to have appeased Shiva by his sublime chanting of Vedic hymns.

The **Mahabharata** speaks of seven Svaras and also of the Gandhara Grama, the ancient third mode. The theory of consonance is also alluded to.

The **Mahajanaka Jataka** (c. 200 B. C) mentions the four great sound (parama maha sabda) which are conferred as an honor by the Hindu kings on great personages. In these drums is associated with various kinds of horn, gong and cymbals. These were sounded in front of a chariot which was occupied, but behind one which was empty. The car used to go slowly round the palace and up what was called 'the kettle-drum road'. At such a time they sounded hundreds of instruments so that 'it was like the noise of the sea.' The Jataka also records how Brahmadatta presented a mountain hermit with a drum, telling him that if he beat on one side his enemies would run away and if upon the other they would become his firm friends.



In the Tamil books **Purananuru** and **Pattupattu** (c. A.D 100-200) the drum is referred to as occupying a position of very great honor. It had a special seat called murasukattil, and a special elephant, and was treated almost as a deity. It is described as 'adorned with a garland like the rainbow.' One of the poets tells us, marveling at the mercy of the king, 'how he sat unwittingly upon the drum couch and yet was not punished.' Three kinds of drums are mentioned in these books: the battle drum, the judgment drum and the sacrificial drum. The battle drum was regarded with same the veneration that regiments used to bestow upon the regimental flag. One poem likens the beating of the drum to the sound of a mountain torrent. Another thus celebrates the virtues of the drummer.

"For my grandsire's grandsire, his grandsire's grandsire.
Beat the drum. For my father, his father did the same.
So he for me. From duties of his clan be has not swerved.
Pour forth for him one other cup of palm tree's purest wine.."

The early Tamil literature makes much mention of music. The **Paripadal** (c. A.D 100-200) gives the names of some of the svaras and mentions the fact of there being seven Palai (ancient modes). The yal is the peculiar instrument of the ancient Tamil land. No specimen of it still exists today. It was evidently something like the vina but not the same instrument, as the poet **Manikkavachakar** (c. A. D 500-700) mentions both in such a way as to indicate two different instruments. Some of its varieties are said to have had over 1,000 strings. The The **Silappadigaram** (A. D. 300), a Buddhist drama, mentions the drummer, the flute player, and the vina as well as the yal, and also has specimens of early Tamil songs. This book contains some of the earliest expositions of the Indian musical scale, giving the seven notes of the gamut and also a number of the modes and ragas in use at that time. The latter centuries of the Buddhist period were more fertile in architecture, sculpture and painting than in music. The dramas of **Kalidasa** make frequent references to music and evidently the rajahs of the time had regular musicians attached to their courts. In the **Malavikagnimitra** a song in four-time is mentioned as a great feat performed at a contest between two musicians. The development of the drama after Kalidasa meant the development of music as well, as all Indian drama is operatic. 'The temple and the stage were the great schools of Indian music.'

The oldest detailed exposition of Indian musical theory which has survived the ravages of ants and the fury of men is found in a treatise called **Natya Sastra** or the science of dancing, said to have been composed by the **sage Bharata**. There are nine chapters of the Natya Sashtra that deal with music proper. These contain a detailed exposition of the svaras, srutis, gramas, murohhansas, jatis. A translation of a portion of this chapter appeared in Mr. Clement's Introduction to Indian Music, and there is a complete French translation by Jean Grosset.

The seventh and eighth centuries of our era in South India witnessed a religious revival associated with the **bhakti movement** and connected with the theistic and popular sects of Vishnu and Shiva. This revival was spread far and wide by means of songs composed by the leaders of the movement and so resulted in a great development of musical activity among the people generally and in the spread of musical education. **Sangita Makaranda**, said to be by Narada, but not Narada Rishi as his name is mentioned in the book, was probably composed between the eighth and eleventh centuries. He gives a similar account of the Gandhara Grama to that of Sangita Ratnakara. Musical sounds are divided into five classes according to the agency of productions, as nails, wind etc. The 18 Jatis of Bharata are given and he enumerates 93 ragas.

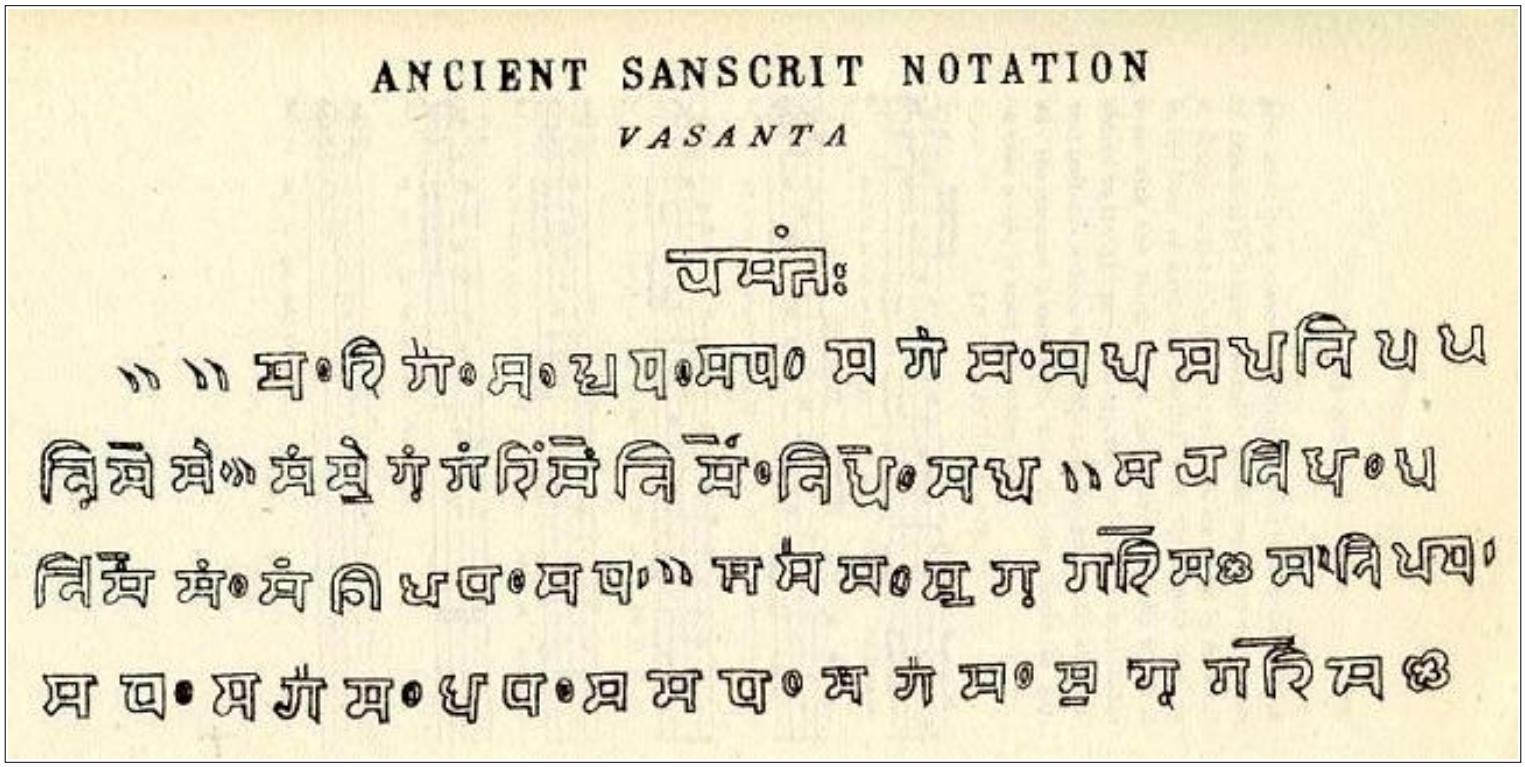
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Some Ancient Musical Authorities

Among important landmarks of the literature on music must also be counted portions of certain Puranas, particularly the Vishnu **Dharmottara, Markandeya Purana** and **Vayu Purana**. The Hindus claim a great antiquity for these Puranas and

this seems to be corroborated by the technical terms used in reference to music. The Sanskrit authors on music can be divided into four main periods. The first period is those whose names are mentioned in the Puranans and in the Epics (Mahabharata and Ramayana), the second that of the authors mentioned in the early medieval works (Buddhistic period), the third period is that of the authors who wrote between the early medieval Hindu revival and the Muslim invasion, and the last or modern period that of Sanskrit writers under Muslim and European rule.

(Note: The Different Narada -s: There were probably three authors known by the name of Narada. One, the author of the Naradiya Shiksha. The Panchama Samhita and Narada Samhita are probably the work of the later Narada (Narada II), the author of the Sangita Makarnada.



Sanskrit authors on music can be divided into four main periods, according to Alain Danielou

First Period - ((The Vedic/Puranic/Epic Period)

Narada, Bharata, Nandikeshvara, Arjuna, Matanga, Kohala, Dattila, Matrigupta, and Rudrata and others.

Second Period

Abhinava Gupta, Sharadatanaya, Nanya Bhupala, Parshvadeva and Sharngadeva, and others.

Third Period

Udbhata, Lollata, Shankuka, Utpala Deva, Nrisimha Gupta, Bhoja King, Simhana, Abhaya Deva, Mammata, Rudrasena, Someshvara II, Lochana Kavi (Raga Tarangini), Sharngadeva (Sangita Ratnakara), Jayasimha, Ganapati, Jayasena, Hammira, Gopala Nayak and others.

Fourth Period

Harinayaka, Meshakarna, Madanapala Deva, Ramamatya (Svara-mela Kalanidhi), Somanatha (Raga Vibodha), Damodhara Mishra (Sangita Darpana), Pundarika Vitthala (Shadraga Chandrodya, Raga Mala, Raga Manjari), Somanatha, Govinda Dikshita, Basava Raja, and others.

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The first North Indian musician whom we can definitely locate both in time and place is **Jayadeva**, who lived at the end of the 12th century. He was born at Kendula near Bolpur, where lived Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, laureate of Bengal and modern India. Jayadeve wrote and sang the **Gita Govinda**, a series of songs descriptive of the love of Krishna, and the bhakti movement. The Gita Govinda was translated by Sir Edwin Arnold under the name of The Indian Song of Songs. In

these songs Radha pours forth her yearning, her sorrow and her joy and Krishna assures her of his love.

Sarangadeva - (1210- 1247 A D) one of the greatest of ancient Indian musical authorities and one who still inspires reverence in the minds of India's musicians. He lived at the court of the Yadava dynasty of Devagiri in the Deccan. at that time the Maratha Empire extended to the river Kaveri in the south, and it is probable that Sarngadeva had come into contact with the music of the south as well as the north. His work, the Sangita Ratnakara shows many signs of this contact. It is possible that he was endeavoring to give the common theory which underlies both systems.


Nayak Baiju, popularly known as Baijubawra

Gopala Nayaka or Bijubawara (1295-1315) a musician from the court of Vijayanagar.

The 14th and 15th centuries are the most important in the development of the northern school. It was the time of the Muhammed conquest. Many of the emperors did a great deal to extend the practice of music of the earlier Hindu rajahs, and most of them had musicians attached their courts. Amir Khusru was a famous singer at the court of Sultan Alla-ud-din (A D 1295-1316). He was not only a poet and musician, but also a soldier and statesman. There is a story told of a contest between Amir Khusru and Gopal Naik, a musician from the court of Vijayanagar. While Gopal was singing a beautiful composition, Khusru hid under the throne of the king and afterwards imitated all the beauties of Gopal's melodies. Muhammadan historians relate that, when the Moghuls, completed the conquest of the Deccan, they took back with them to the north many of the most famous southern musicians, in the same way that they took toll of the Indian architects and sculptors for their new buildings.

Bharata, Iswara, Parana and Narada were among the great Hindu musicians of ancient India. In more recent times, however, Naik Gopal and Tansen have been the most celebrated ones. About Naik Gopal, **Arthur Whitten** says: "Of the magical effect produced by the singing of Gopal Naik and of the romantic termination to the career of the sage, it is said that he was commanded by Akbar to sing the raga deepak, and he, obliged to obey, repaired to the river Jumna, in which he plunged up to his neck. As he warbled the wild and magincal notes, flames burst from his body and consumed him to ashes." He adds: "It is recorded of Tansen that he was also commanded by the Emperor Akbar to sing the sri, or night raga, at midday, and the power of the music was such that it instantly became night, and the darkness extended in a circle around the palace as far as his voice could be heard." India, it seems, produced Orpheuses even so late as the 17th century A.D.

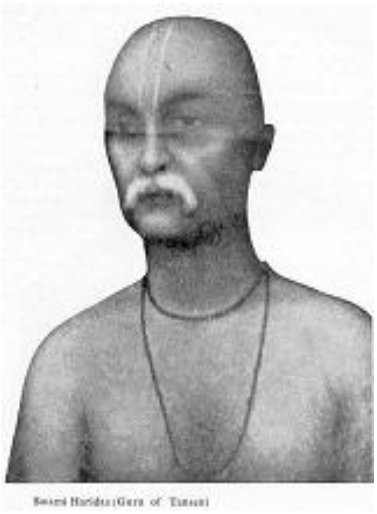
(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 373-374).

Dr. Tennet says: "If we are to judge merely from the number of instruments and the frequency with which they apply them, the Hindus might be regarded as considerable proficients in music."

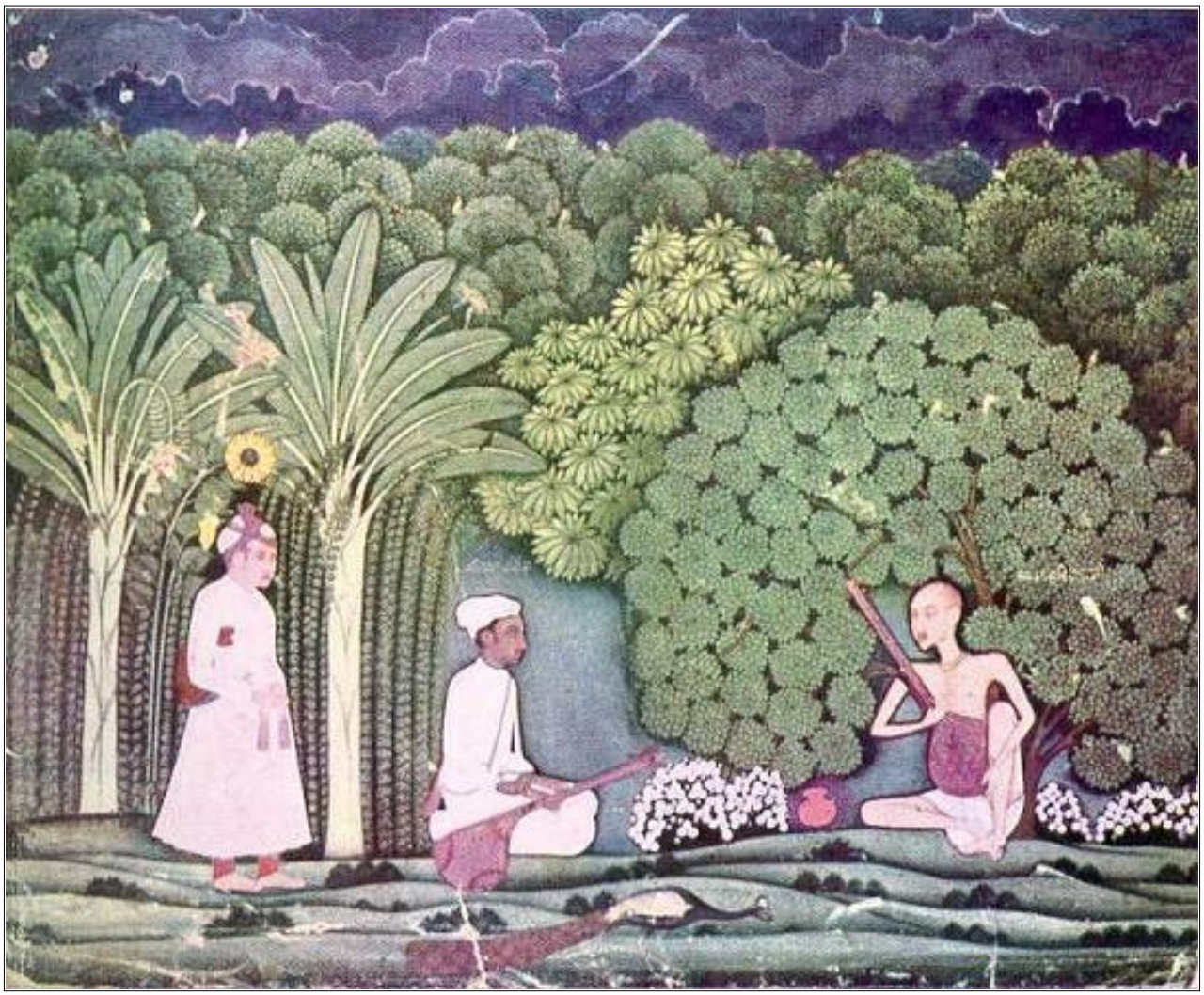
(source: **Music of the Ancients - By Arthur Whitten** p. 21).

Lochana Kavi - The Ragatarangini, was composed by Lochana Kavi and probably belongs to this period. The major portion of this work is devoted to the discussion of a number of songs by a poet named Vidyapati, who flourished in the 15th century at the court of the Raja Siva Singh of Tirhut. The author also describes the current musical theories of the day, and groups the ragas under twelve thats or fundamental modes.

Chaitanya (A.D. 1485-1533) - The development of the bhakti revival in Northern India and Bengal under Chaitanya was accompanied by a great deal of musical activity, and it was at this time that the popular musical performances, known as Sankirtan and Nagarkirtan were first started.



Swami Haridas - was a great Hindu saint and musician who lived on the banks of Brindaban, the center of the Lord Krishna on the banks of the Jamuna in the reign of Akbar. He was considered the greatest musician of his time. **Tan Sen**, a Gaudhiya brahmin and the celebrated singer of Akbar's court, was one of his pupils. Many tales are told about Tan Sen and Haridas. One of these tells how the Emperor after one of his performances asked him if there was anyone in the world who could sing like him. Tan Sen replied that there was one who far surpassed him. At once the Emperor was all anxious to hear this other singer and when told that he would not even obey the command of the Emperor to come to court, he asked to be taken to him. It was necessary for the Emperor to go in disguise as the humble instrument carrier to his singer. They came to the hermitage of Haridas Swami on the banks of the Jamuna, and Tan Sen asked him to sing but he refused. Then Tan Sen practized a little trick and himself sang a piece before his old master, making a slight mistake in doing so. The master at once called his attention to it and showed him how to sing it properly, and then went on in a wonderful burst of song, while the Emperor listened enraptured. Afterwards, as they were going back to the palace, the Emperor said to Tan Sen, "Why cannot you sing like that?" "I have to sing whenever my Emperor commands." said Tan Sen, "but he only sings in obedience to the inner voice."



Akbar and Tansen visiting Swami Haridas, Kishangarh, second half of the 18th century (courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi).

Raja Man Singh of Gwalior, one of the greatest of Akbar's ministers, was also a great patron of music and is have said to have introduced the Dhrupad style of singing. The Gwalior court has maintained its high musical traditions to the present day.

Mirabai - The heroic Mirabai (c. 1500) wife of a prince of the Udaipur clan and famous poetess and musician, and **Tulsi Das**

(1584), the singer and composer of the Hindi Ramayana, are representatives of musical culture in North India.

Pundarika Vitthal - another musician during Akbar's reign. He lived at Burhanpur in Khandhesh and may have been asked to go to Delhi when Akbar took over Khandhesh in 1599. Pundarika wrote four works: Shadragachandrodaya, Ragamala, Ragamanjari, and Nartananirnaya: these have been recently discovered in the State Library of Bikanir.

During the reign of Aurangzeb music went out of favor in the royal court. A story is told of how the court musicians, desiring to draw the Emperor's attention to their distressful condition, came past his balcony carrying a gaily dressed corpse upon a bier and chanting mournful funeral songs. Upon the Emperor enquiring what the matter was, they told him that **music had died from neglect** and that they were taking its corpse to the burial ground. He replied at once, "Very well, make the grave deep, so that neither voice nor echo may issue from it."

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Raga and Jazz

The **raga** is the core of the Indian classical music system. **The Raga Guide** begins by attempting to explain what has always been elusive. As to the question, "What is a raga?," it says, "Virtually every writer on Indian music has struggled with this fundamental question." The guide ventures, "A raga can be regarded as a tonal framework for composition and improvisation; a dynamic musical entity with a unique form, embodying a unique musical idea." A raga is not merely a scale (as in Western music), or a tune or song. A raga is built upon a scale and contains a tune, but it encompasses and implies much more.

Indian music has always placed emphasis on vocal expression over instrumental. The best instrumental is thought to be that which renders most faithfully the subtleties of the human voice. Jazz is often also conceived of vocally, even purely instrumental jazz. **Indian classical music is melodical, whereas Western music is harmonical.** Music of the world began as a melodic stream, which later branched out into harmonics. Although Indian musicians knew the principles of harmony, they chose to develop their systems along the lines of melody: one-line, or one dimensional, "horizontal" music, which lends itself to meditative individual expression. Here we find a similarity to jazz which gives a license for long solo improvisation.

Because Indian music is modal, it knows no change of keys but sticks to one steady ground note. Very important to Indian music are embellishments, tone colors, and intervals that do not exist in well-tempered Western music which allows expression only through improvisation. Jazz is also modal and it does not limit itself to the tones of Western tuning. In theory Indian octaves consist of 66 microtones, but in practice there are 22 tones per octave, which is nearly twice the number found in the Western octave. In many freestyle jazz improvisations, one can also find the use of this many tones.

The French ethnomusicologist **Alain Danielou**, one of the West's top experts in the field of Indian music, once said: "Two basic traits are characteristic of music in India. For one thing, in all its various forms its basic concept is vocal; for another thing, Indian music is modal music in the true sense; it knows no change of keys, that is, it sticks to one steady, unvarying ground tone...A crucial role is played by embellishments, tone colors, and above all, by intervals that do not exist in Western well-tempered music. A music created from this vantage point...can find its musical expression only in improvisation."

Danielou's statements show immediately how **many similarities exist between jazz and Indian music**. Jazz, too is vocally conceived, even in its instrumental forms. Nor does jazz limit itself to the tone reservoir of Western tempered tuning. Jazz musicians - singers and instrumentalists alike have never limited themselves to the well-tempered scales. Theoretically, the Indian octave consists of 66 shrutis (microtones); in musical praxis there are 22 tones per octave, almost twice the number in the Western octave! Jazz and fusion guitarist Larry Coryell was completely right when he said, "I hear a lot of blues in Indian music."



The rhythmic possibilities of India's music have been attractive to jazz musicians. **Trumpeter Don Ellis** (1934-1978) was one of the first to emphasize the similarities between jazz and Indian music. In Jazz he wrote," Jazz musicians like to think of themselves as masters of rhythm (and in comparison to European music they are in the forefront) but.....how crude and primitive the conventional jazz musician's grasp of rhythm is **in comparison with Indian music...And jazz musicians who desires to really acquire a grasp of rhythm should, if at all possible, study Indian music."**

It was also Don Ellis who pointed out that Indian music is played with a different - non-Western - concept of time. The mysteries of Indian music - its talas, its rhythmic sequences - incomprehensible for Western listeners - can be as long as 108 beats. Tala: the word combines the two syllables ta (from tandava, Shiva's cosmic dance) and la (from Lasya, the name of Shiva's dance partner), implying cosmic musical union. Ragas are not keys in the Western sense, although ragas combine all those things that in Western music break down into theme, key, tuning, phrasing, form, and even composition. **The ancient Sanskrit sages gave the following definition: Ranjayati iti ragah ("that which colors the spirit is a raga").** According to Ravi Shankar, a raga is "discovered as a zoologist may discover a new animal species or as a geographer may discover a new island. " In other words, a raga - each raga exists from the beginning; it is a musical archetype. In theory the number of raga is unlimited. In South India alone, there are 5,831 ragas known by their individual titles. Even an average musician is expected to have mastered at least seventy to eighty ragas.

A composition or melody in classical Indian music is called a raga or in the feminine, ragini. Raga means that which gives pleasure. Ragas and ragini are formed by the combination of the seven basic notes on the scale: SA, RE, GA, MA, PA, Dha, and NI. Each raga and ragini is considered to be a person. **The rishis perceived that behind everything is personality; consciousness has personality.** The ragas are also associated with a particular time of day and often to a particular season. Within the guidelines of the raga system, musicians uniquely express themselves. In India over the centuries, there evolved almost 6,000 different ragas. The system is an extremely flexible one, as is jazz among the rest of Western music.

Ragas combine everything that Western music breaks down into them, key tuning, phrasing, form, and even composition. But they are not thought of as compositions by their would-be musical composers. According to **Pandit Ravi Shankar**, a raga is "discovered as a zoologist may discover a new animal species, or a geographer may discover a new island. They are better understood as musical archetypes. Raga is accompanied by rhythmic time cycles. These time cycles are known as matra and can be as long as 108 beats. Although the Western ear is lost, the trained ear is following with a subtle excitement the longer consequences, waiting for the rhythmist to complete the cycle and meet with the other

Indian music is played with a much different conception of time than Western music. Sometimes one piece an last an entire night.



Joachim-Ernst Berendt (1922-2000) author of **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound** (Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180) and **The Jazz Book**. In the later book, he has demonstrated that "a non-Western concept of time plays a decisive role in jazz." According to Berendt, "Jazz is played with two different concepts of time, one Western and one non-Western."

There were many musicians who became caught up in the mystery of Indian music, and of course the beat '50s poets as well, but of all of them, John Coltrane played the highest note. Coltrane is perhaps the best example of how India's spiritual vibration affected jazz musicians spirituality. Coltrane's life was deeply moved by Indian spiritual thought, as were those with whom he played. His albums, beginning as early as 1961 with **India**, followed by **Meditation: A Love Supreme**, and **Om**, are examples of his influence on his music.

John Coltrane (1926-1967) Pioneering American jazz artist.

Non-European religion especially Hinduism long recognized in music a potential for the ecstatic spiritual experience. During the seven year period from 1957 to 1964, Coltrane began to become interested in nonwestern music and philosophy. He explored West African music as well as the music of India and began to read books about Hinduism. "Resolution" begins with Coltrane's introduction of the theme, followed by a series of variations that develop in a manner that has more in common with the Indian raga than with the traditional jazz solo development.



As he explored world religions, Coltrane so also explored world music. In 1961 he began listening closely to Indian music, especially the sitarist Ravi Shankar. Coltrane's interest in scales and modes from India and elsewhere was part of his broader mission to discover the universalities in music. Coltrane recorded a track titled "India". "India" is characterized by a musical chant that never moves from the G pedal point, much like the North Indian music he was listening to at the time. Jazz scholars have found that the probable source of the tune is a recorded Vedic chant that seems to have been issued around that time. The melody of the singer on the recording is nearly identical to that of Coltrane.

Well-known practitioners and dabblers in aspects of Hinduism have included **Alice Coltrane, Mahavishnu John McLaughlin, Narada Michel Walden, Carlos "Devadip" Santana, Charles Mingus, The Beatles, Boy George, Madonna** and **Sting.**

The popular Hare Krishna mantra was heard for months over the radio within ex-Beatle **George Harrison's** number one single, "**My Sweet Lord.**"

(source: **Ancient Wisdom For Modern Ignorance - By Swami B. V. Tripurari** p.).

In reference to music, spirituality is Nada Brahma. Tenor saxophonist Nathan Davis said: "What we really mean by saying spirituality is religiousness." **James Baldwin** wrote that anyone who really wants to become a moral humane being must first of all "free himself from the taboos, the misdeeds and the hypocrisy of the Christian Church..The concept of God is valid and useful only if it can make us greater, freer and more capable of love."

John Coltrane's musical development was driven forward, motivated, supplemented, enlarged, and enriched by its interaction with his spirituality. He said: "My goal in meditating through music remains the same."

John McLaughlin, when asked for the beginning of his musical interest in India, first speaks of spiritual things and then of musical matters: **"I opened myself to Indian music, because I felt a tie with Indian culture."**

For many jazz musicians and for the new species of "world musician" in general, Indian music is a memory of what music should actually be and what it was in the beginning.

(source: **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound - By Joachim-Ernst Berendt** Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180 p 201-226).

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Colonialist thinking of Indian music

A brief look at the position of the musical cultures of Asia in the history of music - primarily the cultures of India. Indian music is classical, and it is a sign of "colonialist" thinking when they are referred to as "folklore." One often hears such nonsense when Indian music is performed; someone will say that Hariprasad Chaurasia, for instance, the master of the "divine flute," plays "Indian folklore," In a way, that is the same as calling a Mozart divertimento "Salzburg folklore," or a Verdi opera "Milanese folklore," or a Gershwin song "American folklore."

To call classical Indian music "folklore" is a sign of arrogance, making it sound as if classical music existed only in the European tradition, while all other traditions have folk music.

Many of the great musical cultures outside of Europe and North America not only are of equal rank with Western music, but surpass it in certain fields. In terms of rhythm, for example, the music of Africa and that of India are far richer than almost anything brought forth in the West. Consider the talas, the rhythmic series of Indian music. Even long talas of fifteen or nineteen beats, structured in the most complex way, can be followed beat for beat not only by the musicians but also by many listeners in India. Western audiences, however, become unsure as soon as they are faced with rhythms more complex than simple three-quarter or four-four time, and Western musicians become uncertain about meters of more than five or seven beats.

The music of India is richer in tonality than the music of the West, because it uses microtones. Its tone repertoire is almost twice as large as that of our music. The ears of music lovers in India have not yet been spoiled by our "well-tempered"

scale.

(source: **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound - By Joachim-Ernst Berendt** Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180 p157-158).

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Views about Hindu Music

Music has been a cultivated art in India for at least three thousand years. The chant is an essential element of Vedic ritual; and the references in later Vedic literature, the scriptures of Buddhism, and the Hindu epics show that it was already highly developed as a secular art in centuries preceding the beginning of the Christian era. Its zenith may perhaps be assigned to the Imperial Age of the Guptas - from the fourth to the sixth century A.D. This was the classical period of Sanskrit literature culminating in the drama of Kalidasa; and to the same time is assigned the monumental treatise of Bharata on the theory of music and drama. The cosmological aspect in Indian music, unlike that in Western counterpart, is of great importance. Indian ragas are to be played at specified times, such as in the morning or evening, or during spring or autumn etc.

There is much that is common to both the Hindu and European systems. Arthur Witten writes: "Their (Hindus) scale undoubtedly resembles our diatonic mode, and consists of seven sounds, which are extended to three octaves, that being the compass of the human voice. Their voices and music, like ours, are divided into three distinct classes. The bass, called odarah, or lowest notes; the tenor, called madurrah, or middle notes; the soprano, called the tarrah, or upper notes. The similarity of the formation of the ancient Hindu scale to our modern system is noteworthy. We name the sounds of our scales: Doh, Ray, Me, Fah, Sol, La, Te. That common in India is: Sa, Ray, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ne. The reason of this similarity is evident.

Amir Khusrow (1234-1325) poet, historian, and musician, who called himself a "Hindu Turk" was passionately involved with Indian music. He wrote:

"Indian music, the fire that burns heart and soul, is superior to the music of any other country."

(source: **Hinduism and Secularism: After Ayodhya - edited by Arvind Sharma** p. 185).

Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840 -1900) says:

"A regular system of notation was worked out before the age of Panini, and seven notes were designated by their initial letters. This notation passed from the Brahmins through the Persians to Arabia, and was thence introduced into European music by Guido d'Arezzo at the beginning of the eleventh century."

According to **Albrecht Weber** (1825 -1901) "According to **Von Bohlen** and **Benfrey**, this notation passed from the Hindus to the Persians," and from these again to the Arabs, and was introduced into European music by **Guido D'Arezzo** at the beginning of the 11th century."

Strabo, the Greek historian wrote: "Some of the Greeks attribute to that country (India) the invention of nearly all the science of music. We perceive them sometimes describing the cittiara of the Asiatics and sometime applying to flutes the epithet Phrygian. the names of certain instruments, such as nabla and others, likewise are taken from barbarous tongues."

Colonel James Tod says: "This nabla of Starbo is possible the tabla, the small tabor of India. If Strabo took his orthography from the Persian or Arabic, a single point would constitute the difference between the N (nun) and the T (te).

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 371- 373).

Sir William Jones foremost Oriental scholar, who went to India in 1794, wrote **On the Musical Modes of the Hindus**, say:

"The Hindu system of music has, I believe, been **formed on truer principles than our own**; and all the skill of the native composers is directed to the great object of their art, the natural expression of strong passions, to which melody, indeed, is often sacrificed, though some of their tunes are pleasing even to an European ear."

"As to the notation, since every Indian consonant includes, by its nature, the short vowel a, five of the sounds are denoted by single consonants, and the two others have different short vowels, taken from their full names; by substituting long vowels, the time of each note is doubled, and other marks are used for a further elongation of them. The octaves above and below the mean scale, the connexion and accerration of notes, the graces of execution, or manner of finger in the instrument, expressed very clearly by small circles and eclipses, by little chains, by curves,



Ragini Todi, Malwa, late 17th century A.D. Legend has it that wild deer would come from the forest enchanted by the sound of the vina.

H T Coleman writes, "An account of the state of musical science amongst the Hindus of early ages and a comparison between it and that of Europe is yet a desideratum in Oriental literature. From what we already know of the science, it appears to have attained a theoretical precision yet unknown to Europe, and that too in a period when even Greece was little removed from barbarism."

Coleman has written in his book, Hindu Mythology: "Of the Hindu system of music the excellent writer whom I have before mentioned (Sir William Jones), has expressed his belief that it has been formed on better principles than our own."

(source: **Hindu Mythology - By H. T. Coleman** preface. p. ix).

Lady Anne Campbell Wilson author of **After five years in India, or, Life and work in a Punjaub district**, says: "An eminently poetical people," as the ancient Hindus were, could not but have been eminently musical also. "The people of India are essentially a musical race.....To such an extent is music an accompaniment of existence in India, that every hour of the day and season of the year has its own melody."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 366).

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) the late curator of Indian art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and author of **The Dance of Shiva: Essays on Indian Art and Culture,** has written:

"Music has been a cultivated art in India for at least three thousand years. The chant is an essential element of Vedic ritual; and the references in later Vedic literature, the epics, the scriptures of Buddhism, show that it was already highly developed as a secular art in centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. Its zenith may perhaps be assigned to the Imperial age of the Guptas - from the 4th to the 6th century A.D. This was the classic period of Sanskrit literature, culminating in the drama of Kalidasa; and to the same time is assigned the monumental treatise on the theory of music and drama."

"..it reflects emotions and experiences which are deeper, wider and older than the emotion or wisdom of any single individual. Its sorrow is without tears, its joy without exultation and it is passionate without any loss of serenity. It is in the deepest sense of the words all-human."

(source: **The Wisdom of Ananda Coomaraswamy - presented by S. Durai Raja Singam** 1979 p. 84 and **The Dance of Shiva - By Ananda Coomaraswamy** p. 94).

J. T. Coker

"Music has been a cultivated art in India for at least three thousand years. It flows from the essential element of chant in ancient Vedic religious expression. More than any other musical form, the Indian *raga* tradition structurally and acoustically corresponds to and embodies the spiritual/religious experience. It offers a direct experience of the consciousness of the ancient world, with a range of expression rarely accessible today. All Indian instruments are played as extensions of the ultimate, because most natural, instrument -- the human voice -- that chants the sacred poems, mantras, and invocations of the gods. "

"The European musical scale has been reduced to twelve fixed notes by merging close intervals such as D sharp and E flat -- a compromise of necessity in the development of the mathematical harmony that made possible the triumphs of Western orchestration, causing the Western keyboard, unlike instruments from other musical cultures, to be inherently "out of tune. **"We can hear in Indian music the richest correlation of sound with the origins and manifestations of spiritual consciousness.** The idea of nonmanifest sound -- the essence in the interval between notes -- is akin to the New Testament conception of the Word, and underlies and pervades the music. It lies beneath all that is manifest in nature, cosmic and microcosmic, and realizes itself as the multiplicities and differentiations of existence."

(source: **A Handful of Beauty: Music as a Vehicle of Spirit - by J. T. Coker Sunrise magazine, February/March 1991 Theosophical University Press**).

Music in India has a history of at least three thousand years. The Vedic hymns, like all Hindu poetry, were written to be snug; poetry and song, music and dance, were made one art in the ancient ritual. Sangita, the Indian tradition of music, is as old as Indian contacts with the Western world, and it has graduated through various strata of evolution: primitive, prehistoric, Vedic, classical, mediaeval, and modern. It has traveled from temples and courts to modern festivals and retaining a clearly recognizable continuity of tradition.

German author **Albrecht Weber** writes in his book **The history of Indian literature** (p. 27):

"The Hindus scale - Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Nee has been borrowed by the Persians, where we find it in the form of do, re, ma, fa, so, le, ci. It came to the West and was introduced by **Guido d' Arezzo** in Europe in the form of do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti....even the 'gamma' of of Guido (French gramma, English gamut) goes back to the Sanskrit grammar and Prakrit gamma and is thus a direct testimony of the Indian origin of our European scale of seven notes."

More information on how the Indian system of music traveled to Europe is provided by **Ethel Rosenthal's** research in her book, **The Story of Indian Music** and its Instruments, on page 3, in which she observes, "In **The Indian Empire, Sir William Wilson Hunter** (1840-1900) remarked that:

"A regular system of notation had been worked out before the age of Panini and the seven notes were designated by their initial letters. **This notation passed from the Brahmins through the Persians to Arabia, and was then introduced into European music by Guido d' Arezzo at the beginning of the 11th century...**...Hindu music after a period of excessive elaboration, sank under the Muhammadans into a state of arrested developments....."





Relief from Sharahat (2nd century B. C) arched harps and drums *Relief from Gandhara (c.100 A.D. with lute).*

Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840-1900) further observes, "Not content with the tones and semi-tones, the Indian musicians employed a more minute sub-division, together with a number of sonal modifications which the Western ear neither recognizes or enjoys. Thus, they divide the octave into 22 sub-tones instead of 12 semi-tones of the European scales. The Indian musician declines altogether to be judged by the new simple Hindu airs which the English ear can appreciate."

The two phenomena, which have already been stated as the foundation of musical modes, could not long have escaped the attention of the Hindus, and their flexible language readily supplied them with names for the seven Swaras, or sounds, which they dispose in the following order: Shadja, pronounced Sharja, Rishabha, Gandhara, Madhyama, Pachama, Dhaivata, Nishada, but the first of them is emphatically named Swara, or the sound, from the important office, which it bears in the scale; and hence, by taking the seven initial letters or syllables of those words, they contrived a notation for their airs and at the same time exhibited a gamut, at least as convenient as that of Guido: they call it Swaragrama or Septaca, and express it in this form:

Sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni,

three of which syllables are, by a singular concurrence exactly the same, though not all in the same places, with three of those invented by David Mostare, as a substitute for the troublesome gamut used in his time, which he arranges thus: Bo, ce, di, ga, lo, ma, ni.

(source: **The Story of Indian Music - By Ethel Rosenthal** p. 3 and 177-178).

Regarding the growth and development of music in India, **Yehudi Menuhin** (1916 -1999) the well known violinist who visited India (1952) writes in an American literary magazine The Saturday Review of Literature that he found:

"there was so much new and satisfying to him that in India the equilibrium of life is better balanced than elsewhere, a greater unity of thought and feeling prevail than in the West." In his view Indian music, culture and philosophy "are quite sufficient, soundly conceived and adequate for the needs not only of Indian but capable of being beneficial if adopted in a wider sphere of humanity. Indian music is a traditional crystallized form of expression in which the performers and auditors partake of the resignation of environment and fact. It invites to attain a sense of meditation, of oneness with God."

(source: **Ancient Indian Culture At A Glance - By Swami Tattwananda** p. 147-148).

The **Sakuntala** furor has lasted till almost today. One of the noblest "overtures" in European music is the **Sakuntala overture** of the Hungarian composer **Carl Goldmark** (1830-1915).

(source: **Creative India - By Benoy Kumar Shenoy** p. 110).

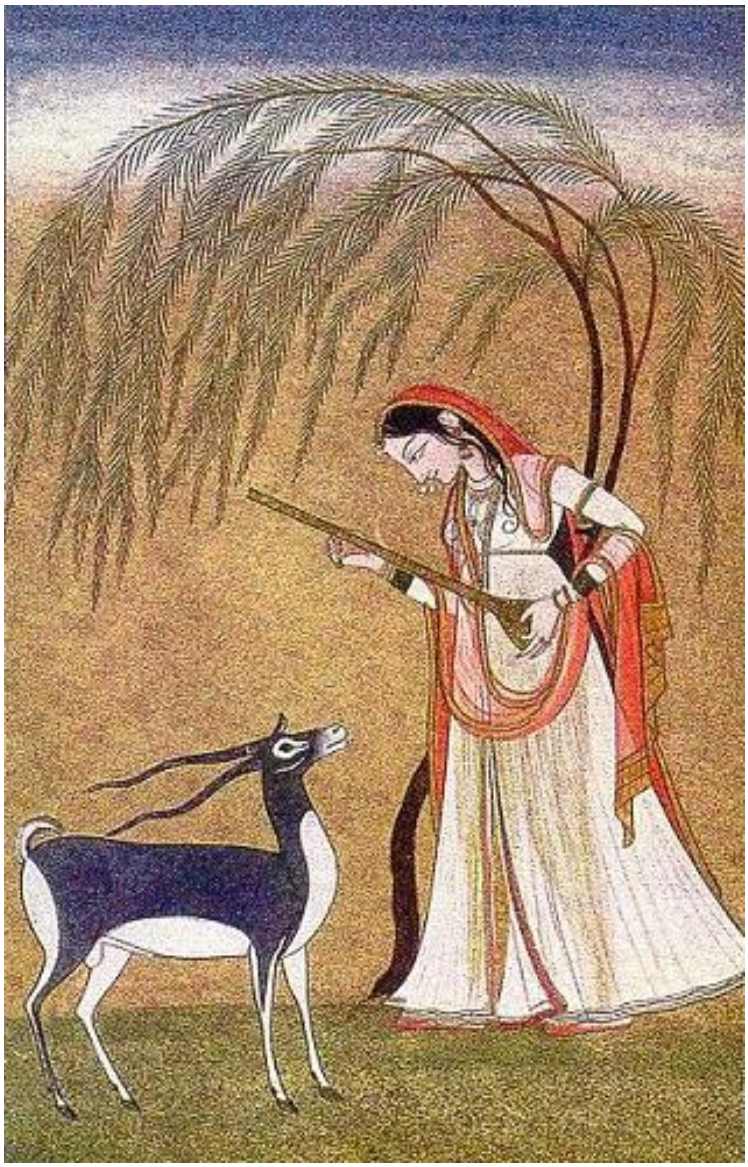
The Hindus first developed the science of music from the chanting of the Vedic hymns. The Sama Veda was especially meant for music. And the scale with seven notes and three octaves was known in India centuries before the Greeks had it. Probably the Greeks learnt it from the Hindus. It is interesting to know that German composer, **Richard Wagner** was indebted to the Hindu science of music, especially for his principal idea of the "leading motive"; and this is perhaps the reason why it is so difficult for many Western people to understand Wagner's music. He became familiar with Eastern music through Latin translations, and his conversation on this subject with **Arthur Schopenhauer**. (please refer to **Quotes1-20** page for more on Schopenhauer).

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** - p.221).

William Smythe Babcock Mathews (1837-1912) author of **Popular History of the Art of Music**

"**Hindoos carried the theory of music to an extremely fine point,** having many curious scales, some of them with 24 divisions in an octave. However 22 was the usual number. **The pitch of each note in every mode was accurately calculated mathematically** and the frets of the VeeNaa located thereby, according to very old theoretical work by one with name Soma, written in Sanskrit as early as 1500 BC."

(source: **Popular History of the Art of Music - By W. S .B. Mathews** Publisher: Clayton F. Summy Date of Publication: 1906).



As **M. Bourgault Ducondray** (1840-1910) writes: "The Hindu music will provide Western musicians with fresh resources of expression and with colors hitherto unknown to the palate of the musicians." It seems **Richard Wagner** got the idea of leading motive from India through Latin translations. The Gregorain mode in Western music introduced by Pope Gregory, the Great, are of Indian inspiration, which he got when he was ambassador at Constantinople. Indian music has ardent admirers in the West. Romain Rolland told Dilip Kumar Roy that by his capacity for continuous improvisation, the executants in Indian music was always a creator, while in European music he was only an interpreter. **George Duhamel**, (1844-1966) the eminent French author and critic, told Roy that Indian music was "indeed a novel but delightful experience with me. **The music of India is without doubt one of the greatest proofs of the superiority of her civilization."**

Leopold Stotowski, Yehudi Meuhudin and others have spoken in glowing words of the subtle intricacies of Indian rhythm from which the West has much to learn. Ravi Shanker has held spell-bound many a Western audience, by playing on his Sitar.

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavarta R. Patel** p. 45-48).

Count Hermann Keyserling (1880-1946) philosopher, author, public speaker, pointed out about Indian music that: "Indian music encompasses an immensely wide world. when listening to it, one experiences nothing in particular, nothing one can put one's hand on, and yet one feels alive in a most intense way. By following its different tones, one actually listens to oneself."

(source: **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound - By Joachim-Ernst Berendt** Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180 p. 153).

Anne C. Wilson adds: "It must, therefore, be a secret source of pride to them to know that their system of music, as a written science, is the oldest in the world. Its principles were accepted by the Mahommedan portion of the population in the days of their pre-eminence, and are still in use in their original construction at the present day."

(source: **A Short Account of the Hindu System of Music - By Anne C. Wilson** p. 9).

"While Western music speaks of the wonders of God's creation, Eastern music hints at the inner beauty of the Divine in man and in the world. Indian music requires of its hearers something of that mood of divine discontent, of yearning for the infinite and impossible." Mrs. Mann,

(source: **The Music of India - By H. A. Popley** South Asia Books ASIN 8185418063 p. 136).

Arthur Whitten observes: "Their (Hindus) scale undoubtedly resembles our diatonic mode, and consists of seven sounds, which are extended to three octaves, that being the compass of the human voice. Their voices and music, like ours, are divided into three distinct classes: the bass, called odarah, or lowest notes: the tenor, called madurrah, or middle notes; the soprano, called the tarrah, or upper notes. The similarity of the formation of the ancient Hindu scale to our modern system is noteworthy. We name the sounds of our scales: Doh, Ray, Me, Fah, Sol, La Te. Those common in India are: Sa, Ray, Gam, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni,"

(source: **The Music of the Ancients - By Arthur Whitten**).

Dr. Arnold Adrian Bake (Editions of Damodara's **Sangita-darpana**) has said:

"It is impossible to divorce Indian music from the whole structure of Indian culture and philosophy." "A show of instrumental

agility in which words have no importance or hardly any, but which for perfection of speed, neatness and precision of intonation, has perhaps no equal anywhere in the world."

(source: **The Music of India - By Peggy Holroyde** p. 218).

Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934) composer of **S¯avitri ; The dream-city**, **Choral hymns from the Rig Veda** and **S¯avitri; an episode from the Mah¯abharata, Op. 25** He was Vaughan Williams' greatest friends. Despite his German name, Holst was born in Cheltenham in 1874. This English composer composed operas about **Sita** and **Savitri** and other works based on Hindu themes. **It was in 1895 that Holst first became interested in Hindu philosophy and Sanskrit literature.** His immediate impulse was to set some hymns from the **Rig Veda,** the most important of the Hindu scriptures, to music. The most notable of many works springing from Holst's preoccupation with Hinduism was the chamber opera **Savitri** dating from 1908, based on an episode from the epic poem **Mahabharata**: its economy and intensity are exemplified in the arresting and dramatic opening, where Death sings, offstage and unaccompanied. From 1908 to 1912, he wrote four sets of hymns from the Rig Veda, the Vedic Hymns for voice and piano, and the large scale choral work called The Cloud Messenger.

(source: http://hem.passagen.se/alkerstj/worldofclassicalmusic/early20th/gustav_holst.html and http://wso.williams.edu/~ktaylor/gholst/). For more refer to chapter on **Quotes271_300**).

Joachim-Ernst Berendt (1922-2000) author of **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound** has written: " Nada Brahma is a primal word in Indian spirituality, a primal word that also refers to India's great classical music. Nada is a Sanskrit word meaning "sound." The term nadi is also used to mean "stream of consciousness," a meaning that goes back 4,000 years to the oldest of India's four sacred Vedic scriptures, the Rig Veda. Thus the relationship between sound and consciousness has long been documented in language.

(source: **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound - By Joachim-Ernst Berendt** Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180 p. 1-20).

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Mantras

Many people mediate on a mantra. A mantra is a sacred sound that may be an entire phrase, a single world, or even a syllable. What does the word mantra mean? The syllable mantra means "intelligence," also "thinking" or "feeling" – everything that distinguishes a human being.

Mantras emerge from the mantric sound, in Sanskrit bija, or "seed." Mantras are germinating seeds that sprout oneness. They are tools of becoming one. The greatest of all mantras is "**OM**" Indra's pearl, although no larger than all other pearls contain all pearls of the world – and just as, according to recent ideas in particular physics, the events in a single electron "contain" all the nuclear events in the world. In the Upanishads: "Whoever speaks this mantra thirty-five million times, the mantra of the sacred word, shall be released from his karma and from all his sins. He shall be freed of all his bonds and shall reach absolute liberty."

Nada Brahma, the world is sound. The sages of India and Tibet as well as the monks of Sri Lanka fee that if there is a sound audible to us mortals that comes close to the primal sound that is the world, then it is the sound of the sacred word OM.

A quote from the **Upanishads**:

The essence of all beings is earth,
the essence of earth is water,
the essence of water are plants,
the essence of plants is man,
the essence of man is speech,
the essence of speech is sacred knowledge,
the essence of sacred knowledge is word and sound,

The essence of word and sound is Om.

(source: **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound - By Joachim-Ernst Berendt** Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180 p. 26-29).

Chant and music were conceived of as mediums for expressing the inward yearning of a man's very breadth and therefore his soul. This was symbolized in the Sanskrit word 'prana.'

Michael Pym has observed: "Sound - shabda - is the manifestation of what might be called the principle of pure intelligence working upon and through matter. In another sense it is the creator of form and the animating principle of form. The idea resembles that of the Greek Logos - the word of creation. Sound is also the quality of inherent property - in Sanskrit the guna - of akasha or ethereal space. There are two forms of sound, unlettered and lettered, the latter proceeding from the former.

Sound is mantra, force or energy; name is form the grosser aspect of the principle. Indian music of the classical type represents something near the essence of existence at a particular moment. The immediate effect of Indian music is not as striking as Western music, but it is in the end, far more insidiously intoxicating. Between the two types of music, the difference is almost like that which exists between getting drunk on spirits and being drugged. The parallel even continues to this point, that once you have really become attuned to Indian music, Western music, beautiful as it may be, becomes too obvious and too tiring for you...And then you begin to understand how **the subtle, pattern weaving music of India conveys India; how the philosophic, imagist music of the raga,** with its one theme varied in a thousand ways, never beginning, and never finishing, but just becoming audible and going again into inaudibility, is the **real expression of India's sense of eternity - beginning in the unknown and going beyond our ken."**

(source: **The Power of India - By Michael Pym** p. 170 - 182).

An integral aspect of this Vedic 'culture of sound' is the so called science of mantrashastra. The Word is Brahman; the Word is Revelation, an icon of the Absolute, murti - a 'momentary deity'. Words, magical formulae, sacred verses - mantra - exist in relation to the divine as the yantra to the god; words are machines. Words are the Vedic yoga: they unite mind and matter. The Word is God, Number is God - both concepts result in a kind of intoxication. Only the Pythagorean Master can hear the music of the spheres: only the perfected Hindu sage can hear the primordial sound - Nada."

(source: **The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society - By Richard Lannoy** p. 275-276).

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Conclusion

'Self-realization' mans God-realization. In ancient times, **Yajnavalkya,** the famous law-giver, wrote:

"One who knows the principles of playing the veena; one who is in expert in jati, and has the mastery of sruti and tala attains to moksha without any effort.'

Thyagaraja, the famous 18th century saint/musician of South India, declared in his Sripapriya that music is yoga: "Music which is composed of the seven svaras is a treasure for the great tapasvins (ascetics) who have cooled the tapatraya (the world of nvolvment). Moksha is impossible for one who has no music in him."

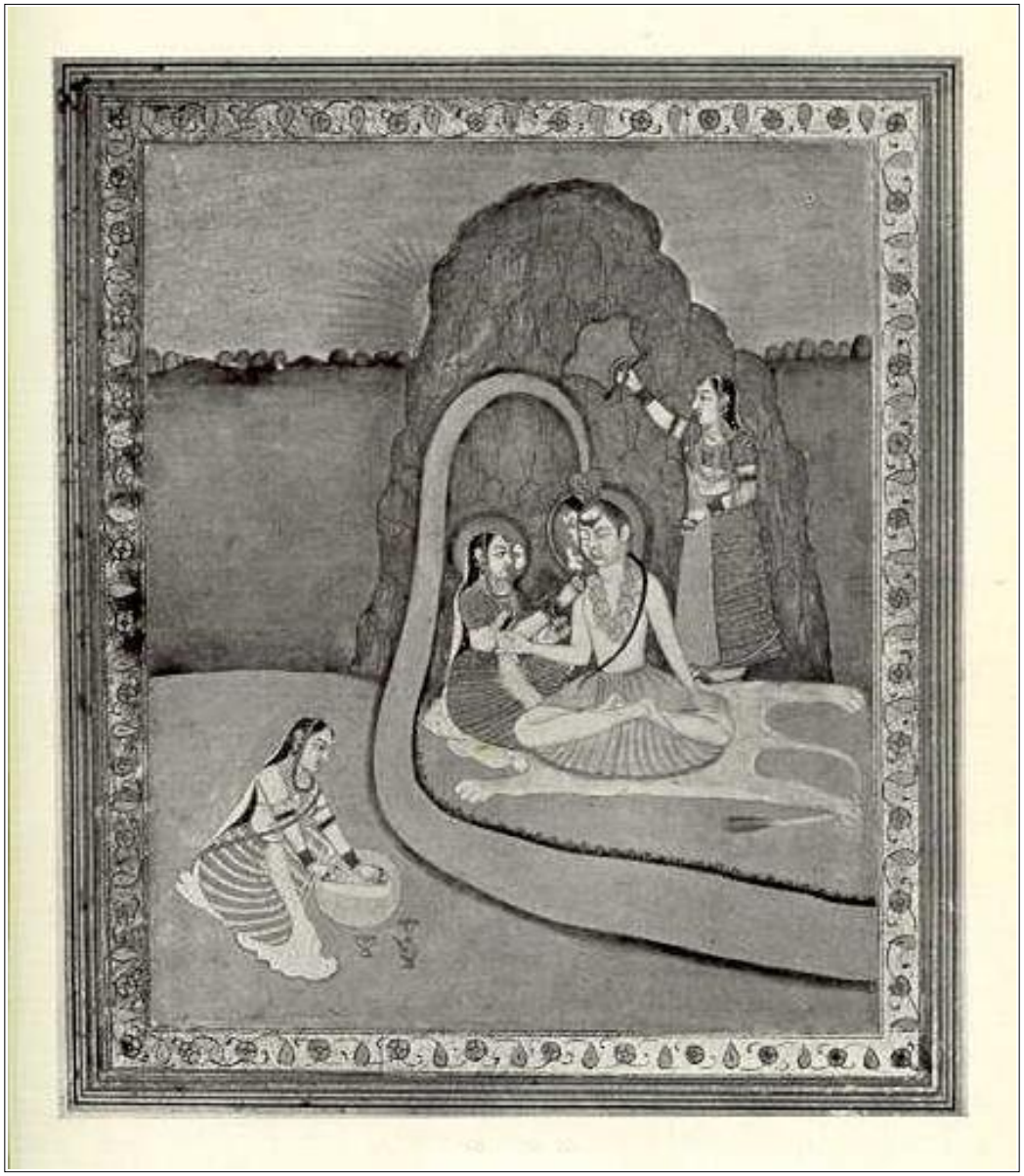
"Those who sing here," says **Sankaracharya**, "sing God"; and the **Vishnu Purana** adds, "All songs are a part of Him, who wears a form of sound."

Many historians, both in the East and the West consider the Gupta Empire between the 4th and 6th centuries A.D. to have been the "renaissance of Indian music." At that time Sanskrit as a classical literature took form, and music, stimulated by the lively ideas of the period, achieved new proportions.

Explaining it for the Westerner the great poet and Indian Nobel prize winner, **Rabindranath Tagore** wrote: "For us Hindus,

music always always has **a transcendent meaning**, even when its intentions are by no means mystical or religious, but epic and amorous. Above all, music tries to touch the great hidden reasons for happiness in this world."

"It is precisely because of this that Indian musicians aspire above all things, to realize the complete identification between the imperfect soul of man and the perfect soul of the divine nature. **Hindu music** aims at creating a point where the beautiful and ugly, good and bad can meet, not on the dangerous level of compromise, but on a level of the absolute. For this reason, our music is paradoxically a combination of chords and discords, equals and opposites. It willingly runs the risk of seeming to be, in fact being, fragmentary and inconclusive."



Ragmala - Rajput school, 18th century A.D.

"Our everyday life often, our music always, appears contradictory to the sophisticated eyes of the West. We do not hesitate to recognize in the sublime paradox, the ultimate, perhaps the eternal meaning of the serene, ordered, and happy world of sounds generated by gods and governed by men."

Thus, music is considered to be of divine origins; legend has it that the three divinities who preside over the Hindu pantheon, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, are themselves accomplished musicians, and that it was they who taught the great laws of musical expression to the first codifiers of Indian music. Ravi Shankar's description of his life as a disciple of spiritual music underscores this point. His practice would begin at 4:00 am. After two hours he would bathe and do his morning spiritual practice. Shankar stated that "total humility and surrender to the guru" were expected; "a complete shedding of the ego" was the goal. About the musical culture of India's ancients, Shankar says:

"There is no dearth of beautiful stories relating how great musicians and saint-musicians such as **Baiju Bavare, Swami Haridas** or **Tan Sen** performed miracles by singing certain ragas. It is said that some could light fires or the oil lamps by singing one raga, or bring rain, melt stones, causing flowers to blossom, and attract ferocious wild animals - even snakes

and tigers - to a peaceful, quiet circle in a forest around a singing musician. To us in this modern, mechanical, materialistic age, all this seems like a collection of fables, but I sincerely believe that these stories are all true and that they were all feasible, especially when one considers that these great musicians were not just singers or performers, but also great yogis whose minds had complete control of their bodies. They knew all the secrets of tantra, hatha yoga, and different forms of occult power, and they were pure, ascetic, and saintly persons. That has been the wonderful tradition of our music."

Legends abound in the annals of India's music, attesting to the **extraordinary prowess of India's devotional musicians.** Indian music has always placed emphasis on vocal expression over instrumental. The best instrumental is thought to be that which renders most faithfully the subtleties of the human voice.

Ravi Shankar has written in his autobiography:

"Our tradition teaches us that sound is God - Nada Brahma. That is, music of sound and the musical experience are steps to the realization of the self. We view music as a kind of spiritual discipline that raises one's inner being to divine peacefulness and bliss. We are taught that one of the fundamental goals a Hindu works toward in his lifetime is a knowledge of the true meaning of the universe - its unchanging, eternal essence - and this is realized first by a complete knowledge of one's self and one's own nature. The highest aim of our music is to reveal the essence of the universe it reflects, and the ragas are among the means by which this essence can be apprehended. Thus, through music, one can reach God."

The sparkling energy of India lies in Hinduism. Without the framework of Hindu belief India would fall apart even today. Without Hinduism India is not herself. "It is impossible," **Dr Arnold Bake** (1899-1963) the late Dutch scholar of Indian music, has written in The New Oxford History of Music, "to divorce Indian music from the whole structure of **Indian culture and philosophy** with which it is interwoven in a number of ways from the earliest times of which we have records."

(source: **The Music of India - By Peggy Holroyde** p. 37-39).





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8. **The Music of India - By Peggy Holroyde**

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Music Site to visit:

Indian Classical Music

Sanatana Dharma - Music

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Did You Know?

Gypsies - Lords of the Open Country

Romanies or Gypsies as they are popularly known, had their origin in India. They are the descendents of tribes who left the banks of the Indus, traversed a number of intervening countries over a period of centuries, and arrived in Europe more than five hundred years ago, where they have been severely persecuted. **Gypsies, the long-lost children of India,** number about 12 million worldwide. In Europe, the 8 million Gypsies constitute its largest minority. During World War II, the Nazis exterminated 1.5 million Gypsies.



Despite their significant contributions to European cultural life over a period of centuries, Europe on the whole has not accepted them with kindness. They have been frequently persecuted throughout the period of their known history. European countries have a sordid record of Gypsy-persecution. Half a million Romany gypsies from across occupied Europe were killed in the Holocaust - yet that fact is now largely forgotten. Soon after their arrival in Europe they were characterized as a people who spoke a strange language and practiced sorcery. In 1427 the Bishop of Paris excommunicated them and they were driven out of the city. Even today, gypsy women are often seen begging with infants in Paris.

A gypsy on the road knows the taste of real liberty and he regards modern man as little more than a mere cog in a gigantic machine tied to money, convention, and a timetable. Throughout the centuries Gypsies have fought and suffered numerous humiliation and penalties to retain their own individuality, freedom, language and cultural identity.

Considering that there are many Greek words in the Gypsy language, and that all Gypsies still count in Greek, Verovici is of the opinion that the first exodus of the Gypsies from India happened at the time of Alexander's invasion. On the other hand, Grellmann believed that the Gypsies had been driven out of India by Timur and his savage hordes at the end of the 14th century. Charles Leland, who identifies the Gypsies with Northern India, suggests that they were taken away in large numbers as slaves by Mahmud of Ghazni during his Indian invasion.

The Gypsies speak a language called Romany which has many common words with Indian languages. **The religion of the Gypsies is a modified form of early Hinduism.** Romani is related to Sanskrit in the same way as the Romance language are to Latin. The following list of cardinal numbers illustrates the point. The sentence is generally constructed in the same way in Romani and Hindi. For example:

Romani: Ja, kik kon chalavelo o vurdo.
Hindi: Ja, dekh kaun chalaaya dvar ko.
English: Go and see who has come to the door.

Romani: Mero sero dukkers.
Hindi: Mero sir dukhe.
English: My head hurts.

Gypsy heritage of laws and customs can be identified with ancient Indian practices. The wise and learned men are called **rashey**, **reminiscent of the Indian rishi, occupy in India**, a highly esteemed place in Gypsy society. Amongst the authentic signs on the sceptre of a Gypsy tribal chief is the trishul (trident), the insignia of Shiva. Gypsy chiefs are still called **Thakur**. The elders of the tribe are addressed respectfully as kako, meaning uncle, a Hindi word of the same meaning. The feminine version of the tribal chief is called **phuri dai**, which in Hindi is **burhi dai**, the old lady. The Gypsy council of elders is clearly a replica of the Indian panchayat, and the Gypsy chief corresponds to the head of the panchayat. The Gypsy family system is a joint one, as is the Hindu embracing parents, children, aunts, uncles, and all kinds of cousins. Likewise, property belongs to the family and not to the individual.

In Indian and Spanish Gypsy music there is, unlike in Western music a luxuriance of cross rhythms, elaborate

ornamentation, and quarter tones, unknown to Western music, are common to both Hungarian Gypsy and Indian music. The Gypsies mentioned by **Firdusi** and the Arab historian, **Hamza**, were expert lute players, and it has been suggested that it was probably they who introduced the lute to Europe.

Gypsy dance has influenced western dance styles like the Waltz and the foxtrot. Even the American Break dance and other dances associated with jazz music have borrowed elements from the gypsy folk dance. The Gypsy folk dance, is itself a free flowing and care free dance, a modified version of which is found in the folk dances of many Adivasi and nomadic tribal communities in India. Gypsies have displayed an adaptability towards the religious beliefs of the countries in their path. Many practice their faith with deep devotion. They call the Bible **the Sastra, the Sanskrit name for scriptures.** Gypsies believe in **Karma** and some kind of continuation of life after death.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Michigan State Univ Pr ASIN 0870131435 p.234 - 266).

Saip Jusuf is the author of one of the first Romani grammars and a principal leader in Skopje, Macedonia, which has the largest Gypsy settlement anywhere. Jusuf helped organize the first world Romany Congress in 1971 in London. The conference was financed in part by the Government of India, and at its urging the U.N. agreed first to recognize the Rom as a distinct ethnic group and several years later accorded voting rights to the International Romani Union.

In an interview with the author, Jusuf, having converted from Islam to **Hinduism, joyously displayed his new icon collection of Ganesha, Parvati, and Durga** . Ramche Mustupha, a poet, showed his passport. Under "citizenship" it recorded Yugoslav; under "nationality," Hindu. **The lost children of India, having found their ancestral land, are very proud of its ancient civilization -- the oldest continuous civilization in the world -- "Amaro Baro Thanh" (Romani for "our big land").**

Isable Fonseca author of **Bury Me Standing: The Gypsies and their Journey** has observed: "Many of the young women, fed up with the baggy-bottomed Turkish trousers they were supposed to wear, have begun to wear saris."

(source: **India Star.com**)



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In the Vedic literature of India, there are many descriptions of flying machines that are generally called Vimanas. India's national epic, The Mahabharata, is a poem of vast length and complexity. There are no physical remains of ancient Indian aircraft technology but references to ancient flying machines are commonplace in the ancient Indian texts. Several popular ancient epics describe their use in warfare. Depending on one's point of view, either it contains some of the earliest known science fiction, or it records conflict between beings with weapons as powerful and advanced as anything used today.

"European scholarship regards human civilization as a recent progression starting yesterday with the Fiji islander, and ending today with Rockefeller, conceiving ancient culture as necessarily half savage culture." It is a superstition of modern thought that the march of knowledge has always been linear." "Our vision of "prehistory" is terribly inadequate. We have not yet rid our minds from the hold of a one-and-only God or one-and-only Book, and now a one-and-only Science."

- wrote **Shri Aurobindo Ghosh,** (1872-1950) most original philosopher of modern India.

"Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored." - **Aldous Huxley**
"Dont' let your minds be cluttered up with the prevailing doctrine." **- Alexander Fleming (1881-1955)**

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Chariots of The Gods
Vymaanika Shaastra Aeronautics of Maharshi Bharadwaaja



Introduction:

The mention of **airplanes** is found many times throughout Vedic literature, including the following verse from the **Yujur-Veda** describing the movement of such machines:

"O royal skilled engineer, construct sea-boats, propelled on water by our experts, and airplanes, moving and flying upward, after the clouds that reside in the mid-region, that fly as the boats move on the sea, that fly high over and below the watery clouds. Be thou, thereby, prosperous in this world

created by the Omnipresent God, and flier in both air and lightening." **Yajur Veda**, 10.19) (Please refer to the Chapter ' **Advanced Concept in Hinduism**)

The Rg Veda, the oldest document of the human race includes references to the following modes of transportation:

Jalayan - a vehicle designed to operate in air and water. (Rig Veda 6.58.3)
Kaara- Kaara- Kaara- a vehicle that operates on ground and in water. (Rig Veda 9.14.1)
Tritala- Tritala- Tritala- a vehicle consisting of three stories. (Rig Veda 3.14.1)
Trichakra Ratha - Trichakra Ratha - Trichakra Ratha - a three-wheeled vehicle designed to operate in the air. (Rig Veda 4.36.1)
Vaayu Ratha- Vaayu Ratha- Vaayu Ratha- a gas or wind-powered chariot. (Rig Veda 5.41.6)
Vidyut Ratha- Vidyut Ratha- Vidyut Ratha- a vehicle that operates on power. (Rig Veda 3.14.1).

Kathasaritsagara refers to highly talented woodworkers called Rajyadhara and Pranadhara. The former was so skilled in mechanical contrivances that he could make ocean crossing chariots. And the latter manufactured a flying chariot to carry a thousand passengers in the air. **These chariots were stated to be as fast as thought itself.**

(source: **India Through The Ages: History, Art Culture and Religion - By G. Kuppuram** p. 532-533).

According to **Dr. Vyacheslav Zaitsev**: "the holy Indian Sages, the Ramayana for one, tell of "Two storied celestial chariots with many windows" "They roar like off into the sky until they appear like comets." The Mahabharata and various Sanskrit books describe at length these chariots, "powered by winged lighting...it was a ship that soared into the air, flying to both the solar and stellar regions."

(source: **Temples and Spaceships - By V. Zaitsev - Sputnik**, Jan. 1967 and **Hinduism in the Space Age - By E. Vedavyas** p. 31-32).

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Some Puranic accounts of Air-Chariots

The **Arthasastra of Kautilya** (c. 3rd century B.C.) mentions amongst various tradesmen and technocrats the Saubhikas as ' pilots conducting vehicles in the sky'. Saubha was the name of the aerial flying city of King Harishchandra and the form 'Saubika' means 'one who flies or knows the art of flying an aerial city.' Kautilya uses another significant word 'Akasa Yodhinah', which has been translated as 'persons who are trained to fight from the sky.' The existence of aerial chariots, in whatever form it might be, was so well-known that it found a place among the royal edicts of the Emperor Asoka which were executed during his reign from 256 B.C. - 237 B. C. **The Vaimanika Shastra** (Hindi edn) refers to about 97 works and authorities of yore of which at least 20 works deal with the mechanism of aerial Flying Machine, but none of these works is now traceable. The **Yuktikalpataru of Bhoja** includes a reference to aerial cars in verses 48-50 and a manuscript of the work belonging to the Calcutta Sanskrit College dated at 1870 A.D. We are thus in possession of some manuscript material and from the above it appears that there were Vimanas or aircrafts in ancient India and they followed the route over the western sea i.e. Arabian Sea - Africa - Atlantic ocean - Latin America/Mexico, this being the shortest route. Some ships also might have followed this route, but most of the cargo ships, however, had to follow the longer route over the Pacific ovean via Indonesia - Polynesia - Latin America/Mexico because of the favorable trade winds and the equatorial currents which made the navigation easier.



And if the ancient Indians could perhaps boast of some form of air travel the **Nazca lines of Peru** acquire an added significance. Not only the scriptural references of aircrafts and the routes of navigation, even some base landing sites might have possibly been found in the tangled outlines and figures in the Pampas of Nazca. Maria Reiche, a German scientist, through her life-long dedication studied these seriously, preserved them from destruction and publicised them before the world. The huge figures which are visible from the sky might have helped the ancient pilots (Sauvikas) of India to land in Peru.

(For more information please refer to Chapters on **Pacific**, **Suvarnabhumi**, **War in Ancient India**, **Hindu Scriptures** and **Seafaring in Ancient India**).

The Nazca lines of Peru seem to be landing signal for the air chariots of pre-Colobian times. There are several references in Sanskrit texts about the Indian Vimanas carrying kings and dignitaries to pataldesa. Ramayana describes Ravana's flight from Varunalaya (Borneo) to Rasatala (Peru).

Prof. D. K. Kanjilal analyses the legend of the Matsya Purana (chapters 129) in his **Vimana in Ancient India** in the following words:

"Behind the veil of legend and scientific truth comes out that three flying-cities were made for and were used by the demons. Of these three, one was in a stationary orbit in the sky, another moving in the sky and one was permanently stationed in the ground. These were docked like modern spaceships in the sky at particular time and at fixed latitude/longitudes. Siva's arrow obviously referred to a blazing missile fired from a flying satellite specially built for the purpose and the brunt spaceship fell in the Indian ocean. Vestiges of onetime prosperous civilization destroyed in battles only flicker through these legends.

These references sharply point to the use of some kind of aerial flying vehicles known as Vimana apart from mechanical contrivances, armoured cars, various types of missiles etc. These references sounding queer and unscientific even in recent past have been approximated to the present-day technology through the innovation of highly sophisticated weapons and of the space-satellites like Mariner, Vostok, Soyuz, Aryabhatta etc. These facts require more than a passing notice.

The flying vehicles were firstly designated Ratha (vehicle or carriage) in the Rig Veda.

Vimanas possessed a very high speed. This aerial vehicle was triangular, large, 3-tier uneven and was piloted by at least three persons (tribandhura). It has three wheels which were probably withdrawn during aerial flight. In one verse the chariot is said to have three columns. It was generally made of anyone of the three kinds of metals, gold, silver or iron but the metal which usually went into its make up according to the Vedic text was gold. It looked beautiful. Long nails or rivets were attached to it. The chariot had three types of fuel. Possessing very fast speed, it moved like a bird in the sky soaring towards the Sun and the Moon and used to come down to the earth with great sound.

(source: **The Indians And The Amerindians - By Dr. S. Chakravarti** p.141-146).

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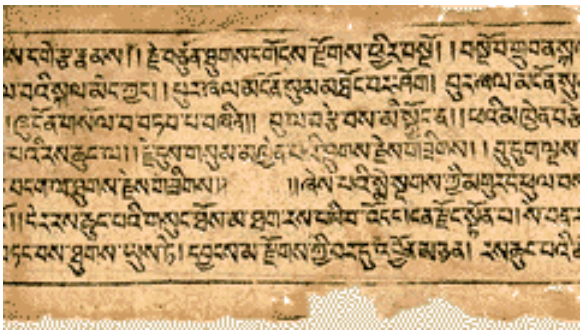
According to Professor **Dileep Kumar Kanjilal** in his book, **Vimana in Ancient India**:

In addition to the Vaimanika Shashtra, the Samarangana Sutradhara and the Yuktikalpataru of Bhoja, there are about 150 verses of the Rig Veda, Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda, a lot of literary passages belonging to the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Puranas, the Bhagavata and the Raghuvamsa and some references of the darma Abhijnanasakuntalam of Kalidasa, the Abimaraka of Bhasa, the Jatalas. the Avadhana Literature and of the Kathasaritsagara and a number of literary works **contained either references to graphic aerial flight or to the mechanism of the aerial vehicles used in old ages in**

India.

In the Ramayana both the words "Vimana" and "Ratha" have been used:

- Kamagam ratham asthaya...nadanadipatim (3. 35. 6-7). He boarded the aerial vehicle with Khara which was decorated with jewels and the faces of demons and it moved with noise resembling the sonorous clouds.
- You may go to your desired place after enticing Sita and I shall bring her to Lanka by air.. So Ravana and Maricha boarded the aerial vehicle resembling a palace (Vimana) from that hermitage.
- Then the demoness brought the Puspaka aerial vehicle and placed Sita on it by bringing her from the Ashoka forest and she was made to see the battle field with Trijata.
- This aerial vehicle marked with Swan soared into the sky with loud noise.



Reference to Flying vehicles as Vimana occur in the Mahabharata in about 41 places of which the air attack of Salva on Krisna's capital **Dwaraka** deserve special notice. The Asura king Salva had an aerial flying machine known as Saubha-pura in which he came to attack Dwaraka. He began to shower hails, and missiles from the sky. As Krishna chased him he went near the sea and landed in the high seas. Then he came back again with his flying machine and gave a tough fight to Krishna staying about one Krosa (about 4,000 ft) above the ground level. Krishna at last threw a powerful ground-to-air weapon which hit the plane in the middle and broke it into pieces. The damaged flying machine fell into the seas. This vivid description of the air attack occurs in the Bhagavata also. We also come across the following references to missiles, armaments, sophisticated war-machines and mechanical contrivances as well as to Vimanas in Mahabharata.

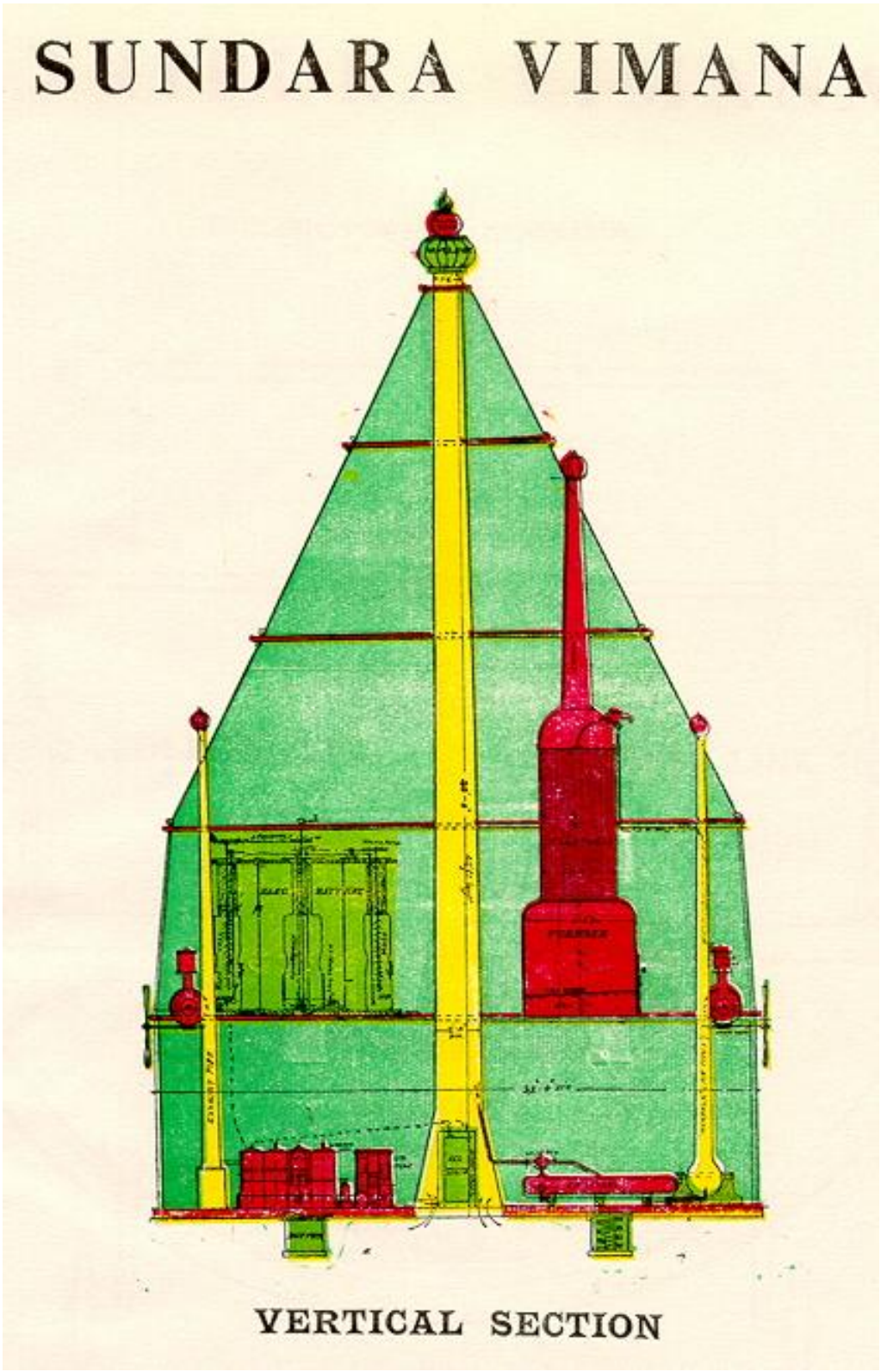
(For more refer to chapter on **Dwaraka**).

The inscriptions of emperor Asoka are by far the most authentic records in support of the existence of aerial flying vehicles which are mentioned as Vimana. The existence of aerial chariots in whatever form it might be was so well-known that it found a place among the royal edicts of the Emperor Asoka which were executed during his reign from 256 B.C.- 237 B.C.

Vatsyana in his Kama Sutra referred to mechanical contrivances in their origin among 64 ancilliary Sciences.

The **Arthasastra of Kautilya** (3rd century B.C), a treatise mainly dealing with political economy but containing information on kindred scientific topics refers to a class of mechanic known as Saubhika..."

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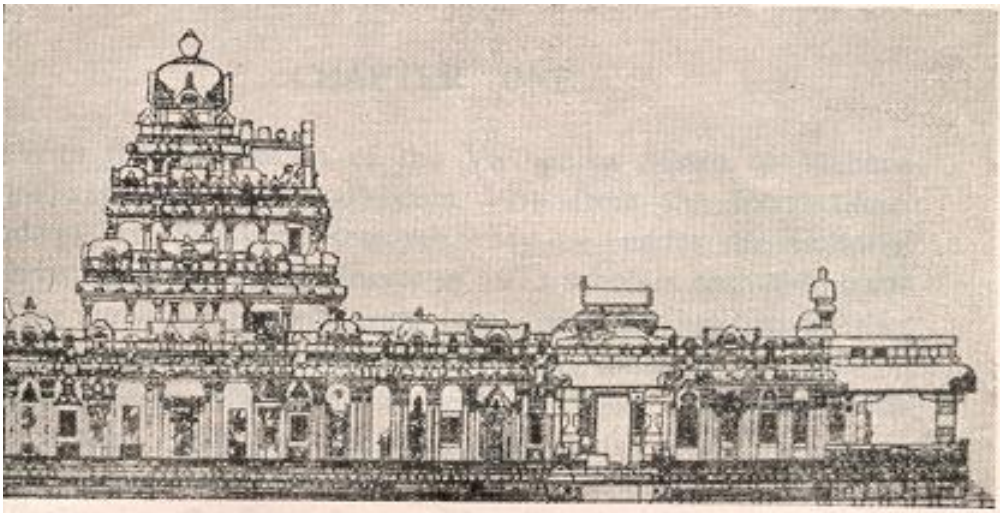


A discussion regarding the existence of and the use of flying vehicles in ancient India naturally waits for an advanced state of knowledge in cosmogony. A close and careful study of the Vedic literature shows that it was not just a collection of primeval poetry but a varied literature of a powerful and dynamic society where the people had the knowledge of cloud and vapor, of the season and of the monsoon, of the different types of wind, of the expanse of the sky, of the strength of the wind blowing at high speed and so on. Three types of cloud have been referred to in the Rig Veda (1.101.4). which also states that smoke and vapor surcharged with water turn into cloud. Formation of vapor through heat and the subsequent formation of cloud has been referred to in the Vedas. Indian meteorological concepts thus date back to the age of the Rig Veda.

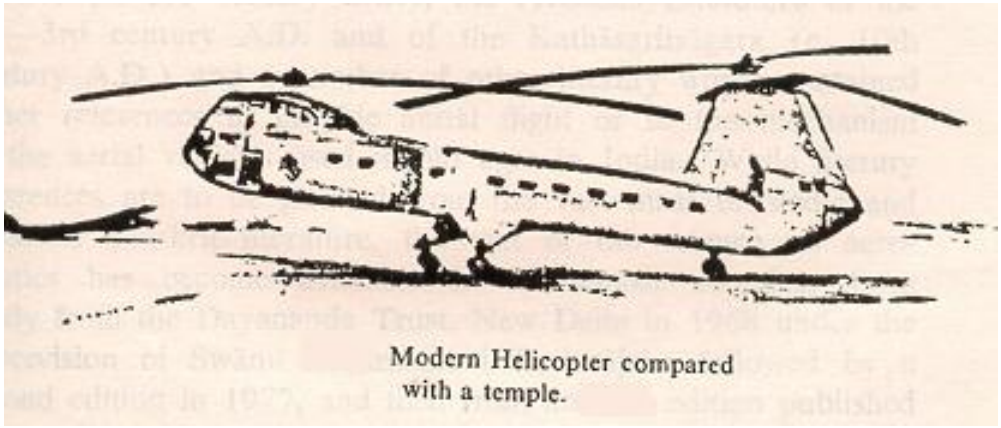
Dileep Kumar Kanjilal concludes that: "With the passage of time and due to various changes of catastrophes the machines went out of use so that the secrets of its make-up and flying were equally lost. That the discontinuity of technical knowledge of a particular science within the known period of history is not an impossible factor has been shown by the inability to explore the nature of the **rustless iron of the pillar of Chandraketu** now fixed in Delhi. Hiuentzang, the Chinese pilgrim in the 7th century A.D. referred to 7 story palaces of which no evidence now remains. **Sir P. C. Roy** had shown that during the period from 1509 B.C. up to the end of the 3rd century B.C.E. methods for the large scale production of metals like gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, lead and mercury and of alloys like brass,

bronze, and those of gold and silver with baser materials were known. Large varieties of mineral ores, gems, and precious stones have been described in detail by Kautilya. Knowledge of the fermentation process also reached a fairly advanced state. With a highly developed state of civilization flourishing in art, culture, literature, history, medicine, alchemy, chemistry, physics, mathematics, astronomy, and astrology, geology, trade, commerce, shipbuilding, and agriculture it is natural to think that some sort of flying vehicles as attested by literary references was in all probability known. From the time of Panini upto the time of Bhoja we come across references to the great universities of Taxila, Valabhi, Dhar, Ujjain and Visala etc. The annals of history inform us that the depredations of the foreign tribes began as early as the 2nd century A.D. From two centuries later came succeeding waves of attacks of other foreign hordes like the Arabs, Turks and Afghans. All the well known universities and other centers of learning like the temples, the Viharas and the Bhandaras containing books and other priceless treasures of the Indian heritage had to stand the fire and fury of the marauders. In the dark firmament of devastation and uncertainty a silver lining was, however, **seen in the efforts of King Bhoja in the 12th century, when he tried to compile the Sanskrit texts.** Glimpses of old heritage survived only in the memory of the people and in stray literary evidences. State patronization for Indian Hindu cultural enterprises in the Turk-Afghan/Islamic period was a misnomer."

The original designation of the flying machine was "Ratha" which gave way for the term "Vimana". The Samarangana Sutradhara unequivocally suggested that the design of the plane was imitated to construct palaces. It was built by the Rbhus for the Gods. Gods as pointed out by Sayana came from remote space in the sky above and the obvious conclusion is that Gods as newcomers on the earth from outer space brought in this technology. The texts of the Rig Veda ranging from the 1st-10th Manadal refers to aerial flying machines as Ratha. In the Yajurveda which is considered chronologically later than the Rg Veda followed by other Brahmanas, the name "Vimanas" occurs. These vehicles were multi-shaped. But the triangular or quadrangular pattern survived owing to their practical utility. Puspaka the aerial vehicel survived in use because of its practical usefulness. In the Vedic texts the configuration of the machines has been broadly shown as triangular. The inside area as it can be gathered from the text was about 9 ft X 9 ft. = 81 sq. ft capable of accommodating 7/8 persons. In a triangular delta wing type this can be easily be made conical to give it greater feasibility and maneuverability.



Virupāksa temple of Pattakadal



Modern Helicopter compared with a temple.

The descriptions of the flying aerial cities in the Mahabharata seem to indicate a higher degree of scientific achievement and technical skill as the flying cities moved high up above the region of the clouds and very probably in the exosphere region. We have **earliest temple design** in a seal of the Harmika-sira temple built by King Hubiska at Buddha Gaya of the 1st century B.C.E. which is a rectangular based conical construction. The Virupaksa Temple of Pattakada, of 740 A.D. has a long rectangular base developed into a tapering square or hectagonal construction upwards imitate the Trivistapa type. The overall structural similarity of the temples with a modern helicopter gives overt cognizance to the Samarangana Sutradhara that temples were designed after the models of the flying machines. Even the giant Konaraka temple which resembles the chariot of Surya (Sun God) was of octagonal pattern on large rectangular base measuring 100 ft X 100 ft. X 100 ft. "

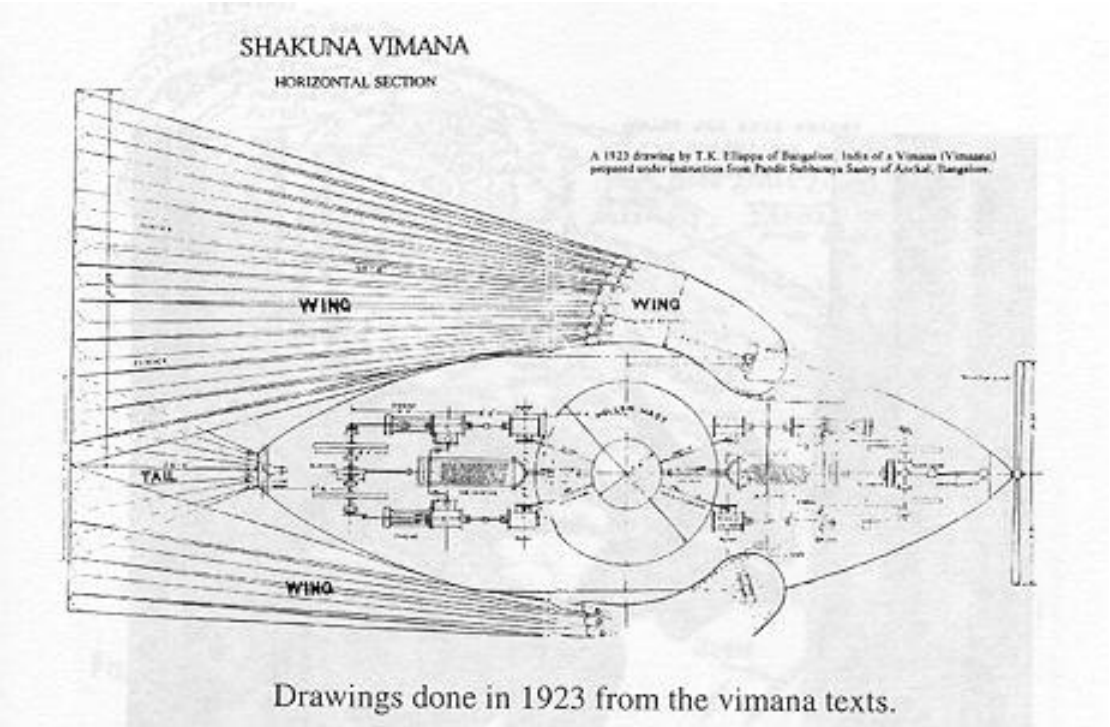
(source: **Vimana in Ancient India - By Dileep Kumar Kanjilal** Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar Calcutta 1985 p. 11-99). For more information, refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture**).

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Here is a survey of some fascinating articles and quotes:

"One time while King Citaketu was traveling in outer space on a brilliantly effulgent airplane given to him by Lord Vishnu, he saw Lord Siva..." "The arrows released by Lord Siva appeared like fiery beams emanating from the sun globe and covered the three residential airplanes, which could then no longer be seen."

Srimad Bhagavatam, Sixth Canto, Part 3



Drawings done in 1923 from the vimana texts.

"The so-called 'Rama Empire' of Northern India and Pakistan developed at least fifteen thousand years ago on the Indian sub-continent and was a nation of many large, sophisticated cities, many of which are still to be found in the deserts of Pakistan, northern, and western India. Rama...was ruled by 'enlightened Priest-Kings' who governed the cities. The seven greatest capital cities of Rama were known in classical Hindu texts as 'The Seven Rishi Cities'. According to ancient Indian texts, the people had flying machines which were called 'vimanas'. The ancient Indian epic describes a vimana as a double- deck, circular aircraft with portholes and a dome, much as we would imagine a flying saucer. It flew with the "speed of the wind" and gave forth a 'melodious sound'. There were at least four different types of vimanas; some saucer shaped, others like long cylinders ('cigar shaped airships')."

(source: **D. Hatcher Childress, "Ancient Indian Aircraft Technology" In The Anti-Gravity Handbook**)

" An aerial chariot, the Pushpaka, conveys many people to the capital of Ayodhya. The sky is full of stupendous flying-machines, dark as night,but picked out by lights with a yellowish glare."

- **Mahavira of Bhavabhuti** (A Jain text of the eighth century culled from older texts and traditions)

"The Vedas, ancient Hindu poems, thought to be the oldest of all the Indian texts, describe vimanas of various shapes and sizes: the 'ahnihotra-vimana' with two engines, the 'elephant-vimana' with more engines, and other types named after the kingfisher, ibis and other animals."

(source: **D. Hatcher Childress, "Ancient Indian Aircraft Technology" In The Anti-Gravity Handbook)**

"Now Vata's chariot's greatness! Breaking goes it, And Thunderous is its noise, To heaven it touches, Makes light lurid [a red fiery glare], and whirls dust upon the earth."

Rig-Veda (Vata is the Aryan god of wind.)
In the Vedic literature of India, there are many descriptions of flying machines that are generally called vimanas. These fall into two categories: (1) manmade craft that resemble airplanes and fly with the aid of birdlike wings, and (2) unstreamlined structures that fly in a mysterious manner and are generally not made by human beings. The machines in category (1) are described mainly in medieval, secular Sanskrit works dealing with architecture, automata, military siege engines, and other mechanical contrivances. Those in category (2) are described in ancient works such as the Rg Veda, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Puranas, and they have many features reminiscent of UFOs."
"There are ancient Indian accounts of manmade wooden vehicles that flew with wings in the manner of modern airplanes. Although these wooden vehicles were also called vimanas, most vimanas were not at all like airplanes. The more typical vimanas had flight characteristics resembling those reported for

UFOs, and the being associated with them were said to possess powers similar to those presently ascribed to UFO entities. An interesting example of a vimana is the flying machine which Salva, an ancient Indian king, acquired from Maya Danava, an inhabitant of a planetary system called Taltala."

Richard L. Thompson, Alien Identities

"The cruel Salva had come mounted on the Saubha chariot that can go anywhere, and from it he killed many valiant Vrishni youths and evilly devastated all the city parks."

The Mahabharata



There is this account by the hero Krishna that is suggestive of more modern weapons. As he takes to the skies in pursuit of Salva: "His Saubha clung to the sky at a league's length...He threw at me rockets, missiles, spears, spikes, battle-axes, three-bladed javelins, flame-throwers, without pausing....The sky...seemed to hold a hundred suns, a hundred moons...and a hundred myriad stars. Neither day nor night could be made out, or the points of compass."

"The airplane occupied by Salva was very mysterious. It was so extraordinary that sometimes many airplanes would appear to be in the sky, and sometimes there were apparently none. Sometimes the plane was visible and sometimes not visible, and the warriors of the Yadu dynasty were puzzled about the whereabouts of the peculiar airplane. Sometimes they would see the airplane on the ground, sometimes flying in the sky, sometimes resting on the peak of a hill and sometimes floating on the water. The wonderful airplane flew in the sky like a whirling firebrand - it was not steady even for a moment."

Bhaktivedanta, Swami Prabhupada, Krsna

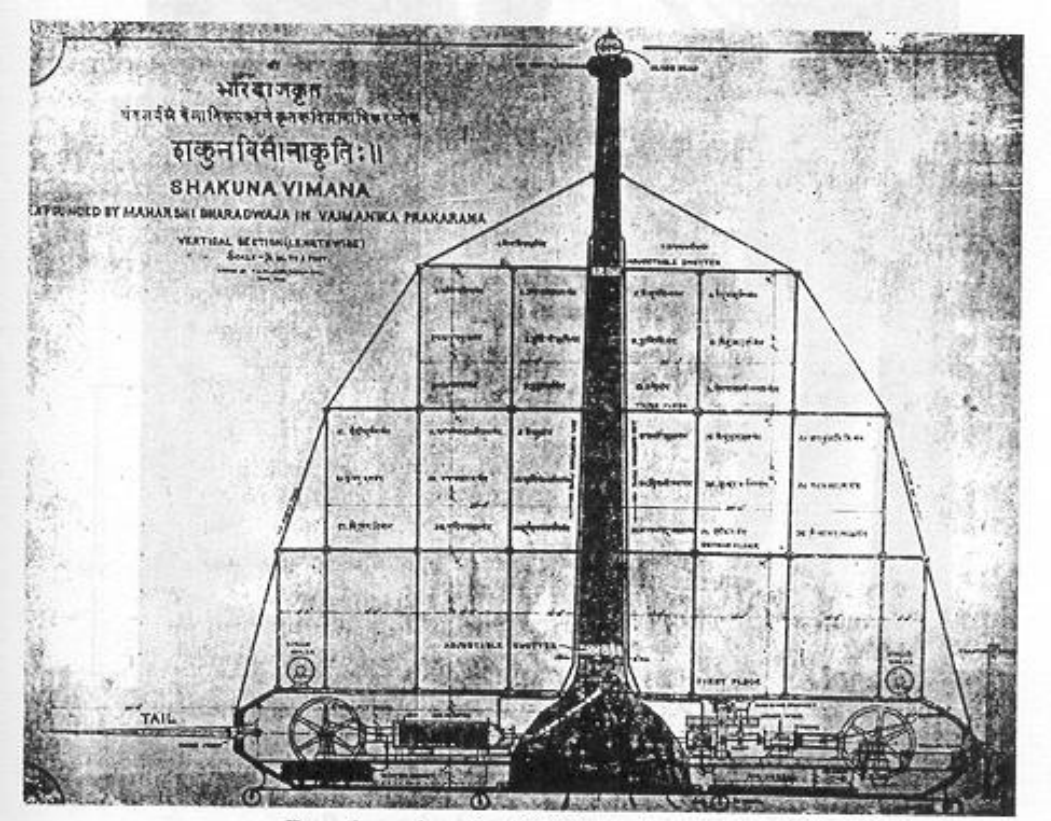
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India had a Superior Civilization
BANGALORE, OCTOBER 11
http://www.ufobbs.com/txt3/2644.ufo



India may have had a superior civilization with possible contacts with extraterrestrial visitors, and the flying devices called 'Vimanas' described in ancient Indian texts may underline their possible connections with today's aerospace technology, an Italian scientist told the World Space Conference here today. Dr. Roberto Pinotti asked the delegates to examine in detail the Hindu texts instead of dismissing 'all the Vimana descriptions and traditions as mere myth.' "The importance of such studies and investigations could prove to be shocking for today's man because the existence of flying devices beyond mythology can only be explained with a forgotten superior civilization on earth," he said. Pointing out that Indian Gods and heroes fought in the skies using piloted vehicles with terrible weapons.

Dr. Pinotti said they were similar to modern jet propelled flying machines. 32 secrets: He said certain descriptions of the Vimanas seemed 'too detailed and technical in nature to be labeled as myth.' He cited various texts to show there were 32 secrets relating to the operation of Vimanas, some of which could be compared to modern day use of radar, solar energy and photography. Quoting from 'Vymanika Shastra' he said the ancient flying devices of India were made from special heat absorbing metals named 'Somaka, Soundalike and Mourthwika.' He said the text also discussed the seven kinds of mirror and lenses installed aboard for defensive and offensive uses. The so-called 'Pinjula Mirror' offered a sort of 'visual shield' preventing the pilots from being blinded by 'evil rays' and the weapon 'Marika' used to shoot enemy aircraft 'does not seem too different from what we today called laser technology,' he said.



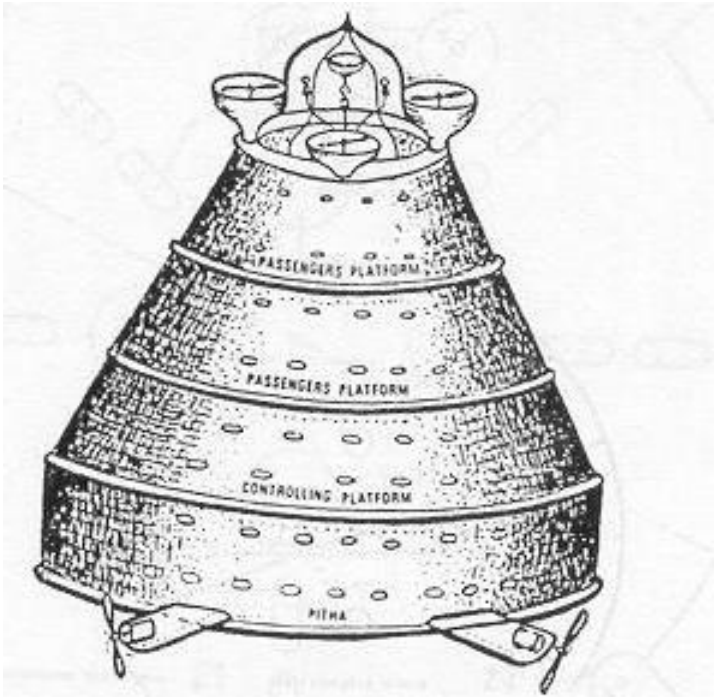
Drawings done in 1923 from the vimana texts.

According to the Italian expert, the 'principles of Page 1 propulsion as far as the descriptions were concerned, might be defined as electrical and chemical but solar energy was also involved. For instance, the 'Tripura Vimana' mentioned in 'Vymanika Shastra' was a large craft operated by 'motive power generated by solar rays,' Dr. Pinotti said, adding 'its elongated form was surely much closer to that of a modern blimp.' Sophisticated design: According to Dr. Pinotti, the huge 'Shakuna Vimana' described in the text 'might be defined as a cross between a plane and a rocket of our times and its design might remind one of today's space shuttle.' 'Surely, it expresses the most complex and sophisticated aeronautical design among all the other descriptions of Vimanas mentioned in the 'Vymanika Shastra,' he said.

He described the author of the treatise **'Vymanika Shastra'** as a man 'attempting to explain an advanced technology.' Dr. Pinotti, who has made an exhaustive study of the history of Indian astronautics, said another text, **Samaraanganasutraadhaara** had 230 stanzas devoted to the principles of building Vimanas and their use in peace and war. He said ancient Aryans knew the use of the element 'fire' as could be seen from their 'Astra' weapons that included Soposamhara (flame belching missile), Prasvapna (which caused sleep) and four kinds of Agni Astras that traveled in sheets of flame and produced thunder. He said the car that was supposed to go up to Suryamandal (solar system) and the Naksatramandala (stellar system) cannot be dismissed as a myth because of the 'technical nature' of its description. Dr. Pinotti said depictions of space travel, total destruction by incredible weapons and the fact that Vimanas resembled modern unidentified flying objects would suggest that India had a 'superior but forgotten civilization.' 'In the light of this, we think it will be better to examine the Hindu texts' and subject the descriptive models of Vimanas to more scientific scrutiny,' he said.- Jerry W. Decker.....Ron Barker.....Chuck Henderson - Vangard Sciences/KeelyNet

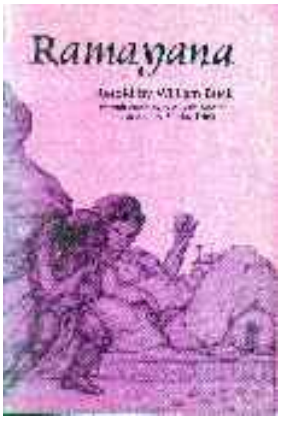
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Ancient Writings tell of UFO visit in 4,000 B.C.
Contributed by John Burrows
http://www.ufobbs.com/txt3/2124.ufo



India, according to Dr.V. Raghavan, retired head of the Sanskrit department of India`s pretigious University of Madras, was alone in playing host to extraterrestrials in prehistory. Dr. Raghavan contends that centuries-old documents in Sanskrit (the classical language of India and Hinduism) prove that aliens from outer space visited his nation. "Fifty years of researching this ancient works convinces me that there are livings beings on other planets, and that they visited earth as far back as4,000 B.C., " The scholar says. "There is a just a mass of fascinating information about flying machines, even fantastic science fiction weapons, that can be found in translations of the Vedas (scriptures), Indian epics, and other ancient Sanskrit text. "In the Mahabharata (writings), there is notion of divine lighting and ray weapons, even a kind of hypnotic weapon. And in the Ramayana (writings), there is a description of Vimanas, or flying machines, that navigated at great heights with the aid of quicksilver and a great propulsive wind. "These were space vehicles similar to the so-called flying saucers reported throughout the world today.

The Ramayana even describes a beautiful chariot which 'arrived shining, a wonderful divine car that sped through the air'. In another passage, there is mention of a chariot being seen 'sailing overhead like a moon.' "The references in the Mahabharata are no less astounding: `



At Rama`s behest, the magnificent chariot rose up to a mountain of cloud with a tremendous din.` Another passage reads: `Bhima flew with his Vimana on an enormous ray which was as brilliant as the sun and made a noise like the thunder of a storm." In the ancient Vymanka-Shastra (science of aeronautics), there is a description of a Vimana: "An apparatus which can go by its own force, from one place to place or globe to globe." Dr. Raghavan points out, "The text`s revelations become even more astounding. Thirty-one parts-of which the machine consists-are described, including a photographing mirror underneath. The text also enumerates 16 kinds of metal that are needed to construct the flying vehicle: `Metals suitable, lighare 16 kinds. `But only three of them are known to us today. The rest remain untranslatable." Another authority who agrees with Dr. Raghavan`s interpretations is Dr. A.V. Krishna Murty, professor of aeronautics at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. "It is true," Dr. Krishna Murty says, "that the ancient Indian Vedas and other text refer to aeronautics, spaceships, flying machines, ancient astronauts. "A study of the Sanskrit texts has convinced me that ancient India did know the secret of building flying machines-and that those machines were patterned after spaceships coming from other planets."

The Vedic traditions of India tell us that we are now in the Fourth Age of mankind. The Vedas call them the "The Golden Age", "The Silver Age", and "The Bronze Age" and we are now, according to their scriptures in the "The Iron Age". As we approach the end of the 20th century both Native Americans, Mayans, and Incans, prophecies claim that we are coming to the end of an age. Sanskrit texts are filled with references to Gods who fought battles in the sky using Vihmanas equipped with weapons as deadly as any we can deploy in these more enlightened times.

For example, there is a passage in the Ramayana which reads:

The Puspaka car that resembles the Sun and belongs to my brother was brought by the powerful Ravan; that aerial and excellent car going everywhere at will.... that car resembling a bright cloud in the sky.".. and the King [Rama] got in, and the excellent car at the command of the Raghira, rose up into the higher atmosphere."

In the Mahabharata, an ancient Indian poem of enormous length, we learn that an individual named Asura Maya had a Vimana measuring twelve cubits in circumference, with four strong wheels. The poem is a veritable gold mine of information relating to conflicts between gods who settled their differences apparently using weapons as lethal as the ones we are capable of deploying.

Apart from 'blazing missiles', the poem records the use of other deadly weapons. 'Indra's Dart' operated via a circular 'reflector'. When switched on, it produced a 'shaft of light' which, when focused on any target, immediately 'consumed it with its power'. In one particular exchange, the hero, Krishna, is pursuing his enemy, Salva, in the sky, when Salva's Vimana, the Saubha is made invisiblein some way. Undeterred, Krishna immediately fires off a special weapon: 'I quickly laid on an arrow, which killed by seeking out sound'.

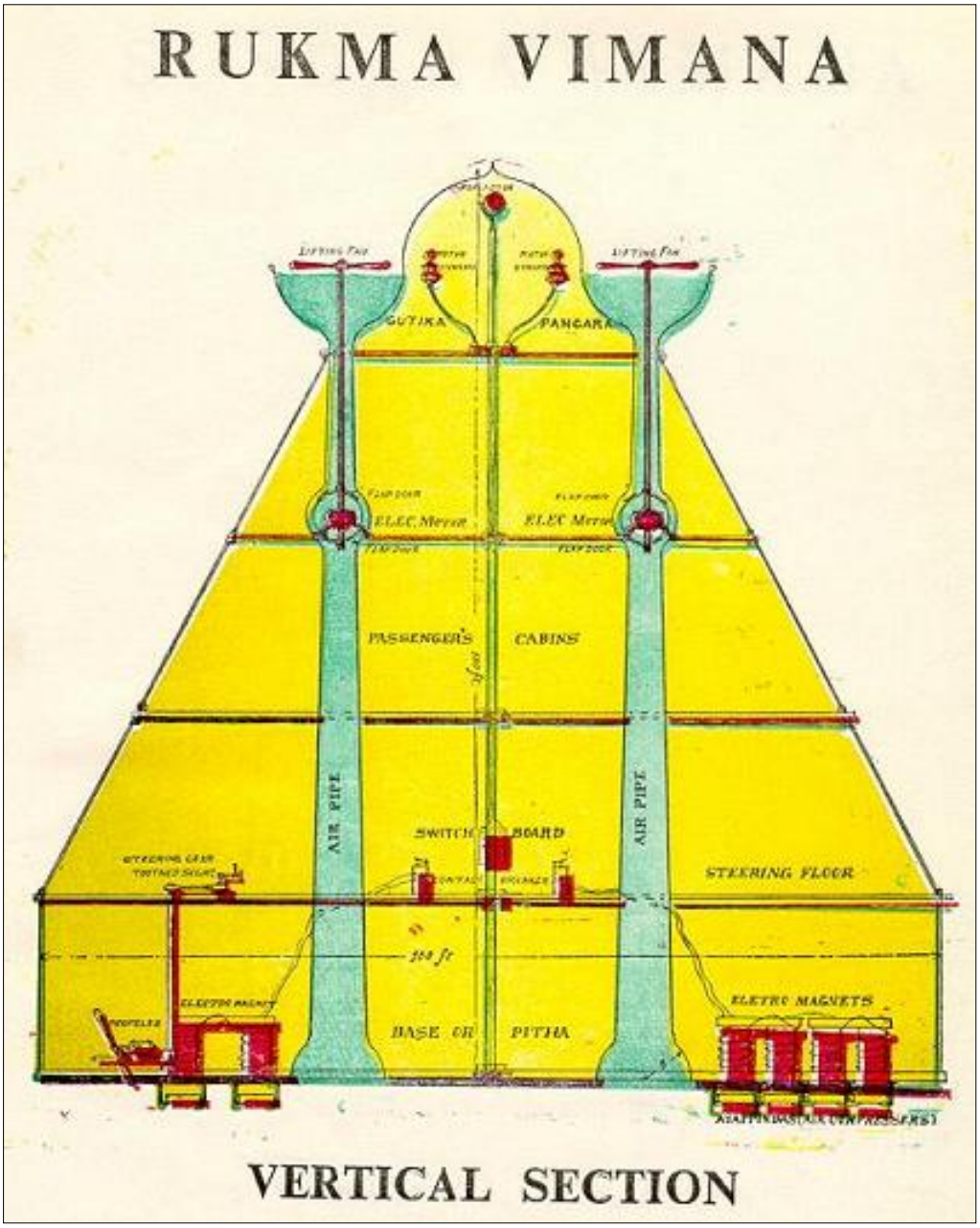


Many other terrible weapons are described, quite matter of factly, in the Mahabharata, but the most fearsome of all is the one used against the Vrishis. The narrative records:

Gurkha flying in his swift and powerful Vimana hurled against the three cities of the Vrishis and Andhakas a single projectile charged with all the power of the Universe. An incandescent column of smoke and fire, as brilliant as ten thousands suns, rose in all its splendor. It was the unknown weapon, the Iron Thunderbolt, a gigantic messenger of death which reduced to ashesthe entire race of the Vrishnis and Andhakas.

It is important to note, that these kinds of records are not isolated. They can be cross-correlated with similar reports in other ancient civilizations.

The after-affects of this Iron Thunderbolt have anonymously recognizable ring. Apparently, those killed by it were so burnt that their corpses were unidentifiable. The survivors fared little ether, as it caused their hair and nails to fall out. Perhaps the most disturbing and challenging, information about these allegedly mythical Vimanas in the ancient records is that there are some matter-of-fact records, describing how to build one. In their way, the instructions are quite precise. In the Sanskrit **Samaraanganasutraadhaara** it is written:



Strong and durable must the body of the Vimana be made, like a great flying bird of light material. Inside one must put the mercury engine with its iron heating apparatus underneath. By means of the power latent in the mercury which sets the driving whirlwind in motion, a man sitting inside may travel a great distance in the sky. The movements of the Vimana are such that it can vertically ascend, vertically descend, move slanting forwards and backwards. With the help of the machines human beings can fly in the air and heavenly beings can come down to earth.

The Hakatha (Laws of the Babylonians) states quite unambiguously: The privilege of operating a flying machine is great. The knowledge of flight is among the most ancient of our inheritances. A gift from 'those from upon high'. We received it from them as a means of saving many lives.

More fantastic still is the information given in the ancient Chaldean work, The Sifrala, which contains over one hundred pages of technical details on building a flying machine. It contains words which translate as graphite rod, copper coils, crystal indicator, vibrating spheres, stable angles, etc. **'Ancient Indian Aircraft Technology'** From **The Anti-Gravity Handbook** by D. Hatcher Childress.

Many researchers into the UFO enigma tend to overlook a very important fact. While it assumed that most flying saucers are of alien, or perhaps Governmental Military origin, another possible origin of UFOs is ancient India and Atlantis. What we know about ancient Indian flying vehicles comes from ancient Indian sources; written texts that have come down to us through the centuries. There is no

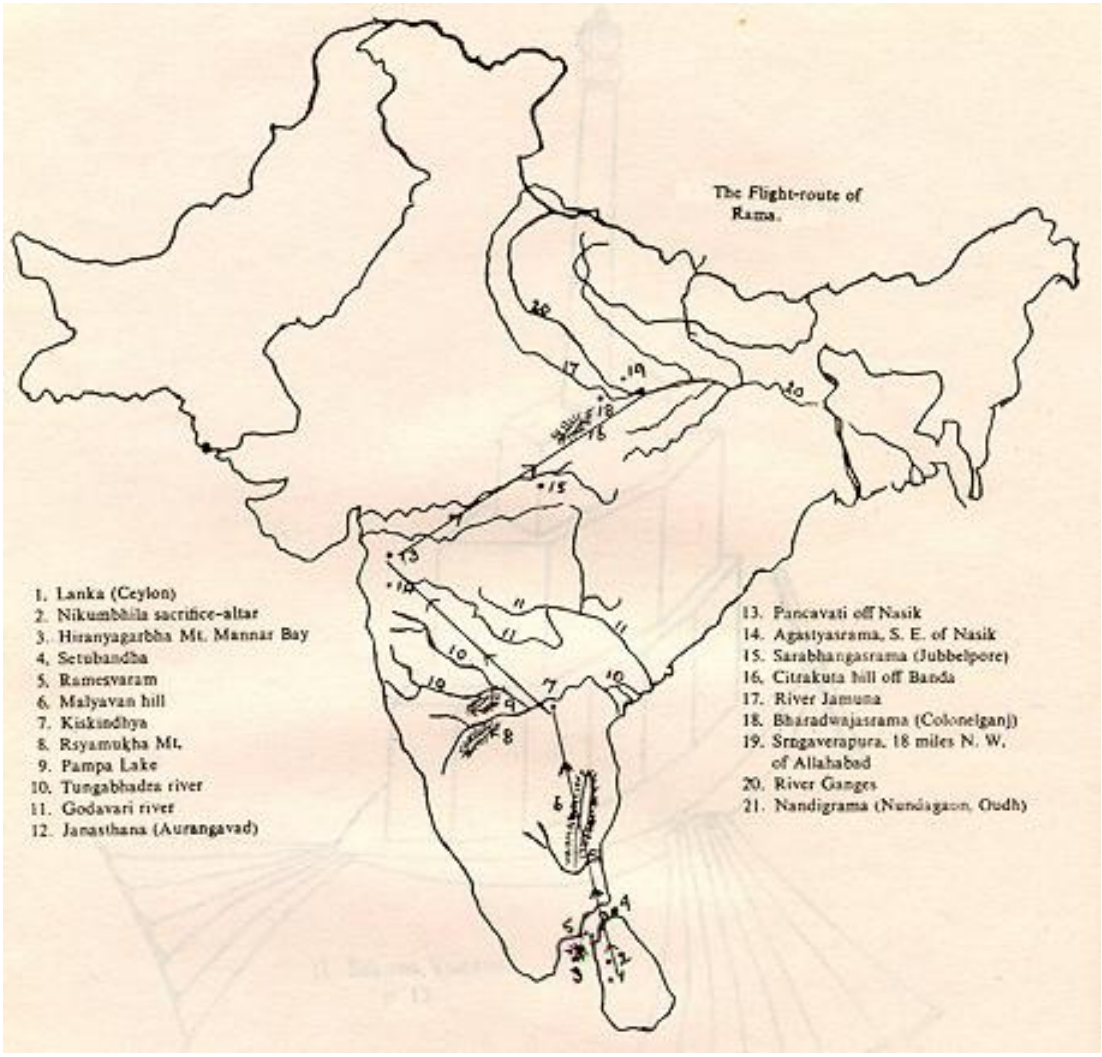
doubt that most of these texts are authentic; many arethe well known ancient Indian Epics themselves, and there are literally hundreds of them. Most of them have not even been translated into English yet from the old sanskrit.



The Indian Emperor Ashoka started a "Secret Society of the Nine Unknown Men": great Indian scientists who were supposed to catalogue the many sciences. Ashoka kept their work secret because he was afraid that the advanced science catalogued by these men, culled from ancient Indian sources, would be used for the evil purpose of war, which Ashoka was strongly against, having beenconverted to Buddhism after defeating a rival army in a bloody battle. The"Nine Unknown Men" wrote a total of nine books, presumably one each. Book number was "The Secrets of Gravitation!" This book, known to historians, but not actually seen by them dealt chiefly with "gravity control." It is presumably still around somewhere, kept in a secret library in India, Tibet or else where (perhaps even in North America somewhere). One can certainly understand Ashoka's reasoning for wanting to keep such knowledge a secret, assuming it exists. Ashoka was also aware of devastating wars using such advanced vehicles and other "futuristic weapons" that had destroyed the ancient Indian "Rama Empire" several thousand years before.

Only a few years ago, the Chinese discovered some Sanskrit documents in Lhasa, Tibet and sent them to the University of Chandrigarh to be translated. Dr. Ruth Reyna of the University said recently that the documents contain directions for building interstellar spaceships! Their method of propulsion, she said, was "anti- gravitational" and was based upon a system analogous to that of "laghima," the unknown power of the ego existing in man's physiological makeup, "a centrifugal force strong enough tocounteract all gravitational pull." According to Hindu Yogis, it is this "laghima" which enables a person to levitate. Dr. Reyna said that on board these machines, which were called "Astras" by the text, the ancient Indians could have sent a detachment of men onto any planet,according to the document, which is thought to be thousands of years old. Themanuscripts were also said to reveal the secret of "antima"; "the cap ofinvisibility" and "garima"; "how to become as heavy as a mountain of lead."Naturally, Indian scientists did not take the texts very seriously, but thenbecame more positive about the value of them when the Chinese announced that they were including certain parts of the data for study in their spaceprogram! This was one of the first instances of a government admitting to be researching anti-gravity. The manuscripts did not say definitely that interplanetary travel was evermade but did mention, of all things, a planned trip to the Moon, though it is not clear whether this trip was actually carried out.

However, one of the great Indian epics,the Ramayana, does have a highly detailed story in it of atrip to the moon in a Vihmana (or "Astra"), and in fact details a battle on themoon with an "Asvin" (or Atlantean") airship. This is but a small bit ofrecent evidence of anti-gravity and aerospace technology used by Indians. To really understand the technology, we must go much further back in time. The so-called "Rama Empire" of Northern India and Pakistan developed at leastfifteen thousand years ago on the Indian subcontinent and was a nation of manylarge, sophisticated cities, many of which are still to be found in the deserts of Pakistan, northern, and western India. Rama existed, apparently, parallel to the Atlantean civilization in the mid- Atlantic Ocean, and wasruled by "enlightened Priest-Kings" who governed the cities.



Flight Route of Rama
(source: Vimana in Ancient India - By Dileep Kumar Kanjilal).

The seven greatest capital cities of Rama were known in classical Hindu texts as *The Seven Rishi Cities* According to ancient Indian texts, the people had flying machines which were called "Vimanas." The ancient Indian epic describes a Vimana as a double deck, circular aircraft with portholes and a dome, much as we would imagine a flying saucer. It flew with the "speed of the wind" and gave forth a "melodious sound." There were at least four different types of Vimanas; some saucer shaped, others like long cylinders ("cigar shaped airships").

The ancient Indian texts on Vimanas are so numerous, it would take volumes to relate what they had to say. The ancient Indians, who manufactured these ships themselves, wrote entire flight manuals on the control of the various types of Vimanas, many of which are still in existence, and some have even been translated into English. The **Samaraanganasutraadhaara** is a scientific treatise dealing with every possible angle of air travel in a Vimana.

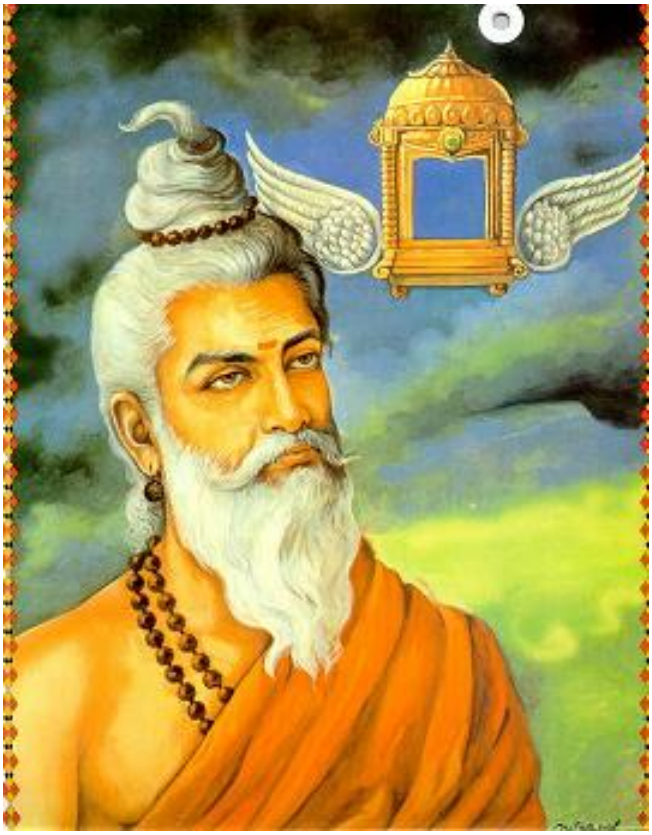
There are 230 stanzas dealing with the construction, take-off, cruising for thousand of miles, normal and forced landings, and even possible collisions with birds. In 1875, the Vaimanika Sastra, a fourth century B.C. text written by **Bharadwaj the Wise**, using even older texts as his source, was rediscovered in a temple in India. It dealt with the operation of Vimanas and included information on the steering, precautions for long flights, protection of the airships from storms and lightning and how to switch the drive to "solar energy" from a free energy source which sounds like "anti-gravity."

The Vaimanika Sastra (or Vymaanika-Shaastra) has eight chapters with diagrams, describing three types of aircraft, including apparatuses that could neither catch on fire nor break. It also mentions 31 essential parts of these vehicles and 16 materials from which they are constructed, which absorb light and heat; for which reason they were considered suitable for the construction of Vimanas. This document has been translated into English and is available by writing the publisher:

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VYMAANIDASHAASTRA AERONAUTICS by Maharishi Bharadwaaja, translated into English and edited, printed and published by Mr. G. R.Josyer, Mysore, India, 1979.

G. R. Josyer is the director of the International Academy of Sanskrit Investigation, located in Mysore. There seems to be no doubt that Vimanas were powered by some sort of "anti-gravity." Vimanas took off vertically, and were capable of hovering in the sky, like a modern helicopter or dirigible.



Bharadwaj the Wise refers to no less than seventy authorities and 10 experts of air travel in antiquity. These sources are now lost. Vimanas were kept in a Vimana Griha, a kind of hanger, and were sometimes said to be propelled by a yellowish-white liquid, and sometimes by some sort of mercury compound, though writers seem confused in this matter. It is most likely that the later writers on Vimanas, wrote as observers and from earlier texts, and were understandably confused on the principle of their propulsion. The "yellowish- white liquid" sounds suspiciously like gasoline, and perhaps Vimanas had a number of different propulsion sources, including combustion engines and even "pulse-jet" engines. It is interesting to note, that the Nazis developed the first practical pulse-jet engines for their V-8 rocket "buzz bombs."

Hitler and the Nazi staff were exceptionally interested in ancient India and Tibet and sent expeditions to both these places yearly, starting in the 30's, in order to gather esoteric evidence that they did so, and perhaps it was from these people that the Nazis gained some of their scientific information! According to the Dronaparva, part of the **Mahabharat**a, and the **Ramayana**, one Vimana described was shaped like a sphere and born along at great speed on a mighty wind generated by mercury. It moved like a UFO, going up, down, backwards and forwards as the pilot desired. In another Indian source, the Samar, Vimanas were "iron machines, well-knit and smooth, with a charge of mercury that shot out of the back in the form of a roaring flame."

Another work called the **Samaranganasutradhara** describes how the vehicles were constructed. It is possible that mercury did have something to do with the propulsion, or more possibly, with the guidance system. Curiously, Soviet scientists have discovered what they call "age old instruments used in navigating cosmic vehicles" in caves in Turkestan and the Gobi Desert. The "devices" are hemispherical objects of glass or porcelain, ending in a cone with a drop of mercury inside. It is evident that ancient Indians flew around in these vehicles, all over Asia, to Atlantis presumably; and even, apparently, to South America.


Harappan Seal

Writing found at Mohenjodaro in Pakistan (presumed to be one of the **"Seven Rishi Cities of the Rama Empire"** and still un deciphered, has also been found in one other place in the world: Easter Island! Writing on Easter Island, called Rongo-Rongo writing, is also un deciphered, and is uncannily similar to the Mohenjodaro script. Was Easter Island an air base for the Rama Empire's Vimana route? (At the Mohenjo- Daro Vimana-drome, as the passenger walks down the concourse, he hears the sweet, melodic sound of the announcer over the loud speaker," Rama Airways flight number seven for Bali, Easter Island, Nazca, and Atlantis is now ready for boarding. Passengers please proceed to gate number..") in Tibet, no small distance, and speaks of the "fiery chariot" thus: "Bhima flew along in his car, resplendent as the sun and loud as thunder... The flying chariot shone like a flame in the night sky of summer... it swept by like a comet... It was as if two suns were shining. Then the chariot rose up and all the heaven brightened." In the Mahavira of Bhavabhuti, a Jain text of the eighth century culled from older texts and traditions, we read: "An aerial chariot, the Pushpaka, conveysmany people to the capital of Ayodhya.

The sky is full of stupendousflying-machines, dark as night,but picked out by lights with a yellowishglare." The Vedas, ancient Hindu poems, thought to be the oldest of all theIndian texts, describe Vimanas of various shapes and sizes: the "ahnihotravimana" with two engines, the"elephant-vimana" with more engines, and other types named after the kingfisher, ibis and other animals. Unfortunately, Vimanas, like most scientific discoveries, were ultimately used for war. Atlanteans used their flying machines, "Vailixi," a similar type of aircraft, to literally try and subjugate the world, it would seem, if Indiantexts are to be believed.



The Atlanteans, known as "Asvins" in the Indian writings, were apparently even more advanced technologically than the Indians, and certainly of a more war-like temperament. Although no ancient texts on Atlantean Vailixi are known to exist, some information has come down through esoteric, "occult" sources which describe their flying machines. Similar, if not identical to Vimanas, Vailixi were generally "cigar shaped" and had the capability of manoeuvering underwater as well as in the atmosphere or even outer space. Other vehicles, like Vimanas, were saucer shaped, and could apparently also be submerged.

According to **Eklal Kueshana,** author of **"The Ultimate Frontier,"** in an article he wrote in 1966:

Vailixi were first developed in Atlantis 20,000 years ago, and the most common ones are "saucer shaped of generally trapezoidal cross- section with three hemispherical engine pods on the underside. They use a mechanical antigravity device driven by engines developing approximately 80,000 horse power. The Ramayana, Mahabharata and other texts speak of the hideous war that took place, some ten or twelve thousand years ago between Atlantis and Rama using weapons of destruction that could not be imagined by readers until the second half of this century.

The ancient Mahabharata, one of the sources on Vimanas, goes on to tell the awesome destructiveness of the war: "...(the weapon was) a single projectile charged with all the power of the Universe. An incandescent column of smoke and flame as bright as the thousand suns rose in all its splendor. An iron thunderbolt, a gigantic messenger of death, which reduced to ashes the entire race of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. The corpses were so burned as to be unrecognizable. The hair and nails fell out; pottery broke without apparent cause, and the birds turned white.... after a few hours all foodstuffs were infected.... to escape from this fire, the soldiers threw themselves in streams to wash themselves and their equipment..."



It would seem that the Mahabharata is describing an atomic war! References like this one are not isolated; but battles, using a fantastic array of weapons and aerial vehicles are common in all the epic Indian books.

One even describes a Vimana-Vailixbattle on the Moon! The above section very accurately describes what an atomic explosion would look like and the effects of the radioactivity on the population. Jumping into water is the only respite. When the Rishi City of Mohenjodaro was excavated by archaeologists in the last century, they found skeletons just lying in the streets, some of them holding hands, as if some great doom had suddenly overtaken them. These skeletons are among the most radioactive ever found, on a par with those found at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ancient cities whose brick and stonewalls have literally been vitrified, that is-fused together, can be found in India, Ireland, Scotland, France, Turkey and other places. There is no logical explanation for the vitrification of stone forts and cities, except from an atomic blast.

Further more, at Mohenjo-Daro, a well planned city laid on a grid, with a plumbing system superior to those used in Pakistan and India today, the streets were littered with "black lumps of glass." These globs of glass were discovered to be clay pots that had melted under intense heat! With the cataclysmic sinking of Atlantis and the wiping out of Rama with atomic weapons, the world collapsed into a "stone age" of sorts, and modern history picks up a few thousand years later Yet, it would seem that not all the Vimanas and Vailixi of Rama and Atlantis were gone. Built to last for thousands of years, many of them would still be in use, as evidenced by Ashoka's "Nine Unknown Men" and the Lhasa manuscript.



That secret societies or "Brotherhoods" of exceptional, "enlightened" human beings would have preserved these inventions and the knowledge of science, history, etc., does not seem surprising. Many well known historical personages including Jesus, Buddah, Lao Tzu, Confucious, Krishna, Zoroaster, Mahavira, Quetzalcoatl, Akhenaton, Moses, and more recent inventors and of course many other people who will probably remain anonymous, were probably members of such a secret organization. It is interesting to note that when Alexander the Great invaded India more than two thousand years ago, his historians chronicled that at one point they were attacked by "flying, fiery shields" that dove at his army and frightened the cavalry. These "flying saucers" did not use any atomic bombs or beam weapons on Alexander's army however, perhaps out of benevolence, and Alexander went on to conquer India. It has been suggested by many writers that these "Brotherhoods" keep some of their Vimanas and Vailixi in secret caverns in Tibet or some other place is Central Asia, and the Lop Nor Desert in western China is known to be the center of a great UFO mystery. Perhaps it is here that many of the airships are still kept, in underground bases much as the Americans, British and Soviets have built around the world in the past few decades. Still, not all UFO activity can be accounted for by old Vimanas making trips to the Moon for some reason. Unknown alloys have been revealed in the ancient palm leaf manuscripts.

The writer and Sanskrit scholar Subramanyam Iyer has spent many years of his life deciphering old collections of palm leaves found in the villages of his native Karnataka in southern India. One of the palm leaf manuscripts they intend to decipher is the Amsu Bodhini, which, according to an anonymous text of 1931, contains information about the planets; the different kinds of light, heat, color, and electromagnetic fields; the methods used to construct machines capable of attracting solar rays and, in turn, of analysing and separating their energy components; the possibility of conversing with people in remote places and sending messages by cable; and the manufacture of machines to transport people to other planets!

Contributed by John Burrows

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In one episode, for example, the Vrishnis, a tribe whose warriors include the hero Krishna, are beset by the forces of a leader named Salva.

"The cruel Salva had come mounted on the Saubha chariot that can go anywhere, and from it he killed many valiant Vrishni youths and evilly devastated all city parks."



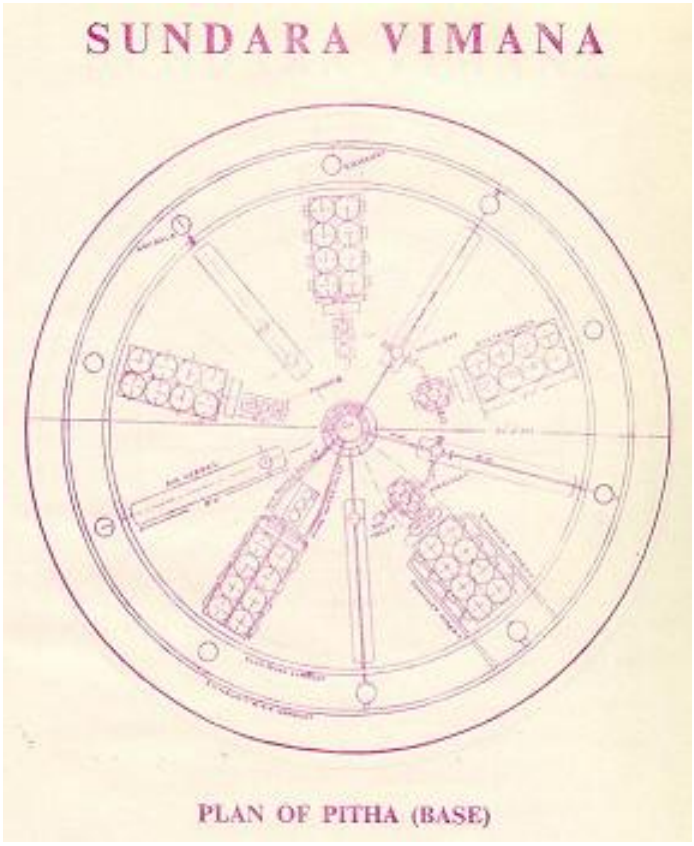
The Saubha is at once Salva's city, flagship, and battle headquarters. In it, he can fly wherever he chooses. Fortunately, the Vrishni heroes are similarly well equipped, and at one point have Salva at their mercy. The hero Pradyumna is about to finish him off with a special weapon, when the highest gods stop him "Not a man in battle is safe from this arrow," they say, and declare that Salva will fall to Krishna.

Krishna took to the sky in pursuit of Salva, but his Saubha clung to the sky at a leagues length... He threw at me rockets, missiles, spears, spikes, battleaxes, three-bladed javelins, flame-throwers, without pausing... The sky... seemed to hold a hundred suns, a hundred moons... and a hundred myriad stars. Neither day nor night could be made out, or the points of a compass.

Krishna, however, wards off Salva's attack with what sounds like antiballistic missiles; I warded them off as they loomed towards me
With my swift-striking shafts, as they flashed through the sky,
And I cut them into two or three pieces with mine --
There was a great din in the sky above.

However, the Saubha becomes invisible. Krishna then loads a special weapon, perhaps an ancient version of a smart bomb? I quickly laid on an arrow, which killed by seeking out sound, to kill them... All the Danavas [Salva's troops] who had been screeching lay dead, killed by the blazing sun like arrows that were triggered by sound.

However, the Sauba itself escaped the attack. Krishna fires his "favorite fire weapon" at it, a discus shaped like the "haloed sun". The discus breaks the Saubha in two, and the city falls from the sky, killing Salva. This is the end of the Mahabharata.



One of the most intriguing thing about it is that the use of Pradyumna's special arrow, from which "not a man in battle is safe", was outlawed by the gods. What sort of weapon could this be? Another chapter, describing the use of the Agneya weapon by the hero Adwattan. When the weapon, a "blazing missile of smokeless fire" is unleashed;

Dense arrows of flame, like a great shower, issued forth upon creation, encompassing the enemy... A thick gloom swiftly settled upon the Pandava hosts. All points of the compass were lost in darkness.
Fierce winds began to blow. Clouds roared upward, showering dust and gravel.
Birds coaked madly... the very elements seemed disturbed. The sun seemed to waver in the heavens. The earth shook, scorched by the terrible violent heat of this weapon.
Elephants burst into flame and ran to and fro in a frenzy... over a vast area, other animals crumpled to the ground and died. From all points of the compass the arrows of flame rained continuously and fiercely.

And if that sounded like a firestorm, then a similar weapon fired by Gurkha sounds like nothing less than a nuclear blast complete with radioactive fallout;

Gurkha, flying in his swift and powerful Vimana, hurled against the three cities of the Vrishnis and Andhakas a single projectile charged with all the power of the universe. An incandescent column of smoke and fire, as brilliant as ten thousand suns, rose in all its splendor. It was the unknown weapon, the iron thunderbolt, a gigantic messenger of death which reduced to ashes the entire race of Vrishnis and Andhakas.

The corpses were so burnt they were no longer recognizable. Hair and nails fell out. Pottery broke without cause... Foodstuffs were poisoned. To escape, the warriors threw themselves in streams to wash themselves and their equipment.

The Indian Vimana - **http://www.realshades.com/mystic/mysteries/myst-vimana-01.html**

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Fly the Friendly skies in Air India Vimanas (excerpts)
By David Hatcher Childress
(source: **Technology of the Gods: The Incredible Sciences of the Ancients** p 147-209)

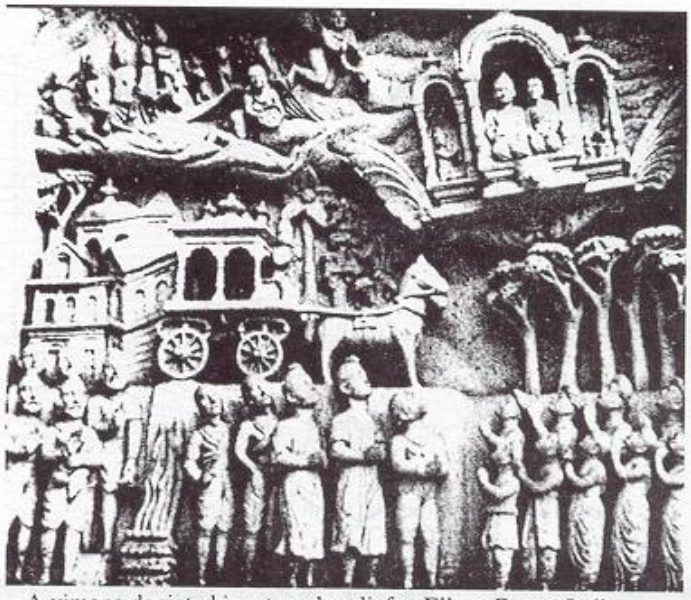
Nearly every Hindu and Buddhist in the world - hundreds of millions of people has heard of the ancient flying machines referred to in the Ramayana and other texts as vimanas. Vimanas are mentioned even today in standard Indian literature and media reports. An article called “Flight Path” by the Indian journalist Mukul Sharma appeared in the major newspaper **The Times of India** on April 8, 1999 which talked about vimanas and ancient warfare:

According to some interpretations of surviving texts, India’s future it seems happened way back in the past. Take the case of the Yantra Sarvasva, said to have been written by the sage **Maharshi Bhardwaj.**

This consists of as many as 40 sections of which one, the Vaimanika Prakarana dealing with aeronautics, has 8 chapters, a hundred topics and 500 sutras.

In it Bhardwaj describes vimana, or aerial aircrafts, as being of three classes:

1. those that travel from place to place;
2. those that travel from one country to another;
3. those that travel between planets.



A vimana depicted in a temple relief at Ellora Caves, India.

Of special concern among these were the military planes whose functions were delineated in some very considerable detail and which read today like something clean out of science fiction. For instance, they had to be:

Impregnable, unbreakable, non-combustible and indestructible capable of coming to a dead stop in the twinkling of an eye; invisible to enemies; capable of listening to the conversations and sounds in hostile planes; technically proficient to see and record things, persons, incidents and situations going on inside enemy planes; know at every stage the direction of the movement of other aircraft in the vicinity; capable of rendering the enemy crew into a state of suspended animation, intellectual torpor or complete loss of consciousness; capable of destruction; manned by pilots and co-travelers who could adapt in accordance with the climate in which they moved; temperature regulated inside; constructed of very light and heat absorbing metals; provided with mechanisms that could enlarge or reduce images and enhance or diminish sounds.

Notwithstanding the fact that such contraption would resemble a cross between an American state-of-the-art Stealth Fighter and a flying saucer, does it mean that air and space travel was well known to ancient Indians and aeroplanes flourished in India when the rest of the world was just learning the rudiments of agriculture? Aerial battles and chases are common in ancient Hindu literature.

What did these airships look like? The ancient Mahabharata speaks of a vimana as “an aerial chariot with the sides of iron and clad with wings.” The Ramayana describes a vimana as a double-deck, circular (cylindrical) aircraft with portholes and a dome. It flew with the “ speed of the wind”, and gave forth a “melodious sound”

The ancient Indians themselves wrote entire flight manuals on the care and control of various types of vimanas. The Samara Sutradhara is a scientific treatises dealing with every possible facet of air travel in a vimana. There are 230 stanzas dealing with construction, take-off, cruising for thousands of miles, normal and forced landings, and even possible collusions with birds!

Would these texts exist (they do) without there being something to actually write about? Traditional historians and archaeologists simply ignore such writings as the imaginative ramblings of a bunch of stoned, ancient writers.

Says Andrew Tomas, " **The Samara Sutradhara, which is a factual type of record, treats air travel from every angle…If this is the science fiction of antiquity, then it is the best that has ever been written.”**

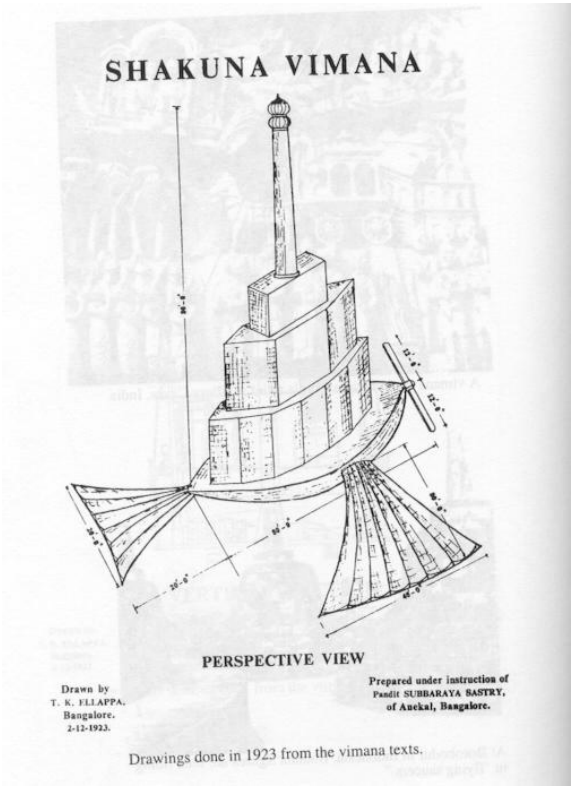
In 1875, the **Vaimanika Shastra**, a fourth century BC text written by Maharshi Bhardwaj, was discovered in a temple in India. The book dealt with the operation of ancient vimanas and included information on steering, precautions for long flights, protection of the airships from storms and lightning, and how to switch the drive to solar energy, or some other “free energy” source, possibly some sort of “gravity drive.” Vimanas were said to take off vertically or dirigible. Bharadwaj the Wise refers to no less than 70 authorities and 10 experts of air travel in antiquity. These sources are now lost.

Vimanas were kept in Vimana Griha, or hanger, were said to be propelled by a yellowish-white-liquid, and were used for various purposes. Airships were present all over the world. The plain of Nazca in Peru is very famous for appearing from the high altitude to be a rather elaborate, if confusing airfield. Some researchers have theorized that this was some sort of Atlantean outpost. It is worth nothing that Rama Empire had its outposts: Easter Island, almost diametrically opposite to Mohenjo-daro on the globe, astonishingly developed its own written language, an obscure script lost to the present

inhabitants, but found on tablets and other carvings. This odd script is found in only one other place in the world: Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa.

Aerial Warfare in Ancient India

The ancient Indian epics go into considerable detail about aerial warfare over 10,000 years ago. So much detail that a famous Oxford professor included a chapter on the subject in a book on ancient warfare!



Drawings done in 1923 from the vimana texts.

According to the Sanskrit scholar **V.R.Ramachandran Dikshitar**, the Oxford Professor who wrote "**War in Ancient India** in 1944, " No question can be more interesting in the present circumstances of the world than India's contribution to the science of aeronautics. There are numerous illustrations in our vast Puranic and epic literature to show how well and wonderfully the ancient Indians conquered the air. To glibly characterized everything found in this literature as imaginary and summarily dismiss it as unreal has been the practice of both Western and Eastern scholars until very recently. The very idea indeed was ridiculed and people went so far as to assert that it was physically impossible for man to use flying machines. But today what with balloons, aeroplanes and other flying machines, a great change has come over our ideas on the subject."

Says Dr. Dikshitar, " …the flying vimana of Rama or Ravana was set down as but a dream of the mythographer till aeroplanes and zeppelins of the present century saw the light of day. The mohanastra or the "arrow of unconsciousness" of old was until very recently a creature of legend till we heard the other day of bombs discharging Poisonous gases. We owe much to the energetic scientists and researchers who plod persistently and carry their torches deep down into the caves and excavations of old and dig out valid testimonials pointing to the misty antiquity of the wonderful creations of humanity."

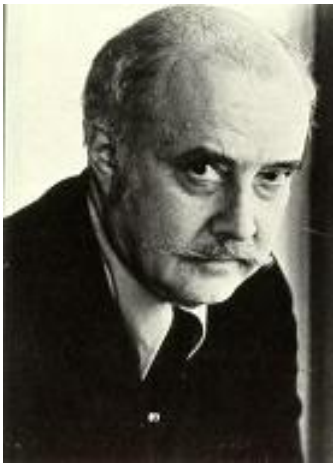
Dikshitar mentions that in Vedic literature, in one of the Brahmanas, occurs the concept of a ship that sails heavenwards. "The ship is the Agniliotra of which the Ahavaniya and Garhapatya fires represent the two sides bound heavenward, and the steersman is the Agnihotrin who offers milk to the three Agnis. Again, in the still earlier Rg Veda Samhita we read that the Asvins conveyed the rescued Bhujya safely by means of winged ships. The latter may refer to the aerial navigation in the earliest times."

Commenting on the famous vimana text the Vimanika Shastra, he says:

" In the recently published Samarangana Sutradhara of Bhoja, a whole chapter of about 230 stanzas is devoted to the principles of construction underlying the various flying machines and other engines used for military and other purposes. The various advantages of using machines, especially flying ones, are given elaborately. Special mention is made for their attacking visible as well as invisible objects, of their use at one's will and pleasure, of their uninterrupted movements, of their strength and durability, in short of their capability to do in the air all that is done on earth. After enumerating and explaining a number of other advantages, the author concludes that even impossible things could be effected through them. Three movements are usually ascribed to these machines, ascending, cruising, thousands of miles in the atmosphere and lastly descending. It is said that in an aerial car one can mount to the Surya-mandala, travel throughout the regions of air above the sea and the earth. These cars are said to move so fast as to make a noise that could be heard faintly from the ground. Still some writers have expressed a doubt and asked "Was that true?" But the evidence in its favor is overwhelming.

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Has the World Ended Before?



Charles Berlitz, author of several books, including The Bermuda Triangle, was the grandson of the founder of the world-famous Berlitz schools, wrote:

"If atomic warfare were actually used in the distant past and not just imagined, there must still exist some indications of a civilization advanced enough to develop or even to know about atomic power. One does find in some of the ancient writings of India some descriptions of advanced scientific thinking which seemed anachronistic to the age from which they come.

The **Jyotish** (400 B. C) echoes the modern concept of the earth's place in the universe, the law of gravity, the kinetic nature of energy, and the theory of cosmic rays and also deals, in specialized but unmistakable vocabulary, with the theory of atomic rays. And what was thousands of years before the medieval theologians of Europe argued about the number of angels that could fit on the head of a pin. **Indian philosophers of the Vaisesika school were discussing atomic theory, speculating about heat being the cause of molecular change, and calculating the period of time taken by an atom to traverse its own space.** Readers of the Buddhist pali sutra and commentaries, who studied them before modern times, were frequently mystified by reference to the "tying together" of minute component parts of matter; although nowadays it is easy for a model reader to recognize an understandable description of molecular composition."

(source: **Doomsday 1999 - By Charles Berlitz** p. 123-124).

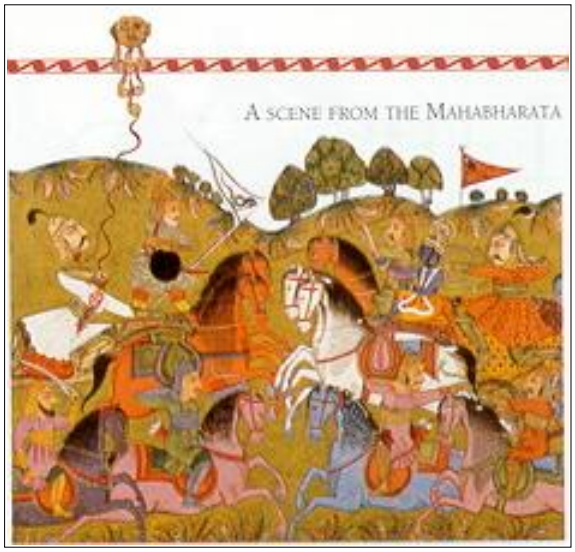
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Flying machines in old Indian Sanskrit texts

By Professor Dr. Dileep Kumar Kanjilal gave a brilliant lecture with this title to the Sixth Congress of the Ancient Astronaut Society in Munich in 1979. Kanjilal is a professor at the Calcutta Sanskrit College and therefore a leading scholar in Sanskrit.

(source: **Pathways To The Gods: The Stones of Kiribati - By Erich Von Daniken** p. 179-187).

But if we follow the history of idolatry in India we come across two important works, the **Kausitaki** and the **Satapatha Brahmana**, dating from before 500 B.C. and telling us about images of the gods. Text and illustration show forcefully that the gods were originally corporeal beings. But how, and this question must be faced, did these gods reach the earth through the atmosphere?



The **Yujurveda** quite clearly tells of a flying machine, which was used by the Asvins (two heavenly twins). The Vimana is simply a synonym for flying machine. It occurs in the Yajurveda, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata Purana, as well as in classical Indian literature.

At least 20 passages in the **Rigveda** (1028 hymns to the gods) refer exclusively to the flying vehicle of the Asvins. This flying machine is represented as three-storeyed, triangular and three –wheeled. It could carry at least three passengers. According to tradition the machine was made of gold, silver and iron, and had two wings. With this flying machine the Asvins saved King Bhujyu who was in distress at sea.

Every scholar knows the **Vaimanika Shastra**, a collection of sketches the core of which is attributed to **Bharatvaj the Wise** around the 4th century B.C. The writings in the Vaimanika Shastra were rediscovered in 1875. The text deals with the size and the most important parts of the various flying machines. We learn how they steered, what special precautions had to be taken on long flights, how the machines could be protected against violent storms and lightning, how to make a forced landing and even how to switch the drive to solar energy to make the fuel go further. Bharatvaj refers to no fewer than 70 authorities and ten experts of Indian air travel in antiquity!

The description of these machines in old Indian texts are amazingly precise. The difficulty we are faced with today is basically that the texts mention various metals and alloys which we cannot translate. We do not know what our ancestors understood by them. In the **Amarangasutradhara** five flying machines were originally built for the gods Brahma, Vishnu, Yama, Kuvera and Indra. Later there were some additions. Four main types of flying Vimanas are described: Rukma, Sundara, Tripura and Sakuna. The Rukma were conical in shape and dyed gold, whereas the Sundata were like rockets and had a silver sheen. The Tripura were three-storeyed and the Sakuna looked like birds. There were 113 subdivisions of these four main types that differed only in minor details. The position and functioning of the solar energy collectors are described in the Vaimanika Shastra. It says that eight tubes had to be made of special glass absorbing the sun's ray. A whole series of details are listed, some of which we do not understand. The **Amaranganasutradhara** even explains the drive, the controls and the fuel for the flying machine. It says that quicksilver and 'Rasa' were used. Unfortunately we do not yet know what "Rasa' was. Ten sections deal with uncannily topical themes such as pilot training, flight paths, the individual parts of flying machines, as well as clothing for pilots and passengers, and the food recommended for long flights. There was much technical detail: the metals used, heat-absorbing metals and their melting point, the propulsion units and various types of flying machines. The information about metals used in construction name three sorts, somala, soundaalika and mourthwika. If they were mixed in the right proportions, the result was 16 kinds of heat-absorbing metals with names like ushnambhara, ushnapaa, raajaamlatrit, etc. which cannot be translated into English. The texts also explained how to clean metals, the acids such as lemon or apple to be used and the correct mixture, the right oils to work with and the correct temperature for them. Seven types of engine are described with the special functions for which they are suited and the altitudes at which they work best. The catalogue is not short of data about the size of the machines, which had storeys, nor of their suitability for various purposes.

This text is recommended to all who doubt the existence of flying machines in antiquity. The mindless cry that there were no such things would have to fall silent in shame.



The ruined sites of Parhaspur have been the scene of 'divine' air battles? Pyramids reminiscent of the Mayan pyramids in the Central American jungles in the center of Parhaspur.

In 1979 a book by David W. Davenport, an Englishman born in India, was published in Italy. Its title was **2000 AC Diztruzione Atomica, Atomic Destruction 2000. BC**. Davenport claimed to have proof that Mohenjo Daro, one of the oldest cities in the history of human civilization, had been destroyed by an atomic bomb. Davenport shows that the ruined site known as the place of death by archaeologists was not formed by gradual decay.

Originally Mohenjo Daro, which is more than 5000 years old, lay on two islands in the Indus. Within a radius of 1.5 km Davenport demonstrates three different degrees of devastation which spread from the center outwards. Enormous heat unleashed total destruction at the center. Thousands of lumps, christened 'black stones' by archaeologists, turned out to be fragments of clay vessels which had melted into each other in the extreme heat. The possibility of a volcanic eruption is excluded because there is no hardened lava or volcanic ash in or near Mohenjo Daro. Davenport assumed that the brief intensive heat reached 2000 degree C. It made the ceramic vessels melt.

He further says that in the suburbs of Mohenjo Daro skeletons of people lying flat on the ground, often hand in hand were found, as if the living had been suddenly overcome by an unexpected catastrophe.

In spite of the interdisciplinary possibilities, archaeology works solely by traditional methods in Mohenjo Daro. They ought to use the former, for it would produce results. If flying machines and a nuclear explosion as the cause of the ruins are excluded out of hand, there can be no research by enlarged teams with physicists, chemists, metallurgists, etc. **As the iron curtain so often falls on sites that are important in the history of mankind, I cannot help feeling that surprising facts endangering existing ways of thinking might and should be discovered. A nuclear explosion 5000 years ago does not fit into the scenario?**

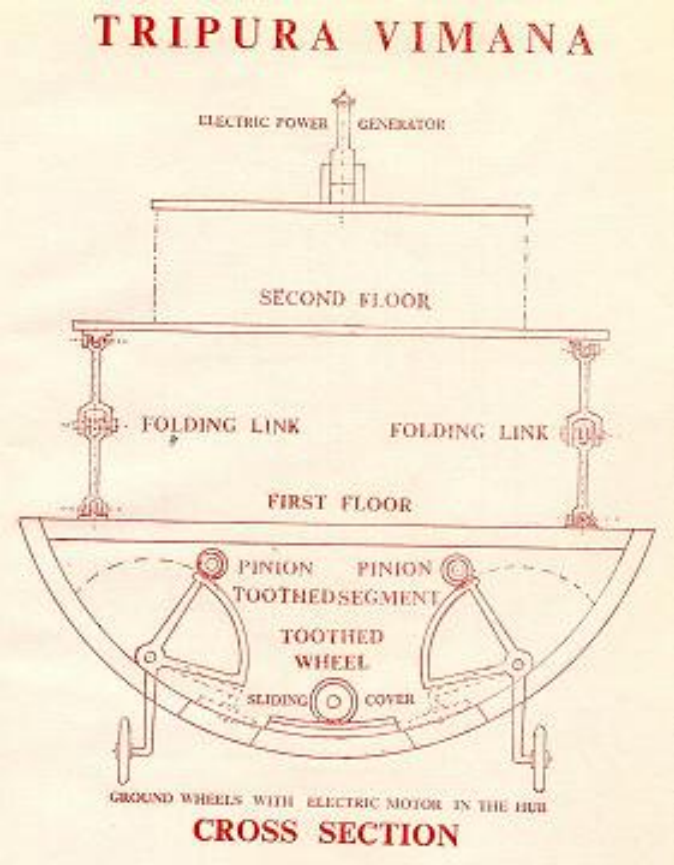
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Chariots of The Gods

Erich Von Daniken author of the International Bestseller book, **Chariots of The Gods**, writes:

" For example, how did the chronicler of the Mahabharata know that a weapon capable of punishing a country with a twelve years' drought could exist? And powerful enough to kill the unborn in their mothers womb? This ancient Indian epic, the Mahabharata, is more

comprehensive than the Bible, and even at a conservative estimate its original core is at least 5,000 years old. It is well worth reading this epic in the light of the present day knowledge.



We shall not be surprised when we learn in the **Ramayana** that Vimanas, i.e. flying machines, navigated at great heights with the aid of quicksilver and a great propulsive wind. the Vimanas could cover vast, distances and could travel forward, upward and downward. Enviably maneuverable space vehicles!.

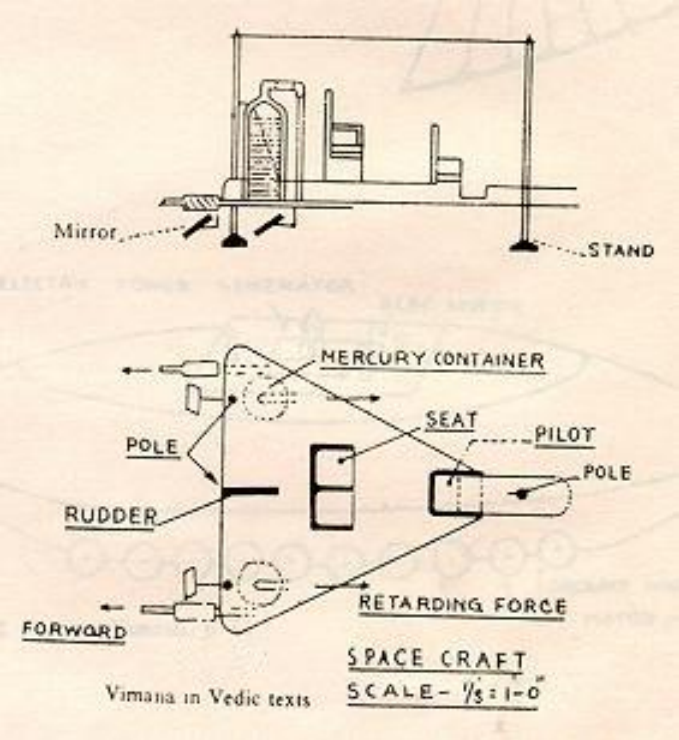
This quotation comes from the translation by **N. Dutt** in 1891: "At Rama's behest the magnificent chariot rose up to a mountain of cloud with a tremendous din.." We cannot help noticing that not only is a flying object mentioned again but also that the chronicler talks of a tremendous din.

Here is another passage from the Mahabharata: "Bhisma flew with his Vimana on an enormous ray which was as brilliant as the sun and made a noise like the thunder of a storm." (C.Roy 1899).

Even imagination needs something to start off. How can the chronicler give descriptions that presuppose at least some idea of rockets and the knowledge that such a vehicle can ride on a ray and cause a terrifying thunder?

Certain numerical data in the Mahabharata are so precise that one gets the impression that the author was writing from first-hand knowledge. Full of repulsion, he describes a weapon that could kill all warriors who wore metal on their bodies. If the warriors learned about the effect of this weapon in time, they tore off all the metal equipment they were wearing, jumped into a river, and washed everything they were wearing, and everything they had come in contact with very thoroughly. Not without reason, as the author explains, **for the weapons made the hair and nails fall out.** Everything living, he bemoaned, became pale and weak.

The Mahabharata says: "Time is the seed of the Universe."



In the **Samarangana Sutradhara** whole chapters are devoted to describing airships whose tails spout fire and quicksilver.

A passage from the **Mahabharata** is bound to make us think:

"It was as if the elements had been unleashed. The sun spun round. Scorched by the incandescent heat of the weapon, the world reeled in fever. Elephants were set on fire by the heat and ran to and fro in a frenzy to seek protection from the terrible violence. The water boiled, the animals died, the enemy was mown down and the raging of the blaze made the trees collapse in rows as in a forest fire. The elephants made a fearful trumpeting and sank dead to the ground over a vast area. Horses and war chariots were burnt up and the scene looked like the aftermath of a conflagration. Thousands of chariots were destroyed, then deep silence descended on the sea. The winds, began to blow and the earth grew bright. It was a terrible sight to see. The corpses of the fallen were mutilated by the terrible heat so that they no longer looked like human beings. Never before have we seen such a ghastly weapon and never before have we heard of such a weapon. (C. Roy 1889).

(source: **Chariots of The Gods - By Erich Von Daniken** p. 56 - 60). For more on **Mahabharata**, refer to chapter on **Hindu Scriputres, War in Ancient India** and **Yantras**).

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Vymaanika Shaastra Aeronautics of Maharshi Bharadwaaja - By G. R. Josyer (excerpts)

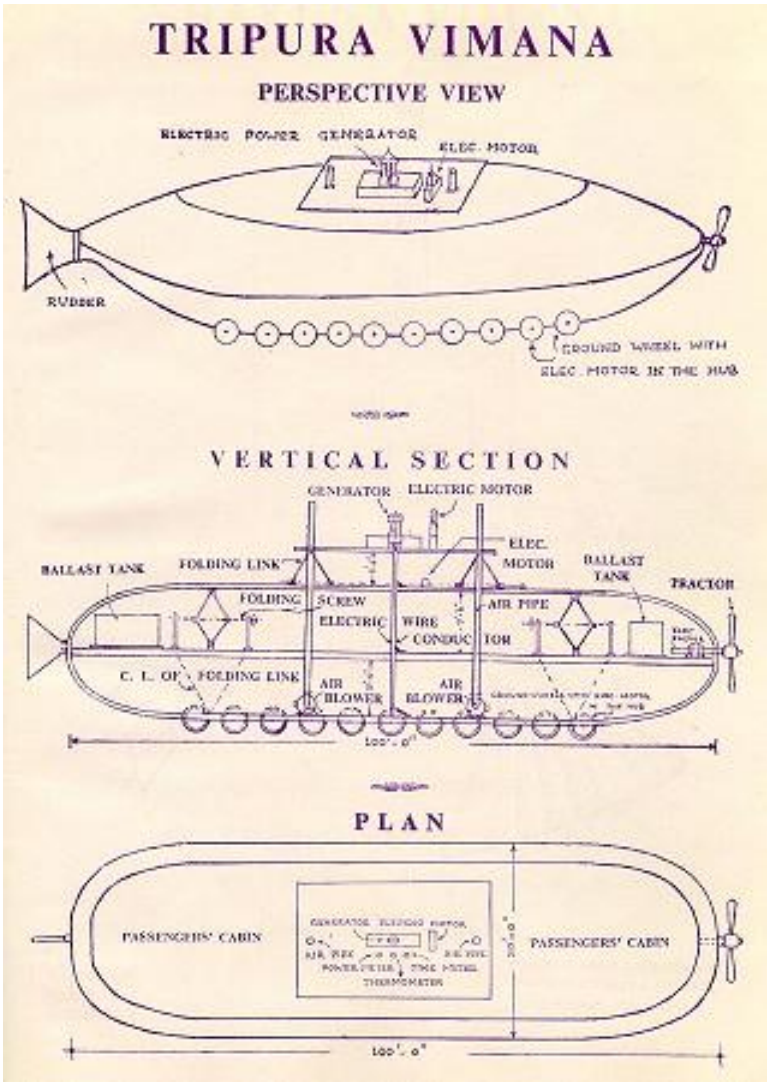
Rahasyagnyodhikaaree - Sutra 2.

"The pilot is one who knows the secrets"

Bodhaanada: Scientists say that there are 32 secrets of the working of the Vimaana. A pilot should acquaint himself thoroughly with them before he can be deemed competent to handle the aeroplane. He must know the structure of the aeroplane, know the means of its take off and ascent to the sky, know how to drive it and how to halt it when necessary, how to maneuver it and make it perform spectacular feats in the sky without crashing. Those secrets are given in **"Rahashya Lahari"** and other works by Lalla and other masters, are are described thus:

"The pilot should have had training in maantrica and taantrica, kritaka and antaraalaka, goodha or hidden, drishya and adrishya or seen and unseen, paroksha and aparoksha, contraction and expansion, changing shape, look frightening, look pleasing, become luminous or enveloped in darkness, deluge or pralaya, vimukha, taara, stun by thunderstorm din, jump, move zig-zag like serpent, chaapala, face all sides, hear distant sounds, take pictures, know enemy maneuver, know direction of enemy approach, stabdhaka or paralyse, and karshana or exercise magnetic pull.

These 32 secrets the pilot should learn from competent preceptors and only such a person is fit to be entrusted with an aeroplane, and not others.



Some of these secrets are:

1. Goodha: As explained in 'Vaayutatva-Prakarana', by harnessing the powers, Yaasaa, Viyaasaa, Prayaasaa in the 8th atmospheric layer covering the earth, to attract the dark content of the solar ray, and use it to hide the Vimana from the enemy.

2. Drishya: By collision of the electric power and wind power in the atmosphere, a glow is created, whose reflection is to be caught in the Vishwa-Kriya-drapana or mirror at the front of the Vimana, and by its manipulation produce a Maaya-Vimana or camouflaged Vimana.

3. Vimukha: As mentioned in "Rig-hridaya", by projecting the force of Kubera, Vimukha and Vyshawaanara poison powder through the third tube of the roudree mirror and turning the switch of the air mechanism, produce wholesale insensibility and coma.

4. Roopaakarshana: By means of the photographic yantra in the Vimana to obtain a television view of things inside an enemy's plane.

5. Stabdhak: By projecting apasmaara poison fume smoke through the tube on the north side on the Vimana, and discharging it with stambhana yantra, people in enemy planes will be made unconscious.

6. Chaapla: On sighting an enemy plane, by turning the switch in the force center in the middle section of the Vimana, a 4087 revolutions an hour atmospheric wave speed will be generated, and shake up the enemy plane.

7. Parashabda Graahaka: As explained in the "Sowdaaminee Kalaa: or science of electronics, by means of the sound capturing yantra in the Vimana, to hear the talks and sound in enemy planes flying in the sky.

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According to Shownaka, the regions of the sky are 5, named, Rekhaapathaha, Mandala, Kakshaya, shakti and Kendra. In these 5 atmospheric regions, ther are 5,19,800 air ways traversed by Vimanas of the Seven Lokas or worlds, known as Bhooloka, Bhuvarloka, Suvarloka, Maholoka, Janoloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka. Dhundinaatha and "Valalmeeki Ganita" state that Rekha has 7,03,00,800 air routes. Mandala has 20,08,00200 air routes, Kakshya has 2,09,00,300 air routes, Shakti has 10,01,300 air routes, and Kendra has 30,08,200 air routes.

It discusses what kind of food to eat, clothing to wear, metals for vimanas, purification of metals, deals with mirrors and lenses which are required to be installed in the vimaanas, mechanical contrivances or yantras and protecting and different types of vimaanas.

(source: **Vymaanika Shaastra Aeronautics of Maharshi Bharadwaaja - By G. R. Josyer International Academy of Sanskrit Research 1973).**

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Stealth bomber from shastra

A glass-like material based on technology found in an ancient Sanskrit text that could ultimately be used in a stealth bomber (the material cannot be detected by radar) has been developed by a research scholar of Benaras Hindu University.

Prof M A Lakshmithathachar, Director of the **Academy of Sanskrit Research** in Melkote, near Mandya, told Deccan Herald that tests conducted with the material showed radars could not detect it. “The unique material cannot be traced by radar and so a plane coated with it cannot be detected using radar,” he said.

The academy had been commissioned by the Aeronautical Research Development Board, New Delhi, to take up a one-year study, ‘Non-conventional approach to Aeronautics,’ on the basis of an old text, **Vaimanika Shastra, authored by Bharadwaj.**

Though the period to which Bharadwaj belonged to is not very clear, Prof Lakshmithathachar noted, the manuscripts might be more 1,000 years old.

The project aims at deciphering the Bharadwaj’s concepts in aviation.

However, Prof Lakshmithathachar was quick to add that a collaborative effort from scholars of Sanskrit, physics, mathematics and aeronautics is needed to understand Bharadwaj’s shastra.

The country’s interest in aviation can be traced back over 2,000 years to the mythological era and the epic Ramayana tells of a supersonic-type plane, **the Pushpak Vimana, which could fly at the speed of thought.**

“The shastra has interesting information on vimanas (airplanes), different types of metals and alloys, a spectrometer and even flying gear,” the professor said. The shastra also outlines the metallurgical method to prepare an alloy very light and strong which could withstand high pressure.

He said Prof Dongre of BHU had brought out a research paper Amshubondhini after studying Vaimanika Shastra and developed the material. “There have been sporadic efforts to develop aeronautics in the country’s history. There has never been a holistic approach to it. Vaimanika Shastra throws up many interesting details that can benefit Indian aviation programme,” the director added.

Prof Lakshmithathachar rubbished the tendency among certain scholars to discount such ancient Sanskrit texts and said, “Why would our scholars want to cheat future generations? Unless it was important, nothing was written in the old days. The fact that there exists manuscripts indicates the significance.”

The academy has also embarked on other projects including ‘Indian concept of Cosmology’ with Indian Space Research Organisation, ‘Iron & Steel in Ancient India — A Historical Perspective’ with the Steel Authority of India Limited, and ‘Tools & Technology of Ancient India.’

(source: **Stealth bomber from shastra** - **deccan herald** November 2, 02).

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Did You know?

Oppenheimer and Atom bomb in modern times



Only seven years after the first successful atom bomb blast in New Mexico, Dr. Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967) Scientist, philosopher, bohemian, and radical. A theoretical physicist and the Supervising Scientist of **the Manhattan Project, who was familiar with ancient Sanskrit literature**, was giving a lecture at Rochester University. During the question and answer period a student asked a question to which Oppenheimer gave a strangely qualified answer:

Student: Was the bomb exploded at Alamogordo during the Manhattan Project the first one to be detonated?

Dr. Oppenheimer: "Well -- yes. In modern times, of course.

Charles Berlitz goes on to quote a number of passages from the Mahabharata that describe the impact of a weapon that I suspect must be the brahmaastra, although he neither names the weapon nor cites those sections of the text from which his quotations are drawn (he lists Protap Chandra Roy's translation of 1889 in his bibliography):...a single projectile Charged with all the power of the Universe.

An incandescent column of smoke and flame As bright as ten thousand Suns Rose in all its splendor.....it was an unknown weapon, An iron thunderbolt, A gigantic messenger of death, Which reduced to ashes. The Entire race of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas....the corpses were so burned As to be unrecognizable. Their hair and nails fell out; Pottery broke without apparent cause, And the birds turned white. After a few hours all foodstuffs were infected.....To escape from this fire. The soldiers threw themselves in streams to wash themselves and their equipment...

One is reminded of the yet unknown final effect of a super-bomb when we read in the **Ramayana** of a projectile:

...So powerful that it could destroy
The earth in an instant -
A great soaring sound in smoke and flames...
And on it sits Death...

(source: **Doomsday 1999 - By Charles Berlitz** p. 118-122). For more on **Oppenheimer**, refer to **Quotes 21-40**).

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The Discovery of Dwaraka



Discovered in 1981, the well-fortified township of Dwaraka extended more than half a mile from the shore and was built in six sectors along the banks of a river before it became submerged.

The findings are of immense cultural and religious importance to India. Among the objects unearthed that proved Dwarka's connection with the Mahabharata epic was a sea engraved with the image of a three-headed animal. The epic mentions such a seal given to the citizens of Dwarka as a proof of identity when the city was threatened by King Jarasandha of the powerful Magadh kingdom (now Bihar). The foundation of boulders on which the city's walls were erected proves that the land was reclaimed from the sea about 3,600 years ago. The epic has references to such reclamation activity at Dwarka. Seven islands mentioned in it were also discovered submerged in the Arabian Sea.
Why is that the rediscovery of Dwaraka has not attracted the same degree of attention in the West, as that of ancient Troy by Heinrich Schliemann?

(Note: Please refer to Chapter on **Dwaraka**. For information on **Lost city found off Indian coast**, refer to chapter on **Glimpses III**).

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The history of ancient India is largely a history of Hindu culture and progress. Hindu culture has a distinct claim to a higher antiquity than Assyrian schools would claim for Sargon I and as much or even higher antiquity than Egyptian scholars would claim for the commencement of the first dynasty of Kings. One aspect of this culture consists in India's political institutions which were almost modern. Modern warfare has developed on mechanical lines, giving less scope for the qualities of courage and individual leadership. The value and importance of the army were realized very early in the history of India, and this led to the maintenance of a permanent militia to put down dissent within and arrest aggression from without. This gave rise to the Ksatriya warrior caste, and the ksatram dharmam came to mean the primary duty of war. To serve the country by participating in war became the svadharma of this warrior community.

Hindu military science recognizes two kinds of warfare - the **dharmayuddha** and the **kutayuddha.** Dharmayuddha is war carried on the principles of dharma, meaning here the Ksatradharma or the law of Kings and Warriors. In other words, it was a just and righteous war which had the approval of society. On the other hand, kuttayuddha was unrighteous war. It was a crafty fight carried on in secret. The Hindu science of warfare values both niti and saurya i.e. ethical principles and valor. It was therefore realized that the waging of war without regard to moral standards degraded the institution into mere animal ferocity. A monarch desirous of dharma vijaya should conform to the code of ethics enjoined upon warriors. The principles regulating the two kinds of warfare are elaborately described in the Dharmasutras and Dharmasastras, the epics (Ramayana and Mahabharata), the Arthasastra treatises of Kautalya, Kamandaka, and Sukra. Hindu India possessed the classical fourfold force of chariots, elephants, horsemen, and infantry, collectively known as the Caturangabala. Students also know that the old game of chess also goes by the name of Caturanga. From the references to this game in the Rg Veda and the Atharva Veda and in the Buddhists and Jaina books, it must have been very popular in ancient India. The Persian term Chatrang and the Arabic Shatrang are forms of the Sanskrit Caturanga.

According to **Sir A. M. Eliot** and **Heinrich Brunnhofer** (a German Indologist) and **Gustav Oppert**, all of whom have stated that ancient Hindus knew the use of gunpowder. Eliot tells us that the Arabs learnt the manufacture of gunpowder from India, and that before their Indian connection they had used arrows of naptha. It is also argued that though Persia possessed saltpetre in abundance, the original home of gunpowder was India. In the light of the above remarks we can trace the evolution of fire-arms in the ancient India. (source: **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German** - **By Valentine Stache-Rosen**. p.92). Terence Duke, author of The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China, martial arts went from India to China. Fighting without weapons was a specialty of the ancient Ksatreya warriors of India.

Introduction
Territorial ideal of a one-State India
The Laws of War
Weapons of War as Gathered from Literature
Martial Arts - Fighting without weapons
Army and Army Divisions
Aerial Warfare
Naval Warfare
Diplomacy and War
Conclusion
Articles



Introduction

The value and importance of the army were realized very early in the history of India, and this led in course of time to the maintenance of a permanent militia to put down dissensions. War or no war, the army was to be maintained, to meet any unexpected contingency. **This gave rise to the Ksatriya or warrior caste, and the ksatram dharman came to mean the primary duty of war.** To serve the country by participating in war became the **svadharma** or this warrior community.



The necessary education, drill, and discipline to cultivate militarism were confined to the members of one community, the Ksatriyas. This prevented the militant attitude from spreading to other communities and kept the whole social structure unaffected by actual wars and war institutions. Says the **Arthva Veda**: "May we revel, living a hundred winters, rich in heroes." The whole country looked upon the members of the ksatriya community as defenders of their country and consequently did not grudge the high influence and power wielded by the Ksatriyas, who were assigned a social rank next in importance to the intellectual and spiritual needs of the society. The ancient Hindus were a sensitive people, and their heroes were instructed that they were defending the noble cause of God, Crown and Country. Viewed in this light, war departments were 'defense' departments and military expenditure were included in the cost of defense. In this, as in many cases, ancient India was ahead of modern ideas.

Chivalry, individual heroism, qualities of mercy and nobility of outlook even in the grimmest of struggles were not unknown to the soldiers of ancient India. Thus among the laws of war, we find that (1) a warrior (**Khsatriya**) in armor must not fight with one not so clad (2) one should fight only one enemy and cease fighting if the opponent is disabled, (3) aged men, women and children, the retreating, or one who held a straw in his lips as a sign of unconditional surrender should not be killed. It is of topical interest to note that one of the laws enjoins the army to leave the fruit and flower gardens, temples and other places of public worship unmolested. Terence Duke, author of The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China, martial arts went from India to China. Fighting without weapons was a specialty of the ancient Ksatreya warriors of India.

Territorial ideal of a one-State India

Imperial sway in ancient India meant the active rule of an individual monarch who by his ability and prowess brought to subjection the neighboring chieftains and other rulers, and proclaimed himself the sole ruler of the earth. This goes by the name of **digvi-jaya**. It is not necessary that he should conquer all States by the sword. A small state might feel the weight of a conquering king and render obeisance of its own accord.

According to the **Sangam** classics, each of the respective rulers of the chief Tamil kingdoms, the Cera, Cola and Pandya, carried his sword as far north as the Himalayas, and implanted on its lofty heights his respective crest the bow, the tiger and the fish. In these adventures which the Tamil Kings underwent for their glorification, they did not lag behind their northern brethren. The very epithet **Imayavaramban** shows that the limits of the empire under that Emperor extended to the Himalayas in the north. This title was also earned by Ceran **Senguttuvan** by his meritorious exploits in the north. Names like the Cola Pass in the Himalayan slopes, which in very early times connected Nepal and Bhutan with ancient Tibet, give a certain clue to the fact that once Tamil kings went so far north as the Himalayas and left their indelible marks in those regions.



Kshatriya Warrior (Now in Indian Museum, Calcutta).

If in the epic age a Rama and an Arjuna could come to the extremity of our peninsula, and in the historical period of a Chandragupta or a Samudragupta could undertake an expedition to this part of our country, nothing could prevent a king of prowess and vast resources like the Cera king Senguttuvan from carrying his armies to the north. The route lay through the Dakhan plateau, the Kalinga, Malva, and the Ganga. Perhaps it was the ancient **Daksinapatha** route known to history from the epoch of the **Rg Veda Samhita**.

The king who became conqueror of all India was entitled to the distinction of being called a Samrat. In the Puranic period the great Kartavirya Arjuna of the Haihaya clan spread his arms throughout the ancient Indian continent and earned the title of Samrat. The same principle of glory and distinction underlay the performance of the sacrifice, Asvamedha and Rajasuya, which were intended only for the members of the Ksatriya community.



A Cakravartin

This bears testimony to ' the existence of the territorial ideal of a one-State India' (Cakravartiksetram of Kautalya). These kings were called **Sarvabhaumas** and **Ekarats.**

Vedic kings aimed at it, and epic rulers realized it. The idea of ekarat, continued down to Buddhist times and even later. The Jatakas which are said to belong to the fifth and sixth century B.C., make pointed reference to an all-Indian empire. This concept of an all-India empire stretching from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas, according to Kautalya receives further support from another important political term: **ekacchatra**, or one-umbrella sovereignty.

Hindus have given shelter to the persecuted people from many lands and in all ages. **But what is most important, they have always regarded their own homeland as the only playfield for their chakravartins, and never waged wars of conquest beyond the borders of Bharata-varsha.**

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The Laws of War

When society became organized and a warrior caste (Kshatriya) came into being, it was felt that the members of this caste should be governed by certain humane laws, the observance of which, it was believed, would take them to heaven, while their non-observance would lead them into hell. In the post Vedic epoch, and especially before the epics were reduced to writing, lawless war had been supplanted, and a code had begun to govern the waging of wars. The ancient law-givers, the reputed authors of the **Dharmasutras** and the **Dharmasastras,** codified the then existing customs and usages for the betterment of mankind. Thus the law books and the epics contain special sections on royal duties and the duties of common warriors.



It is a general rule that kings were chosen from among the Kshatriya caste. In other words, a non-Ksatriya was not qualified to be a king. And this is probably due to the fact that the kshatriya caste was considered superior to others in virtue of its material prowess. Though the warrior's code enjoins that all the Ksatriyas should die on the field of battle, still in practice many died a peaceful death. There is a definite ordinance of the ancient law books prohibiting the warrior caste from taking to asceticism. Action and renunciation is the watch-word of the Ksatriya. The warrior was not generally allowed to don the robes of an ascetic. **But Mahavira and Gautama protested against these injunctions and inaugurated an order of monks or sannyasins. When these dissenting sects gathered in strength and numbers, the decline of Ksatriya valor set in. Once they were initiated into a life of peace and prayer, they preferred it to the horrors of war. this was a disservice that dissenting sects did to the cause of ancient India.**

When a conqueror felt that he was in a position to invade the foreigner's country, he sent an ambassador with the message: 'Fight or submit.' More than 5000 years ago India recognized that the person of the ambassador was inviolable. **This was a great service that ancient Hinduism rendered to the cause of international law.** It was the religious force that invested the person of the herald or ambassador with an inviolable sanctity in the ancient world. The **Mahabharata** rules that the king who killed an envoy would sink into hell with all his ministers.

As early as as the 4th century B.C. **Megasthenes** noticed a peculiar trait of Indian warfare.

"Whereas among other nations it is usual, in the contests of war, to ravage the soil and thus to reduce it to an uncultivated waste, among the Indians, on the contrary, by whom husbandmen are regarded as a class that is sacred and inviolable, the tillers of the soil, even when battle is raging in their neighborhood, are undisturbed by any sense of danger, for the combatants on either side in waging the conflict make carnage of each other, but allow those engaged in husbandry to remain quite unmolested. Besides, **they never ravage an enemy's land with fire, nor cut down its trees."**

(source: **A Brief History of India - By Alain Danielou** p. 106). The modern "scorched earth" policy was then unknown. "

Professor **H. H. Wilson** says: **"The Hindu laws of war are very chivalrous and humane, and prohibit the slaying of the unarmed, of women, of the old, and of the conquered."**

At the very time when a battle was going on, be says, the neighboring cultivators might be seen quietly pursuing their work, - " perhaps ploughing, gathering for crops, pruning the trees, or reaping the harvest." **Chinese pilgrim to Nalanda University, Hiuen Tsiang affirms that although the there were enough of rivalries and wars in the 7th century A.D. the country at large was little injured by them.**

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Weapons of War as Gathered from Literature

Dhanur Veda classifies the weapons of offence and defense into four - the mukta, the amukta, the mukta-mukta and the yantramukta. The **Nitiprakasika,** on the other hand, divides them into three broad classes, the mukta (thrown), the amukta (not thrown), and the mantramukta (discharged by mantras). The bows and arrows are the chief weapons of the

mukta group. The very fact that our military science named Dhanur Veda provides sufficiently clearly that the bow and arrow were the principle weapons of war in those times. It was known by different terms as sarnga, kodanda, and karmuka. Whether these are synonyms of the same thing or were different is difficult to say. The Rg vedaic smith was not only a steel worker but also an arrow maker.



Painting of Battle Scene, Ellora

Fire-Arms:

It would be interesting to examine the true nature of the agneya-astras. **Kautalya** describes agni-bana, and mentions three recipes - agni-dharana, ksepyo-agni-yoga, and visvasaghati. **Visvasaghati** was composed of 'the powder of all the metals as red as fire or the mixture of the powder of kumbhi, lead, zinc, mixed with the charcoal and with oil wax and turpentine.' From the nature of the ingredients of the different compositions it would appear that they were highly inflammable and could not be easily extinguished.

A recent writer remarks: **'The Visvasaghati-agni-yoga** was virtually a bomb which burst and the fragments of metals were scattered in all directions. The agni-bana was the fore-runner of a gun-shot.....

Sir A. M. Eliot tells us that the Arabs learnt the manufacture of gunpowder from India, and that before their Indian connection they had used arrows of naptha. It is also argued that though Persia possessed saltpetre in abundance, the original home of gunpowder was India. It is said that the Turkish word top and the Persian tupang or tufang are derived from the Sanskrit word dhupa. The **dhupa** of the **Agni Purana** **means a rocket, perhaps a corruption of the Kautaliyan term natadipika.**

(source: **Fire-Arms in Ancient India - By Jogesh Chandra Ray** I.H.Q. viii. p. 586-88).

Heinrich Brunnhofer (1841-1917), German Indologist, **also believed that the ancient Aryans of India knew about gunpowder.**

(source: **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German** - **By Valentine Stache-Rosen**. p.92).



Gustav Oppert (1836-1908) born in Hamburg, Germany, he taught Sanskrit and comparative linguistics at the Presidency College, Madras for 21 years. He was the Telugu translator to the Government and Curator, Government Oriental Manuscript Library. Translated **Sukraniti, statecraft by an unknown author.**

He attempted to prove that ancient Indians knew firearms.

(source: **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German - By Valentine Stache-Rosen.** p.81).

(For more refer to article by G R Josyer - **India: The Home of Gunpowder and Firearms**).

In his work, **Political Maxims of the Ancient Hindus**, he says, that ancient India was the original home of gunpowder and fire-arms. It is probable that the word Sataghni referred to in the Sundara Kanda of the Ramayana refers to cannon.

(source: **Hindu Culture and The Modern Age - By Dewan Bahadur K.S. Ramaswami Shastri** - Annamalai University 1956 p. 127).

The word astra in the Sukraniti is interpreted by Dr. Gustav Oppert as a bow. The term astra means a missile, anything which is discharged. Agneya astra means a fiery arm as distinguished from a firearm.

Dr. Oppert refers to half a dozen temples in South India to prove the use of fire-arms in ancient India. The Palni temple in the Madura District contains on the outer portion in an ancient stone mantapa scenes of carved figures of soldiers carrying in their hands small fire-arms, apparently the small-sized guns mentioned in the Sukranitisara. Again in the Sarnagapani temple at **Kumbakonam** in the front gate of the fifth story from the top is the **figure of a king sitting in a chariot drawn by horses and surrounded by a number of soldiers. Before this chariot march two sepoys with pistols in their hands**. In the **Nurrukkal mantapam** of the **Conjeevaram temple** is a pillar on the north side of the mandapa. Here is a relief vividly representing a flight between two bodies of soldiers. Mounted horsemen are also seen. The foot-soldier is shown aiming his fire-arm against the enemy. Such things are also noted in the Tanjore temple and the temple at Perur, in the Coimbatore District. In the latter there is an actual representation of a soldier loading a musket.

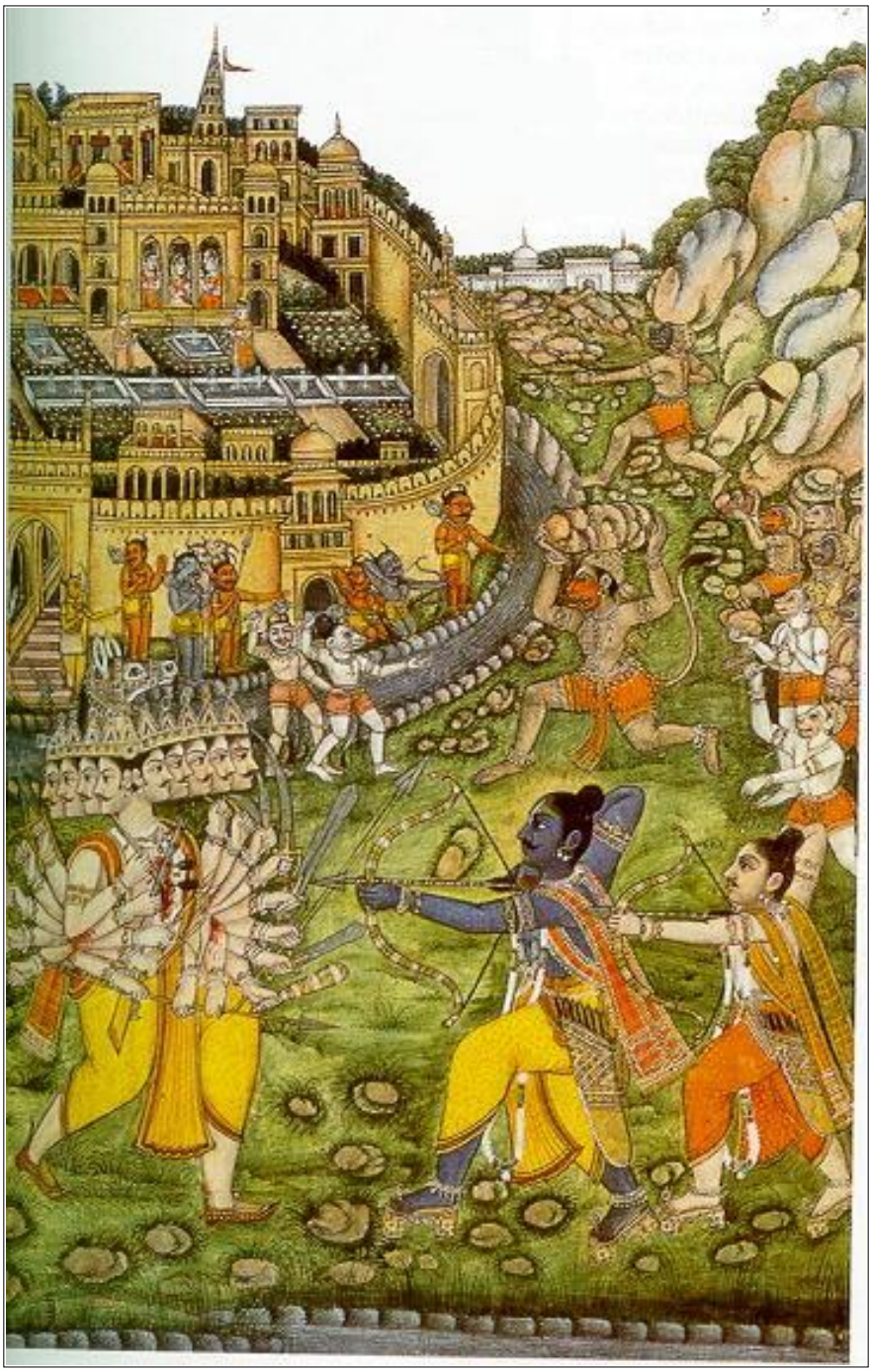
The Borobudar in Java where Indian tradition is copied wholesale. They are ascribed roughly to the period 750-850 A.D. There is a striking relief series PL. I, fig. 5, (1605) representing a battle in which two others are seen on each side, one wearing a curved sword in the right hand and a long shield, and the other a mace and a round shield resembling a wheel, all apparently made of iron. The story of the Ramayana is also given as in the **Tadpatri temple** from Rama's going to the forest down to the killing of Ravana. There is also a wonderful sculpture of an ancient Hindu ship.

(source: **Suvarnadvipa - By R.C. Majumdar.** pp 194-5).

Medhatithi remarks thus "while fighting his enemies in battle, he shall not strike with concealed weapons nor with arrows that are poisoned or barbed on with flaming shafts."

Sukraniti while referring to fire-arms, (agneyastras) says that before any war, the duty of the minister of war is to check up the total stock of gunpowder in the arsenal. Small guns is referred as tupak by Canda Baradayi. The installation of yantras (engines of war) inside the walls of the forts referred to by Manasollasa and the reference of Sataghni (killer of hundreds of men) pressed into service for the protection of the forts by Samaranganasutradhara clearly reveals the frequent use of fire arms in the battle-field.

(source: **India Through The Ages: History, Art Culture and Religion - By G. Kuppuram** p. 512-513).



Lord Rama with his bow defeats Ravana in the gold city of Lanka

In the light of the above remarks **we can trace the evolution of fire-arms in the ancient India.** There is evidence to show that agni (fire) was praised for vanquishing an enemy. The **Arthava Veda** shows the employment of fire-arms with lead shots. The Aitareya Brahmana describes an arrow with fire at its tip. In the Mahabharata and Ramayana, the employment of agnyastras is frequently mentioned, and this deserves careful examination in the light of other important terms like ayah, kanapa and tula-guda.

The agnicurna or gunpowder was composed of 4 to 6 parts of saltpetre, one part of sulphur, and one part of charcoal of arka, sruhi and other trees burnt in a pit and reduced to powder. Here is certain evidence of the ancient rockets giving place to actual guns in warfare. From the description of the composition of gunpowder, the composition of the Sukraniti can be dated at the pre-Gupta age.

(source: **War in Ancient India - By V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar** 1944. p. 103 -105).

Bow and Arrow:



In the words of **H. H. Wilson**: "the Hindus cultivated archery most assiduously and were very Parthians in the use of the bow on horse-back." One feature of this weapon was that it could be handled by all the four classes of warriors.

Other Weapons:

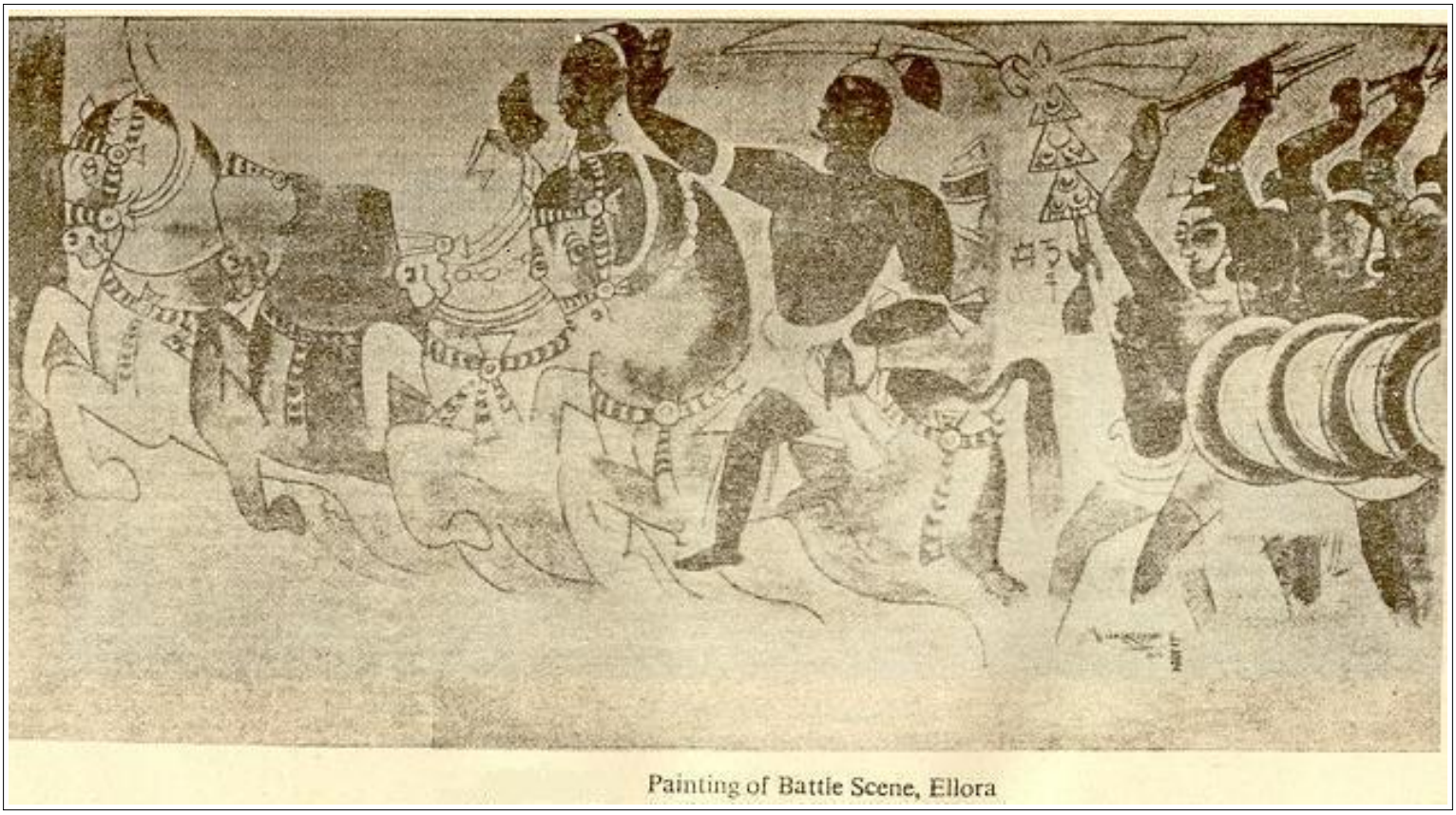
The **Bindipala** and the nine following are minor weapons of this class. Probably this was a heavy club which had a broad and bent tail end, measuring one cubit in length. It was to be used with the left foot of the warrior placed in front. The various uses of this weapon were cutting, hitting, striking and breaking. It was like a kunta but with a big blade. It was used by the Asuras in their fight with Kartavirya Arjuna.

The Nalika is a hand gun or musket rightly piercing the mark. It was straight in form and hollow inside. It discharged darts if ignited. As has been already said, Sukracarya speaks of two kinds of nalika, one big and the other small. The small one, with a little hole at the end, measured sixty angulas (ie. distance between the thumb and the little finger) dotted with several spots at the muzzle end. Through the touch hole or at its breach which contained wood, fire was conveyed to the charge. It was generally used by foot-soldiers. But the big gun had no wood at the breach and was so heavy that it had to be conveyed in carts. The balls were made of iron, lead or other material. Kamandaka uses the word nalika in the sense of firing gun as a signal for the unwary king. Again in the **Naisadha**, a work of the medieval period, Damayanti is compared to the two bows of the god of love and goddess of love, and her two nostrils to the two guns capable of throwing balls.

Thus there is clear evidence of the existence and use of firing guns in India in very early times.

The **Cakra,** the next weapon in the category, is a circular disc with a small opening in the middle. It was of three kinds of eight, six and four spokes. It was used in five or six ways. It resembled the quoid of the Sikhs today. Lord Vishnu is popularly addressed as Sankha-cakra-gada-pani, that is having Sankha or conch, Cakra or disc, and Gada or mace in three of his four hands.The various uses of a disc were felling, whirling, rending, breaking, severing, and cutting. It is one of the instruments peculiar to Lord Vishnu. Kautalya speaks of it as a movable machine. **The Cakra belongs to the category of a missile. According to the Vamanapurana, the Cakra has lustrous and sharp edges.**

The Tomara is another weapon of war frequently mentioned in all kinds of warfare. It was of two kinds, an iron club (sarvayasam) and a javelin. . According to the Agni Purana it was to be with the help of an arrow of straight feathers, and was powerful in dealing blows to the eyes and hands of an enemy.



Painting of Battle Scene, Ellora

The **Dantakanta**, is another weapon of war, perhaps the shape of a tooth, made of metal, of strong handle and a straight blade. It had two movements.

The **Pasa,** which is a noose killing the enemy at one stroke, of two or tree ropes used as a weapon attributed to the god Varuna. It was triangular in shape and **embellished with balls of lead.** It was associated with three kinds of movements. In the Agni Purana are described eleven ways of turning it to one's own advantage by dexterity of hand.

The **Masundi,** was probably an eight sided cudgel. It was furnished with a broad and strong handle. It apparently comes from the root-meaning to cleave or break into pieces, and perhaps akin to the Musala.

All these and more found used in one battle or another both in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

Amukta Weapons



The first of the Amukta weapons was the **Vajra or the thunderbolt.** The origin of this weapon is given in the Rirthayatra portion of the Mahabharata. It was made out of the backbone of the **Rishi Dadhici** which was freely given by him to Indra. Originally perhaps it had six sides and **made a terrible noise when hurled.**

The **Parasu** is the battle-axe attributed to Parasu-rama, of great fame. Its blade was made of steel and it had a wooden handle. There were six ways of manipulating it to one's own advantage.

The **Gada** is a heavy rod of iron with one hundred spikes on the top. One of the four cubits was able to destroy elephants

and rocks. It could be handled in twenty different ways. **By means of gun powder it could be used as a projectile weapon of war.** Its principal use was to strike the enemy either from a raised place or from both sides and strike terror into the enemy especially of the Gomutra array.

The **Mudgara** was a staff in the shape of a hammer. It was used to break heavy stones and rocks. This is again a movable machine according to Kautalya.

The **Sira** was a bucket-like instrument curved on both sides and with a wide opening made of iron. It was as long as a man's height. The **Pattisa** is a razor like weapon.

The **Sataghni, literally means that which had the power of killing a hundred at a time.** It looked like a Gada and is said to be four cubits in length. It is generally identified with modern cannon and hence was a projectile weapon of war.

"sataghni tu catustala lohakantaka samcita yastih! iti Kesavah."

It was generally placed on the walls of a fort and is included among the movable machines by Kautalya.



Asi or the Swords - The best sword measured fifty inches. They were usually made of Pindara iron found in the Jangala country, black iron in the Anupa, white iron in the Sataharana, gold colored in the Kalinga, oily iron in the Kambhoja, blue-colored in Gujarat, grey-colored in the Maharashtra and reddish white in Karnataka. The aSi si also known as Nistrimsa, Visamana, Khadga, Tiksnadhara, Durasada, Srigarbha, Vijaya and Dharmamula, meaning respectively cruel, fearful, powerful, fiery, unassailable, affording wealth, giving victory, and the source of maintaining dharma. And these are generally the characteristics of a sword.

It was commonly worn on the left side and was associated with thirty-two different movements. It measured 50 thumbs in length and four inches in width. In the **Santi-parva** (166,3 ff; 82 ff). **Bhisma** being asked as to which weapon in his opinion was the best for all kinds of fighting, replies that the sword is the foremost among arms (agryah praharananam), but the bow is first (adyam).

B, K, Sarkar says that the secret of manufacturing the so-called Damascus blade was learnt by the Saracens from the Persians, who, in their turn, had learnt it from the Hindus. Early Arabic literature provides us with a curious illustration of the esteem with which Indian swords were looked upon in Western Asia. An early Arabic poet, Hellal, describing the flight of the Hemyarites, says: "But they fled under its (ie. the clouds) small hail of arrows quickly, whilst hard Indian swords were penetrating them." and again: "He died and we inherited him; one old wide (cuirass) and a bright Indian (sword) with a long shoulder-belt." (Hindu Achievements in Exact Science - By B. K. Sarkar p. 45).

(**Note**: Hindus made the best swords in the ancient world, they discovered the process of making Ukku steel, called Damascus steel by the rest of the world (**Damas meaning water to the Arabs, because of the watery designs on the blade**). These were the best swords in the ancient world, the strongest and the sharpest, sharper even than Japanese katanas. Romans, Greeks, Arabs, Persians, Turks, and Chinese imported it. **The original Damascus steel-the world's first high-carbon steel-was a product of India known as wootz. Wootz is the English for ukku in Kannada and Telugu, meaning steel.** Indian steel was used for making swords and armor in Persia and Arabia in ancient times. Ktesias at the court of Persia (5th c BC) mentions two swords made of Indian steel which the Persian king presented him. **The pre-Islamic Arab word for sword is 'muhannad' meaning from Hind. So famous were they that the Arabic word for sword was Hindvi - from Hind.**

Wootz was produced by carburising chips of wrought iron in a closed crucible process. "Wrought iron, wood and carbonaceous matter was placed in a crucible and heated in a current of hot air till the iron became red hot and plastic. It was then allowed to cool very slowly (about 24 hours) until it absorbed a fixed amount of carbon, generally 1.2 to 1.8 per cent," said eminent metallurgist Prof. T.R. Anantharaman, who taught at Banares Hindu University, Varanasi. "When forged into a blade, the carbides in the steel formed a visible pattern on the surface." To the sixth century Arab poet Aus b. Hajr the pattern appeared described 'as if it were the trail of small black ants that had trekked over the steel while it was still soft'. In the early 1800s, Europeans tried their hand at reproducing wootz on an industrial scale. Michael Faraday, the great experimenter and son of a blacksmith, tried to duplicate the steel by alloying iron with a variety of metals but failed. Some scientists were successful in forging wootz but they still were not able to reproduce its characteristics, like the watery mark. "Scientists believe that some other micro-addition went into it," said Anantharaman. "That is why the separation of carbide takes place so beautifully

and geometrically."

The crucible process could have originated in south India and the finest steel was from the land of Cheras, said K. Rajan, associate professor of archaeology at Tamil University, Thanjavur, who explored a 1st century AD trade centre at Kodumanal near Coimbatore. Rajan's excavations revealed an industrial economy at Kodumanal. **Pillar of strength The rustless wonder called the Iron Pillar near the Qutb Minar at Mehrauli in Delhi did not attract the attention of scientists till the second quarter of the 19th century. The inscription refers to a ruler named Chandra, who had conquered the Vangas and Vahlikas, and the breeze of whose valour still perfumed the southern ocean. "The king who answers the description is none but Samudragupta, the real founder of the Gupta empire," said Prof. T.R. Anantharaman, who has authored The Rustless Wonder. Zinc metallurgy travelled from India to China and from there to Europe.** As late as 1735, professional chemists in Europe believed that zinc could not be reduced to metal except in the presence of copper. The alchemical texts of the mediaeval period show that the tradition was live in India. In 1738, William Champion established the Bristol process to produce metallic zinc in commercial quantities and got a patent for it. Interestingly, the mediaeval alchemical text Rasaratnasamucchaya describes the same process, down to adding 1.5 per cent common salt to the ore.

(source: **Saladin's sword - By The Week -** June 24, 2001 **- http://netinfo.hypermart.net/telingsteel.htm**).

Artillery - India Taught Europe

Artillery was introduced into Europe by the Roma (Gyspsies), who were none else than the Jats and Rajputs of India.

This has been revealed in a study by a reputed linguist, **Weer Rajendra Rishi**, after an extensive tour of Roma camps in Europe.

He explains that the Romas, who are the Gypsies of Europe, also taught the use of artillery to Europeans. These Roma belonged to the Jat and Rajput clans who left India during the invasions by Mohamud Ghaznavi and Mohammad Ghori between the 10th and 12th centuries of the Christian era.

He says the use of artillery was known in Asia, notably in India, from time immemorial, while it was introduced to the Europeans much later.

Mr. Rishi reveals that the Roma had helped different countries of Europe in making artillery. “Evidence of this is given as early as 1496 by a mandate of that date granted by Wadislas, King of Hungary, wherein it is said that Thomas Polgar, chief of 25 tents of wandering Gypsies had, with his people, made at Funfkirchen musket-balls and other ammunition for Bishop Sigismond. “In 1546 when the English were holding Boulogne against the French the latter took the help of two experienced Romas of Hungary to make great number of cannons of greater caliber than earlier guns. The Hungarian Roma of the 16th century possessed fuller knowledge of fabricating artillery than the races of Western Europe.

There were also records that the Roma were employed as soldiers by some countries of Europe. Dr. W. R. Rishi, is the author of the book, Roma - The Panjabi Emigrants in Europe, Central and Middle Asia, the USSR, and the Americas - published 1976. Mr. Rishi is a well-known linguist of India and was awarded the honour of 'Padmashri' by the President of India in 1970 for his contributions in the field of linguistics. He is also the Founder Director of the Indian Institute of Romani Studies.

(source: **Diamonds, Mechanism, Weapons of War, Yoga Sutras - By G. R. Josyer.** p. 179-182).

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To conclude with the words of **Sir George Birdwood:**

" For a variety, extent, and gorgeousness, and ethnological and artistic value, no such collection of Indian arms exists in this country (England) as that belonging to the Prince of Wales. It represents the armorer's art in every province of India, from the rude spear of the savage Nicobar islanders to the costly damascened, sculptured, and jewelled swords, and shields, spears, daggers, and match-locks of Kashmir, Kutch and Vizianagaram. The most striking object in the collection is a suit of armor made entirely of the horny scales of the Indian armadillo, or pangolin, encrusted with gold, and turquoise, and garnets."

(source: **The Industrial Arts of India** pp. 171-2).

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Martial Arts - Fighting without weapons

"Fighting without weapons was a specialty of the Ksatreya (caste of Ancient India)and foot soldier alike. For the Ksatreya it was simply part and parcel of their all around training, but for the lowly peasant it was essential. We read in the Vedas of men unable to afford armor who bound their heads with turbans called Usnisa to protect themselves from sword and axe blows.

" Fighting on foot for a Ksatreya was necessary in case he was unseated from his chariot or horse and found himself without weapons. Although the high ethical code of the Ksatreya forbid anyone but another Ksatreya from attacking him, doubtless such morals were not always observed, and when faced with an unscrupulous opponent, the Ksatreya needed to be able to defend himself, and developed, therefore, a very effective form of hand-to-hand combat that combined techniques of wrestling, throws, and hand strikes. Tactics and evasion were formulated that were later passed on to successive generations. This skill was called Vajramukhti, a name meaning "thunderbolt closed - or clasped - hands." The tile Vajramukti referred to the usage of the hands in a manner as powerful as the vajra maces of traditional warfare. Vajramukti was practiced in peacetime by means of regular physical training sessions and these utilized sequences of attack and defense technically termed in Sanskrit nata."



Kalaripayattu, literally "the way of the battlefield," still survives in Kerala, where it is often dedicated to Mahakali. The Kalari grounds are usually situated near a temple, and the pupils, after having touched the feet of the master, salute the ancestors and bow down to the Goddess, begin the lesson. Kalari trainings have been codified for over 3000 years and nothing much has changed.

The warming up is essential and demands great suppleness. Each movement is repeated several times, facing north, east, south and west, till perfect loosening is achieved. The young pupils pass on to the handling of weapons, starting with the "Silambam", a short stick made of extremely hard wood, which in the olden times could effectively deal with swords. The blows are hard and the parade must be fast and precise, to avoid being hit on the fingers! They continue with the swords, heavy, and dangerous, even though they are not sharpened any more, as they are used. Without guard or any kind of body protection; they whirl, jump and parry, in an impressive ballet. Young, fearless girls fight with enormous knives, bigger than their arms and the clash of irons is echoed in the ground. The session ends with the big canes, favorite weapons of the Buddhist traveler monks, which they used during their long journey towards China to scare away attackers.

The "Urimi" is the most extraordinary weapon of Kalari, unique in the world. This double-edged flexible sword which the old-time masters used to wrap around the waist to keep coiled in one hand, to suddenly whip at the opponent and inflict mortal blows, is hardly used today in trainings, for it is much too dangerous.

This indigenous martial arts, under the name of **Kalari or Kalaripayit** exists only in South India today. **Kalarippayat is said to be the world's original martial art.** Originating at least 1,300 years ago, India's Kalaripayit is the oldest martial art taught today. It is also the most potentially violent, because students advance from unarmed combat to the use of swords, sharpened flexible metal lashes, and peculiar three-bladed daggers. More than 2,000 years old, it was developed by warriors of the Cheras kingdom in Kerala. Training followed strict rituals and guidelines. The entrance to the 14 m-by-7 m arena, or kalari, faced east and had a bare earth floor. Fighters took Shiva and Shakti, the god and goddess of power, as their deities. From unarmed kicks and punches, kalarippayat warriors would graduate to sticks, swords, spears and daggers and study the marmas—the 107 vital spots on the human body where a blow can kill. Training was conducted in secret, the lethal warriors unleashed as a surprise weapon against the enemies of Cheras.

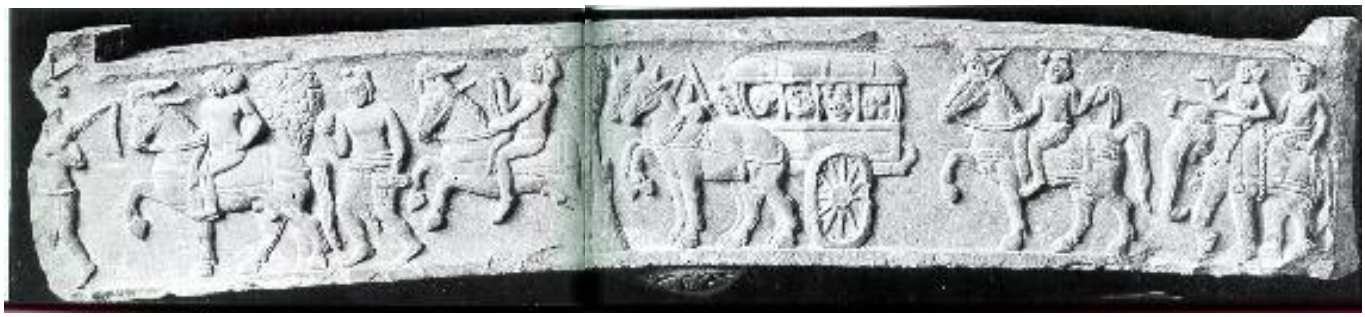


Father and founder of Zen Buddhism (called C'han in China), Boddidharma, a Brahmin born in Kacheepuram in Tamil Nadu, in 522 A.D. arrived at the courts of the Chinese Emperor Liang Nuti, of the 6th dynasty. He taught the Chinese monks Kalaripayattu, a very ancient Indian martial art, so that they could defend themselves against the frequent attacks of bandits. In time, the monks became famous all over China as experts in bare-handed fighting, later known as the Shaolin boxing art. The Shaolin temple which has been handed back a few years ago by the communist Government to the C'han Buddhist monks, inheritors of Boddhidharma's spiritual and martial teachings, by the present Chinese Government, is now open to visitors. On one of the walls, a fresco can be seen, showing Indian dark-skinned monks, teaching their lighter-skinned Chinese brothers the art of bare-handed fighting. On this painting are inscribed: "Tenjiku Naranokaku" which means: **"the fighting techniques to train the body (which come) from India…"**

(for more information on martial arts refer to chapter **India and China**).

(source: **The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China - By Terence Dukes/ Shifu Nagaboshi Tomio** p. 3 - 158-174 and 242. **A Western Journalist on India: a ferengi's columns - By Francois Gautier** Har-Anand Publications January 2001 ISBN 8124107955 p. 155-158).

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Army and Army Divisions

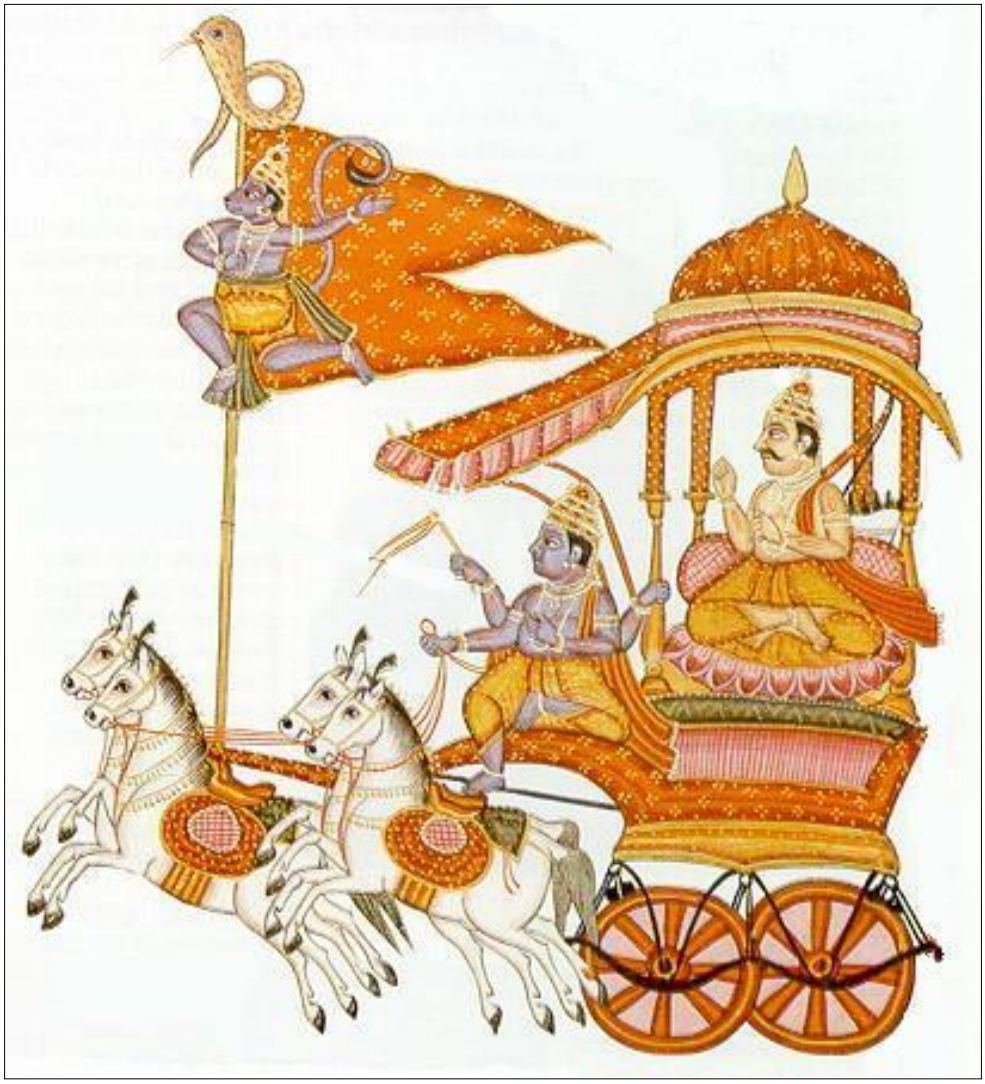
The Game of Chess and the Four-Fold Force



Owing to peculiar geographical features, with her vast plains interspersed with forests, the ancient Indian States had to make extensive use of mounted forces which comprised cavalry, chariots, and elephants. This does not mean that infantry was neglected. **Hindu India possessed the classical fourfold force of chariots, elephants, horsemen, and infantry, collectively known as the Caturangabala. Students also know that the old game of chess also goes by the name of Caturanga. Chess is a game of war, and in each game there are a king, a councilor, two elephants, two horses, two chariots, and eight foot-soldiers. From the references to this game in the Rg Veda and the Atharva Veda and in the Buddhists and Jaina books, it must have been very popular in ancient India. The Persian term Chatrang and the Arabic Shatrang are forms of the Sanskrit Chaturanga.**

On the whole the board is 8 X 8 squares. According to Taylor, the game of chess was the invention of some Hindu who devised a game of war with the astapada board as his field of battle. From the reference to the game in the Rig Veda and the Arthava Veda and in the Buddhist and Jaina books, it must have been very popular in ancient India. It is to be noted that the relative values of the chess pieces were analogous to or identical with the relative values of different arms as laid down by **Kautalya, Sukra, and Vaisampayana.** The organization of the Indian army which came to be known as **Caturanga**, both in epic Sanskrit and Pali literature, was based on the ancient game.

The Chariots: Chariots were used in warfare from very remote times. There are many references to chariots in the Samhitas and in the Brahmanas. The chariot was an indispensable instrument of war in the days of the Vedas, and on its possession depended victory. In the Rg Veda there is a hymn addressed to the war chariot: ' Lord of the wood, be firm and strong in body: be bearing as a brave victorious hero. Show forth thy strength, compact with straps of leather and let thy rider win all spoils of battle.' Chariots were of different types and materials. In the Ramayana and the Mahabharata their use is largely in evidence. Each chariot was marked off by its ensign and banner. Besides flags, umbrellas (chattra, atapatra), and fans were a part of the paraphernalia of the war chariot. **Sukra mentions an awe-inspiring chariot of iron with swift-moving wheels, provided with good seats for the warriors and a seat in the middle for the charioteer; the chariot was also equipped with all kinds of offensive and defensive weapons.**



Warrior Arjuna with Krishna - driving the chariot in the epic The Mahabharata

The conception of the sun-god in Indian tales is of value to the student of ancient Indian military history. The idea is that the sun-god wants to destroy darkness. Therefore he dons a lustrous armor and marching in his swift flying chariot drawn by seven powerful steads, Aruna (dawn) being his charioteer. The whole image presents a life-like portrait of the military dress as well as the march against an enemy.

Elephants: The next important force of war consisted of elephants. The numerous representations of the animal on coins and in architectural sculptural works from Gandhara to Ramesvaram as well as bronze figures in Indonesia are an indication of the esteem in which it was held by the ancient Indians, clearly on account of its usefulness.

There is a reference in the Rg Veda to two elephants bending their heads and rushing together against the enemy, which is a fairly early reference to the animal being used in war. By the time of the Yajur Veda Samhita the art of training elephants had become common. The **Arthasastra** mentions a special officer of the State for the care of elephants and lays down his duties. Megasthenes explains how the elephants were hunted, and how their distempers were cured by simple remedies such as cow's milk for eye-disease and pig's fat for sores. **A Jataka story throws some light on how fire-weapons were used in ancient India.** "Once a king mounted on an elephant and led an attack on the city of Benares. The soldiers who offered defences from within the city gates discharged a shower of missiles against the enemy

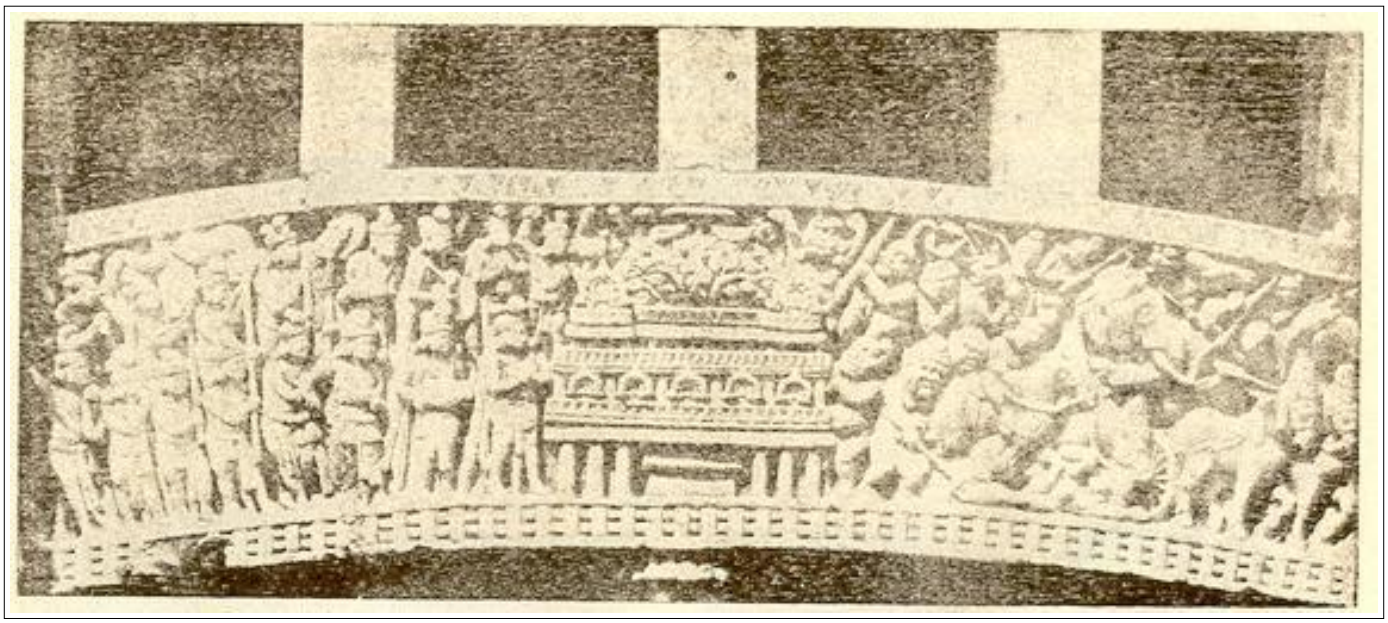
at which the elephant was frightened a little." The use of burning naphtha balls thrown against on rushing elephants to frighten them and make them turn back on their own side, is mentioned by early Mohammadan historians as a feature of the warfare between the Rajputs and the Turkish invaders from the North-West. (Elliot and Dowson, vol. I).

Cavalry:



We hear from the Kautaliya and Megasthenes that there was a well-organized and efficient cavalry force in the army of Chandragupta. In the ArthaVeda we hear of dust-raising horsemen. In this connection it is interesting to consider the oft-repeated statement that horses are non-Indian. It is not the whole truth. They were known to the Asuras of Vedic literature. There is a legend narrated in the third book of the **Hariharacaturanga** (though this is work of the late 12th century A.D., the tradition recorded is very ancient). In the epoch of the epics and the Arthasastra, we find that the cavalry occupied as important a place in the army as any other division.

Megasthenes corroborates the evidence of the Arthasastra. There was a special department in the State for the cavalry. The horses of the State were provided with stables and placed under the care of good grooms and syces. There were several trained horsemen who could jump forward and arrest the speed of galloping horses. But the majority of them rode their horses with bit and bridle. When horses became ungovernable they were placed in the hands of professional trainers who made the animals gallop round in small circles. In selecting horses of war, their age, strength, and size were taken into account. We may remark in passing that Abhimanyu's horses were only three years old.



How important the science of horses was to the ancient Indians is best seen from the **Laksanaprakasa** which quotes from several important old authorities some of which are probably lost to us. Among them are the Asvayurveda and Asvasastra, the former attributed to Jayadeva and the latter to Nakula. **Both the Puranas and the epics agree that the horses of the Sindhu and Kamboja regions were the finest breed and that the services of the Kambojas as cavalry troopers were requisitioned in ancient wars. In the Mahabharata war the Kambojans (Cambodians) were enlisted.** The steeds of Bahalika were also highly esteemed. Horses had names and so did elephants. Unlike the chariot horse, the cavalryman drove his animal with a whip which was generally fixed to the wrist. This allowed his hand free play. The cavalryman was armed with arrow or spear or sword. He wore breastplate and turban (unsnisa). Worth noting is the fact that horses were made to drink wine before actually marching to battle.

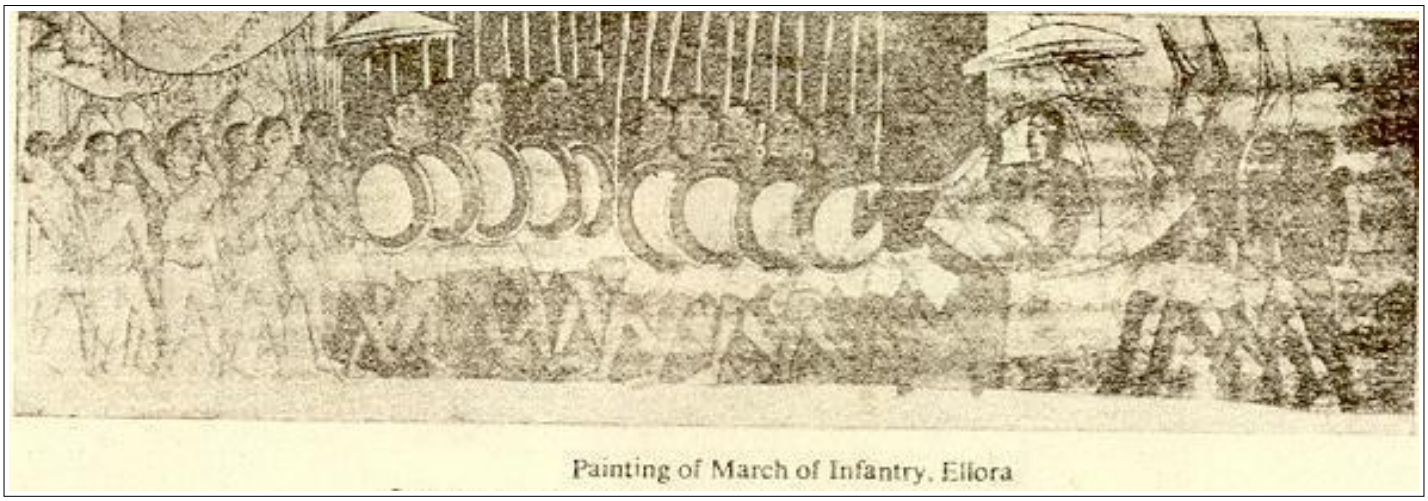
The tactical use of the cavalry was to break through the obstacles on the way, to pursue the retreating enemy, to cover the flanks of the army, to effect speedy communication with the various parts of the army unobserved (bahutsara) and to pierce the enemy ranks from the front to the rear. The cavalry was responsible, in a large measure, for the safety and

security of the army in entrenched positions, forests or camps. It obstructed movements of supplies and reinforcements to the enemy. In short, the cavalry was indispensable in situations requiring quickness of movement.

Infantry:

The next important division of the army was the infantry, or foot-soldier. The Arthasastra speaks of the infantry as a separate army department under the charge of a special officer of the State. This receives confirmation from Megasthenes statement. Besides the maula or hereditary troops which formed a considerable portion of the army, there were the bhrta or mercenaries, the sreni or soldiers supplied by the different group and guild organizations, the mitra or soldiers supplied by allies, the amitra or deserters from the enemy ranks, and the atavi recruited from forest tribes. According to the **Sukraniti and the Kamandakanitsara**, the army was to be made as imposing as possible to frighten the enemy by its size. The **Agni-purana** says that victory ever attends the army where foot-soldiers are numerically strong.

The Sukraniti also mentions that foot-soldiers possessed fire-arms when they fought.



Painting of March of Infantry, Ellora

When these foot-soldiers equipped themselves for war **Arrian** says that **'they carry a bow made of equal length with the man who bears it. This they rest upon the ground and pressing against it and their left foot, thus discharge the arrow having drawn the string backwards: the shaft they use is little short of being three yards long, and there is nothing which can resist an Indian Archer's shot - neither shield nor breast-plate, nor any stronger defense if such there be.'** In their left hand they carry bucklers made of undressed ox-hide which are not so broad as those who carry them but are about as long. If we turn to the ancient nations and especially the ancient Egyptians we meet with almost a similar description.

The Commissariat:



The **Caturanaga** was a classical division of the army accepted by tradition. But in the epoch of the epic we hear of a Sadanga or the six-fold army, including commissariat and admiralty. The use of commissariat can be traced to the epic age. This belonged to the category of administrative division of troops as against the combatant. We are told that this division of the army into two categories was first seen in the battle of Mansikert (1071 A.D.)
But, centuries before, the Indian army leaders had realized the value of such a division. It is said that when the Pandava army marched to Kurukshetra it was followed by 'carts and transport cars, and all descriptions of vehicles, the treasury, weapons and machines and physicians and surgeons, along with the few invalids that were in the army and all those that were weak and powerless. This was purely a civil department attached to the army. Care was also given to wounded animals.

The numerous references in our authorities to the Commissariat demonstrate beyond doubt that wars were planned methodically and conducted systematically.

The Admiralty:

The Admiralty as a department of the State may have been a creation of Chandragupta **but there is evidence to show that the use of ships and boats was known to the people of the Rig Veda**. In the following passage we have reference to a vessel with a hundred oars. 'this exploit you achieved, Asvins in the ocean, where there is nothing to give support, nothing to rest upon, nothing to cling to, that you brought Bhujya, sailing in a hundred-cared ship, to his father's house." (refer to Naval warfare section).

Cartography

There is no special word in Sanskrit for a 'a map.' There is, however, reason to believe that in ancient India a map or chart was regarded as a citra or **alekhya**, i.e., 'a painting, a picture, a delineation'. **That maps were made in ancient India seems to be quite clear from the evidence of the New History of the T'ang Dynasty which gives an account of the Chinese general Wang Hiuen-tse's exploits in India in the year 648 A.D.**

With reference to the knowledge of map-making among the people of India, especially the Dravidians of the South:

"The charts in use by the medieval navigators of the Indian Ocean - Dravidas, Arabs, Persians, were equal in value, if not superior, to the charts of the Mediterranean. Marco Polo (1498) found them in the hands of his Indian pilot, and their nature is fully explained in the Mohit or 'the Encyclopaedia of the Sea',

**

Hindu Valor

The Hindus were declared the by the Greeks to be the bravest nation they ever came in contact with. (source: **History of India - by Mountstuart Elphinstone** p. 197). **It was the Hindu King of Magadha that struck terror in the ever-victorious armies of Alexander.**

Abul Fazal, the minister of Akbar, after admiring their noble virtues, speaks of the valor of the Hindus in these terms: “Their character shines brightest in adversity. Their soldiers (Rajputs) know to what it is to flee from the fields of battle, but when the success of the combat becomes doubtful, they dismount from their horses and throw away their lives in payment of the debt of valor.”

Francois Bernier, A 17th century traveler says that: “The Rajputs embrace each other when on the battlefields as if resolved to die.” The Spartans, as is well known, dressed their hair on such occasions. It is well known that when a Rajput becomes desperate, he puts on garments of **saffron color**, which act, in technical language, is called **kesrian kasumal karna (donning saffron robes).**

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 79 - 91).

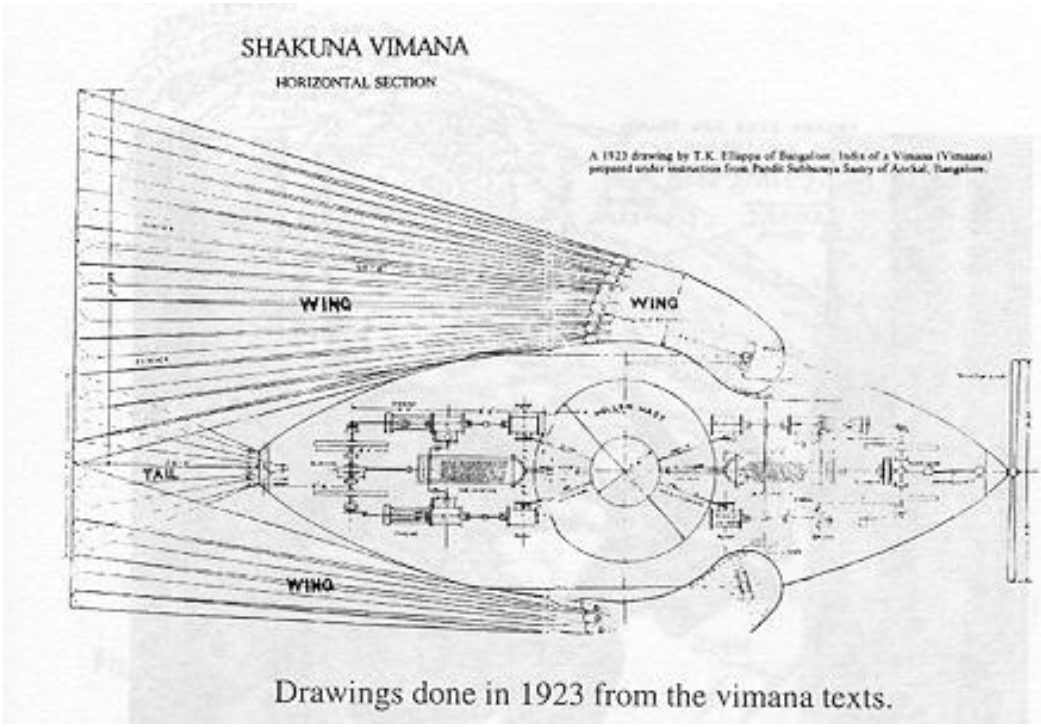
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Aerial Warfare

No question can be more interesting in the present circumstances of the world than India's contribution to the science of aeronautics. There are numerous illustration in our vast Puranic and epic literature to show how well and wonderfully the ancient Indians conquered the air. **To glibly characterize everything found in this literature as imaginary and summarily dismiss it as unreal has been the practice of both Western and Eastern scholars until very recently.** The very idea indeed was ridiculed and people went so far to assert that it was physically impossible for man to use flying machines. But today what with balloons, airplanes….."

Turning to Vedic literature, in one of the Brahmanas occurs the concept of a ship that sails heavenwards. The ship is the Agnihotra of which the Ahavaniya and Garhapatya fires represent the two sides bound heavenward, and the steersman is the Agnihotrin who offers milk to the three Agnis. Again in the still earlier Rg Veda Samhita we read that the Asvins conveyed the rescued Bhujya safely by means of winged ships. The latter may refer to the aerial navigation in the earliest times.

In the recently published Samarangana Sutradhara of Bhoja, a whole chapter of about 230 stanzas is devoted to the principles of construction underlying the various flying machines and other engines used for military and other purposes.



Drawings done in 1923 from the vimana texts.

The various advantages of using machines, especially flying ones, are given elaborately. Special mention is made of their use at one's will and pleasure, of their uninterrupted movements, of their strength and durability, in short of their capability to do in the air all that is done on earth. Three movements are usually ascribed to these machines, - ascending, cruising thousands of miles in different directions in the atmosphere and lastly descending. It is said that in an aerial car one can mount up to Suryamandala, 'solar region' and the Naksatra mandala (stellar region) and also travel throughout the regions of air above the sea and the earth. These cars are said to move so fast as to make a noise that could be heard faintly from the ground. The evidence in its favor is overwhelming.

An aerial car is made of light, wood looking like a great bird with a durable and well-formed body having mercury inside and fire at the bottom. It had two resplendent wings, and is propelled by air. It flies in the atmospheric regions for a great distance and carries several persons along with it. The inside construction resembles heaven created by Brahma himself. Iron, copper, lead and other metals are also used for these machines. All these show how far art and science was developed in ancient India in this direction. Such elaborate description ought to meet

the criticism that the vimanas and similar aerial vehicles mentioned in ancient Indian literature should be relegated to the region of myth.

The ancient writers could certainly make a distinction between the mythical which they designated as daiva and the actual aerial wars designated as manusa.



After the great victory of Rama over Lanka, Vibhisana presented him with the Puspaka vimana which was furnished with windows, apartments, and excellent seats. It was capable of accommodating all the vanaras besides Rama, Sita and Lakshman. Again in the Vikramaurvaisya, we are told that king Puraravas rode in an aerial car to rescue Urvasi in pursuit of the Danava who was carrying her away. Similarly in the Uttararamacarita in the flight between Lava and Candraketu (Act VI) a number of aerial cars are mentioned as bearing celestial spectators. There is a statement in the Harsacarita of Yavanas being acquainted with aerial machines. The Tamil work Jivakacintamani refers to Jivaka flying through the air.

Kathasaritsagara refers to highly talented woodworkers called Rajyadhara and Pranadhara. The former was so skilled in mechanical contrivances that he could make ocean crossing chariots. And the latter manufactured a flying chariot to carry a thousand passengers in the air. **These chariots were stated to be as fast as thought itself.**

(source: **India Through The Ages: History, Art Culture and Religion - By G. Kuppuram** p. 532-533).

(for more information on vimanas please refer to chapter on **Vimanas**).

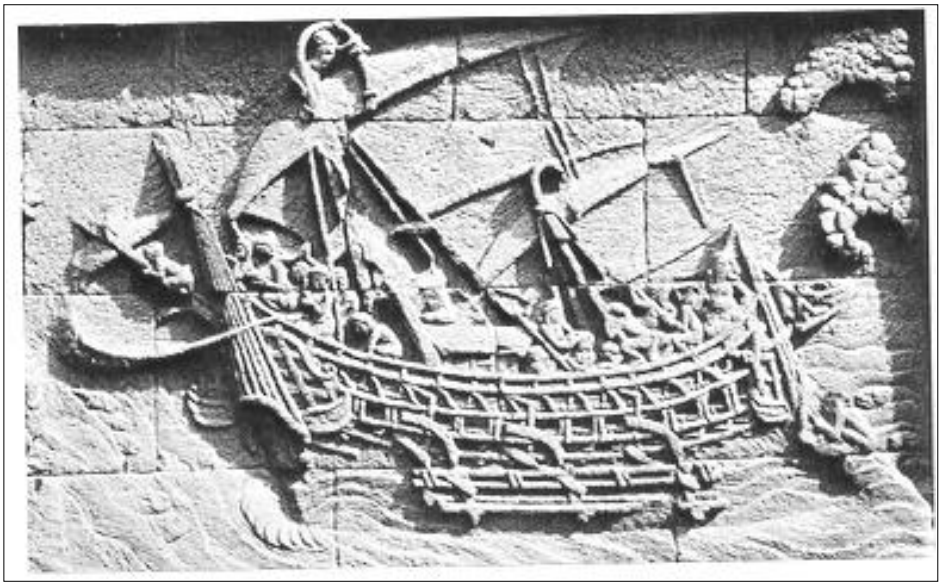
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Naval Warfare

The old notion that the Hindus were essentially a landlocked people, lacking in a spirit of adventure and the heart to brave the seas, is now dispelled. **The researches of a generation of scholars have proved that from very early times the people of India were distinguished by nautical skill and enterprise, that they went on trading voyages to distant shores across the seas, and even established settlements and colonies in numerous lands and islands.** (please refer to chapter on **Suvarnabhumi**).

In ancient India, owing to the geographical influence, nautical shill and enterprise seems to have been best developed in three widely separated region of the country. These were Bengal, the valley and delta of the Indus, and the extreme south of the Deccan peninsula, called **Tamilagam**.

Boat-making and ship-building industries were found in India since ancient times. In the Vedic period, sea was frequently used for trade purposes. The *Rig Veda* mentions "merchants who crowd the great waters with ships". The *Ramayana* speaks of merchants who crossed the sea and bought gifts for the king of Ayodhya. Manu legislates for safe carriage and freights by river and sea. In some of the earliest Buddhist literature we read of voyages ‘out of sight’ of land, some lasting six months or so.



In **Kautalya Arthasastra** the admiralty figures as a separate department of the War Office; and this is a striking testimony to the importance attached to it from very early times. In the Rg Veda Samhita boats and ships are frequently mentioned. The classical example often quoted by every writer on the subject is the naval expedition of Bhujya who was sent by his father with the ship which had a hundred oars (aritra). Being ship-wrecked he was rescued by the twin Asvins in their boat.

"There was also extensive intercourse of India with foreign countries, including the Mediterranean lands and the African continent, naturally led to piracy on the waters. There then arose the need for the protection of sea-borne trade, and we are told that "at the outset the merchant vessels of India carried a small body of trained archers armed with bows and arrows to repulse the attacks of the pirates, but later they employed guns, cannon and other more deadly weapons of warfare with a few wonderful and delusive contrivances."

(source: **The Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients In the Indian Ocean** - **William Vincent** pp. 457). These are probably the beginnings of the ancient Indian navy.

In the **Shanti Parvan** (59, 41) of the **Mahabharata** it is said that the navy is one of the angas (part)of the complete army. Examples of ships being used for military purposes are not lacking. When Vidura scented danger to Kunti's five sons, he made them escape to the forest with their mother, crossing the Ganges in a boat equipped with weapons having the power of withstanding wind and wave. In the Dig Vijaya portion of the Sabha parva, it is said that Sahadeva crossed the sea and brought many islands under his sway after defeating the Mlecchas and other mixed tribes inhabiting them. If this be an historical fact the inference is irresistible that he could not have effected his conquest without the use of boats and vessels. We read in the Ramayana that Durmukha, a Raksasa, who had been fired bu the impulse of anger at the deeds of Hanuman, offered his services to Ravana even to fight on the sea. This is testimony enough of the use of a fleet for war purposes. There are other references here and there to ships in the Ramayana. When Hanuman was crossing the ocean to Lanka, he is compared to a ship tossed by winds on the high seas. Sugriva speaks of Sumatra, Java and even the Red Sea, when sending forth his monkey hosts in quest of Sita.



The **Amarakosa**, mentions a number of nautical terms which stand for ship, anchorage (naubandhana), the helm of the ship (naukarana), the helmsman (naukaranadhara). That there were ships-building yards in different parts could be inferred from a significant term navatakseni occurring in a copper plate grant of Dharmaditya dated 531. A.D.

About 517 B.C. according to Herodotus, Darius launched a maritime expedition under Skylax of Caryanda to the Indus Delta, and during Alexander's time, again, we read of the people of the Punjab fitting out a fleet. We have the testimony of **Arrian to show that the Xathroi (Kshatri), one of the Punjab tribes, supplied Alexander during his return voyage with thirty oared galleys and transport vessels which were built by them.**

(source: **India and Its Invasion by Alexander** p. 156)

In the Manusamhita (Vii. 192), it is laid down that boats should be employed for military purposes when the theatre of hostilities abounded in water. **Kamandaka** (XVI, 50) alludes to naval warfare when he says: "By regular practice one becomes an adept in fighting from chariot, horses, elephants and boats, and a past-master in archery." **Manavadharmasastra** refers to sea fights and attests to the use of boats for naval warfare. **The sailor is called naukakarmajiva. Thus in Vedic, Epic and the Dharmasastra literature we find that naval warfare is mentioned as a distinct entity, attesting a continuous naval tradition from the earliest times.**
Yukti-kalpataru specifies one class of ships called agramandira (because they had their cabins towards the prows), as eminently adapted for naval warfare (rane kale ghanatyaye).

Passing on to other literary evidence, we find in the **Raghuvamsa** frequent reference to boats and ships. Raghu in the course of his digvijaya conquered Bengal which was protected by a fleet (nausadhanotyatan). In anther place it is mentioned that Raghu marched on Persia through the land route, and not by the sea route, thereby showing that the latter was the more common route.



Historian **Dr. Vincent A. Smith** says that 'the creation of the Admiralty department was an innovation due to the genius of Chandragupta.

"**The Admiralty as a department of the State may have been a creation of Chandragupta but there is evidence to show that the use of ships and boats was known to the people of the Rg Veda. "**

(source: **Early History of India - By Vincent Smith** p 133).

In the following passage we have reference to a vessel with a hundred oats. 'This exploit you achieved, Asvins in the ocean, where there is nothing to give support, nothing to rest upon, nothing to cling to, that you brought Bhujya, sailing in a hundred oared ship, to his father's house.'

Further on in the Veda, this same vessel is described as a **plava** which was storm-proof and which presented a pleasing appearance and had wings on its sides. Another reference informs us that Tugra dispatched a fleet of four vessels (**Catasro navah**) among which was the one referred to above. We may infer from these passages that the Asvins were a great commercial people having their home in a far-off island, and that their ruler Tugra maintained a fleet in the interests of his State. There are also other references in the Rg Veda to show that the ancient Indians were acquainted with the art of navigation. For instance, Varuna is credited with a knowledge of the ocean routes along which vessels sailed.

The **Baudhayana Dharmasastra** speaks of Samudrasamyanam and interprets it as **nava dvipantaragamanam, i. e. Sailing to other lands by ships. This very term occurs in the navadhyaksa section of the Kautaliya Arthasastra.**



The Puranas have several references to the use of ships and boats. The **Markandeya Purana** speaks of vessels tossing about on the sea. The Varahapurana refers to the people who sailed far into the ocean in search of pearls and oysters. The ships floated daily on the shoreless, deep and fearful waters of the ocean. We are on firmer ground when we see in the Andhra period their coins marked with ships. The ship building activities were great on the east coast, and the Coromandel coast in particular. **From this period to about 15th century A.D. there was a regular intercourse with the islands of the Archipelago most of which were colonized and also with ancient America right across the Pacific as testified to us by the archaeological finds and inscriptions in those parts.**

(please refer to chapters on **Pacific**, **Suvarnabhumi** and **Seafaring in Ancient India**).

The **Pali books of Sri Lanka** like the **Mahavamsa** refers to ocean going vessels carrying 700 passengers. Such frequent intercourse and colonization through the ages could not have been effected without a powerful fleet.

But it is in a later work, the **Yuktikalpataru of Bhoja**, that we have three classes of ships - the Sarvamandira, the Madhyamandira, and Agramandira. The first was called Sarvamandira because it had apartments all around. In the Sarvamandira were carried treasures, animals, and ladies of the court. This was the vessel ordinarily used by kings in times of peace. The Madhyamandira was so called because the living quarters were situated in the middle. It was a sporting vessel and generally used in the rainy season. The vessel of the third kind, the Agramandira, took its name from the circumstance that the living room was located in front or at the top of the vessel. The Agramandira was used for distant and perilous voyages and also sea-fights.

There are also in the **Yuktikalpataru** other references to vessels. There are 27 types of ships mentioned here, the largest having the measurement 276 ft X 36 ft X 27 ft weighing roughly 2,300 tons. The following passage points to the use of ships in warfare. The line: naukadyam vipadam jneyam makes it clear that naval expeditions were common. Under the heading of yanam or march mention is made of expeditions by land, water and air.

Kautilya remarks: "Pirate ships (himsrika), boats from an enemy's country when they cross its territorial limits, as well as vessels violating the customs and rules enforced in port towns, should be pursued and destroyed." It is obvious that the task set forth above could only be performed by armed vessels belonging to the state.

From this we may conclude that in ancient India ships were employed in warfare at least as early as the Rig Vedic times. It is an incontrovertible fact that there was a naval department in Mauryan times. We have the testimony of Megasthenes that the navy was under a special officer called the Superintendent of Navigation. This official was in turn controlled by the Admiralty department. The officer whom **Megasthenes** refers to as Superintendent of Navigation is called **Navadhyaksa** as already seen, in the **Arthasastra.** The Greek accounts bear testimony to the fact that navigation had attained a very high development at the times of Alexander's

invasion, for we are told that the invader was able to secure a fleet from the Punjab at short notice. The **Arthasastra** lays down some healthy regulations relating to navigation. Vessels which gave trouble or were bound for the enemy's country, or transgressed the regulations of port towns were to be destroyed.

A considerable ship building activity is evident on the west coast of India also as noted in the Sangam works of the Tamils. South India carried on political and commercial activities as far as the Mediterranean in the early centuries of the Christian era and before. The great Ceran Senguttavan had a fleet under him.

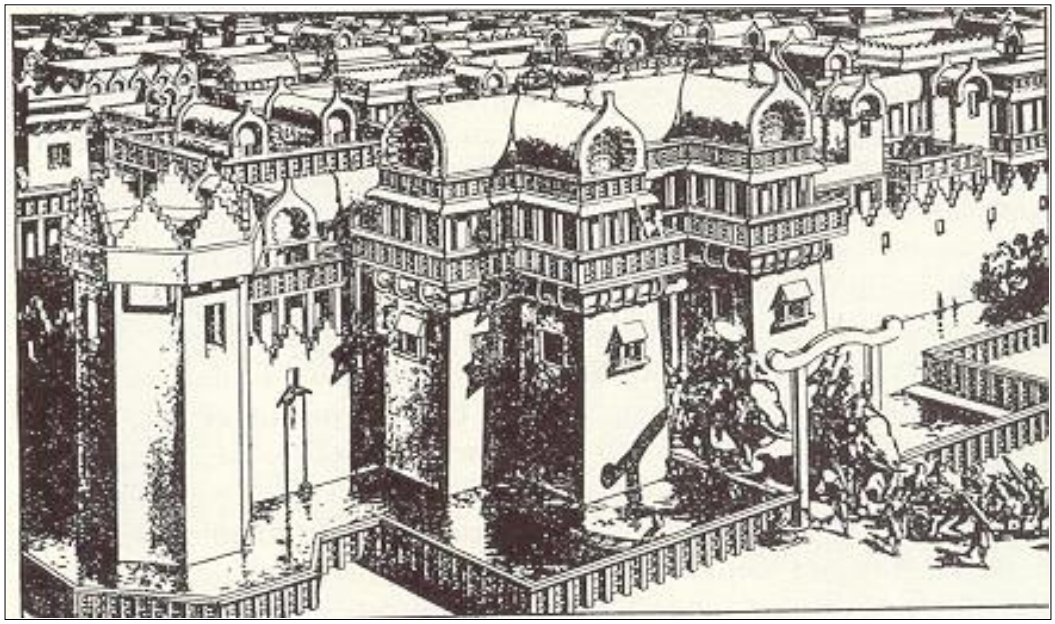


Turning to the history of **South India**, we have evidence to show that the country had trade and culture contacts with foreign countries like Rome in the west and Malay Archipelago and South east Asia in the east. Yavana ships laden with articles of merchandise visited the west coast frequently. There was active foreign trade between Tamil Indian and the outer world **at least** from the time of Soloman, ie. about 1000 B.C. Roman historians refer to the commercial intercourse that existed between Rome and South India. In the first century before Christ we hear of a **Pandyan embassy to Augustus Caesar.** (refer to **Periplus translated by Schoff** p. 46).

The Sangam classics point to the profession of pearl-diving and sea-fisheries on a large scale. We hear of shipwrecks of the early Tamils saved now and then by Manimekhalai, the goddess of the sea.

(Note: ancient Tamil tradition traces its origins to a submerged island or continent, **Kumari Kandam,** situated to the south of India. The Tamil epics **Shilappadikaram** and **Manimekhalai** provide glorious descriptions of the legendary city and port of **Puhar**, which the second text says was swallowed by the sea. As in the case of Dwaraka, (please refer to chapter on **Dwaraka** and **Aryan Invasion Theory**), initial findings at and off **Poompuhar,** at the mouth of the Cauvery, show that there may well be a historical basis to this legend: apart from several structures excavated near the shore, such as brick walls, water reservoirs, even a wharf (all dated 200-300 B.C.), a few years ago a structure tantalizingly described as a "U-shaped stone structure" was found five kilometers offshore, at a depth of twenty-three meters; it is about forty meters long and twenty wide, and fishermen traditionally believed that a submerged temple existed at that exact spot. If the structure is confirmed to be man-made (and not a natural formation), its great depth would certainly push back the antiquity of Puhar. Only more systematic explorations along Tamil Nadu's coast, especially at Poompuhar, Mahabalipuram, and around Kanyakumari (where fishermen have long reported submerged structures too) can throw

more light on the lost cities, and on the traditions of **Kumari Kandam**, which some have sought to identify with the mythical Lemuria).



ancient city in India

We have the account of a Cera King conquering the Kadamba in the midst of sea waters. The Cera King **Senguttuvan** had a fleet with which he defeated the Yavanas who were punished with their hands being tied behind their backs and the pouring of oil on their heads. The Cholas also maintained a strong fleet with which they not only invaded and subjugated Lanka but also undertook overseas expeditions. Among the conquests of Rajaraja, Lanka was one, and his invasion of that island finds expression in the **Tiruvalangadu plates**, where it is described as follows:

"Rama built, with the aid of the monkeys, a causeway over the sea and then slew with great difficulty the king of Lanka by means of sharp-edged arrows. But Rama was excelled by this (king) whose powerful army crossed the ocean in ships and burnt the king of Lanka."

Rajaraja also sent an expedition against the Twelve Thousand Islands, obviously a reference to the Laccadives and Maldives. Friendly embassies were also sent by the Chola king to China.

From the evidence of the Mahvamsa as well as from a few inscriptions we are able to gather some information regarding the diplomatic relations that existed between India and Sri Lanka. We have the story of Vijaya and his followers occupying the island about 543 B.C. Vijaya was a prince of North India who was banished from the kingdom by his father. Passing through the southern Magadha country he sailed to Sri Lanka, according to the **Rajavali,** in a fleet carrying more than 700 soliders, defeated the Yaksas inhabiting it, and settled there permanently. This story is illustrated in the Ajanta frescoes.



Numerous ships carried the troops of Rajendra to Sri Vijaya and its dependencies which he conquered. Among the places conquered were Pannai (Pani or Panei on the east coast of Sumatra), Malaiyur (at the southern end of the Malay Peninsula), Mappappalam (a place in the Talaing country of Lower Burma), Mudammalingam (a place facing the gulf of Siam), Nakkavaram (the Nicobar islands. Besides, active trade was carried on between South India and China during this period.

At the end of the 10th century the Chinese emperor sent a mission to the Chola king with credentials under the imperial seal and provisions of gold and piece-goods to induce the foreign traders of the South Sea and those who went to foreign lands beyond the sea for trade to come to China.

The facts clearly show that the Cholas maintained supremacy over the sea and kept a strong and powerful navy which was useful not only for carrying on extensive commerce with foreign countries but also for conducting military expeditions. During the days of the Kakatiyas of Warangal, Motupalle (Guntur District) was the chief port, on the east coast. Ganapatideva, the Kakatiya ruler, **extirpated piracy on the sea and made the sea safe for commerce with foreign countries like China and Zanzibar.** This policy was pursued by Rudramba, his daughter.

Vijayanagar kingdom also claimed supremacy over the sea. Since the days of **Harihara I the rulers of Vijayanagar** took the **title of the Lord of the Eastern, Western and Southern oceans**; and there were 300 ports in the empire. The activities of the Vijayanagar fleet on the west coast are also referred to by the Portuguese in 1506.

The Vijayanagar kings sent friendly embassies to foreign courts. 'Bukka I sent an embassy through his chief explainer to the court of Taitsu, the King Emperor of China, with tributes and large presents, among which was a stone which was valuable in neutralizing poison.



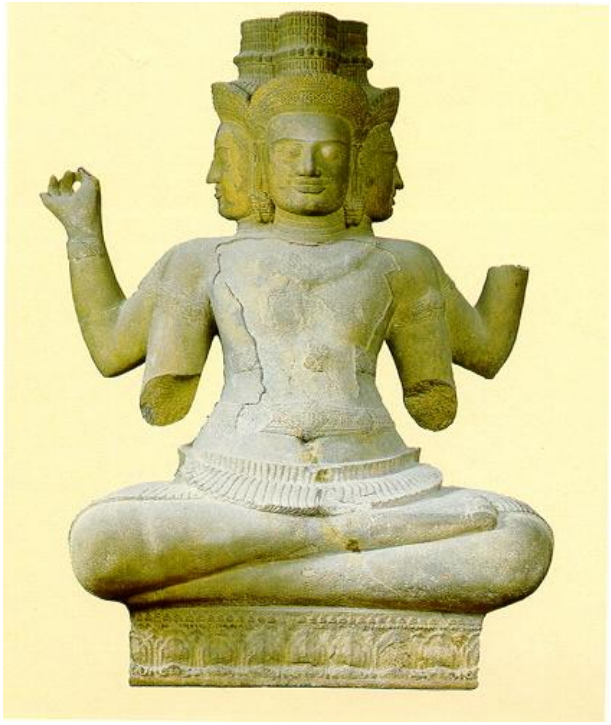
Accounts of Foreign Travelers to India

Coming to later times we have the account of **Hiuen Tsang** who notices a fleet of 3,000 sail belonging to the King os Assam. There is inscriptional evidence of the possession of a fleet under the Kakatiyas and the Cholas in South india. **Marco Polo** testifies to the huge size and efficient construction of Indian vessels while **Yule** in his **Cathey** refers to Rajput ships en route to China. Marco Polo, a famous Venetian traveler who visited India in 13th Century also visited Thane Port. The first chapter of his book which deals with India is almost devoted to shipbuilding industry in India. **Friar Odoric** of Pordenone, an Italian Monk who visited India in 14th Century, in his account of his voyage across the Indian Ocean, a mention is made of ships which can carry 700 people.

"Ships of size that carried Fahien from India to China (through stormy China water) were certainly capable of proceeding all the way to Mexico and Peru by crossing the Pacific. One thousand years before the birth of Columbus Indian ships were far superior to any made in Europe upto the 18th century."

(source: **The Civilizations of Ancient America: The Selected Papers of the XXIXth International Congress of Americanists - edited Sol Tax** 1951).

Ludovico di Varthema (1503 A. D) saw vessels of 1,000 tons burden built at **Masulipatnam**. According to Dr. Vincent, India built great sized vessels from the time of Agathareids (171 B.C.) to the 16th century. And no wonder the Portuguese, when they first landed at the west coast, were carried away by the excellent Indian vessels. Later still, the Vijayanagar Empire, which had as many as 300 ports, had a powerful fleet. The naval commander was styled Naviyadaprabhu.



India has a coastline of about 6300 kms. Extensive new archaeological, epigraphical, sculptural and literary material has been added to our knowledge since the early decades of this century. **Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji's** Book **Indian Shipping - A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Marine Activity of The Indians From The Earliest Times** published in 1912 Orient Longmans ISBN 8121509165) is the most comprehensive study of Indian Navigation up to that period. We now know that many ports on both Eastern and Western Coast had navigational and trade links with almost all Continents of the world. There are many natural and technological reasons for this. Apart from Mathematics and Astronomy, India had excellent manufacturing skills in textile, metal works and paints. India had abundant supply of Timber. Indian - built ships were superior as they were built of Teak which resists the effect of salt water and weather for a very long time.

"The art of Navigation was born in river Sindhu 6000 years ago. The very word navigation is derived from Sanskrit word Nav (or Nav-ship) Gatih."

Lieut. Col. A Walker's paper: "Considerations of the affairs of India" written in 1811 had excellent remarks on Bombay-built ships. He notes, "situated as she is between the forests of Malabar and Gujarat, she receives supplies of timber with every wind that blows." Further he says, "it is calculated that every ship in the Navy of Great Britain is renewed every twelve years. It is well known that teakwood built ships last fifty years and upwards. Many ships Bombay-built after running fourteen or fifteen years have been brought into the Navy and were considered as stronger as ever. The Sir Edward Hughes performed, I believe, eight voyages as an Indiaman before she was purchased for the Navy. No Europe-built Indiaman is capable of going more than six voyages with safety."

He has also further noted that Bombay-built ships are at least one-fourth cheaper than those built in the docks of England. **Francois Balazar Solvyns**, a Belgian/Flemish maritime painter, wrote a book titled **Les Hindous** in 1811.

His remarks are, **"In ancient times, the Indians excelled in the art of constructing vessels, and the present Hindus can in this respect still offer models to Europe-so much so that the English, attentive to everything which relates to naval architecture, have borrowed from the Hindus many improvement which they have adopted with success to their own shipping.... The Indian vessels unite elegance and utility and are models of patience and fine workmanship."**

(source: **http://www.orientalthane.com/speeches/speech_2.htm**).

Surprisingly, many earlier western traders and travelers have expressed the same views. Madapollum was a flourishing shipping centre. **Thomas Bowrey**, an English traveler who visited India during 1669-79, observes, " many English merchants and others have their ships and vessels yearly built (at Madapollum). Here is the best and well grown timber in sufficient plenty, the best iron upon the coast, any sort of ironwork is ingeniously performed by the natives, as spikes, bolts, anchors, and the like. Very expert master-builders there are several here, they build very well, and launch with as much discretion as I have seen in any part of the world. They have an excellent way of making shrouds, stays, or any other rigging for ships".



A Venetian traveler of 16th Century **Cesare de Fedrici**, while commenting on the East Coast of India has noted that there is an abundance of material for ship building in this area and many Sultans of Constantinople found it cheaper to have their vessels built in India than at Alexandria.

Nicol Conti who visited India in 15th century was impressed by the quality Indians had achieved in ship building. He observes:

"The nations of India build some ships larger than ours, capable of containing 2,000 butts, and with five sails and as many masts. The lower part is constructed with triple planks, in order to withstand the force of the tempests to which they are much exposed. But some ships are so built in compartments that should one part be shattered, the other portion remaining entire may accomplish the voyage."

J. Ovington, Chaplain to the British King, the seventeenth-century English traveler, who visited Surat, wrote a book **A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689**. He was impressed by the skill of the Indians in ship-building and found that they even outshone Europeans. **The timber used by the Indians was so strong that it would not 'crack' even by the force of a bullet so he urged the English to use that timber 'to help them in war'. Indian Teak stood firmer than the English Oak, remarked Ovington.**

Thomas Herbert, a traveler who visited Surat in 1627, has given an interesting account of the arrival, loading and unloading of ships through small boats at Swally marine (Sohaly), a few kilometres away from Surat. He remarked that between September and March every year, the port of Sohaly presented a very busy and noisy scene for there came many ships from foreign lands. The merchants (*baniyas)* erected their straw huts in large numbers all along the sea coast, making the whole place thus look like a country fair. The merchants sold various commodities like calicoes, ivory, agates, etc. Many small boys engaged by the merchants were seen running about doing odd jobs. The English found that

the small boats used and constructed by the natives could be of immense use. This was a definite gain for both nations. Boats and rafts were used as a means of conveyance for loading and unloading ships. There were about 4200 big and 4400 small boats. There were large-sized boats that could carry even elephants. The boats used by kings and nobles were designed to look artistic. **Abul Fazl** writes about the "wonderfully fashioned boats with delightful quarters and decks and gardens"

Among the primitive Indian boats, the **cattarmaran** comes first. It consisted of three logs and three spreaders and cross lashings. The centre log was the largest, and pointed towards one end. Mainly fishermen used the cattarmaran for fishing. A little more skillfully made is the **musoola** boat, which has no iron fastening. It was mostly used in the Coromandel coast. Dr John Fryer says, "It is possible that the name musoola may be connected with Masulipatarn where boats seem to have been in use".

Another boat made in an indigenous manner was known as **dingy**. It was hollowed out from a single trunk. Lower down the Ganga, the name was applied to boats half-decked, half wagon-roofed and built of planks.

Purqoo was another type of boat described by **Thomas Bowery**. It plied between the Hooghly and Balasore. These boats were made very strong to carry 'sufficient load'. They were also used for loading ships. they could remain in water for a long time without getting damaged. As compared to the purqoo, boora was a 'lighter boat' which rowed with 29 or 30 oars. These boats were also used for carrying saltpeter and other commodities.

(source: **Coastal trade flourished with Europeans - By Pramod Sangar**).

Sir John Malcolm writes"

"Indian vessels are so admirably adapted to the purpose for which they are required that, notwithstanding their superior science, Europeans were unable, during an intercourse with India for two centuries, to suggest or to bring into successful practice one improvement."

(source: **Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. I**).

In the middle of the 18th century, **John Grose** noted that at Surat the Indian ship-building industry was very well established, indeed, "They built incomparably the best ships in the world for duration", and of all sizes with a capacity of over a thousand tons. Their design appeared to him to be a "a bit clumsy" but their durability soundly impressed him. **They lasted "for a century".**

Lord Grenville mentions, in this connection, a ship built in Surat which continued to navigate up the Red Sea from 1702 when it was first mentioned in Dutch letters as "the old ships" up to the year 1700." Grenville also noted that ships of war and merchandise "not exceeding 500 tons" were being built" with facility, convenience and cheapness" at the ports of Coringa and Narsapore.

Dr. H. Scott sent samples of **dammer** to London, as this vegetable substance was used by the Indians to line the bottom of their ships; he thought it would be a good substitute "in this country for the materials which are brought from the northern nations for our navy…There can be no doubt that you would find dammer in this way an excellent substitute for pitch and tar and for many purposes much superior to them."

source: **Decolonizing History: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West 1492 to the Present Day - By Claude Alvares** p. 68-69).

Alain Danielou (1907- 1994) son of French aristocracy, author of numerous books on philosophy, religion, history and arts of India has written:

"India's naval dockyards, which belonged to the state, were famous throughout history. The sailors were paid by the state, and the admiral of the fleet hired the ships and crew to tradesmen for transporting goods and passengers. When the British annexed the country much later on, they utilized the Indian dockyards - which were much better organized then those in the West - to build most of the ships for the British navy, for as long as ships were made of wood."

(source: **A Brief History of India - By Alain Danielou** p. 106).

For more information on Navy refer to chapters on **Pacific**, **Suvarnabhumi** and **Seafaring in Ancient India**).

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Diplomacy and War

Not withstanding the elaborate rule of war laid down in the epics and the law-books, insisting in the main that to wage war was the duty and privilege of every true Ksatriya, in several cases the horrors of war made the belligerent think of the consequences and avoid outbreak of hostilities by a well calculated policy which we now term diplomacy.



King seeking counsel

Negotiation, persuasion and conciliation were cardinal points of the ancient Indian diplomatic system, and were effective instruments in averting many a war, which would otherwise have realized in much bloodshed and economic distress.

The political term for diplomacy is **naya,** and the opinion of **Kautalya**, the eminent politician of the 4th century B.C., a king who understands the true implications of diplomacy conquers the whole earth.

The history of diplomacy in ancient India commences with the Rig Veda Samhita, and the date of its composition may be taken as far back as the Chalcolithic period. In the battles the help of Agni is invoked to overcome enemies. He is to be the deceiver of foes. In pursuing his mission to a successful end, the use of spies is mentioned. This bears eloquent testimony to the system of espionage prevalent so early as the time of the Rig Veda Samhita. In the battle of the Ten Kings described in the seventh mandala, we find diplomacy of rulers getting supplemented by its association with priestly diplomacy, which exercised a healthy influence on the constitutional evolution.

International Relations - The picture presented in the **epics** and the **Arthasastra** literature seems to be confined to the four corners of **Bharatkhanda. The intercourse as envisaged in the literature, shows relations to be more commerical than political in character.**

Strabo quotes Megasthenes and says that Indians were not engaged in wars with foreigners outside India nor was their country invaded by foreign power except by Hercules and Dionsysius and lately by the Macedonians. **There were friendly relations of Chandragupta with Seleukos Nikator, of Bindusara with Antiochus, of Asoka and Samadragupta with Lanka, of Pulaskesi with Persians, of Harsha with Nepal and China, of the Cholas with Sri Vijaya.**

"It was always regarded as a legitimate object of the ambition of every king to aim at the position of **Cakravartin or Sarvabhuuma** (paramount sovereign or of supreme monarch)." This ambition was legitimate and had no narrow outlook about it. It was a fruit to be sought after by every one of the monarchs comprising the mandala. If the king is not actuated by this idea, he falls short of an ideal king according to the Hindu Rajadharma.

Diplomatic agents - ambassadors

Bhisma mentions seven qualifications as essential in an ambassador: he should come from a noble line, belong to a high family, be skilful, eloquent of speech, true in delivering the mission, and of excellent memory.



Espionage in War - Spies filled an important role in both the civil and military affairs of ancient India. The institution of spies had a greater utility, as the king could take action on the report of the spies. Spies were engaged to look after the home officials, including those of the royal household as well as to report on the doings in the enemy kingdoms. The Rig Veda Samhita, often speaks of spies (spasah) of Varuna. Only men of wisdom and purity were sent on this errand, thus suggesting that they should be persons above corruption and temptation of any sort. In the epics and post-epic literature in general, spies have been described as the 'eyes of the king'. In the **Udyoga-parva** (33, 34) of **Mahabharata**, it is stated that "cows see by smell, priests by knowledge, kings by spies, and others through eyes." Spies roamed about in foreign states under various disguises to collect reliable information. In the **Ramayana**, a king mentions the wise adage that "the enemy, whose secrets have been known through espionage, can be conquered without much effort." The **Arthashastra**, which predates Christ by centuries, dwells at length on the importance of espionage and the creation of an effective spy network.

Such details may indicate the high development of the science of diplomacy in ancient India. It was the famous Indian strategist of the fourth-century B.C, **Kautilya** in the **Arthasastra**, who gave the world the dictum:

"The enemy of my enemy is my friend."

"The same style of Indian thought" says **Heinrich Zimmer** in his book, **Philosophies of India**, p. 139, admiringly of Kautilya, **"that invented the game of chess grasped with profound insight the rules of this larger game of power."**

Attitude to war - **The Sangam age of the Tamils was the heroic age of the Tamil Indians.** If the men of the Tamil land were heroes, then their women were heroines. A certain mother was asked where her son was, and she replied, that she was sure that the tiger that had lain in her womb would be found in the field of battle. War was the pabulum on which our ancient warriors were great in name and fame. A certain lady who gave birth to only one son and who sent hime to the field of battle when there was the country's call for it. **Okkurmasattiyar**, a poetess, praises a certain lady dresses the hair of her only son and gives him the armor to get ready for action in the field of battle. This may be contrasted with another where a heroic mother heard the disquieting news that her son lost his courage in action and had fled in fear. If it were true, she expressed that she would cut off her breasts that had fed him with milk. With this determination she entered the battle-field with sword in her hand and went on searching for her fallen son. When she saw her son's body cut in twain, she felt much more happy than when she gave birth to him. (source: **Puram** 277 and 279 - in Tamil).

Flags - The origin and use of flags can be traced to the earliest Indian literature, the Rig Veda Samhita. The term deaja

occurs twice in the Veda. Besides, dhvaja, we meet with a good number of expressions for a banner in Vedic literature. These are Akra, Krtadhvaja, Ketu, Brhatketu, Sahasraketu. It appears that the Vedic host aimed their arrows at the banners of the enemy. The idea was that once the banner was captured, or struck, a claim was made for success in the battle over the enemy. Ketu was a small flag as contrasted with Brhatketu or the big flag. Sahasraketu may be a thousand flag, or as the knight who brought under control a thousand flags of enemies. We are told that banners and drums were counted among the insignia of ancient Vedic kings. In the Mahabharata war, every leader had his own insignia to distinguish one division from the other. **Arjuna** had the **Kapidhvaja** or the flag with the figure of Hanuman, **Bhisma**, Taladhvaja, cognizance of a palmyra tree etc..

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Conclusion

The foregoing survey may convince an impartial student of history that the ancient Hindus had evolved precepts on fair fighting which formed a chivalrous code of military honor.



On the whole, however, it would seem that wars in ancient India were characterized by less violence and savagery than wars elsewhere. There is no recorded instance of such wanton and cold-blooded atrocity as Athens perpetrated against Melos, Corcyra and Mytilene, or the wearers of the Cross against the defenders of the Crescent in 1099 A.D. Such incidents of war as the indiscriminate slaughter of all men of military age or the enslavement of women and children of the conquered state were hardly known. On the whole, the chiefs were considerate of each other's rights.

This was also the **Kautilyan ideal of dharmavijayan**, and the typical Hindu method of creating unity out of diversity in the political sphere. It was a well-established maxim of statecraft that a victor should acquiesce in the continuance of the laws, beliefs and customs of the vanquished peoples, and that instead of seeking to extermination of the defeated dynasties, he should be content with submission and tribute. It is also the reason why some of the princely families in India can boast of an ancestry unequalled by any royal house in Europe.

It is of paramount importance to remember that in India the social, economic and religious life of the people pursued their course irrespective of the activities of the state. As early as as the 4th century B.C. **Megasthenes** noticed a peculiar trait of Indian warfare.

"Whereas among other nations it is usual in the contests of war to ravage the soil, and thus to reduce it to an uncultivated waste, among the Indians, on the contrary, by whom husbandmen, the tillers of the soil, even if battle is raging in the neighborhood, are undisturbed by any sense of danger, for the combatants on either side, in waging the conflict, make carnage of each other but allow those engaged in husbandry to remain quite unmolested. Besides they never ravage an enemy's land with fire nor cut down its trees." The modern "scorched earth" policy was then unknown.

Professor **H. H. Wilson** says: **"The Hindu laws of war are very chivalrous and humane, and prohibit the slaying of the unarmed, of women, of the old, and of the conquered."**



At the very time when a battle was going on, be says, the neighboring cultivators might be seen quietly pursuing their work, - " perhaps ploughing, gathering for crops, pruning the trees, or reaping the harvest." **Chinese pilgrim to Nalanda University, Hiuen Tsiang affirms that although there were enough of rivalries and wars in the 7th century A.D. the country at large was little injured by them.**

Colonel James Tod, author of **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India** South Asia Books; ; 2 edition (April 1998) ISBN 8120803809 wrote: "To spare a prostrate foe is the creed of the Hindu cavalier, and he carried all such maxims to excess."

What were the causes which led to the downfall of the Hindus? Why did the Indian states fall prey to the Muhammadan Turks in the 11th and 12th century?

King Asoka wanted to convert his empire into an open-air Buddhist monastery, at the expense of Hindu taxpayers whose interests in turn were marginalized. Buddhist principles derided martial prowess and criminally neglected the intrepidity and valor which fought for national independence. The excessive propaganda for unrestricted ahimsa which King Asoka carried on by his use of political authority throughout his empire, cut at the very root of the Indian empire.

For a few generations following Ashoka's demise, 'non-violent' Buddhists ate into the vitals of India's external defence, leaving the country vulnerable to a second wave of Greek attacks.

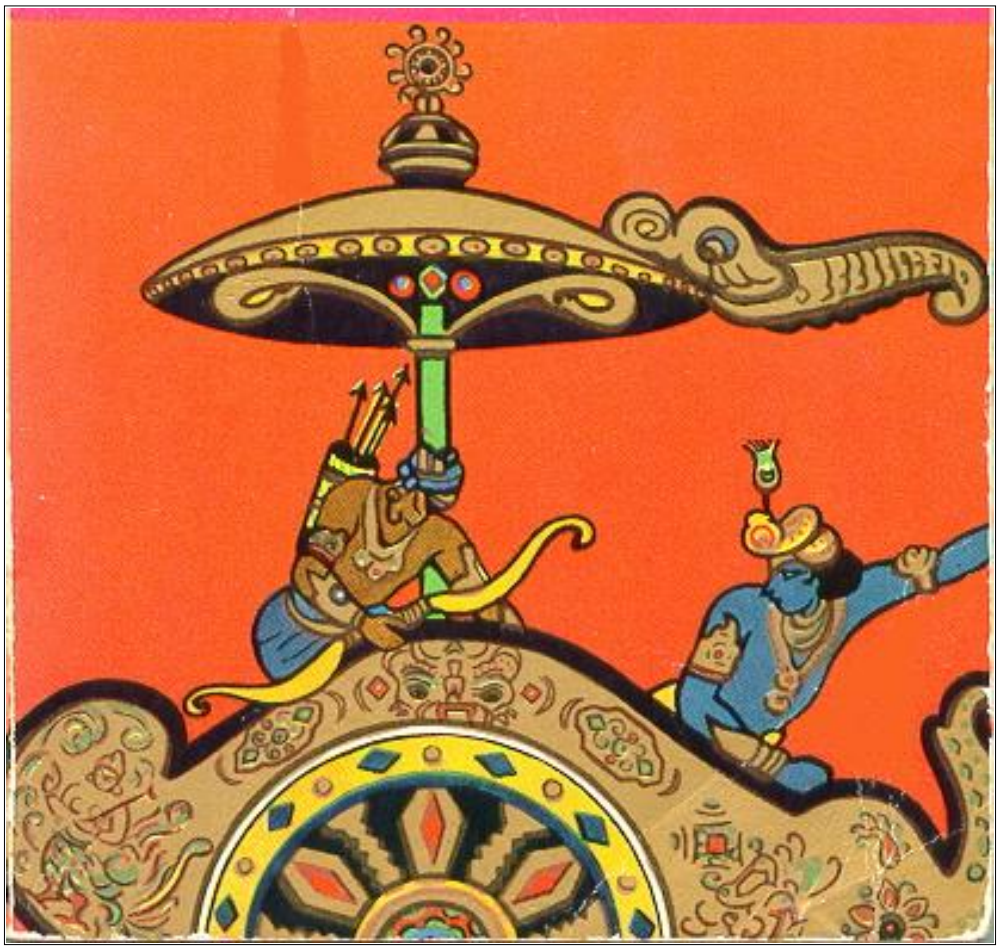
According to **Priyadarshi Dutta**:

"The Greeks, who had concluded a treaty with Chandra-gupta Maurya, moved in to Ayodha before the Kalinga King **Kharvela** repulsed them. Later Pushyamita Sunga assassinated the last Maurya King and salvaged India. Buddhism vanished from India as a result of Muslim onslaught because none of them had the liver of the likes of say, Guru Govind Singh. **While Hindus and Sikhs resisted Muslim onslaught, Buddhist submitted en mass to Islam."**

The Hindu defenders of the country although fully equal to their assailants in courage and contempt of death were nevertheless, divided among themselves. This division and disunion also enabled the crafty Turk invaders from the north to exploit the differences within the country. Hindus were more civilized and prosperous than the Turks. Moreover, the Turks had rude rigor of a semi-civilized barbarians who combined the fierce religious zeal of neo-converts. To spread their faith by conquest doubled their natural zest for battle and endowed them with the devoted valor of martyrs. In addition, the concept of ahimsa tended to create in certain sections of Hindus a deep abhorrence to all forms of violence.

The **Bhagavad Gita's** great message: **that violence is sometimes necessary, if it flows from Dharma.**

Non-violence in thought, word and deed is the ideal of the yogi, as the Gita points out. Violence is never an ideal in a civilized society, but it cannot be avoided. Rulers of society have to employ it for their preservation. Even this terrible action can be performed as selfless service when lawless societies (eg. Muhammadan Turks or Europeans who came to India as invaders) prey upon others out of greed.



The Bhagavad Gita's great message: that violence is sometimes necessary, if it flows from Dharma



For a warrior, nothing is higher than a war
against evil.
The warrior confronted with such a war should be pleased, Arjuna, for it comes as an open gate to heaven.
But if you do not participate in this battle against evil, you will incur sin, violating your dharma and your honor....

- Bhagavad Gita 2.31-33



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Re-inventing a political Buddha - By Priyadarshi Dutta
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Articles

Sailors of Sixty Centuries

Yukikalpataru, a Sanskrit manuscript compilation by **Bhoja Narapati,** which manuscript is now in the Calcutta Sanskrit College Library, is something like a treatise, on the art of shipbuilding in Ancient India.

It gives, according to Vriksha-Ayurveda ("Botany"), an account of four different kinds of wood. The first class comprises wood, that is light and soft, and can be joined to any other wood. The second class is light and hard, but cannot be joined to any other class of wood. The third class of wood is soft and heavy. Lastly the fourth kind is hard and heavy. According to Bhoja, a ship made out of the second class of wood, brings wealth and happiness. Ships of this type can be safely used for crossing the oceans. Ships made out of timbers containing different properties are not good, as they rot in water, and split and sink at the slightest shock.

Bhoja says that care should be taken that no iron be used, in joining planks, but they be subjected to the influence of magnetism, but they are to be fitted together with substances other than iron. Bhoja also gives names of the different classes of ships:

1. River-going ships –Samanya;
2. Ocean-going ships – Visesa.

The measurements in cubits of the "Ordinary class" of ships are the following:

		Length	Breadth	Height
1.	Kshudra	16	4	4
2	Madhyama	24	12	8
3	Bhima	40	20	20
4	Chapala	48	24	24
5	Patala	64	32	32
6	Bhaya	72	36	36
7	Dirgha	88	44	44
8	Patraputa	96	48	48
9	Garbhara	112	56	56
10	Manthra	120	60	60

Bhima, Bhaya, Garbhara are liable to bring ill-luck because their dimensions are such as not to balance themselves in water.

Among the "Special" are two classes.

1. Dirgha

		Length	Breadth	Height
1.	Dirghika	32	4	31/5
2	Tarani	48	6	44/5
3	Lota	64	8	62/5
4	Gatvara	80	10	8
5	Gamini	96	12	92/5
6	Tari	112	14	111/5
7	Jangala	128	16	124/5
8	Plavini	144	18	142/5

9	Dharnini	160	20	16
10	Begini	176	22	173/5

2. Unnanta

a	Urddhva	22	16	16
b	Anurddva	48	24	24
c	Svanamukhi	64	32	32
d	Gharbhini	80	40	40
e	Manthara	96	48	48

Lota, Gamini, Plavini, Anurddhava, Gharbhini, Manthara bring misfortune, because of their dimensions, and Urddhva much gain.

The “Yaktikalpataru” also suggests the metals to be used in decorations, eg. Gold, silver, copper, and compounds of all three as well as the colors. A vessel with four masts is to be painted white, the one with three masts is to be given a red paint, a two masted vessel is to be colored yellow, and a one masted vessel is to have a blue color. The prows are to be shaped into the form of heads of lions, buffalos, serpents, elephants, tigers, ducks, pea-hens, parrots and human beings, thus arguing an advanced progress in carpentry. Pearl and gold garlands are to decorate the prows.

Three classes of Ships:

According to cabins, ships are to be grouped into three classes:

Sarvamandira ships, having the largest cabin, from one end of the ship to the other. These are to be used for the transportation of the royal treasury, of women and horses. Madhyamandira ships, with cabins in the rainy season. Ships with cabins near the prows, are called Agramandira, and are for sailings in the dry seasons as well as for long voyages, and naval warfare.It was in these ships, that the first naval battle recorded in Indian literature, was fought, when Tugra, the Rishi King, sent his son Bhujyu against his enemies inhabiting some Island, and Bhujya on being wrecked, was rescued by two Asvins, in their hundred oared gallery. Of the same description are the five hundred vessels, mentioned in the Ramayana.

Carried 1000 Passengers: In Rajavalliya, the ship in which Prince Vijaya and his followers were sent away by King Sinhala of Bengal, was large enough to accommodate seven hundred passengers. The ship in which Prince Vijaya’s bride was conveyed to Sri Lanka, was big enough to accommodate eight hundred people of the bride’s party. The ship which took Prince Sinhala to Sri Lanka contained five hundred merchants besides the Prince himself. The Janaka Jataka mentions a ship-wreck of seven hundred passengers. The ship by which was effected the rescue of the Brahmin mentioned in Sankha Jataka was 800 cubits in length, 600 cubits in width, 20 fathoms deep, and had three masts. The ship mentioned in the Samuddha Vanija Jataka was big enough to transport a village full of absconding carpenters, numbering a thousand, who had failed to deliver goods paid for in advance.

Early History: An ancient couplet betrays the spirit with which the Indians were imbued and which accounts for their wonderful achievements on land, beyond seas and across mountain barriers. There is indeed evidence to show that the sons of the soil were adept at navigation both riverine and oceanic. Right from the dawn of history, therefore, Indians have been engaged in plying boats and ships, carrying cargoes and passengers, manufacturing vessels of all types and dimensions, studying the stars and winds, erecting light-houses and building ports, wharfs, dockyards and warehouses. From rustic beginnings they developed a precise science of navigation and composed regular manuals as well as elaborate treatises on the subject, some of which survive to this day. It is noteworthy that the very term navigation is derived from nau, which in Sanskrit word for ‘ship’ or ‘boat’. Thus navi gatih ‘going in a boat’ amounts to ‘navigation’.

Literary Evidence: Sanskrit literature is full of references to river transport and sea voyages. Sometimes we have graphic descriptions of fleets, even of ship-wrecks. The Rig-Veda is taken as the earliest extant work of the Aryans, though there is no general agreement as to its exact age. At one place, Rishi Kutsa Angirasa prays to

Agni: “Remove our foes as if by ship to the yonder shore. Carry us as if in a ship across the sea for our welfare.”

In Ramayana: In Valmiki’s Ramayana, we come across beautiful descriptions of large boats plying on the Ganga near Sringiberapura. King Guha of that place arranges a magnificent boat for Rama accompanied by Lakshman and Sita, in exile, to enable the party to cross the river.When Bharat comes later to the same place, with the whole royal household, citizens of Ayodhya and a large army, with the intention of bringing Rama back to Ayodhya from exile, the same King Guha, suspecting Bharata’s intentions, take precautionary measures by ordering five hundred ships, each manned by one hundred youthful mariners to keep in readiness, should resistance be necessary.

The descriptions of the ships is noteworthy: “Some (of the ships) reared aloft the swastika sign, had tremendous gongs hung, flew gay flags, displayed full sails and were exceedingly well built” The ships chosen for Bharata and the royal ladies of the royal household had special fittings and furniture as well as yellow rugs.

In Mahabharata: In the Mahabharata too there are many references. The ship contrived by Vidura for the escape of Pandavas had some kind of mechanism fitted in it: “the ship strong enough to withstand hurricanes, fitted with machinery and displaying flags.” Panini, who lived about the 7th century B.C. in his Ashtadhyayi, the most commented upon work on Sanskrit grammar, has incidentally recorded certain usages which reflect in a way the maritime activity before and during his days in India. According to one sutra various types of small river craft were in use, and their names were utsagna, udupa, udyata, utputa, pitaka etc. A large boat was called Udavahana or udakavahana. Of special interest is the distinction made between the cargoes coming from an island near the coast and those coming from mid-ocean islands: the former were called dvaipya, and the latter dvaipa or dvaipaka. Certain other sutras speak of ferry chages, cargoes, marine trade and the like of those days.

Chandragupta Maurya’s minister, Vishnugupta Chanakya alias Kautilya, the celebrated author of the treatise on statecraft, Kautilya Arthasastra, of about 320 B.C. devotes a full chapter to waterways under a Navadhyaksha ‘Superintendent of ships’. His duties included the examination of accounts relating to navigation, not only on oceans and mouths of rivers, but also on lakes, natural or artificial, and rivers. Fisheries, pearl fisheries, customs on ports, passengers and mercantile shipping, control and safety of ships and similar other affairs all came under his charge. Jaina scriptures, Buddhist Jatakas and Avadanas, as well as classical Sanskrit literature, abound in references to sea-voyages. They acquaint us with many interesting details as to the sizes and shapes of ships, their furniture, and decorations, articles of import and export, names of seaports and islands, in short, everything connected with navigation.

Temples Give Proof: In the temple of Jagannath at Puri, a stately barge is sculptured in relief. The oarsmen paddle with all their strength, the water is thrown into waves, and the whole scene is one of desperate hurry. The boat is of the Madhyamandira type, as defined by Bhoja in the “Yuktikalpataru”. The Ajanta paintings are rightly interpreted by **Griffiths** as a "**vivid testimony to the ancient foreign trade of India.**" Of the many paintings one is of “a sea-going vessel with high stem and stern with three oblong sails attached to as many upright masts. Each masts is surrounded by a truck and there is carried a big sail. The jib is well filled with wind. A sort of bowspirit, projecting from a kind of gallows on deck is indicated with the outflying jib, square in form,” like that of Columbus ships. The ship is of the Agramandira type, as described in the “Yuktikalpataru”. Another painting is of a royal pleasure boat which is “like the heraldic lymphad, with painted eyes at stem and stern, a pillard canopy amid ships, and an umbrella forward the steersman being accommodated on a sort of ladder, which remotely suggest the steerman’s chair, in the modern Burmese row boats, while a rower is in the bows.” The barge is of the Madhyamandira type.

Sculpture at Borobudur: The temple of Borobudur in Java contains sculptures recalling the colonization of Java by Indians. One of the ships “tells more plainly than words, the perils, which the Prince of Gujarat and his companions encountered on the long and difficult voyages from the west coast of India.” There are other ships tempest-tossed on the Ocean, fully trying to pluck and dexterity of the oarsmen, sailors, and pilots, who, however, in their movements and looks impress one with the idea, that they were quite equal to the occasion.

What Historian say: **Nicolo Conti** says:

"The natives of India build some ships larger than ours, capable of containing 2,000 butts, and with five sails and as many masts. The lower part is constructed with triple planks, in order to withstand the force of the tempests, to which they are much exposed. But some ships are so built in compartments, that should one part be shattered, the other portion remaining whole may accomplish the journey."

Mr. J. L. Reid, member of the Institute of Naval Architects and Shipbuilders, England and the Superintendent of the Hongli Docks, has stated:

"The early Hindu astrologers are said to have used the magnet as they still use the modern compass, in fixing the north and east, in laying foundations, and other religious ceremonies. The Hindu compass was an iron fish, that floated in a vessel of oil, and pointed, to the north. Fact of this older Hindu compass seems placed beyond doubt by the Sanskrit word "maccha-yantra."

India's extensive Sea-borne Trade: The historian **Strabo** says that in the time of Alexander, the River Oxus was so easily navigable that Indian wares were conducted down it, to the Caspian and the Euxine sea, hence to the Mediteranean Sea, and finally to Rome. Greeks and Indians began to meet at the newly established sea ports, and finally all these activities culminated in Indian embassies, being sent to Rome, from several Indian States, for Augustus himself says that Indian embassies came "frequently." Abundant Roman coins from Augustus right down to Nero, have been found in India.

Archaeologist's Testimony: Archaeology amply supports literary record. Excavations at Mohenjodaro on the Indus have yielded, among other things, a potsherd and couple of steatite, seals each bearing a representation of a boat or a ship incised on it. By far the most substantial proof is afforded by the discovery of a dockyard at Lothal in Gujarat.

The eminent Indian archaeologist **Dr. Bahadur Chand Chhabra** concludes:

"It may be a surprise even to an Indian today to be told that in the ancient world India was in the forefront in the field of shipping and ship-building. **Her ships, flying Indian flags, sailed up and down the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and far beyond to Southeast Asia. Her master-mariners led the way in navigation. Riverine traffic within the country, shipping along the entire length of India's coastline, and on high seas were brisk until as recently as the days of the East India Company.** Owing however, to historical competition by the British, ancient Indian shipping was wiped out without a trace. No wonder then the common man in India today readily believes that Indians are not only now learning the ABC of navigation. It would have been odd indeed if, bounded on three sides by great oceans, and gifted with a remarkable spirit of enterprise and invention, India had registered no advancement in the sphere of navigation while she had gone far in other arts and sciences.

(source: **Hindu America: revealing the story of the romance of the Surya Vanshi Hindus and depicting the imprints of Hindu culture on the two Americas - By Chaman Lal** with foreword by **Dr. S. Radhakrishnan**. 3d ed. (LC History-America-E) 1966).

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U.S. adopts catamaran technology

Washington May 28. The United States adopted **ancient Indian catamaran-making technology to construct fast ships** which were used with dramatic effect in the Iraq war, says a media report.

Among the equipment the Americans used to win the Iraq war were 100-feet catamaran ships to ferry tanks and ammunition from Qatar to Kuwait.

The ships, built with technology adapted from ancient Tamil methods to make catamarans, can travel over 2,500 kms in less than 48 hours, twice the speed of the regular cargo ships, and carry enough equipment to support

about 5,000 soldiers, the Wall Street Journal reported yesterday.

Having a shallow draft, the boats can unload in rudimentary ports, allowing troops to land closer to the fight. — PTI

(source: **U.S. adopts Indian Catamaran technology** - hindu.com and **tribune.com**).

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Sailing down the seas of history

Charting the coastline from Mumbai to the very end of Gujarat, where India ends and Pakistan begins, the 1,000 nautical mile voyage that will end on February 11 is in preparation for another, more ambitious voyage. The sailors, calling themselves the Maritime Exploration and Research Group, is getting ready to follow the path of ancient Indian mariners from south India all the way to Indonesia.

Inspired by the Chola kings of the 11th century, who discovered the present-day Indonesian islands of Sumatra and Bali, the group is preparing to replicate the feat using traditional instruments and a boat resembling the vessels of yore.

Called the Simulation of Chola Navigation Techniques, the forthcoming expedition will attempt to cover the distance between Nagapatnam in southern India and the Indonesian islands. "The expedition will aim to show that our ancient seafarers were in no way inferior to their Western counterparts," said B. Arunachalam, a researcher who is the moving spirit behind the expedition. The expedition has cost the team members nearly Rs.100,000 but they have received substantial assistance from the Indian Navy.

(source: **Sailing down the seas of history -** newindpress.com).

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India defence looks to ancient text

Indian scientists are turning to an ancient Hindu text in their search for the secrets of effective stealth warfare.

They believe the book, the **Arthashastra**, written more than 2,300 years ago, will give Indian troops the edge on their enemies.

India's Defence Minister George Fernandes has approved funding for the project, and told parliament recently that experiments had begun.

The research is being carried out by experts from the Defence Research and Development Organisation and scientists from the University of Pune and National Institute of Virology in western India.

The book includes the recipe for a single meal that will keep a soldier fighting for a month, methods of inducing madness in the enemy as well as advice on chemical and biological warfare.

Powders and remedies

The book was written by military strategist Kautilya, also known as Chanakya and Vishnugupta, a prime minister in the court of India's first emperor Chandragupta Maurya, in the fourth century BC.

"All of us are excited about the possibilities and do not for a moment think that the idea is crazy," said Professor SV Bhavasar, a space scientist who has spent many years researching the Arthashastra.

"Decoding ancient texts is not an easy task but we are very hopeful of success," he added.

According to a Pune University report, the book says that soldiers fed with a single meal of special herbs, milk and clarified butter can stay without food for an entire month.

Shoes made of camel skin smeared with a serum made from the flesh of owls and vultures can help soldiers walk hundreds of miles during a war without feeling tired.

A powder made from fireflies and the eyes of wild boar can endow soldiers with night vision.

Chemical warfare

Kautilya wrote in the Arthashastra that a ruler could use any means to attain his goal, and Book XIV touches on aspects of chemical and biological warfare.

The book says that smoke from burning a powder made from the skin and excreta of certain reptiles, animals and birds can cause madness and blindness in the enemy.

The book also provides the formula to create a lethal smoke by burning certain species of snakes, insects and plant seeds in makeshift laboratories.

"Our focus at present is on how humans can control hunger for longer durations and walk for longer period without experiencing fatigue,

Project leader Dr V S Ghole, head of the environmental engineering department of Pune university, said the team was now focusing on the methods of controlling hunger and increasing stamina.

"Once we have made some headway we will go into researching Kautilya's notes on night vision and other fields," he said.

Professor S V Bhavasar said the team also had plans to research other ancient Hindu texts.

These include manuscripts which "claim to provide secrets of manufacturing planes which can not be destroyed by any external force, could be motionless in the sky and even invisible to enemy planes."

(source: **http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/south_asia/newsid_1986000/1986595.stm**).

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Did You Know?

Gun powder (Agnicurna) and Ancient Hindus

Sir A. M. Eliot tells us that the Arabs learnt the manufacture of gunpowder from India, and that before their Indian connection they had used arrows of naptha. It is also argued that though Persia possessed saltpetre in abundance, the original home of gunpowder was India. It is said that the Turkish word top and the Persian tupang or tufang are derived from the Sanskrit word dhupa. The dhupa of the **Agni Purana** means a rocket, perhaps a corruption of the Kautaliyan term natadipika.

(source: **Fire-Arms in Ancient India - By Jogesh Chandra Ray** I.H.Q. viii. p. 586-88).

(For more refer to article by G R Josyer - **India: The Home of Gunpowder and Firearms**).

Heinrich Brunnhofer (1841-1917) German Indologist, also believed that the ancient Aryans of India knew about gunpowder.

(source: **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German** - **By Valentine Stache-Rosen**. p.92).

Gustav Oppert (1836-1908) in his work, **Political Maxims of the Ancient Hindus**, says, that ancient India was the original home of gunpowder and fire-arms. It is probable that the word Sataghni referred to in the Sundara Kanda of the Ramayana refers to cannon.

(source: **Hindu Culture and The Modern Age - By Dewan Bahadur K.S. Ramaswami Shastri** - Annamalai University 1956 p. 127).

Professor Horace Hayman Wilson says: “Amongst ordinary weapons one is named vajra, the thunderbolt, and the specification seems to denote the employment of some explosive projectile, which could not have been in use except by the agency of something like gunpowder in its properties.”

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that draws from positive proofs, that the use of fire as weapon of combat was a familiar idea, as it is constantly described in the heroic poems."

(source: **Essays and lectures on the religions of the Hindus - H H Wilson** vol. II p. 302)

It is very unlikely that they should not have discovered their inflammability, either singly or in combination. To this inference a priori may be added that drawn from positive proof, that the use of fire as a weapon of combat was a familiar idea, as it is constantly described in the heroic poems."

The testimony of ancient Greek writers, who, being themselves ignorant of fire-arms used by Indians, give peculiar descriptions of the mode of Hindu warfare is significant. "Themistius mentions the Brahmin fighting at a distance with lightning and thunder."

Alexander, in a letter to Aristotle, mentions, "the terrific flashes of flame which he beheld showered on his army in India." (See Dante's Inferno, XIV, 31-7).

Speaking of the Hindus who opposed Alexander, **Lord Elphinstone** says: "Their arms, with the exception of fire-arms, were the same as at present."

(source: **History of India - by Mountstuart Elphinstone** p. 241).

Philostratus thus speaks of Alexander's invasion of the Punjab: "Had Alexander passed the Hyphasis he never could have made himself the master of the fortified habitations of these sages. Should an enemy make war upon the, they drive him of by means of tempests and thunders as if sent down from Heaven. The Egyptian Hercules and Bacchus made a joint attack on them, and by means of various military engines attempted to take the place. The sages remained unconcerned spectators until the assault was made, when it was repulsed by fiery whirlwinds and thunders which, being hurled from above, dealt destruction on the invaders."

(source: Philostrati Vit: Apollo, Lib II. C. 35).

Commenting on the stratagem adopted by King Hal in the battle against the king of Kashmir, in making a clay elephant which exploded, **H M. Elliot** says: "Here we have not only the simple act of explosion but something very much like a fuse to enable the explosion to occur at a particular period."

(source: **The History of India, as told by its own Historians - By H. M Elliot** volume I. p. 365).

Though the Hindu masterpieces on the science of war are all but lost, yet there is sufficient material available in the great epics and the Puranas to prove that fire-arms were not only known and used on all occasions by the Hindus, but that this branch of their armory had received extraordinary development. In medieval India, of course, guns and cannons were commonly used. In the 12th century we find pieces of ordnance being taken to battle fields in the armies of Prithviraj. In the 25th stanza of Pritviraja Rasa it is said that "The calivers and cannons made a loud report when they were fired off, and the noise which issued from the ball was heard at a distance of ten cos. An Indian historian, Raj Kundan Lall, who lived in the court of the King of Oudh, says that there was a big gun named lichhma in the possession of His Majesty the King (of Oudh) which had been originally in the artillery of Maharaja of Ajmer. The author speaks of a regular science of war, of the postal department, and of public roads. "Maffei says that the Indians far excelled the Portuguese in their skill in the use of fire-arms."

Another author quoted by **Peter Von Bohlen** (1796-1840) German Indologist, speaks of a certain Indian king being in the habit of placing several pieces of brass ordnance in front of his army. "Faria-e-Souza speaks of a Guzerat vessel in A.D. 1500 firing several guns at the Portuguese, and of the Indians at Calicut using fire vessels in 1502, and of the Zamorin's fleet carrying in the next year 380 guns."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 355-360).

In the light of the above remarks **we can trace the evolution of fire-arms in the ancient India.** There is evidence to show that agni (fire) was praised for vanquishing an enemy. The Arthava Veda shows the employment of fire-arms with lead shots. The Aitareya Brahmana describes an arrow with fire at its tip. In the **Mahabharata and Ramayana**, the

employment of agnyastras is frequently mentioned, and this deserves careful examination in the light of other important terms like ayah, kanapa and tula-guda.

The **agnicurna or gunpowder** was composed of 4 to 6 parts of saltpetre, one part of sulphur, and one part of charcoal of arka, sruhi and other trees burnt in a pit and reduced to powder. Here is certain evidence of the ancient rockets giving place to actual guns in warfare. From the description of the composition of gunpowder, the composition of the **Sukraniti** can be dated at the pre-Gupta age.

(source: **War in Ancient India - By V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar** 1944. p. 103 -105).

Medhatithi remarks thus "while fighting his enemies in battle, he shall not strike with concealed weapons nor with arrows that are poisoned or barbed on with flaming shafts."

Sukraniti while referring to fire-arms, (agneyastras) says that before any war, the duty of the minister of war is to check up the total stock of gunpowder in the arsenal. Small guns is referred as tupak by Canda Baradayi. The installation of yantras (engines of war) inside the walls of the forts referred to by Manasollasa and the reference of Sataghni (killer of hundreds of men) pressed into service for the protection of the forts by Samaranganasutradhara clearly reveals the frequent use of fire arms in the battle-field.

(source: **India Through The Ages: History, Art Culture and Religion - By G. Kuppuram** p. 512-513).

The use of gunpowder, first invented and used in India as an explosive mixture of saltpetre, sulfur and charcoal to power guns, cannons and artillery.

(source: **How to Read the Timeline Hinduism Today**).

H. H. Eliot, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India (1845), after discussing the question of the use of fire-arms in ancient India, says: "On the whole, then, we may conclude that fire-arms of some kind was used in early stages of Indian history, that the missiles were explosives....that projectiles were used which were made to adhere to gates and buildings, and machines setting fire to them from a considerable distance; that it is probable that saltpetre, the principal ingredient of gunpowder, and the cause of its detonation, entered into the composition, because the earth of Gangetic India is richly impregnated with it in a natural state of preparation, and it may be extracted from it by lixiviation and crystallization without the aid of fire; and that sulphur may have been mixed with it, as it is abundant in the north-west of India."

(source: **Historians of M India** - Bibliographical Index. Vol. I p. 373).

Horace Hayman Wilson wrote: "Rockets appear to be of Indian invention, and had long been used in native armies when Europeans came first in contact with them." "It is strange that they (rockets) should now be regarded in Europe as the most recent invention of artillery."

(source: **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India - By James Tod** South Asia Books; ; 2 edition (April 1998) ISBN 8120803809 Vol. II p. 220 and (source: **Historians of M India** - Bibliographical Index. Vol. I p. 373 and 357).

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(For more refer to article by G R Josyer - **India: The Home of Gunpowder and Firearms**).

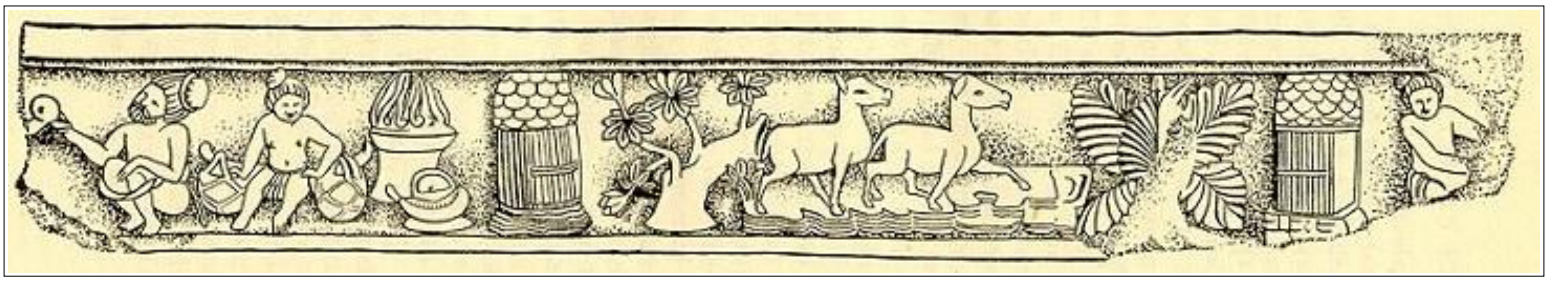


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"He who is possessed of supreme knowledge by concentration of mind, must have his senses under control, like spirited steeds controlled by a charioteer." says the Katha Upanishad (iii, 6). From the Vedic age downwards the central conception of education of the Indians has been that it is a source of illumination giving us a correct lead in the various spheres of life. Knowledge, says one thinker, is the third eye of man, which gives him insight into all affairs and teaches him how to act. (Subhishitaratnasandhoha p. 194).

A single feature of ancient Indian or Hindu civilization is that it has been molded and shaped in the course of its history more by religious than by political, or economic, influences. The fundamental principles of social, political, and economic life were welded into a comprehensive theory which is called Religion in Hindu thought. The total configuration of ideals, practices, and conduct is called Dharma (Religion, Virtue or Duty) in this ancient tradition. From the very start, they came, under the influence of their religious ideas, to conceive of their country as less a geographical and material than a cultural or a spiritual possession, and to identify, broadly speaking, the country with their culture. The Country was their Culture and the Culture their Country, the true Country of the Spirit, the 'invisible church of culture' not confined within physical bounds. India thus was the first country to rise to the conception of an extra-territorial nationality and naturally became the happy home of different races, each with its own ethno-psychic endowment, and each carrying its social reality for Hindus is not geographical, not ethnic, but a culture-pattern. Country and patriotism expand, as ideals and ways of life receive acquiescence. Thus, from the very dawn of its history has this Country of the Spirit ever expanded in extending circles, Brahmarshidesa, Brahmavarta, Aryavarta, Bharatvarsha, or Jambudvipa, Suvarnabhumi and even a Greater India beyond its geographical boundaries.

Learning in India through the ages had been prized and pursued not for its own sake, if we may so put it, but for the sake, and as a part, of religion. (It was sought as the means of self-realization, as the means to the highest end of life. viz. Mukti or Emancipation. Ancient Indian education is also to be understood as being ultimately the outcome of the Indian theory of knowledge as part of the corresponding scheme of life and values. The scheme takes full account of the fact that Life includes Death and the two form the whole truth. This gives a particular angle of vision, a sense of perspective and proportion in which the material and the moral, the physical and spiritual, the perishable and permanent interests and values of life are clearly defined and strictly differentiated. Of all the people of the world the Hindu is the most impressed and affected by the fact of death as the central fact of life. The individual's supreme duty is thus to achieve his expansion into the Absolute, his self-fulfillment, for he is a potential God, a spark of the Divine. Education must aid in this self-fulfillment, and not in the acquisition of mere objective knowledge.



Introduction
Rigvedic Education
Education in the Epics
Period of Panini
Buddhist Education
Universities
Professional and Useful Education
Conclusion



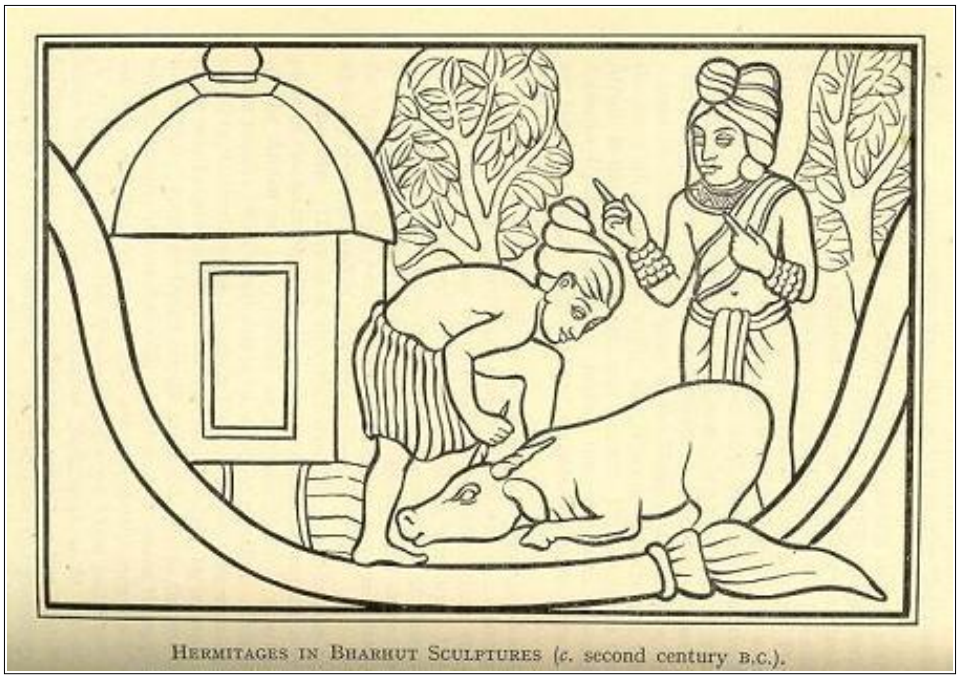
Introduction

It may be said with quite a good degree of precision that India was the only country where knowledge was systematized and where provision was made for its imparting at the highest level in remote times. Whatever the discipline of learning, whether it was chemistry, medicine, surgery, the art of painting or sculpture, or dramatics or principles of literary criticism or mechanics or even dancing, everything was reduced to a systematic whole for passing it on to the future generations in a brief and yet detailed manner. University education on almost modern lines existed in India as early as 800 B.C. or even earlier. The learning or culture of ancient India was chiefly the product of her hermitages in the solitude of the forests. It was not of the cities. The learning of the forests was embodied in the books specially designated as Aranyakas "belonging to the forests." Indian civilization in its early stages had been mainly a rural, sylvan, and not an urban, civilization.

The ideal of education has been very grand, noble and high in ancient India. Its aim, according to Herbert Spencer is the 'training for completeness of life' and the molding of character of men and women for the battle of life. The history of the educational institutions in ancient India shows how old is her cultural history. It points to a long history. In the early stage it is rural, not urban. British Sanskrit scholar **Arthur Anthony Macdonell** (1854-1930) author of **A History of Sanskrit Literature** (Motilal Banarsidass Pub. ISBN: 8120800354) says "Some hundreds of years must have been needed for all that is found" in her culture. The aim of education was at the manifestation of the divinity in men, it touches the highest point of knowledge. In order to attain the goal the whole educational method is based on plain living and high thinking pursued through eternity.

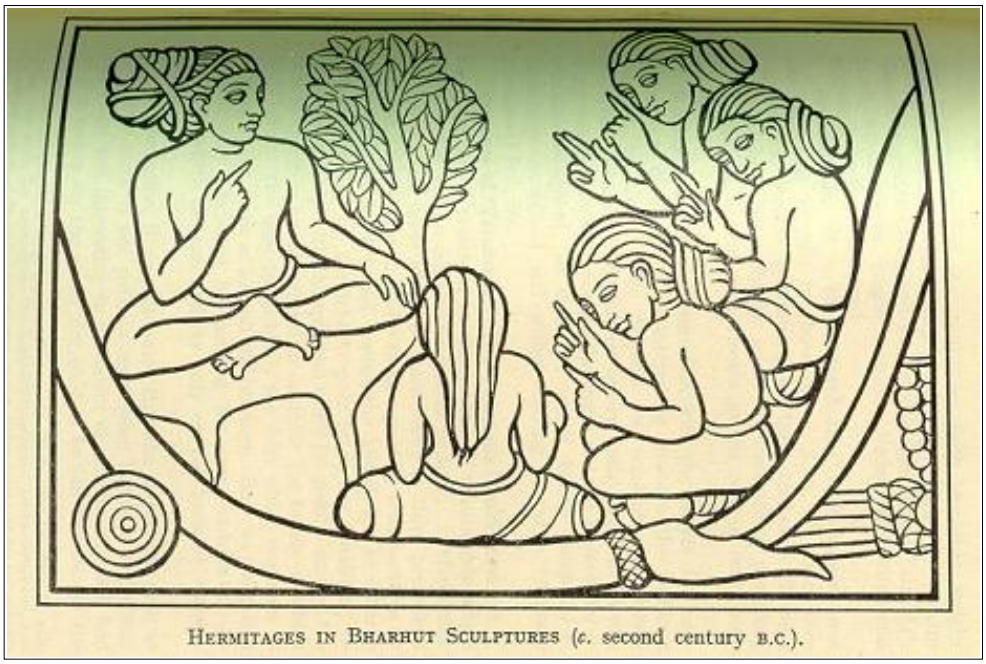
As the individual is the chief concern and center of this Education, education also is necessarily individual. It is an intimate relationship between the teacher and the pupil. The relationship is inaugurated by a religious ceremony called **Upanayana**. It is not like the admission of a pupil to the register of a school on his payment of the prescribed fee. The spiritual meaning of Upanayana, and its details inpsired by that meaning, are elaborated in many texts and explained below in the proper place. By Upanayana, the teacher, "holding the pupil within him as in a womb, impregnates him with his spirit, and delivers him in a new birth." The pupil is then known as **Dvija,** "born afresh" in a new existence, **"twice born" (Satapatha Brahmana)**. The education that is thus begun is called by the significant term Brahmacharya, indicating that it is a mode of life, a system of practices.

This conception of education molds its external form. The pupil must find the teacher. He must live with him as in member of his family and is treated by him in every way as his son. The school is a natural formation, not artificial constituted. **It is the home of the teacher. It is a hermitage, amid sylvan surrounding, beyond the distractions of urban life, functioning in solitude and silence.** The constant and intimate association between teacher and taught is vital to education as conceived in this system. The pupil is imbibe the inward method of the teacher, the secrets of his efficiency, the spirit of his life and work, and these things are too subtle to be taught. It seems in the early Vedic or Upanishadic times education was esoteric. The word Upanishad itself suggests that it is learning got by sitting at the feet of the master. The knowledge was to be got, as the Bhagavad Gita says, by obeisance, by questioning and serving the teacher.



HERMITAGES IN BHARHUT SCULPTURES (*c.* second century B.C.).

The ascetic, clad in birch bark, with matted hair bound up into a knot, leaning and grieving over his dead pet antelope.



HERMITAGES IN BHARHUT SCULPTURES (*c.* second century B.C.).

The inscription: Dighatapasi sise anusasati, "the ascetic of long penance instructs the pupils." Some of the pupils are female rishis. The position of the pupils' fingers show counting called for in Sama Veda chanting.
(source: Ancient Indian Education - By Radha Kumud Mookerji).

India has believed in the domestic system in both Industry and Education, and not in the mechanical methods of large production in institutions and factories turning out standardized articles.

It is these sylvan schools and hermitages that have built up the thought and civilization of India. As has been pointed out in the graphic words of the poet and Nobel prize laureate, **Rabindranath Tagore** (1861-1941):

"A most wonderful thing was notice in India is that here the forest, not the town, is the fountain head of all its civilization. Wherever in India its earliest and most wonderful manifestations are noticed, we find that men have not come into such close contact as to be rolled or fused into a compact mass. There, trees and plants, rivers and lakes, had ample opportunity to live in close relationship with men. In these forests, though there was human society, there was enough of open space, of aloofness; there was no jostling. Still it rendered it all the brighter. It is the forest that nurtured the two great ancient ages of India, the Vaidic and the Buddhist. As did the Vaidic Rishis, Buddha also showered his teaching in the many woods of India. The current of civilization that flowed from its forests inundated the whole of India."

"The very word 'aranyaka' affixed to some of the ancient treatises, indicates that they either originated in, or were intended to be studied in, forests."

(source: **India: Bond Or Free? - By Annie Besant** p. 94-95).

"In order to preserve the continuity of this national heritage and add to its richness, India built large institutions of higher learning from time to time. They served as the repositories of her spiritual, philosophical, scientific, artistic and literary achievements and as the media of transmission of this heritage to the future generations. But it was realized by the early Vedic seers that the educational institutions could only discharge their functions properly if they were isolated from the conflicting demands of the rough and tumble of the world. They, therefore, built their universities in forests, or in places of natural beauty. Nature softens the instincts of body and mind, which otherwise become harsh and aggressive when man lives in houses of brick and mortar. When man lives in the lap of nature, his emotional and mental life becomes pure and harmonious; he grows as a part of life that surrounds him. His inner strains and stresses are reduced to minimum, his mind is alert, his intuition awake. **Ancient India, therefore, selected spots of natural beauty for locating its educational institutions."**

(source: **India: A synthesis of cultures – by Kewal Motwani** p. 131).

It is here, in these forest universities, as **Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** (1888-1975) has said, ' evolved the beginning of the sublime idealism of India.'

(source: **Everyday Life in Ancient India - By Padmini Sengupta** p. 161).

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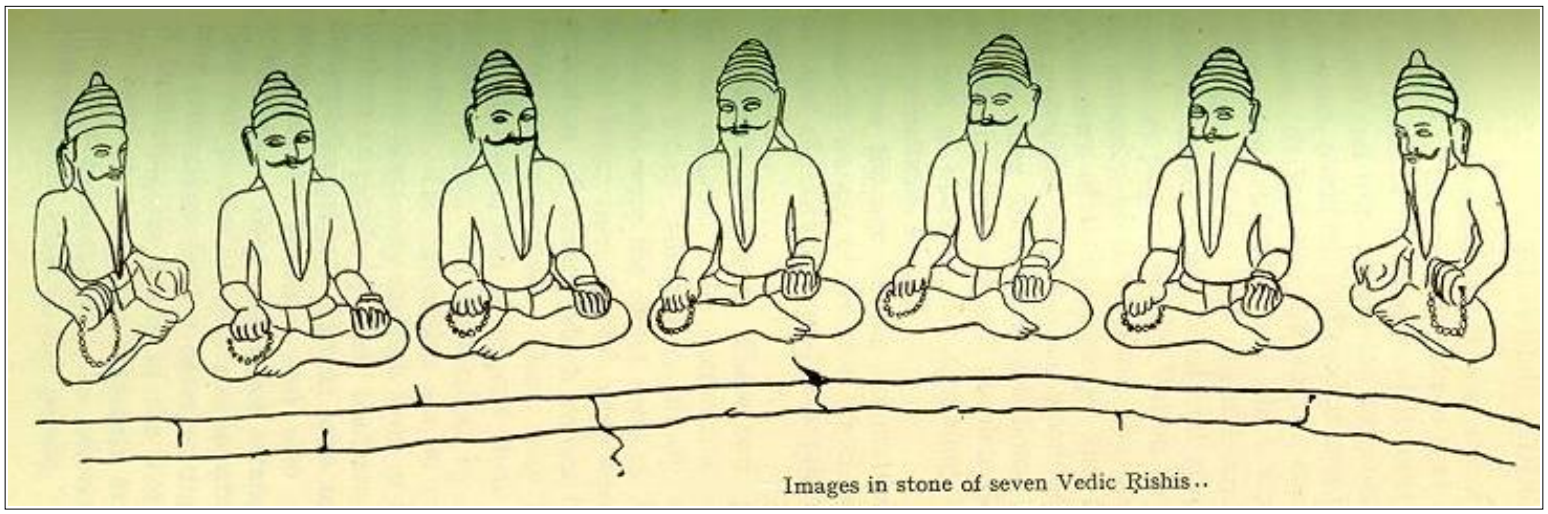
Rigvedic Education

The Rig Veda as the source of Hindu Civilization

The Rig Veda is established as the earliest work not merely of the Hindus, but of all Indo-European languages and humanity. It lays the

foundation upon which Hindu Civilization has been building up through the ages. Broadly speaking, it is on a foundation of plain living and high thinking. Life was simple but though high and of farthest reach, wandering through eternity. Some of the prayers of the Rig Veda, like the widely known Gayatri mantram also found in Samaveda and Yajur veda touch the highest point of knowledge and sustain human souls to this day.

The Rig Veda itself exhibits an evolution and the history of the Rigveda is a history of the culture of the age. The Rig veda, in the form in which we have it now, is a compilation out of old material, a collection and selection of 1,017 hymns out of the vast literature of hymns which have been accumulating for a long period. When the Rigvedic texts was thus fixed and appropriated for purposes of the Samhita, its editors had to think out the principles on which the hymns could be best arranged. These show considerable literary skill, originality of design, and insight into religious needs. First, it represents **Rishis** were chosen and their works were utilized to constitute six different Mandalas. **These Rishis are Gritsamada, Visvamitra, Vamadeva, Atril, Kanva, Bharadvaja, and Vasistha.**

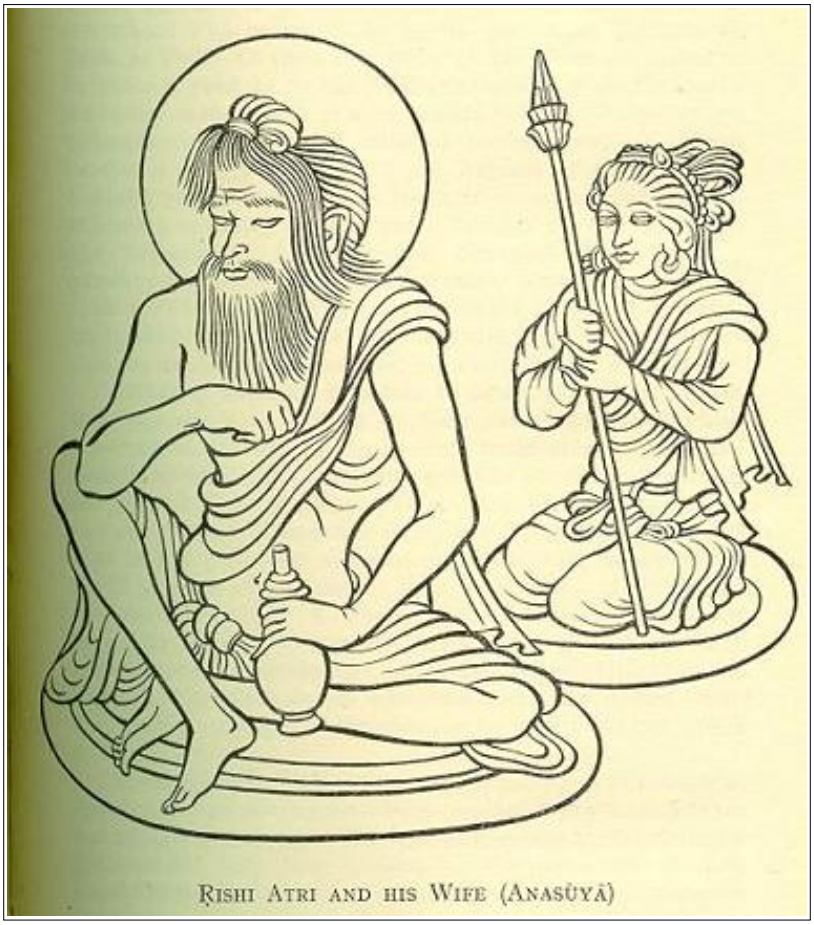


1. Vasishtha 2. Visvamitra 3. Vamadeva 4. Bharadvaja 5. Atri 6. Kanva 7. Gritsamada

When the highest knowledge was thus built up by these Seers and revealed and stored up in the hymns, there were necessarily evolved the methods by which such knowledge could be acquired, conserved, and transmitted to posterity. Thus every Rishi was a teacher who would start by imparting to his son the texts of the knowledge he had personally acquired and such texts would be the special property of his family. Each such family of Rishis was thus functioning like a Vedic school admitting pupils for instruction in the literature or texts in its possession. The relations between teacher and taught was well established in the Rig Veda. The methods of education naturally varied with the capacity of pupils. Self-realization by means of tapas would be for the few.

The Rig Veda shows a lively sense of the immutable laws governing Creation. Its best expression is iii. 56, I, a hymn of Visvamitra. It means that the Vratas or Cosmic Laws which are at the root of creation, operate for all time and regularly, which can never be violated by anyone however clever or wise. There is no one in earth or heaven who by his power or supreme knowledge can set them at naught. "They cannot bend like mountains."

"Then at the beginning, before creation, there was neither Being nor non-Being. There was neither the atmosphere nor the heavens beyond. What did it contain? Where? And under whose direction? Were there waters, and the bottomless deep?"



RISHI ATRI AND HIS WIFE (ANASÛYÂ)

Commenting on these **Vedic hymns** **Count Maurice Maseterlinck** in is book **The Great Secret** (Citadel Pub ASIN: 0806511559) says:

"Is it possible to find, in our human annals, words more majestic, more full of solemn anguish, more august in tone, more devout, more terrible? Where, from the depths of an agnosticism, which thousands of years have augmented, can we point to a wider horizon? At the very outset, it surpasses all that has been said, and goes farther than we shall even dare to go. No spectacle could be more absorbing than this struggle of our forefathers of five to ten thousand years ago with the Unknowable, the unknowable nature of the causeless Cause of all Causes. But of this cause, or this God, we should never have known anything, had He remained self-absorbed, had He never manifested Himself." Thus it is, say the Laws of Manu, "that, by an alternation of awakening and repose, the immutable Being causes all this assemblage of creatures, mobile and immobile, eternally to return to life and to die." He exhales Himself, or expels His breath, throughout the Universe, innumerable worlds are born, multiply and evolve. He Himself inhales, drawing His breath, and Matter enters into Spirit, which is but an invisible form of Matter: and the worlds disappear, without perishing, to reintegrate the Eternal cause, and emerge once more upon the awakening of Brahma - that is, thousands of millions of years later; to enter into Him so it has been and ever shall be, through all eternity, without beginning, without cessation, without end."

"When the world had emerged from the darkness," says the **Bhagavata Puranam**, "the subtle elementary principle produced the vegetable seed which first of all gave life to the plants. From the plants, life passed into the fantastic creatures which were born of the slime in the waters; then, through a series of different shapes and animals, it came to Man." They passed in succession by way of the plants, the worms, the insects, the serpents, the tortoises, cattle, and the wild animals - such is the lower stage," says Manu again, who adds, "Creatures acquired the qualities of those that preceded them, so that the farther down its position in the series, the greater its qualities.

"Have we not here the whole of Darwinian evolution confirmed by geology and foreseen at least 6,000 years ago? On the other hand, is this not the theory of Akasa which we more clumsily call the ether, the sole source of all substances, to which our science is returning? Is it true that the recent theories of Einstein deny ether, supposing that radiant energy - visible light, for example - is propagated independently through a space that is an absolute void. But the scientific ether is not precisely the Hindu Akasa which is much more subtle and immaterial being a sort of spiritual element or divine energy, space uncreated, imperishable, and infinite."

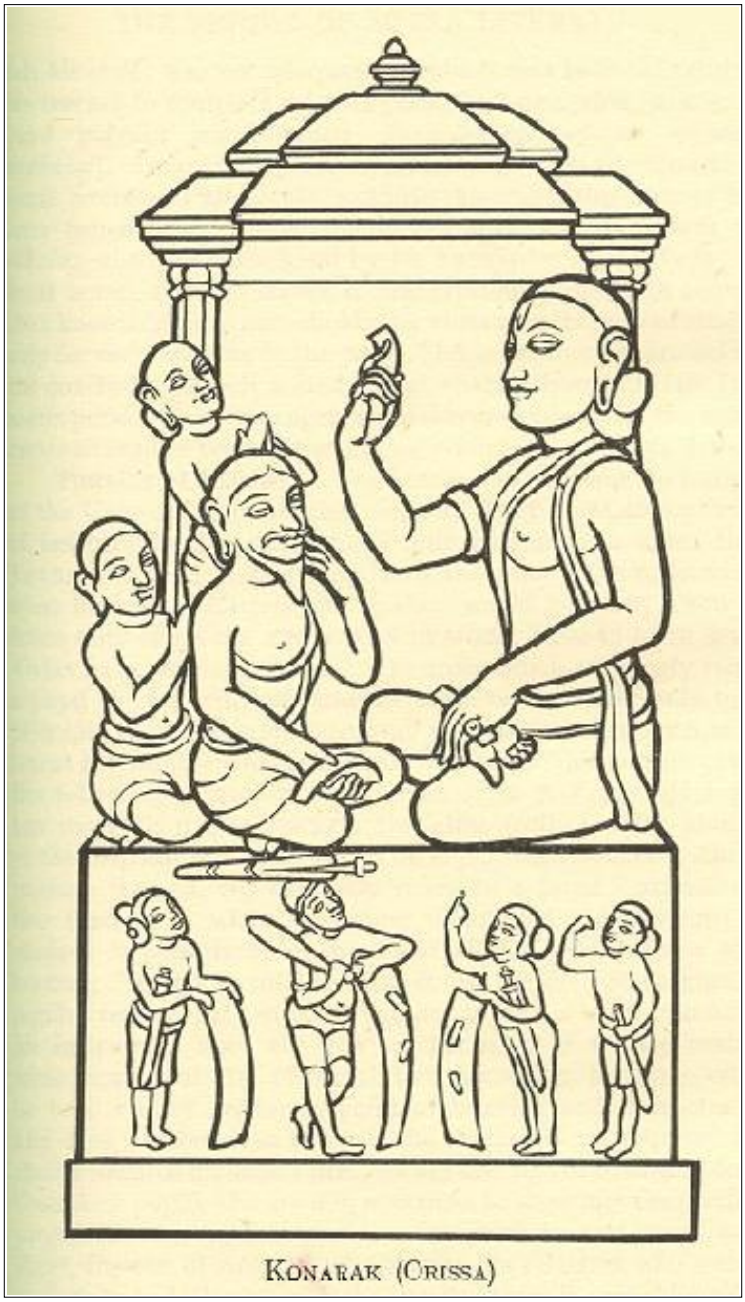
(source: **Ancient Indian Education - By Radha Kumud Mookerji** p. 17 and 49).

Women as Rishis

The history of the most of the known civilizations show that the further back we go into antiquity, the more unsatisfactory is found to be the general position of women. Hindu civilization is unique in this respect, for here we find a surprising exception to the general rule. The further back we go, the more satisfactory is found to be the position of women in more spheres than one; and the field of education is most noteworthy among them. There is ample and convincing evidence to show that women were regarded as perfectly eligible for the privilege of studying the Vedic literature and performing the sacrifices enjoined in it down to about 200 B.C. This need not surprise us, for some of

the hymns of the Rig Veda are the composition of twenty sage-poetesses.

Women were then admitted to fulfill religious rites and consequently to complete educational facilities. **Women-sages were callee Rishikas and Brahmavadinis.** The **Rig Veda** knows of the following Rishikas 1.Romasa 2.Lopamudra 3.Apala 4. Kadru 5.Visvavara 6. Ghosha 7. Juhu 8. Vagambhrini 9. Paulomi 10 Jarita 11. Sraddha-Kamayani 12. Urvasi 12. Sarnga 14. Yami 15. Indrani 18. Savitri 19. Devajami 20. Nodha 21 Akrishtabhasha 22. Sikatanivavari 23. Gaupayana.



Sculpture showing Vaishanava Guru and his royal discipline at Konark, holding in his right hand a MS, with his attending guards shown below. Now on display at the Victoria Albert Museum in London, England.

The Brahmavadinis were the products of the educational discipline of brahmacharaya for which women also were eligible. Rig Veda refers to young maidens completing their education as brahmacharinis and then gaining husbands in whom they are merged like rivers in oceans. Yajurveda similarly states that a daughter, who has completed her brahmacharya, should be married to one who is learned like her. A most catholic passage occurs in YajurVeda (xxvi, 2) which enjoins the imparting of Vedic knowledge to all classes, Brahmins and Rajanyas, Sudras, Anaryas, and charanas (Vaisyas) and women. No one can recite Vedic prayers or offer Vedic sacrifices without having undergone the Vedic initiation (**Upanayana**). It is, therefore, but natural that in the early period the Upanayana of girls should have been as common as that of boys. The Arthava Veda (xi. 5.8) expressly refers to maidens undergoing the Brahmacharya discipline and the Sutra works of the 5th century B.C. supply interesting details in its connection. Even Manu includes Upanayana among the sanskaras (rituals) obligatory for girls (II.66). Music and dancing was also taught to them. Brahmavadins used to marry after their education was over, some of them like Vedavati, a daughter of sage Kusadhvaja, would not marry at all.

Women in Education

Radha Kumud Mookerji (1884 -1964) Indian historian, has noted: "An important feature of this educational system should not be missed. The part taken in intellectual life by women like Gargi who could address a Congress of philosophers on learned topics, or like Maitreyi, who had achieved the highest knowledge, that of Brahma. The Rigveda shows us some women as authors of hymns, such as Visvavara, Ghosha, and Apala."

(source: **Hindu Civilization - By Radha Kumud Mookerji** p. 111 Longmans, Green and Co. London 1936).

The Vedic women received a fair share of masculine attention in physical culture and military training. The Rigveda tells us that many women joined the army in those days. A form of chariot race was one of the games most popular during the Vedic period. People were fond of swinging. Ball games were in vogue in those days by both men and women. Apart from this, a number of courtyard games like" Hide and seek" and "Run and catch" were also played by the girls. Playing with dice became a popular activity. The dices were apparently made of Vibhidaka nuts. From the Rigveda, it appears that the Vedic Aryans knew the art of boxing.

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Education in the Epics

Takshashila was a noted center of learning. The story is told of one of its teachers named Dhaumya who, had three disciples named Upamanyu, Aruni, and Veda.

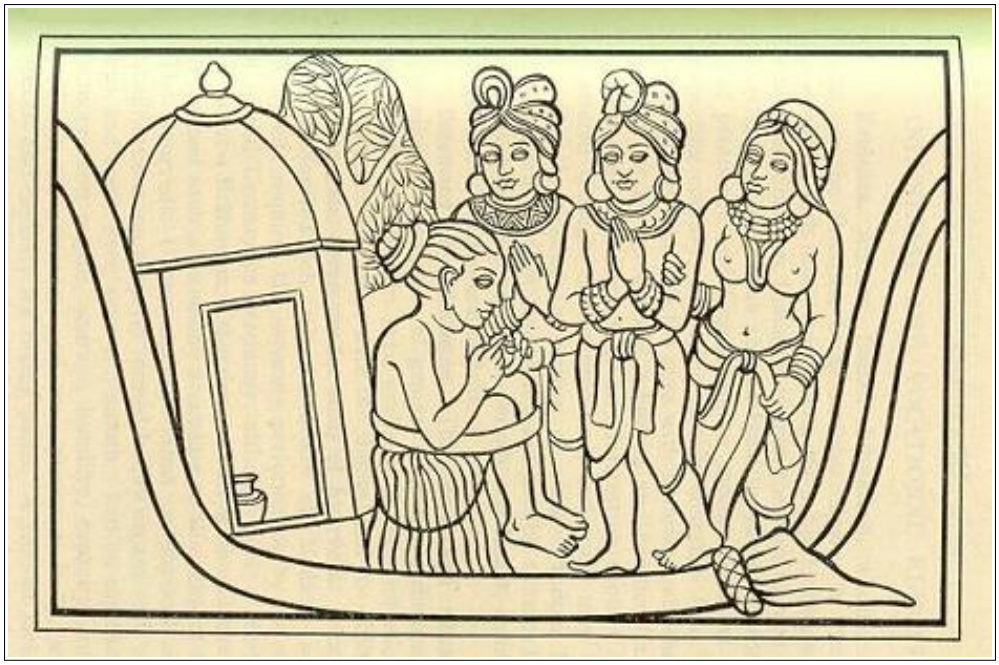
Hermitages

The **Mahabharata** tells of numerous hermitages where pupils from distant parts gathered for instruction round some far-famed teachers. A full-fledged Asrama is described as consisting of several Departments which are enumerated as following:

1. Agnisthana, the place for fire-worship and prayers
2. Brahma-sthana, the Department of Veda
3. Vishnusthana, the Department for teaching Raja-Niti, Arthaniti, and Vartta
4. Mahendrasthana, Military Section
5. Vivasvata-sthana, Department of Astronomy
6. Somasthana, Department of Botany
7. Garuda-sthana, Section dealing with Transport and Conveyances
8. Kartikeya-sthana, Section teaching military organization, how to form patrols, battalions, and army.

The most important of such hermitage was that of the **Naimisha**, a forest which was like a university. the presiding personality of the place was **Saunaka**, to whom was applied the designation of **Kulapati,** sometimes defined as the preceptor of 10,000 disciples.

The hermitage of **Kanva** was another famous center of learning, of which a full description is given. It is situated on the banks of the Malini, a tributary of the Sarayu River. It was not a solitary hermitage, but an assemblage of numerous hermitages round the central hermitage of Rishi Kanva, the presiding spirit of the settlement. There were specialists in every branch of learning cultivated in that age; specialists in each of the four Vedas; in sacrificial literature and art; Kalpa-Sutras; in the Chhanda (Metrics), Sabda (Vyakarana), and Nirukta. There were also Logicians, knowing the principles of Nyaya, and of Dialectics (the art of establishing propositions, solving doubts, and ascertaining conclusions). There were also specialists in the physical sciences and art. There were, for example, experts in the art of constructing sacrificial altars of various dimensions and shapes (on the basis of a knowledge of Solid Geometry); those who had knowledge of the properties of matter (dravyaguna); of physical processes and their results of causes and their effect; and zoologists having a special knowledge of monkeys and birds. It was thus a forest University where the study of every available branch of learning was cultivated.



Hermitage of Rishi Bharadvaja at Prayaga, or at Atri at Chitrakuta; showing Rama, Lakshmana and Sita standing before the Rishi.

The hermitage of Vyasa was another seat of learning. There Vyasa taught the Vedas to his disciples. Those disciples were highly blessed Sumantra, vaisampayana, Jamini of great wisdom, and Paila of great ascetic merit." They were afterwards joined by Suka, the famous son of Vyasa.

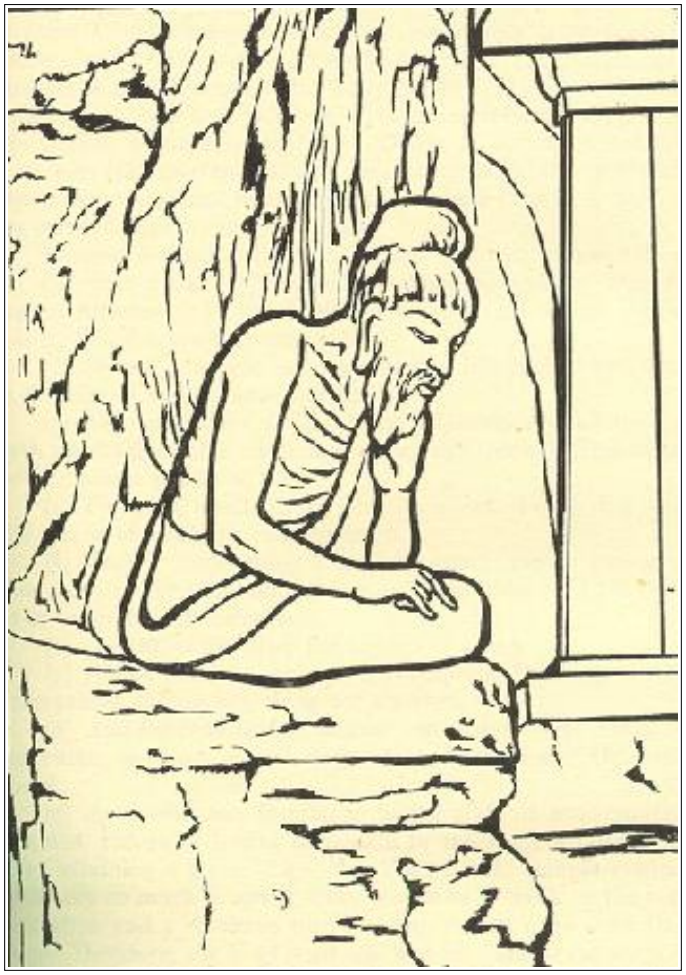
Among the other hermitages noticed by the Mahabharata may be mentioned those of Vasishtha and Visvamitra and that in the forest of Kamyaka on the banks of the Saraswati. But a hermitage near Kurkshetra deserves special notice for the interesting fact recorded that it produced two noted women hermits. There "leading from youth the vow of brahmacharya, a Brahmin maiden was crowned with ascetic success and ultimately acquiring yogic powers, she became a tapassiddha", while another lady, the daughter not of a Brahmin but a Kshatriya, a child not of poverty but affluence, the daughter of a king, Sandilya by name, came to live there the life of celibacy and attained spiritual pre-eminence.

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Period of Panini

When we study how these institutions grew we find that students approached the learned souls for the acquisition of knowledge. Parents, too encouraged it and sent their boys to the institutions. When their number began to increase the institutions formed with these students began to grow gradually. With the lapse of time these institutions turned into Universities and were maintained with the munificent gift of the public and the state. In this way many institutions were formed of which Taxila, Ujjain, Nalanda, Benares, Ballavi, Ajanta, Madura and Vikramsila were very famous. Taxila was famous for medicine and Ujjain for Astronomy. Both were pre-Buddhist. Jibaka the well known medical expert and the state physician of the King of Magadha of the 6th century B.C. and Panini the famous grammarian of the 7th century B.C. and Kautilya, the authority on Arthasastra, of the 4th century B.C. were students of Taxila.

Education as revealed in the grammatical Sutras of Panini, together with the works of Katyayana and Patanjali. The account of education in the Sutra period will not be complete without the consideration of the evidence of the grammatical literature as represented in the works of Panini and his two famous commentators, Katyayana and Patanjali. Panini throws light on the literature of his times. Four classes of literature are distinguished.



Bhagiratha in Meditation - Pallava relief of 7-8th century A.D. at Mamallapuram. The Yogi (who was a king) appears to be petrified by his prolonged penance and has become a part of the rocks round him. His penance moves Goddess Ganga who melts and descends from Heaven to Earth, pouring out Her bounty in streams of plenty.

There is evidence that girls have been admitted in Vedic schools or Charanas. **Panini refers to this specially. A Kathi is a female student of Katha school. There are hostels for female students and they are known as Chhatrisala.** Each Charana or school has an inner circle of teachers known as Parisad. Their decisions on doubts about the reading and the meaning of Vedic culture are binding. Pratisakyas are said to be the product of such Parisad.

The academic year has several terms. Each term is inaugurated by a ceremony called Upakarnmana and ends by the Utsarga ceremony. Holidays (Anadhyayas) are regularly observed on two Astamis (eight day of the moon) two Chaturdasis (fourteenth day of the moon), Amavasya, Purnima and on the last day of each of the four seasons, called Chaturmasi. Besides these Nitya (regular) holidays there are Naimittika (occasional) holidays due to accidental circumstances, eg. storms, thunder, rain, fog, fire, eclipses etc.

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Buddhist Education

Buddhism as a phase of Hinduism

Buddhist education can be rightly regarded as a phase of the ancient Hindu system of education. Buddhism, itself, especially in its original and ancient form, is, as has been admitted on all hands, rooted deeply in the pre-existing Hindu systems of thought and life.

Max Muller in **Chips from a German Workshop** i 434), "To my mind, having approached Buddhism after a study of the ancient religion of India, the religion of the Veda, Buddhism has always seemed to be, to a new religion, but a natural development of the Indian mind in its various manifestations, religious, philosophical, social, and political."

Auguste Barth (1834-1916) in **The Religions of India**, p. 101 calls Buddhism: "a Hindu phenomenon, a natural product, so to speak, of the age and social circle that witnessed its birth", and "when we attempt to reconstruct its primitive doctrine and early history we come upon something so akin to what we meet in the most ancient Upanishads and in the legends of Hinduism that it is not always easy to determine what features belong peculiarly to it."

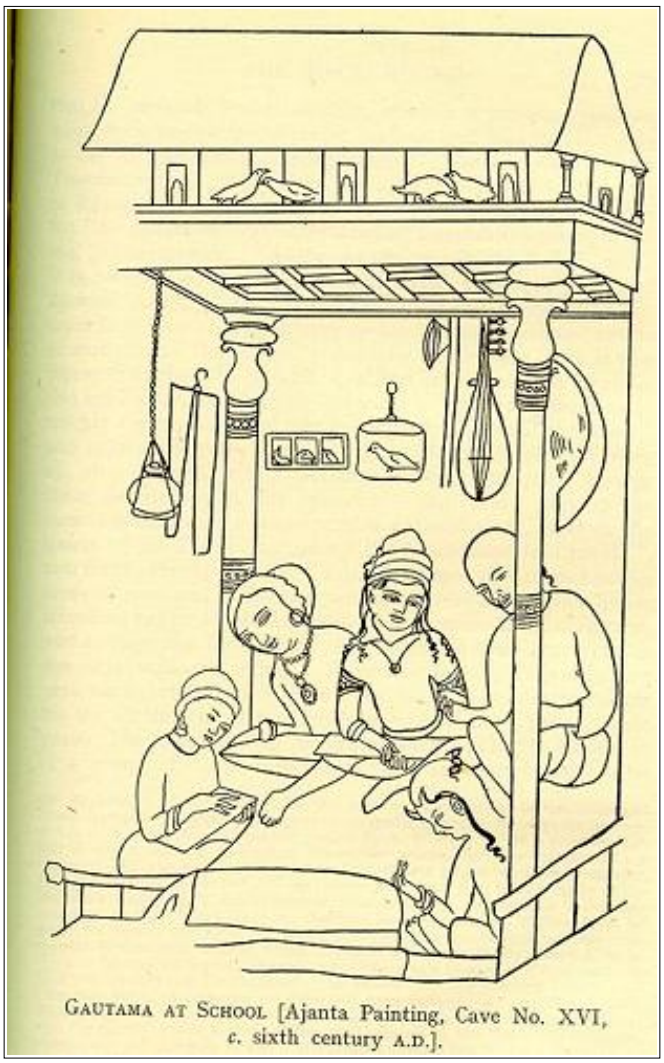
T. W. Rhys Davids (1843-1922) in **Buddhism** p. 34 calls Gautama Buddha "the creature of his times", of whose philosophy it must not be supposed that "it was entirely of his own creation." He wrote: "The fact we should never forget is that Gautama was born and brought up and lived and died a Hindu. On the whole, he was regarded by the Hindus of that time a Hindu. Without the intellectual work of his

predecessors, his work, however, original, would have been impossible. He was the greatest and wisest and best of the Hindus and, throughout his career, a characteristic India."

Edward Washburn Hopkins (1857-1932) goes so far as to assert (**The Religions of India** p. 298) that "the founder of Buddhism did not strike out a new system of morals; he was not a democrat; he did not originate a plot to overthrow the Brahminic priesthood; he did not invent the order of monks."

Hermann Oldenberg (1854-1920): "For hundreds of years before Buddha's time, movements were in progress in Indian thought which prepared the way for Buddhism."

(source: **Ancient India - By V. D. Mahajan** p. 197).



GAUTAMA AT SCHOOL [Ajanta Painting, Cave No. XVI, *c.* sixth century A.D.].

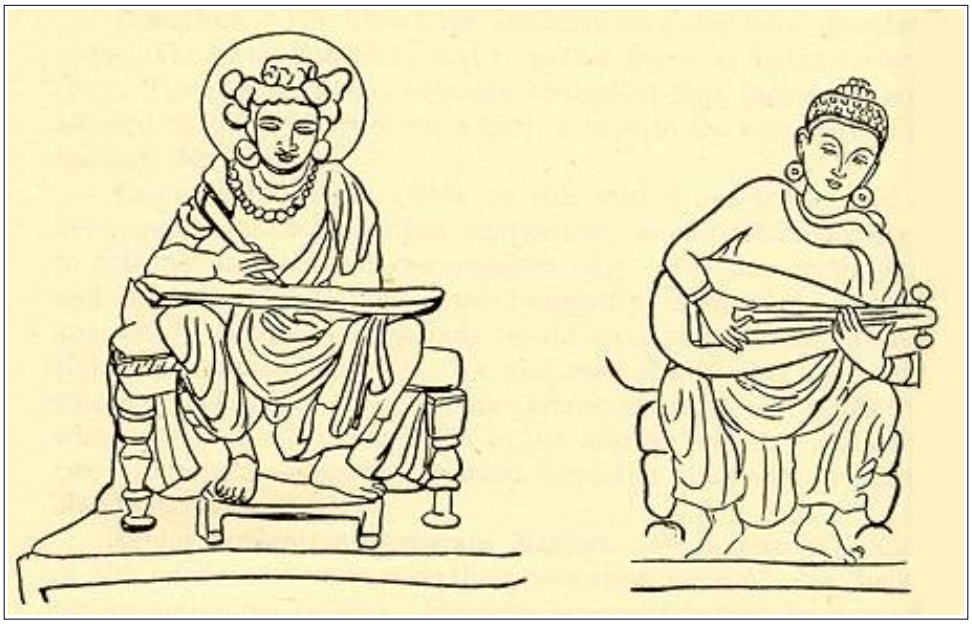
The school is "in a verandah in his father's palace; Gautama Buddha being instructed, with three other boys, by a Brahmin teacher. On their laps are tablets...caged birds, musical instruments, a battle-axe, bows. Gautama, a prince, was given, along with literary education, education in music and military arts like archery.

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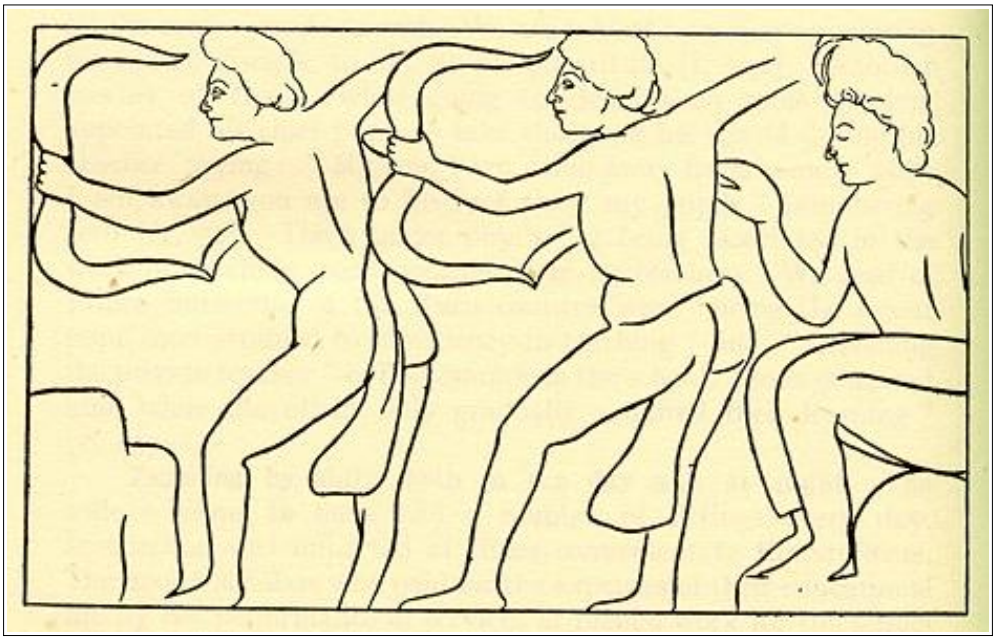
The Buddha was a product of the Hindu System

The thesis also receives a most conclusive confirmation from the details of the Buddha's own career as preserved in the traditional texts. The details show how largely **Buddha was himself the product of the then prevailing Hindu educational systems.** We see how in the very first step that he takes towards the Buddhahood, the renunciation of the home and the world, the world of riches to which he is born, he was not at all singular but following the path trodden by all seekers after truth in all ages and ranks of society. Our ancient literature is full of examples of the spirit of acute, **utkata, vairagya** under which the rich, the fortunate, and the noble not less than the poor, the destitute and the lowly, the young with a distaste for life before tasting it as much as the old who have had enough of it, even women and maidens, as eagerly leave their homes and adopt the ascetic life as a positive good as their dear ones entreat them to desist such a step. The Buddha's next step was to place himself under the guidance of **two successive gurus.** The first was the Brahmin, Alara Kalama, at Vesali, having a following of 300 disciples who taught him the successive stages of meditation and the doctrine of the Atman, from which the Buddha turns back dissatisfied on the ground that it "does not lead to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, knowledge, supreme wisdom and Nirvana, but only as far as the realm of nothingness". Next he attaches himself to the sage of Rajagaha with 700 pupils, Uddaka, the disciple of Rama but "he gained no clear understanding from his treatment of the soul." As **Rhys David** points out "Gotama, either during this period or before must have gone through a very systematic and continued course of study in all the deepest

philosophy of the time."



Gautama at School: practicing writing. Gautama at School: learning music



Gautama at school: being instructed in Archery - Gandhara Sculptures - 2nd century A.D.

In the **Lalitavistara Sastra**, the education of Buddha as a child, aged eight by the **Sage Vishvamitra**, who says:

Let us turn to Numbers. Count after me
Until you reach lakh (= one hundred thousand):
One, two, three, four, up to ten
Then in tens, up to hundreds and thousands,
After which, the child named the numbers,
Then the decades and the centuries, without stopping.
And once he reached lakh, which he whispered in silence,
Then came koti, nahut, ninnahut, khamba,
viskhamba, abab, attata,
Up to kumud, gundhika, and utpala
Ending with pundarika (leading)
Towards paduma, making it possible to count

Up to the last grain of the finest sand
Heaped up in mountainous heights.

(source: **The Universal History of Numbers - By Georges Ifrah** p. 421 - 423).

Takshasila/Taxila - The Most Ancient University

Takkasila was the most famous seat of learning of ancient India. Takkasila was also the capital of Gandhara and its history goes back into hoary antiquity. **It was founded by Bharata and named after his son Taksha, who was established there as its ruler.** Janamejaya's serpent sacrifice was performed at this very place. As a center for learning the fame of the city was unrivalled in the 6th century B.C. Its site carries out the idea held by the ancient Hindus of the value of natural beauty in the surroundings of a University. The valley is "a singularly pleasant one, well-watered by a girdle of hills." The Jatakas tell us of how teachers and students lived in the university and the discipline imposed on the latter, sons of Kings and themselves future rulers though they might be! The Jatakas (No. 252) thinks that this discipline was likely "to quell their pride and haughtiness". It attracted scholars from different and distant parts of India. Numerous references in the Jatakas show how thither flocked students from far off Benares, Rajagaha, Mithila, Ujjain, from the Central region, Kosala, and Kuru kingdoms in the North country. The fame of Takkasila as a seat of learning was of course due to that of its teachers. They are always spoken of as being " world renowned" being "authorities", specialists, and experts in the subject they professed. Of one such teacher we read: "Youths of the warrior and brahmin castes came from all India to be taught the art by him" Sending their sons a thousand miles away from home bespeaks the great concern felt by their parents in their proper education. **As shown in the case of the medical student, Jivaka, the course of study at Takila extended to as many as seven years.** Jataka No. 252 records how parents felt if they could see their sons return home after graduation at Taxila. One of the archery schools at Taxila had on its roll call, 103 princes from different parts of the country. King Prasenajit of Kosala, a contemporary of the Buddha, was educated in the Gandhara capital. Prince Jivaka, an illegitimate son of Bimbusara, spent seven years at Taxila in learning medicine and surgery.

Takshasila a Center for Higher Education: The students are always spoken of as going to Takshasila to "complete their education and not to begin it." They are invariably sent at the age of sixteen or when they "come of age".

Different Courses of Study

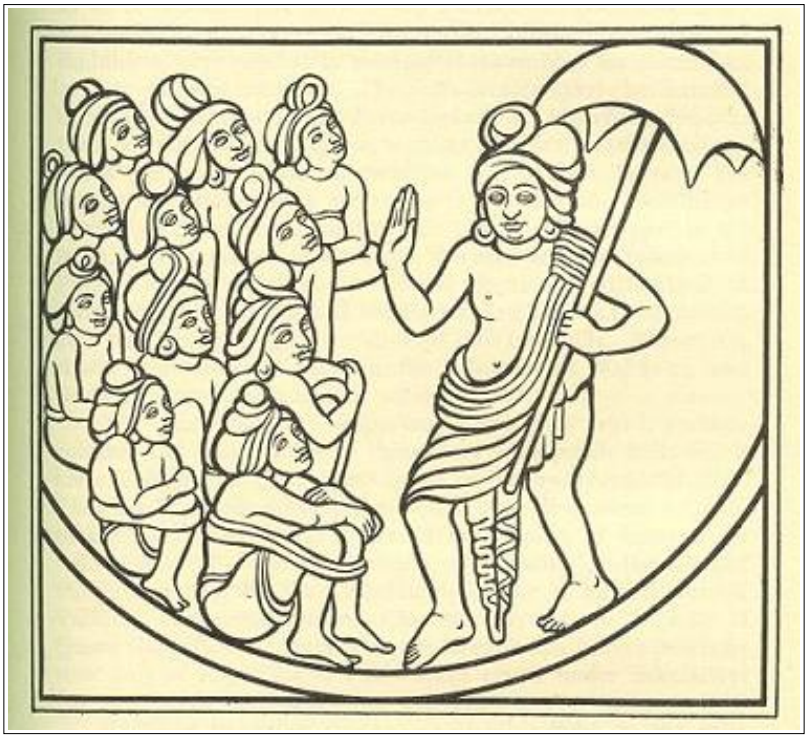
"The Jatakas contain 105 references to Takshasila. "The fame of Takshasila as a seat of learning was, of course, due to that of its teachers. They are always spoken of as being 'world-renowned,' being authorities, specialists and experts in the subjects they professed. It was the presence of scholars of such acknowledged excellence and widespread reputation that caused a steady movement of qualified students from all classes and ranks of society towards Takshasila from different and distant parts of the Indian continent, making it the intellectual capital of India of those days. Thus various centers of learning in the different parts of the country became affiliated, as it were, to the educational center or to the central University of Takshasila, which exercised a kind of intellectual suzerainty over the world of letters in India." Takshashila was destroyed by the Huns in 455 A.D."

(source: **India: A synthesis of cultures – by Kewal Motwani** p. 133).

The Jatakas constantly refer to students coming to Takkasila to complete their education in the three Vedas and the eighteen Sippas or Arts. Sometimes the students are referred to as selecting the study of the Vedas alone or the Arts alone. **The Boddisatta (Buddha) is frequently referred to as having learned the three Vedas by heart.** Takshila was famous for military training, wrestling, archery and mountain- climbing.

Science, Arts and Crafts: The Jatakas mention of subjects under scientific and technical education. Medicine included a first hand study of the plants to find out the medicinal ones. Takkasila was also famous for some of its special schools. One of such schools was the Medical Schools which must have been the best of its kind in India. It was also noted for its School of Law which attracted student from distant Ujjeni. Its Military School were not less famous, which offered training in Archery. Thus the teachers of Takkasila were as famous for their knowledge of the arts of peace as for that of war. Much attention was paid to the development of social and cultural activities in all possible ways. Dancing and dramatic groups, singers and musicians and other artists were given encouragement and offered employment. During the Sangam epoch in South India, the three principal arts, Music, Dance and Drama were practiced intensively and extensively throughout the country, and the epic of Silappadikaram contains many references to the practice of these arts.

Next, to Takkasila ranks **Benares** as a seat of learning. It was, however, largely the creation of the ex-students of Takkasila who set up as teachers at Benares, and carried thither the culture of that cosmopolitan educational center which was **molding the intellectual life of the whole of India.** There were again certain subjects in the teaching of which Benares seems to have specialized. There is an expert who was "the chief of his kind in all India."



Assembly of monks seated in three rows and addressed by their leader standing, with a parasol, in his left hand indicating his rank. pre - Gandhara period.

Hermitages as Centers of Highest Learning

Lastly, it is to be noted that the educational system of the times produced men of affairs as well as men who renounced the world in the pursuit of Truth. The life of renunciation indeed claimed many an ex-student of both Takksila and Benares. In the sylvan and solitary retreats away from the haunts of men, the hermitages served as schools of higher philosophical speculation and religious training where the culture previously acquired would attain its fruitage.

There are accounts of education written by eye witness who were foreigners, like the pilgrims from China who regarded India, as its Holy Land. **The very fact of the pilgrimage of Chinese scholars like Fa-Hien or Hiuen Tsang to India testifies to the tribute paid by China to the sovereignty of Indian thought and culture which made its influence felt beyond the bounds of India itself in distant countries which might well be regarded as then constituting a sort of a Greater India.** The duration of Fa-Hien's travel in India was for fifteen years. "After Fa-Hien set out from Ch'ang-gan it took him six years to reach Central India; and on his return took him three years to reach Ts'ing-chow. A profound and abiding regard for the learning and culture of India was needed to feed and sustain such a long continued movement. Indeed, the enthusiasm for Indian wisdom was so intense, the passion for a direct contact with its seats was so strong, that it defied the physical dangers and difficulties which lay so amply in the way of its realization. Besides, Chinese scholars, I-tsing refers to "the Mongolians of the North" sending students to India.

The teachers themselves were most exemplary. Hiuen Tsang says of the Brahmins: "The teachers (of the Vedas) must themselves have closely studied the deep and secret principles they contain, and penetrated to their remotest meaning. They then explain their general sense, and guide their pupils in understanding the words which are difficult. They urge them on and skillfully conduct them. They add luster to their poor knowledge and stimulate the desponding." Studies were pursued unremittingly, and Hiuen Tsang says: "The day is not sufficient for asking and answering profound questions. From morning till night they engage in discussion; the old and the young mutually help one another."

(source: **Life of Hiuen-Tsiang - by Samuel Beal**, vol. I p. 79 and vol II p. 170).

Attached to the university was a kind of post-graduate department, a group of learned Brahmins known collectively as a parishad. A parishad seems usually to have consisted of ten men; four 'walking encyclopedias' each of whom had learnt all the four Vedas by heart, three who had specialized in one of the Sutras, and representative of the three orders of brahmachari grihastha and vanaprastha - student, householder and hermit. The parishad gave decisions on disputed points of religion of learning. I-Tsing reports that at the end of their course of studies, 'to try the sharpness of their wit' some men 'proceed to the king's court to lay down before it the sharp weapon of their abilities: there they present their schemes and show their talent, seeking to be appointed in the practical government..."

(source: **Everyday Life in Ancient India - By Padmini Sengupta** p. 162-169).

It is interesting to note that the study of Sanskrit was continued in Buddhist monasteries. At the Pataliputra monastery Fa-Hien stayed for three years "learning Sanskrit books and the Sanskrit speech and writing out the Vinaya rules." Archery is found mentioned in the Jataka stories. The Bhimsena Jataka tells that Boddhisatva learnt archery at Takshila. Wrestling was popular and descriptions of such breath-holding bouts in wrestling are available in the Jataka stories. Two kinds of games called Udyana Krida or garden games and Salila Krida or water sports are also mentioned. Archery was also popular among the women during this period, as can be seen from the Ahicchatra images. Hunting, elephant fighting, Ram fighting, and Partridge fighting were the other important games of this period.

Takshashila, the most ancient Hindu University, was destroyed by the barbarian White Huns in 455 A.D. Sir John Marshall, Director General of Archaeology in India, has given a most interesting account, but he says regretfully,

"The monuments of Taxila were wantonly and ruthlessly devastated in the course of the same (fifth) century. This work of destruction is almost certainly to be attributed to the hordes of barbarian white Huns, who after the year 455 A.D. swept down into India in ever increasing numbers carrying sword and fire wherever they went, and not only possessed themselves of the kingdom of the Kinshans, but eventually overthrew the great empire of the Guptas. From this calamity Taxila never again recovered."

(source: **India: Bond Or Free? - By Annie Besant** p. 94-97).

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Universities of Ancient India

1. Takkasila - also known as Taxila - for information on this university, please refer to the above passages.

2. Mithila - Mithila, was a stronghold of Brahminical culture at its best in the time of the Upanishads, under its famous **Philosopher-king Janaka** who used to send our periodical invitations to learned Brahmins of the Kuru-Panchala country to gather to his court for purpose of philosophical discussions. Under him Eastern India was vying with North-Western India in holding the palm of learning. In those days, the name of the country was not Mithila but Videha. **In the time of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and Buddhist literature, Mithila retained the renown of its Vedic days.**

Its subsequent political history is somewhat chequered. When Vijaya Sen was King of Bengal, Nanyadeva of the Karnataka dynasty was King of Mithila in A.D. 1097. King Vijaya defeated him but was defeated by his son Gangadeva who recovered Mithila from him. This Karnataka Dynasty ruled Mithila for the period c. A.D. 115-1395, followed by the Kamesvara Dynasty which ruled between c. A.D. 1350-1515. It was again followed by another dynasty of rulers founded by Mahesvara Thakkura in the time of Akbar, and this dynasty has continued up to the present time.

Mithila as a seat of learning flourished remarkably under these later kings. The Kamesvara period was made famous in the literary world by the erudite and versatile scholar, **Jagaddhara**, who wrote commentaries on a variety of texts, the Gita, Devi-mahatmya, Meghaduta, Gita-Govinda, Malati-Madhava, and the like, and original treatises on Erotics, such as Rasika-Sarvasva-Sangita-Sarvasva.

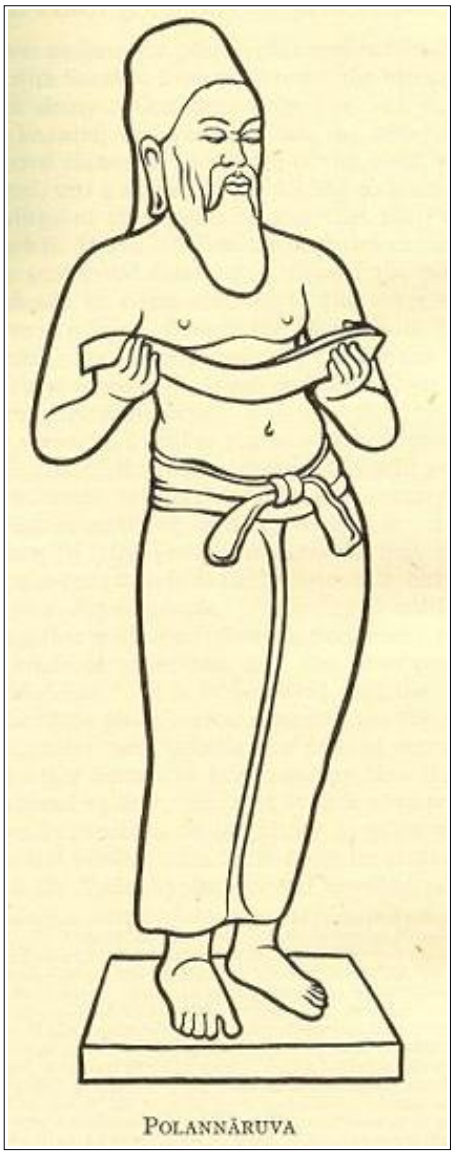
The next scholar who shed luster on Mithila was the poet Vidyapati, the author of Maithili songs or Padavali generally. He has inspired for generations the later Vaishava writers of Bengal.

Mithila made conspicious contributions in the realm of severe and scientific subjects. It developed a famous **School of Nyaya** which flourished from the twelfth to the fifteenth century A.D. under the great masters of Logic, Gangesa, Vardhamana, Pakshadhara, and others. This School of New Logic (Navya Nyaya) was founded by **Gangesa Upadhyaya** and his epoch-making work named "**Tattva Chinatmani"**, a work of about 300 pages whose commentaries make up over 1,000,000 pages in three centuries of its study. Gangesa is supposed to have lived after A.D. 1093-1150, the time of Ananada Suri and Amarachandra Suri, whose opinions he has quoted.

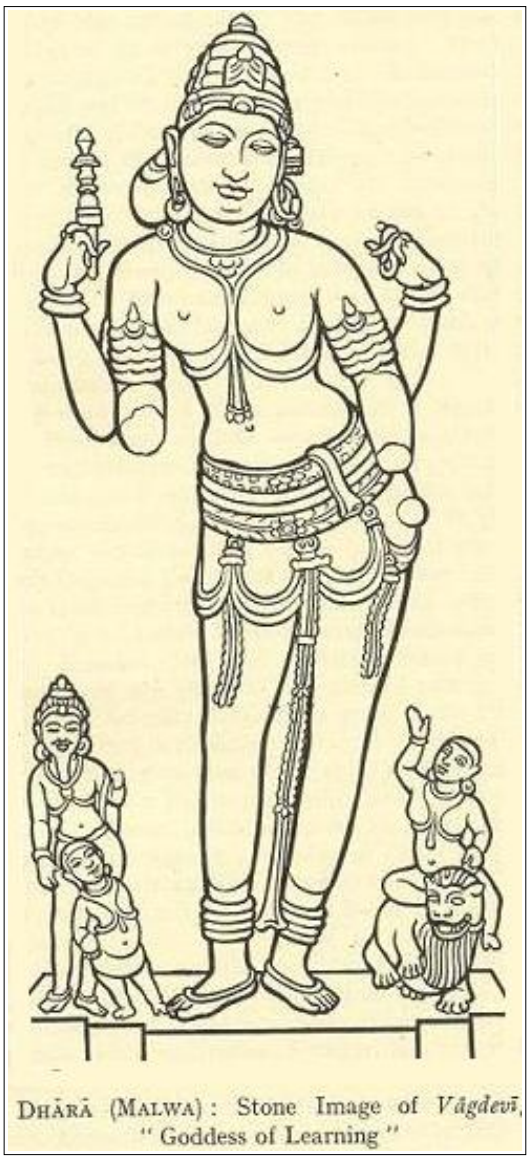
By its scholastic activities Mithila in those days, like Nalanda, used to draw students from different parts of India for advanced and specialized studies in Nyaya or Logic, of which it was then the chief center.

3. Nalanda

Nalanda was the name of the ancient village identified with modern Baragaon, 7 miles north of Rajgir in Bihar. The earliest mention of the place is that in the Buddhist scriptures which refer to a Nalanda village near Rajagriha with a Pavarika Mango Park in Buddha's time. The Jain texts carry the history earlier than the Buddhist. IT was the place where Mahavira had met Gosala and was counted as a bahira or suburb of Rajagriha where Mahavira had spent as many as fourteen rainy seasons. Nalanda, when Fa-hien visited it, was called Nala and was known as the place "where Sariputta was born, and to which also he returned, and attained here his pari-nirvana. Nalanda was not a sectarian or a religious university in the narrow sense of the term, imparting only Buddhist thought. Subjects other than Buddhism were taught as fervently. Almost all sciences, including the science of medicine were taught. So were the **Upanishads and the Vedas. Panini's grammar,** the science of pronunciation (Phonetics), etymology, Indology and Yoga were all included in the curricula. Surprisingly, even archery was taught at Nalanda. Hiuen Tsang himself learnt Yogasastra from Jayasena.



POLANNĀRUVA



DHĀRĀ (MALWA): Stone Image of *Vāgdevī*, "Goddess of Learning"

Knowledge of Sanskrit was essential for all entrants in spite of the fact that Sakyamuni delivered his sermons in Pali. Knowledge of Sanskrit meant complete mastery of Sanskrit grammar, literature and correct pronunciation, and was compulsory to enter the portals of the university. On the authority of Hiuen Tsang, we can safely say that the entrants to Nalanda were supposed to be well-versed in "Beda" i.e. Veda, Vedanta, Samakhya, Nyaya and Vaisesika. I-Tsing also confirms this in his accounts. Nalanda was an example of the **Guru-Shishya parampara, a great Indian tradition**. The authority of the Guru (teacher) over the shishya (student) was absolute, and yet, dissent was permitted in academic matters.Free education: Out of the income of the estate. In Nalanda, swimming, breathing exercises and yoga formed an integral part of the curriculum. Harshavardhana, of the Gupta dynasty was a great sportsman and he encouraged his subjects as well. Another great contemporary of Harsha, Narasimhan or Mamallah was also a great wrestler. He belonged to the Pallava dynasty.

Yuan Chawang, a Chinese student at Nalanda, wrote: "In the establishment were some thousand brethren, all men of great learning and ability, several hundreds being highly esteemed and famous; the brethren were very strict in observing the precepts and regulations of their order; learning and discussing, they found the day too short. Day and night they admonished each other, juniors and seniors mutually helping to perfection....Hence foreign students came to the institution to put an end to their rounds and then become celebrated and those who shared the name of Nalanda, were all treated with respect, wherever they went."

(source: **On Yuang-Chwang's Travels in India - By Thomas Watters** (1840-1901) volume 2 p. 165).

Though Buddhism and Hinduism became arrayed in opposite philosophical camps, they were both given their places in the university curriculum. There was **no intellectual isolationism** of the type that characterizes modern sectarian institutions of the Christian world. According to eminent Indian historian, **R C Dutt**, "Buddhism never assumed a hostile attitude towards the parent religion of India; and the fact that the two religions existed side by side for long centuries increased their tolerance of each other. Hindus went to Buddhist monasteries and universities, and Buddhist learnt from Brahmin sages."

(source: **Civilization in Ancient India - By R C Dutt** p. 127).

According to **Alain Danielou** (1907-1994) son of French aristocracy, author of numerous books on philosophy, religion, history and arts of India: "Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveler, stayed five years at Nalanda University, where more than seven thousand monks lived. He mentions a very considerable literature in Sanskrit and other works on history, statistics and geography, none of which have survived. He also writes of officials whose job it was to write records of all important events. At Nalanda, studies included the **Vedas, the Upanishads, cosmology (Sankhya), realist or scientific philosophy (Vaisheshika), logic (Nyaya), to which great importance was attached,** and Jain and Buddhist philosophy. Studies also included grammar, mechanics, medicine, and physics. Medicine was highly effective, and surgery was quite developed. The pharmacopoeia was enormous, and astronomy was very advanced. **The earth's diameter had been calculated very precisely. In physics, Brahmagupta had discovered the law of gravity."**

(source: **A Brief History of India - By Alain Danielou** p. 165-166).

4. Vallabi

Valabhi in Kathiawad was also a great seat of Hindu and Buddhist learning. It was the capital of an important kingdom and a port of international trade with numerous warehouses full of rarest merchandise. During the 7th century, however, it was more famous as a seat of learning. I-tsing informs us that its fame rivaled with that of Nalanda in eastern India.

5. Vikramasila

Like Nalanda and Vallabhi, the University of Vikramsila was also the result of royal benefactions. Vikramasila, found by king Dharmapala in the 8th century, was a famous center of international learning for more than four centuries. King Dharmapala (c. 775-800 A. D) was its founder, he built temples and monasteries at the place and liberally endowed them. He had the Vihara constructed after a good design. He also erected several halls for the lecturing work. His successors continued to patronize the University down to the 13th century. The teaching was controlled by a Board of eminent teachers and it is stated that this Board of Vikramsila also administered the affairs at Nalanda. The University had six colleges, each with a staff of the standard strength of 108 teachers, and a Central Hall called the House of Science with its six gates opening on to the six Colleges. It is also stated that the outer walls surrounding the whole University was decorated with artistic works, a portrait in painting of Nagarjuna adorning the right of the principal entrance and that of Atisa on the left. On the walls of the University were also the painted portraits of Pandits eminent for their learning and character.

Grammar, logic, metaphysics, ritualism were the main subjects specialized at the institution.

Destruction of Vikramsila by Moslems: **In 1203, the University of Vikramasila was destroyed by the Mahomadens under Bakhtyar Khilji.** As related by the author of **Tabakat-i-Nasari**:

"the greater number of the inhabitants of that place were Brahmins and the whole of these Brahmins had their heads shaven; and they were all slain. There were a great number of books on religion of the Hindus (Buddhists) there; and when all these books came under the observation of the Musalmans, they summoned a number of Hindus that they might give them information respecting the import of these books; but the whole of the Hindus had been killed. On becoming acquainted (with the contents of those books), it was found that the whole of that fortress and city was a college, and, in the Hindu tongue, they call a college a Bihar (Vihara)."

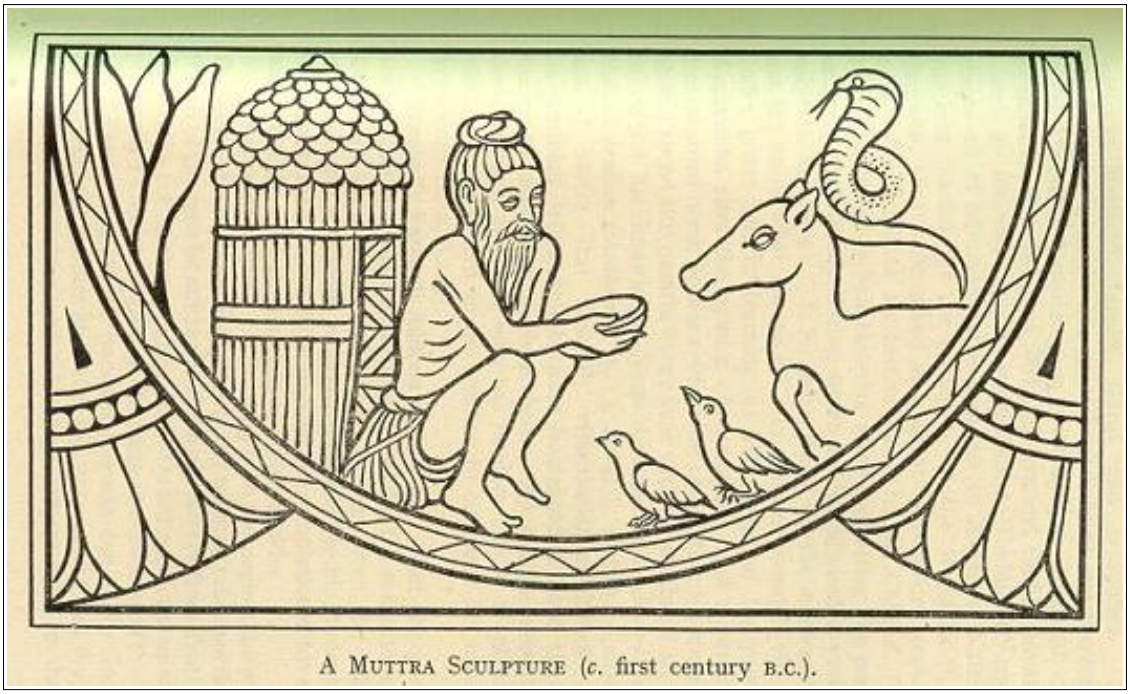
After the destruction of the Vikramsila University, Sri Bhadra repaired to the University of Jagadala whence he proceeded to Tibet, accompanied by many other monks who settled down there as preachers of Buddhism.

6. Jagaddala

Its foundation by King Rama Pala. According to the historical Epic Ramacharita, King Ram Pala, of Bengal and Magadha, who reigned between A.D. 108-1130, founded a new city which he called Ramavati on the banks of the rivers Ganga and Karatoya in Varendra and equipped the city with a Vihara called Jagadala. The University could barely work for a hundred years, till the time of Moslem invasion sweeping it away in A.D. 1203. But in its short life it has made substantial contributions to learning through its scholars who made it famous by their writings.

7. Odantapuri

Very little is known of this University, although at the time of Abhayakaragupta there were 1,000 monks in residence here. Odanatapuri is now known for the famous scholar named Prabhakara who hailed from Chatarpur in Bengal. It appears that this University had existed long before the Pala kings came into power in Magadha. These kings expanded the University by endowing it with a good Library of Brahmanical and Buddhist works. This Monastery was taken as the model on which the first Tibetan Buddhist Monastery was built in 749 A.D. under King Khri-sron-deu-tsan on the advice of his guru, Santarakshita.



A MUTTRA SCULPTURE (*c.* first century B.C.).

A typical Brahmin with a high chignon, beard, short garments, seat of mat, round leafy hut; four fellow denizens of his hermitage, a dow, a crow, a kneeling doe, and a coiled snake, all living at peace as friends in the atmosphere of non-violence.

8. Nadia

Nadia is the popular name of Navadvipa on the Bhagirathi at its confluence with Jalangi. Once it was a center of trade borne by the Bhagirathi between Saptframa)on the river Sarasvati near Hoogly) and the United Provinces, and in the other direction by the Jalangi between Saptagrama and Eastern Bengal.

9. Madura Sangham - was another seat of learning. The Sangham was known for its learning and academic prestige. Writing about the Tamil institutions, **Dr. Krishnaswami Aiyangar** (1871-1947) remarks: "There are two features with regard to these assemblies that call for special remark. The first, the academics were standing bodies of the most eminent men among the learned men of the time in all branches of knowledge. The next, it was the approval of this learned body that set the seal of authority on the works preserved to it." Scholars were honored irrespective of sex. Aiyangar continues: "A Ruler of Tanjore, poet, musician, warrior, and administrator, did extraordinary honor to a lady of Court, by name **Ramachandramha**, who composed an epic on the achievements of her patron, Raghunatha Nayaka of Tanjore. It appears that she was accorded honor of **Kanaka-Ratna Abhisheka** (bath in gold and gems). She was, by assent of the Court, made to occupy the position of "Emperor of Learning."

(source: **India: A synthesis of Culture - By Kewal Motwani** p. 138).

10. Benares - Benares has always been a culture center of all India fame and even in the Buddha's day it was already old. Though not a formal university, it is a place unique in India, which has throughout the ages provided the most suitable atmosphere for the pursuit of higher studies. The method of instruction as also the curriculum followed there in early times was adopted from Taxila. Benares University was famous for Hindu culture. Sankaracharya as a student was acquainted with this university. Benares is the only city in India which has its schools representing every branch of Hindu thought. And there is no spiritual path which has not its center in Benares with resident adherents. Every religious sect of the Hindus has its pilgrimage there. In ancient days, Sarnath figured as a recognized seat of Buddhist learning. Rightly, therefore, it is this holy city the very heart of spiritual India. **Alberuni,** the noted Arabian historian, mentioned Benares as a **great seat of learning** and **Bernier**, who visited India, described it "as a kind of university, but it resembled rather the school of ancients, the masters being spread over different parts of the town in private houses."

11. Kachipuram was another such institution of learning in South India. It came to be known as Dakshina Kasi, Southern Kashi. Huien Tsang visited it about 642. A.D. and found Vaishnavite and Shaivite Hindus, Digambara Jain and Mahayan Buddhists studying together.

12. Navadvip belonged to comparatively recent times and was founded by Sena Kings of Bengal in about 1063 A.D. and soon rose to be a great center of learning. It imparted instruction in Vedas, Vedangas, Six Systems especially Nyaya. Chaitanya was a product of Navadvipa. It had 500-600 students, when A. H Wilson visited it in 1821, drawn from Bengal, Assam, Nepal and South India.

In 1867, **Edward B Cowell** (1826-1903) professor of Sanskrit in Cambridge and author of **The aphorisms of Sandilya or The Hindu doctrine of faith**, recorded his opinion in these words: "I could not help looking at these unpretending lecture-halls with a deep interest, as I thought of the pundits lecturing there to generation after generation of eager, inquisitive minds. Seated on the floor with his 'corona' of listening pupils round him, **the teacher expiates on those refinements of infinitesmal logic which makes a European's brain dizzy to think of, but whose labyrinth a trained Nadia student will thread with unfaltering precision."**

(source: **India: A synthesis of Culture - By Kewal Motwani** p. 134-145 and **Indian Education in Ancient and Later Times - By Key** p.145).

Libraries in Ancient India

The great seats of learning in ancient India like Nalanda, Vikramasila, Pataliputra, and Tamralipti are said to have contained libraries of their own and striven hard for the promotion of education and learning in the country, the evidence for which comes from the writings of Hieun-Tsang and It-Sing who spent some time in some of the centers and studied the Buddhist philosophy. They were given all facilities to copy down the manuscripts which they wanted from the libraries. Each of these institutions must have maintained a well equipped library for the use of teachers and students. The library in ancient times was called either Saraswati-bhandara or Pustaka bhandara. Many libraries were located in temples. In South India, records contain references to Nagai, Srirangam, Sermadevi and Cidambaram, Kacipuram and Sringeri. In this connection it may be mentioned that libraries in ancient Cambodia were all located in temples and the inscriptions from some temples in the area bear evidence to that. Library is mentioned for the first time in the inscriptions of the king Indravarman at Preah Ko and Bakong (Cambodia). They were rectangular with gabled ends and at first with a single vaulted hall. **The temples of Prasat Bantay Pir Chan, and Angkor Wat contained libraries in which the main deity of the temples were oriented. It is also interesting to note that the walls of the library were sculptured with panels depicting scenes from the epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata.**

"India has lost much of its great treasures of ancient texts during the successive invasions by foreign rulers. Our great libraries at Nalanda and other places were burnt to ashes. Sachan who collected and edited **Al Beruni's** works said: "It was like a magic island of quiet and impartial research, in the midst of a world of clashing swords, burning towns, and plundered temples. The work of many eminent scholars contained thousands of volumes of translations of Indian texts, whose original were lost in India owing to the depredations of Mohammedan iconoclasts who destroyed hundreds of Hindu and Buddhist seats of learning, in India including the world famous Nalanda University." "The Christian missionaries in the West coast took away and burnt many valuable manuscripts. Many great scholars died without passing down their knowledge to the descendents. In their quest for livelihood during the nine hundred years of foreign rule, the descendents did not care to preserve their knowledge."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - Har Bilas Sarda** p. 150 and **Vision of India - By Sisir Kumar Mitra** p. 186 and **The Temple Empire - By Vidyavisarada Garimella Veeraraghuvulu**. Printed in Sri Gayathri press. Kakinada. India 1982 p. 136-137)..

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(**Note:** The fall of Nalanda at the hands of the Turks is a story too deep for tears. Like Nero, Bakhtiar Khilji, its destroyer in 1205 A.D., laughed while Nalanda burnt. The City of Knowledge, which took several centuries to build, took only a few hours to be destroyed. Legend has it that when some monks fell at the feet of the invader to spare at least its world-famed library, *Ratnabodhi*, he kicked them and had them thrown in the fire along with the books. The monks fled to foreign lands, citizens became denizens and Nalanda was relegated to a memory. (source: **Nalanda - The City of Knowledge**).

Many of these universities were sacked, plundered, looted by the Islamic onslaught. They destroyed temples and **libraries** and indulged in most heinous type of vandalism. These were particularly heinous crimes. The burning of the Library of Nalanda ranks with the destruction of the Library of Alexandria as the two most notorious acts of vandalism in the course of Islamic expansion. Nalanda, Vikramshila, Odantapura, and Jagddala as the universities destroyed by Mohammed Bakhtiar Khilji around 1200 A.D. For more refer to **The Sack of Nalanda**).

Gertrude Emerson Sen (-1982) historian and journalist and Asia specialist, wrote on the plight of the universities: "Night was to descend on all the great centers of traditional Indian learning, however, when the untutored Muslims of Central Asia poured into India with fire and sword at the beginning of the 11th century."

(source **The Pageant of India's History - By Gertrude Emerson Sen** p. 275 - 276).

Later when the **British** came there was, throughout India, a system of communal schools, managed by the village communities. **The agents of the East India Company and the Christian missionaries destroyed** these village community schools, and took steps to replace education by introducing English and western system of education. In October 1931 **Mahatma Gandhi** made a statement at Chatham House, London, that created a furor in the English press.

He said, **"Today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago, and so is Burma, because the British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and left the root exposed and the beautiful tree perished"**.

Mr. Ermest Havell (formerly Principal of the Calcutta school of Art) has rightly said, the fault of the Anglo-Indian Educational System is that, instead of harmonizing with, and supplementing, national culture, it is antagonist to, and destructive, of it.

Sir George Birdwood says of the system that it "has destroyed in Indians the love of their own literature, the quickening soul of a people, and their delight in their own arts, and worst of all their repose in their own traditional and national religion, has disgusted them with their own homes, their parents, and their sisters, their very wives, and brought discontent into every family so far as its baneful influences have reached."

(source: **Bharata Shakti: Collection of Addresses on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p 75-77).

As **Max Mueller**, the propagator of the Aryan invasion theory, wrote to his wife, **"It took only 200 years for us to Christianise the whole**

of Africa, but even after 400 years India eludes us, I have come to realize that it is Sanskrit which has enabled India to do so. And to break it I have decided to learn Sanskrit." The soul of India lies in Sanskrit. And Lord Macaulay saw to it that the later generations are successfully cut off from their roots.

(source: **Assaulting India's pluralist ethos - by D. Harikumar** The Hindu).

The present education system is, in effect, a legacy of the colonial rule. For more on this tragic destruction of ancient education, please refer to the chapters **Islamic Onslaught**, **FirstIndologists** and **European Imperialism**. Also refer to **Education: A Beautiful Tree** - Indiatogether.com and **The Beautiful Tree - Shri Dharampal** - an associate of Mahatma Gandhi (Biblia Impex, Delhi, 1983).

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In India, our goddess of learning is **Saraswati**. She who is seated on a white lotus, wearing a beautiful white garment; she who holds a lute in her hand and has a garland of fresh white jasmine buds around her neck; she who is worshipped even by Brahma, Shiva and all gods – **may that Saraswati, Goddess of Learning, remove my ignorance. It is significant that these ideas of beauty and grace, purity, simplicity, and holiness are associated with the goddess of learning.** In the traditional Indian scheme of values, scholarship is not regarded as an end in itself, and education is looked upon as the molding of the complete man. **The educational system established by the British in India was one-sided, and came in for sharp criticism from Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo.**

Rabindranath Tagore wrote: "The Western system of education is impersonal...It dwells in the cold-storage compartments of lessons and the ice-packed minds of the schoolmasters...**It represented an artificial method of training specially calculated to produce the carriers of the white man's burden."** Man's intellect has a natural pride in its own aristocracy, which is the pride of its culture. When this pride succumbs to some compulsion of necessity or lure of material advantage, it brings humiliation on to the intellectual man. **Modern India, through her education, has been made to suffer this humiliation.** There was a time when India provided her children with a culture which was the product of her own thought and creation. But this culture was brushed aside by the educationists under the British rule." "Our educated community is not a cultured community but a community of qualified candidates."

(source: **The Spirit of Modern India - Edited by Robert A McDermont and V. S. Naravane** p. 169 - 171and 182-185).

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Professional and Useful Education

Medical science

Medical science is no doubt of hoary antiquity in India. The Vedic literature refers to the healing feats of Asvins, who though originally human beings, were later deified by a grateful posterity. This science was fairly well developed by the 4th century B.C., for the Greeks, who had accompanied Alexander, were very well impressed by the skill of Indian doctors in curing the cases of serpent bites. The Jatakas refer to the medical students at Taxila treating for cranial abscesses and intestinal displacement. Medical education was usually imparted by private teachers. The student had to be well versed in Sanskrit, for most of the books on medicine were written in that language. Practical training in surgery and pharmacy and constant discussion were some of the important features of the training.

Training in Surgery: The beginners were taught how to hold and use the surgical instruments by practicing upon pumpkins, water melons etc. under the teacher's direction. Puncturing was demonstrated on the veins of dead animals, the manner of holding the probe on dry Alabu fruits, application of bandages on stuffed human figures and the use of caustics on soft pieces of flesh. **Susruta** emphasizes on the importance of dissection for perfecting the student's knowledge; and points out that mere book learning cannot give a clear idea of the actual internal constituents of the human body. Corpses used to be decomposed in water and students were then required to dissect them and visualize the nature of skin, muscles, arteries, bones, internal organs, etc. Anatomical knowledge that was imparted was fairly high when compared with the contemporary standards elsewhere.

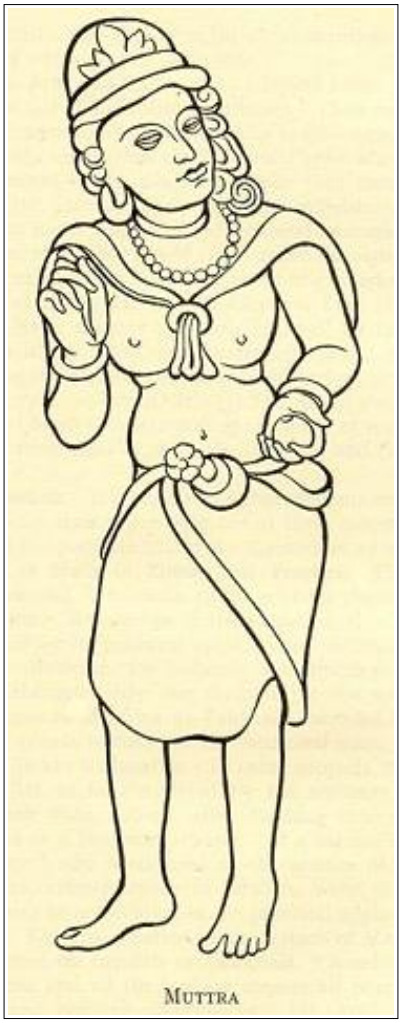


Image in stone of Pingala, attendant of Surya, holding pen in his right hand and an Ink-pt in his left. Gupta period.

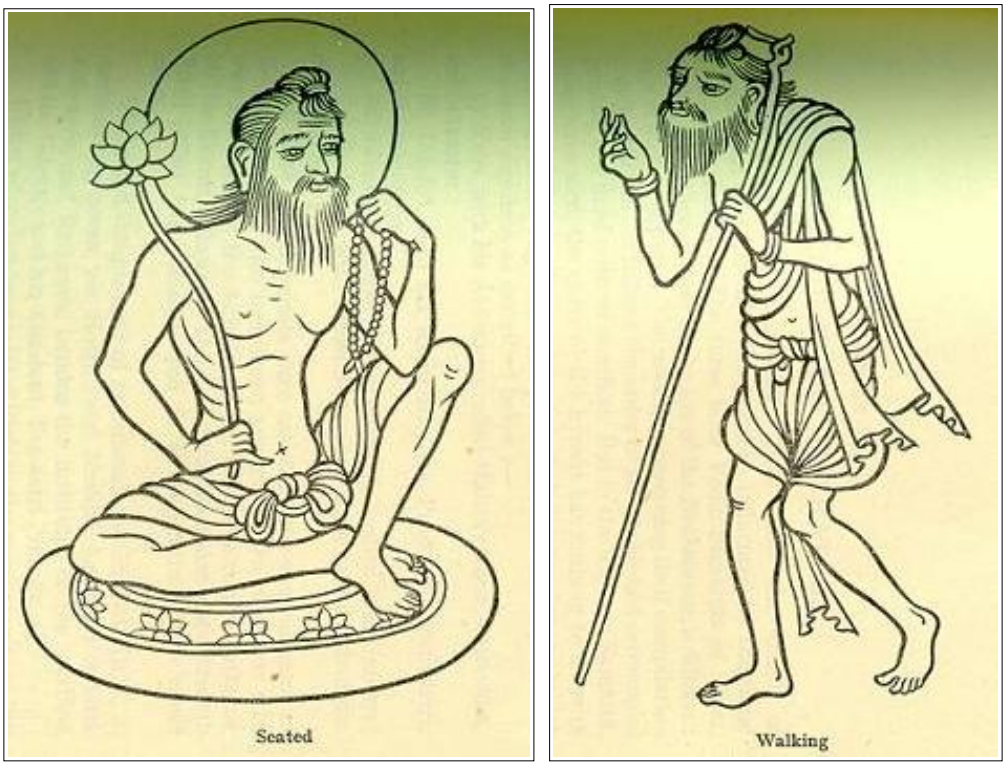
Smallpox inoculation is an ancient Indian tradition and was practiced in India before the West.

In ancient times in India smallpox was prevented through the tikah (inoculation). **Kurt Pollak** (1968) writes, "preventive inoculation against the smallpox, which was practiced in China from the 11th century, apparently came from India". This inoculation process was generally practiced in large part of Northern and Southern India, but around 1803-04 the British government banned this process. It's banning, undoubtedly, was done in the name of 'humanity', and justified by the Superintendent General of Vaccine (manufactured by Dr. E. Jenner from the cow for use in the inoculation against smallpox).

Dharmapal has quoted British sources to prove that inoculation in India was practiced before the British did. In the seventeenth century, smallpox inoculation (*tikah*) was practiced in India. A particular sect of Brahmins employed a sharp iron needle to carry out these practices. In 1731, Coult was in Bengal and he observed it and wrote (Operation of inoculation of the smallpox as performed in Bengall from Re. Coult to **Dr. Oliver Coult** in 'An account of the diseases of Bengall' Calcutta, dated February 10, 1731):

" The operation of inoculation called by the natives tikah has been known in the kingdom of Bengall as near as I can learn, about 150 years and according to the Bhamanian records was first performed by one Dununtary, a physician of Champanagar, a small town by the side of the Ganges about half way to Cossimbazar whose memory in now holden in great esteem as being through the another of this operation, which secret, say they, he had immediately of God in a dream.'

(source: **Indian Science And Technology in the Eighteenth Century**; some contemporary European accounts - **By Dharampal** 1971. An Account of the manner of inoculating for the Smallpox in the East Indies. Mapusa, Goa: Other India Press. Chapter VIII p. 142 -164. **The Healers, the Doctor, then and now - By Pollack, Kurt** 1968.English Edition. p. 37-8.).



Sage Vasistha

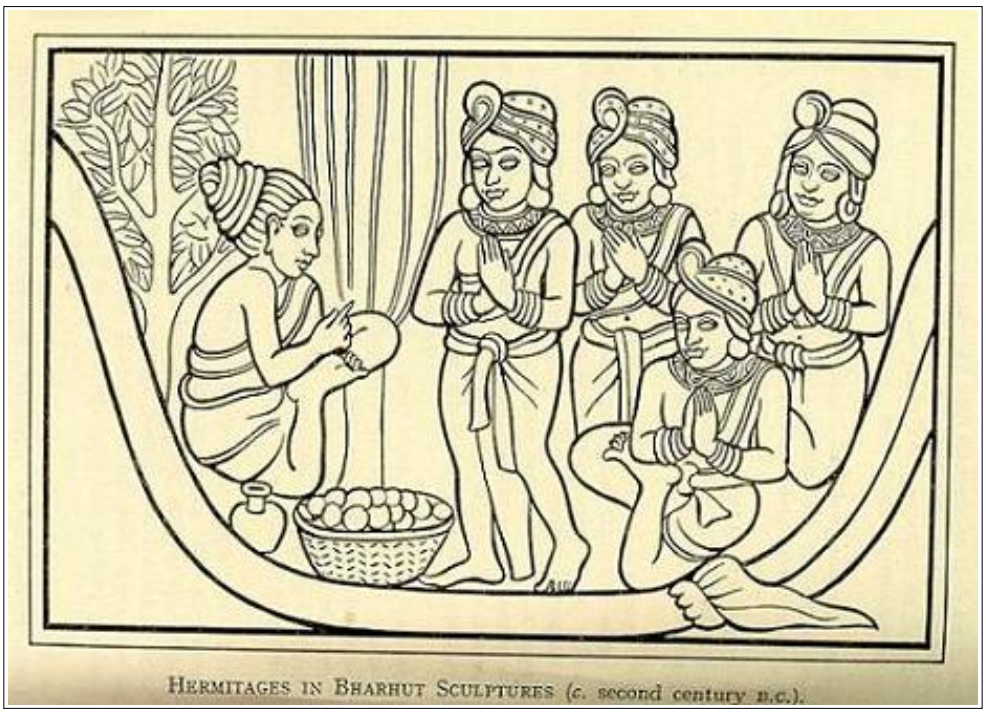
The Hindus were the first nation to establish hospitals, and for centuries they were the only people in the world who maintained them. The Chinese traveler, **Fa-hien**, speaking of a hospital he visited in Pataliputra says: "Hither come all poor and helpless patients suffering from all kinds of infirmities. They are well taken care of, and a doctor attends them; food and medicine being supplied according to their wants. Thus they are made quite comfortable, and when they are well, they may go away."

Excavations at Kumrahar near Patna have revealed in 1953 the existence of one university-cum hospital named Arogyavihara. Indian hospitals were well organized, for Hindu doctors were invited by the Abbaside Khalifas to supervise their own hospitals in the 8th century A.D. The medical course at Taxila was fairly long, for his physician Jivaka was permitted to go home very reluctantly by his teacher, though he had spent seven years at that University. The completion of the course was followed by an examination. This is implied by the observation of Charaka and Susruta that it is the king's fault, if incompetent doctors practice as a doctor without possessing king's license.

India continued to be famous for its medical skills throughout the ancient period. Her doctors could perform surgical operations for cataract, hydrocele, abscesses, extraction of dead embryos etc. They were in demand in Mesopotamia and Arabia for guiding and training the physicians there. **Khalifa Harun** sent several scholars to India to study Hindu medicine and pharmacology and induced about 20 doctors to come to Baghdad to become chief medical officers of state hospitals and to translate Sanskrit medical works into Arabic. Most celebrated among them was Manaka (Manikya) who was originally invited to cure an ailment of Sultan Harun, which defied the sill of Arabian physicians. He succeeded in his treatment and was later induced to become the director of state hospitals and translate the work of Susruta into Arabic. Arabic system of medicine owes a great deal to the Ayurvedic system. (refer to S. K. Nadvi - Arab aur Bharat ke sambandha. p. 103-123).

Veterinary Education had been developed in India fairly early. Since animals were regarded as a part of the same cosmos as humans, it is not surprising that animal life was keenly protected and veterinary medicine was a distinct branch of science with its own hospitals and scholars. Salihotra is its traditional founder and two of the Pandava heroes, Nakula and Sahadeva are said to have been experts in it. Numerous texts, especially of the postclassical period, **Visnudharmottara Mahapurana** for example, mention veterinary medicine. Megasthenes refers to the kind of treatment which was later to be incorporated in Palakapyamuni's Hastya yur Veda and similar treatises. **Salihotra** was the most eminent authority on horse breeding and hippiatry. **Juadudatta** gives a detailed account of the medical treatment of cows in his Asva-Vaidyaka.

(source: **Indian and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p.187-188).



Hermitage of Kapila, who gives it away to four exiled Ikshvaku princes.

According to **Stanley Wolpert**, " Veterinary science had developed into an Indian medical specialty by that early era, and India's monarchs seem to have supported special hospitals for their horses as well as their elephants. Hindu faith in the sacrosanctity of animals as well as human souls, and belief in the partial divinity of cows and elephants helps explain perhaps what seems to be far better care lavished on such animals... A uniquely specialized branch of Indian medicine was called **Hastyaurveda** ("The Science of Prolonging Elephant Life").

(source: **An Introduction to India - By Stanley Wolpert** p. 193-194).

Military Education

In modern times military training is usually given only by the state authorities when recruits join the army. Such was not the case in ancient India. The average citizen and villager was expected to be able to defend his own hearth and home: The Arthasastra expressly lays down that every village ought to be able to defend itself. That such was actually the case in several parts of India would become quite clear from the accounts of Alexander's invasion, as given by the Greek historians. In several places the Macedonian was opposed not so much by state forces as by the whole population in arms. There can be no doubt that in many of the republican states of the Punjab, the Kathas, the Malavas, the Sibis, etc. every adult used to receive military training of a fairly high order.

Military Training: There were also some cities in the country, famous as centers of military training. Taxila, situated in the north-west, had naturally become a center of military training. Kshatriyas and Brahmins from all over the country used to go to this frontier city for getting mastery in the military profession. In one military college of the city there were 103 princes receiving training in the different branches of the military art, which included elephant-lore, horsemanship, and cavalry training, and the instructions in the use of the different weapons then in use.

Commercial Education

There was considerable inter provincial and foreign trade going on in the ancient times. The maritime activity of ancient India were considerable, and the trade with South East Asia, Egypt, Greek and Rome was very profitable to India during the early centuries.

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Conclusion

The Hindu Synthesis of the Transcendental and Education:

Author **Benoy Kumar Sarkar** writes: "The ideal of realizing the infinite in the finite, the transcendental in the positive, manifested itself also in the educational system of Hindu India. The graduates trained under the 'domestic system' of the Gurukulas or preceptors' homes were competent enough to found and administer states, undertake industrial and commercial enterprises; they were builders of empires and organizers of business concerns. It was because of this all-round and manly culture that the people of India could organize vast schemes of colonization and conquest, and not content with being simply confined within the limits of mother India, could build up a Greater India beyond the seas, and spread culture, religion and humanity among the subject and hospitable races. It it is not for education, how else can we account for the remarkable progress of the nation in architecture, sculpture, medicine, dyeing, weaving, mathematics, ship building, chess, navigation, military tactics, and implements and all such aspects of socio-economic and economico-political life as have to depend on the help of physical and natural sciences?"

(source: **Creative India - By Benoy Kumar Sarkar** p. 60-63).

The majestic Saraswati River ran through northwestern India till it dried up 4,000 years ago. **The goddess of learning is Saraswati.**

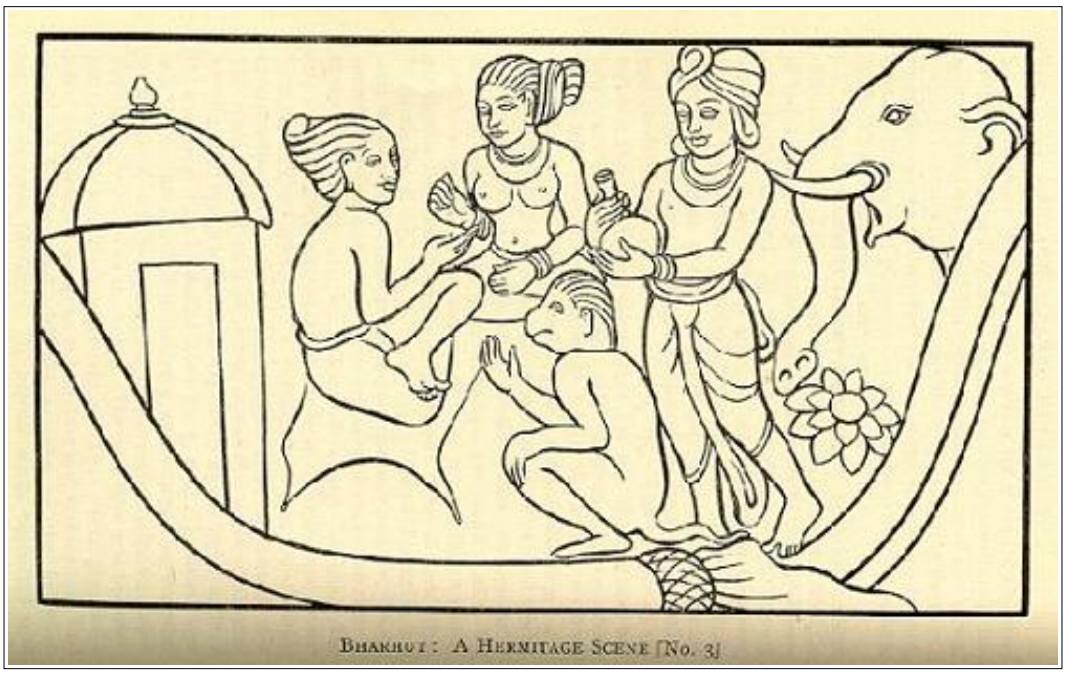
Only a nation who had highly educated people would call a river - a goddess of learning.

Louis Revel (?) French author of **The Fragrance of India : landmarks for the world of tomorrow** has observed:

"India, in her glorious past, has understood that the greatness of a nation, its virility, its moral value, depend entirely on the system of education that is given to it. Ancient India furnished us examples of schools, universities, Brahmanic or Buddhist, which brought to this nation most glorious harvests – harvests fallen, alas! today into oblivion. Let us take such centers of culture as Taxila, Ujjain, and Nalanda. These universities where thousands of students came from all parts of Asia to drink at the source of learning – based their system of education on individual contacts between master and pupil, but the masters themselves were pupils in the great University of Life. What they gave to their students was the honey of their moral and intellectual experiences received through masters still more experienced in spiritual science, in the true knowledge of the laws of life. Do we not see the famous Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen-Tsang, coming to perfect himself at Nalanda in the study of Yoga-sastra, the knowledge of the laws of being? Did he not have, at Nalanda, the celebrated vision of the vicissitudes through which India would have to go? Thus, there passed through these universities great winds of free Spirit and free Intelligence which swept away the miasms of false conceptions, which formed real men, noble men, in whom joy sparkled."

(source: **The Fragrance of India : landmarks for the world of tomorrow - By Louis Revel** p. 99 - 114).

The percentage of literary people in India was more than that at present. At least up to the 7th century A.D. this system worked most satisfactorily. People showed brilliancy in all departments. eg. Mathematics, Astronomy, Medicine, Chemistry, Poetry, Drama, Grammar and Philosophy. No nation could excel these people at that time. From the 4th century B.C. to the 11th century A.D. all foreigners who came in contact with India and studied her civilization critically were very much impressed by it. They spoke highly of Indian character specially their truthfulness, honesty, and sense of justice. The influence of the system of education was very great among the people in general. **Megasthenes**, the Greek ambassador who came to India in the 4th century B.C. remarked " for whereas among other nations it is usual in the contests of war, to ravage the soil, among the Indians it is on the contrary. They never use the conquered as slaves." **Idrisi**, the Arabian traveler and scholar in his Geography written in the 11th century A.D. says, "The Indians are naturally inclined to justice and never depart from it in action. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to their engagement were well known and they were so famous for their qualities that people came to their country from every side." **Abul Fazl,** the author of Aini Akbar, in the 16th century notes, "The Hindus are admirers of truth and showed unbounded fidelity in all dealings."



Hermitage scene

The Hindus were conscious about their ideal. Though spirituality is their goal they never neglected the material affairs. They were in the words of Wordsworth, "true to the kindred points of heaven and home' and knew fully that matter and spirit are interrelated, one cannot be conceived without the other. **This ideal is maintained by the system of education which is based on a sound method.'**

Dwelling on this wonderful effect of this system of education unparalleled in history **Sir Monier Williams** says, "And here I may observe circumstances in the history of India is more worthy of investigation than the antiquity and perseverance of her institutions. It has existed almost unaltered since the description of its organization in Manu's code two or three centuries before Christian era. It has survived all religious, political and physical convulsions from which India suffered from time immemorial. **Invader after invader has ravaged the country with fire and sword** but the simple self-contained township has preserved its constitution intact, its customs, precedents, and peculiar institutions unchanged and unchangeable amid all other changes." (source: Brahmanism and Hinduism p. 455).

The realization of the ultimate Reality was the ideal of India. Material progress was never the end in itself but was considered as a means

to the realization of the end. Apara Vidya dealing with material progress could never bring peace. From all these it appears that the aim of education was not only material progress but also spiritual growth. Regarding the system of education in ancient India it is known from the account of Ewan Chowang, the Chinese traveler, that boys at the age of seven began studying grammar, arts, painting, logic and scriptures and Brahmin and Buddhist teachers were highly efficient and persevering. The doors of education was open to all whether they belonged to the order of monks or of householders.

Ramesh Chandra Dutt, in his **Civilization in Ancient India**, p. 127, writes: "Buddhism had never assumed a hostile attitude towards the parent religion of India; and the fact that the two religions existed side by side for long centuries increased their toleration of each other. In every country Buddhists and orthodox Hindus lived side by side. **Hindus went to Buddhist monasteries and Universities, and Buddhists learned from Brahmins sages.** The same Kings favored the followers of both religions. The Gupta Emperors were often worshippers of Shiva and Vishnu, but loaded Buddhists and Buddhist monasteries with gifts, presents and favors. One king was often a Buddhist and his son an orthodox Hindu; and often two brothers followed or favored the two religions without fighting. Every Court had learned men belonging to both the religions, and Vikramaditya 's Court was no exception to the rule."

Mr. Ernest Binfield Havell says that the system of education during the seventh century was very much improved and better than was under the British. Even up to the fifteenth century, the educational institutions in every Hindu village were maintained either from the income of some temple or from the produce of land set aside for the purpose in villages.

From this, a picture of the educational system of ancient India can be derived and also come idea of the high standard of civilization then prevailing in the society.

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Books Used for this Chapter

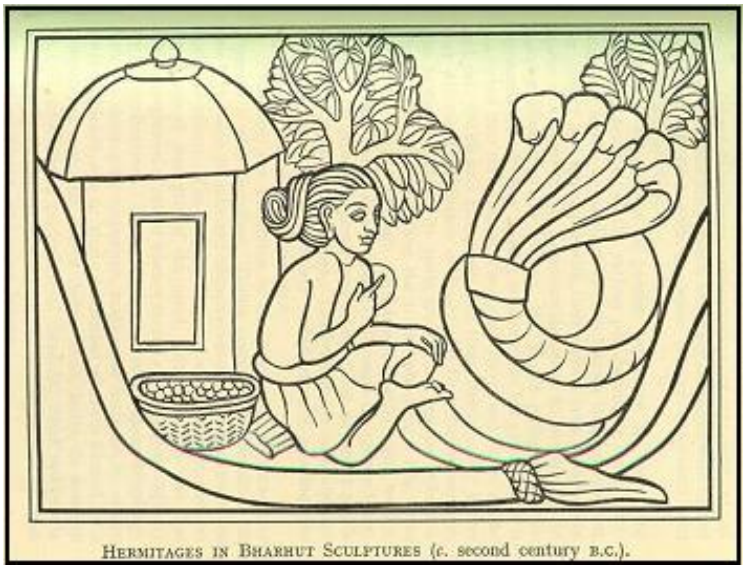
1. **Ancient Indian Education - By Radha Kumud Mookerji**
2. **Education in Ancient India - By Dr. A. S. Altekar**
3. **Ancient Indian Culture at a Glance - By Swami Tattwananda**
4. **Creative India - By Benoy Kumar Sarkar**
5. **Education in South India - By S. Gurumurthy -** New Era publication - 1979 Madras
6. **Hindu Civilization - By Radha Kumud Mookerji** Longmans, Green and Co. London 1936

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Did You Know?

England's debt to India in Pedagogics - The So-called Bell-Lancasterian Pedagogics

During the formative period of the modern educational systems in Europe and America, the pedagogy of the Hindus, especially on its elementary side, has played an important part.



HERMITAGES IN BHARHUT SCULPTURES (c. second century B.C.).

It is well-known that primary education was grossly neglected in America during the first half-century of her independence. In England even so late as 1845, 3.2 percent of men and 49 per cent of women had to sign their names on the marriage register with a cross. In the age of paucity of "public schools" private educational efforts naturally elicited the people's admiration. And none drew more sympathy and support than **Andrew Bell's** (1775-1823) "mutual-tuition" or "pupil teacher" or "monitorial" system of school management.

What, now, is the origin of this much-applauded mutual instruction or monitorial system, the so-called Bell-Lancasterain "discovery" in pedagogy. **Historians of education are familiar with the fact that the plan of making one boy teach others has been indigenous to India for centuries.** Bell, himself, in his **Mutual Tuition** (pt. I. ch. I, V). describes how in Madras he came into contact with a school conducted by a single master or superintendent through the medium of the scholars themselves. And, in fact, in England the monitorial system or the method of making every boy at once a master and a scholar is known as the "Madras system."



Bell, a Christian missionary in Madras took the Indian system of education back to England, and introduced it there. Until then, only the children of the nobles were given education there and he started education for the masses in England. So, we gather that it is from India that the British adopted the system for educating the masses.

England's debt to India in pedagogies has been fitly acknowledged in the tablet in Warminister Abbey, which describes Andrew Bell as

"the eminent founder of the **Madras System of Education**, which has been adopted within the British empire, as the national system of education for the children of the poor."

(source: **Creative India: From Mohenjo Daro to The Age of Ramakrsna-Vivekananda - By Benoy Kumar Sarkar** p. 108-110 and **Education in India Under The Rule of the East India Company - By Major B. D. Basu** 1934 2nd edition. Calcutta and **The Destruction of The Indian System of Education**).

For more on education under the British Rule, refer to chapter **European Imperialism**)

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Did You Know?

Link between Myths of the Scandinavians and the Hindus:

The Scandinavians are the descendants of the Hindu Kshatriyas. The term Scandinavian and the Hindu "Kshatriya" or the Warrior caste are identical, "the former being a Sanskrit equivalent for the latter: "Scanda Nabhi" (Scanda Navi) signifies Scanda Chiefs (Warrior Chiefs).

Colonel James Tod says: "The Aswas were chiefly of the Indu race, yet a branch of the Suryas also bore this designation." In the Edda we are informed that the Getes or Jits who entered Scandinavia were termed Asi, and their first settlement was Asigard (Asi garh, fortress of the Asi)."

John Pinkerton says: "Odin came into Scandinavia in the time of Darius Hystaspes, 500 years before Christ, and that his successor was Gotama. This is the period of the last Buddha or Mahavira, whose era is 477 before Vikrama, or 533 before Christ. Gotama was the successor of Mahavira."

"In the martial mythology and warlike poetry of the Scandinavians a wide field exists for assimilation."

"We can scarcely question," says **Count Bjornstjerna**, "the derivation of the **Edda** (the religious books of ancient Scandinavia) from the **Vedas.**"

The principle on which the seven days of the week are named in India is the same on which it has been done in Scandinavia:

1. Sunday is called by the Hindus Aditwaram, after Addit, the sun, after which also the Scandinavians call the day – Sondag.
2. Monday is called by the Hindus Somawaram, from Soma, the moon. Among the Scandinavians it is called Mondag.
3. Tueday is called Mangalwaram in India after the Hindu hero, Mangla. It bears the name Tisdag amongst the Scandinavians, after their hero, This.
4. Wednesday is termed Boudhawaram by the Hindus, after Boudha; by the Scandinavians, it is denominated after Odin (Wodan, Bodham, Budha), Onsdag.
5. Thursday is called Brahaspativaram by the Hindus, after Brahspati, or Brahma, their practical god; it bears the name Thorsdag amongst the Scandinavians, after the principal god, Thor.
6. Friday is called by the Hindus Sucrawaram, after Sucra, the goddess of beauty; it is named by the Scandinavians after Freja, the goddess of beauty, Frejdag.

7. Saturday is called Sanivaram by the Hindus after Sanischar, the god who cleanses spiritually; it is named Lordag by the Scandinavians from loger, bathing.

"We have here," says Count Bjornstjerna (author of **The Theogony of the Hindoos with their systems of Philosophy and Cosmogony** p. 169), himself a Scandinavian gentleman, "another proof that the Myths of the Scandinavians are derived from those of the Hindus.

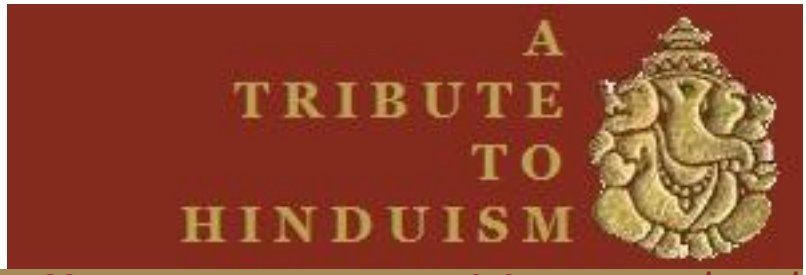
(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 173 - 174).






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From the beginning of her history, India has adored and idealized, not soldiers and statesmen, not men of science and leaders of industry, not even poets and philosophers, who influence the world by their deeds or by their words, but those rarer and more chastened spirits, whose greatness lies in what they are and not in what they do; men who have stamped infinity on the thought and life of the country. To a world given over to the pursuit of power and pleasure, wealth and glory, they declared the reality of the unseen world and the call of the spiritual life. This ideal had dominated the Indian religious landscape for over forty centuries. Hinduism has thus had a long and continuous evolution and in the process has influenced all other major world religions.

India, which is, in a sense, representation of the Asiatic consciousness, has never been isolated from the Western continent in spite of geographical, linguistic, and racial barriers. A large part of the world received its religious education from India. In spite of continuous struggle with superstition and theological baggage, India has held fast for centuries to the ideals of the spirit. Its influence or, at any rate, connection with Western thought, though not constant and continuous, has been quite significant. Commenting on the teachings of Christian missionaries as Plotinus, Clement, Gregory, Augustine and the like, Dean Inge observes: "They are the ancient religion of the Brahmins masquerading in the clothes borrowed from the Jewish, Gnostic, Manichaen and Neo-Platonic allegories. That is why Mahatma Gandhi told Romain Rolland in Switzerland on his way back to India from the Round Table Conference (1911) that Christianity is an echo of the Indian religion and Islam is the re-echo of that echo."

Jules Michelet (1789-1874) French writer, the greatest historian of the romantic school, affirms this: " Follow the migration of mankind from East to West along the sun's course and along the track of the world's magnetic currents; observe its long voyage from Asia to Europe, from India to France.....At its starting point in India, the birthplace of races and religions, the womb of the world...."

Introduction
The Bhagavad Gita, Buddhism and Christianity
Buddha and Jesus
The Vedas, Mithraism and Christianity
Articles

1. **Christmas' Hindu Roots - By D. Parsuram Maharaj**
2. **Buddhism in Christianity**
3. **Vedic Links to Judaism**



Introduction

Dr. Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975) the great British historian. His massive research was published in 12 volumes between 1934 and 1961 as `A Study of History'. Toynbee was a major interpreter of human civilization in the 20th century. He has said:

" India is not only the heir of her own religious traditions; she is also the residuary legatee of the Ancient Mediterranean World's religious traditions." "Religion cuts far deeper, and, at the religious level, India has not been a recipient; **she has been a giver.** About half the total number of the living higher religions are of Indian origin." he said.

(source: **One World and India - By Arnold Toynbee** p. 42- 59).

Volney, Constantin Francois de Chasseboeuf, comte de 1757-1820) historian and philosopher and French scholar. His principal work, **Les Ruines; ou, Méditation sur les révolutions des empires** (1791), which popularized religious skepticism, was influential not only in France but also in England and the United States; it went through many translations and editions and stimulated much controversy.



Volney of France was perhaps the first to propound in the 18th century that **"Jesus was a solar myth derived from Krishna' of Hindu mythology."** Buddhism existed at least four hundred years before Christianity. Another French theologian, **Ernest Havet**, did the same in his study of primitive Christianity published in 1884. A

He was followed by **Ernest Renan**, the famous Catholic theologian from France, who pointed out **Buddhist parallels in the parables of Jesus** in his **Life of Jesus** published in 1863.

Max Muller noted "startling coincidences between Buddhism and Christianity in his **India - What It Can Teach Us** published from England.

A stronger case along the same lines was made by **Rudolf Seydel**, Professor in the University of Leipzig (Germany), whose first book, **The Gospel of Jesus in relation to the Buddha Legend**, published in 1882, was followed by a more elaborate one, **The Buddha Legend and the Life of Jesus**, published in 1897. Finally, **J. M. Robertson**, a British scholar and a Member of Parliament, revived the Volney thesis in 1900 by stating in his **Christianity and Mythology** that **"the Christ-Myth is merely a form of the Krishna-Myth.**

(source: **Jesus Christ: An Artifice for Aggression - By Sita Ram Goel** p. 53).

In the past, the West and India were immediate neighbors. Before the Islamic civilization came between the two, the empire, which was first Persian, then Greek and later Roman,

stretched from the Mediterranean to the Indus. The commercial ties between India and Europe were more direct than they have ever been over the last ten centuries. Indian monks and their disciples lived and taught for several hundred years in the Middle East and founded large monasteries, the traces of which can be seen mainly in Antioch and Alexandria. In the 4th A.D. Saint Jeremy fulminated against the fake prophets from India. **But his protest came to late, for the men from India had already left their mark on the Mediterranean mind in search of holiness.**

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** (**'Le Genie de l'Inde'**) p.189-)

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The Bhagavad Gita, Buddhism and Christianity



The Bhagavad Gita doctrine of l*okasmgraha* (good of humanity) and of Divine Incarnation influenced the Mahayana or the Northern school of Buddhism. The Buddhist scholar Taranath who wrote the history of Buddhism mentions that the teacher of Nagarjuna, who is regarded as the chief originator of the Mahayana school of Buddhism, was Rahulabhadra who **"was much indebted to sage Krishna and still more to Ganesha…..This quasi-historical notice, reduced to its less allegorical expression means that Mahayanism is much indebted to the Bhagavadgita and more even to Shaivism."**

(source: **Dr. Kern's Manual of Buddhism**).

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has said: " Buddhism which arose in India was an attempt to achieve a purer Hinduism. It may be called a reform within Hinduism. The formative years of Buddhism were spent in the Hindu religious environment. It shares in a large measure the basic pre suppositons of Hinduism. **It is a product of the Hindu religious ethos**."

(source: **Religion and Culture - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 29).

The origin of Christianity is due also to Buddhist influence. The teachings of the Buddha got woven into Greek, Egyptian and Hebraic theology, giving rise to the new Christian religion. Renan sensed this when he wrote in his Life of Christ that 'there was something Buddhist' in the Word of Christ. **Flavius Joseph observed that the Pharisees of Alexandria had taken from the Indians the belief in resurrection of the dead.** Though this idea was alien to the Hebrew dogma, it gradually got absorbed into it, which probably explains the resurrection of Jesus Christ. At a more mundane level, Christians who venerate relics, ring bells and burn incense are unwittingly imitating Indian rituals that were established many centuries before Christianity. Ironically in the 19th century, some Christian missionaries expressed their indignation at Indian pagans ringing Christian bells and burning Christian incense when in point of fact it was the Christians who were imitating the Indians.

These influences from India may come as a surprise to many Christians. Yet they were often discussed in the early 19th century when Europe discovered the Vedas and the Upanishads in translation. European philosophers, especially **Soren Kierkegaard,** were amazed by the evangelical tone of these holy books from India. More recently, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Biblical manuscripts, some archaeologists who specialize in

religion have spoken once again of an Indian connection between Buddhist monks and the Essenian community which lived next to Jerusalem.

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** ('Le Genie de l'Inde') p.189-195).

The Hindus venerate Christ as an Incarnation, and they see that his essential message is that of the Sanatana Dharma (the Eternal Religion). The special ethical and religious ideas contained in the teachings of Christ have no antecedents in the religious traditions in which he was born. Non-resistance to evil, love of enemies, monasticism, love of death, the assertion of man's innate perfection (kingdom of heaven is within you), universalism are principles not to be found in the religion into which he was born.



John the Baptist, who belonged to the monastic sect of the Essenes, was a Buddhist. **Dr. Moffatt**, in his book, **Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,** vol. v, p.410, remarks, "Buddhist tendencies helped to shape some of the Essenic characteristics." King Ashoka of India (third century B.C.) sent Buddhist missionaries to different parts of the world, from Siberia to Ceylon, from China to Egypt, and for two centuries before the advent of Christ, the Buddhist missionaries preached the ethics of Buddha is Syria, Palestine and Alexandria. The Christian historian, **Mahaffi,** declared that the Buddhist missionaries were forerunners of Christ. " Philosophers like **Schelling** and **Schopenhauer**, and Christian thinkers like **Dean Mansel and D. Millman** admit that the sect of the Essenes arose through the influence of the Buddhist missionaries who came from India.

(source: **Complete works of Swami Abhedananda**, vol.2, p.120).

Professor Friedrich Heiler (1892-1967) German scholar of religion, writing during and after the First World War, in an important article on 'Christian and Non-Christian Religions' writes: " The doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation as well as the Virgin Birth, belief in the Divine Sacrifice of love, the conception of irresistible Grace and justification by faith alone, prayer prompted by the grace of God, petition for forgiveness of sins, all-embracing love towards every creature, heroic love of enemies, belief in everlasting life, in the judgment and the restoration of the world - there is not a single central doctrine of Christianity which does not have an array of striking parallels in the various non-Christian faiths." (Hibbert Journal, January 1954)

(source: **Religion and Culture - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 67).



A European version of the Buddha story; Barlaam and Josaphat

(Josaphat sees a blind man, a cripple and a dying man. from Barlaam and Josaphat - Augsburg, 1477
source: East-West Passage: the travel of ideas, arts and inventions between Asia and the Western world
- By Michael Edwardes).

Many incidents in Christ's life as well as the organization of the Catholic Church and its rituals suggest their Buddhistic and Hindu origin. The Gospel stories of the immaculate conception of a virgin mother, the miraculous birth, the story of slaughter of the infants by Herod, and the chief events of Christ's life seem like repetitions of what happened in the lives of Krishna and of Buddha. The idea of Incarnation is purely and Indian idea. It was not known among the Jews. The star over Buddha's birthplace and the prophecy of the old monk Asita are repeated in the Gospel story of Simeon. The temptation of Buddha by Mara, the evil spirit, the twelve disciples, with the beloved disciple Ananda, and the many miracles recall the stories in Christ's life.

Under cover of the legend of **Barlaam and Josaphet,** Buddha has found a place among Catholic saints and has his saint-day in the calendar of the Greek and Roman churches. The story is a Christianized version of one of the legends of Buddha, as even the name Josaphat would seem to show. This is said to be a corruption of the original Joasaph, which is again corrupted from the middle Persian **Budasif (Budsaif=Bodhisattva).**

The rosary, the veneration of relics, asceticism, baptism, confession, etc. are also of Indian origin. The name Josaphet is **Bodhisattva** in the corrupt form. The story of the Buddha's life underwent an extraordinary transmutation as it moved west and became what is one of the most widespread legends ever told -- the story of Barlaam and Josaphat. More than sixty translations, versions, or paraphrases have been identified. It

was altered to fit the religious climate of each language and culture. As it moved westward, the story was adopted and adapted by Manicheans in central Asia, and then it became Christianized. In its new version, Barlaam was a Christian monk who had converted Josaphat (the name was a linguistic development from the word Bodhisattva -- one capable of Buddhahood). It may be that Georgian Christians in the Caucasus were the first to give the story a Christian cast, in the sixth or seventh century.

There are innumerable similarities between Hindu-Buddhist practices and doctrines and those of Christianity.

The Russian author, **Nicholas Notovitch** translated in 1894 a biography of Christ found in Nepal in a Buddhist monastery which said that Christ went there during the thirteen years of his life of which there is no record in the Gospel. Notovitch author of a book, **The Unknown Life of Christ,** asserting that during his long period of obscurity Jesus had stayed with Brahman and Buddhist monks, who had initiated him into Indian religions. The book was first published in French and edited, abridged, and translated into English by Violet Crispe in 1895. This study was based on the materials Notovitch had collected during his travels in India and Tibet, particularly on the records of Saint Issa discovered by him at the monastery Himis. Inevitably the book excited fierce controversy and reproach from some theologians. Max Muller disputed Notovitch's assertions and questioned the authenticity of the latter's evidence. Despite this, Notovitch reaffirmed his views when the English version was published. The German scholar **Faber-Kaiser's** more recent book entitled **Jesus died in Kashmir'** also supports Ahmadiya sect in Islam that Jesus did not die on the Cross, but came to India and died near Rozabal not far from Srinagar in Kashmir.
(**http://www.tombofjesus.com/AcharaS.htm#Yuz**)



French historian **Alain Danielou** had noticed as early as 1950 that "a great number of events which surround the birth of Christ - as it is related in the Gospels - strangely remind us of Buddhists and Krishnaites legends".



Danielou quotes as examples the structure of the Christian Church, which resembles that of the Buddhist Chaitya; the rigorous asceticism of certain early Christian sects, which reminds one of the asceticism of Jain and Buddhist saints; the veneration of relics, the usage of holy water, which is an Indian practice, or the word 'Amen', which comes from the Hindu 'OM'.

There are some indication that Christ came to India for spiritual initiation and borrowed from Buddhism for his teachings. According to **Alain Danielou**, who wrote the **Histoire de l'Inde,**

"Many sects which developed in the first century before Christ in Palestine, had a strong

Hindu and Buddhist influence and a great number of legends surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, are strangely similar to Buddhist and Krishnaites stories. He adds that the structures of the church resembles those of Chaitya Buddhism and that the early Christian asceticism seems to have been inspired by Jainism."

(source: **Rewriting Indian History** - **By Francois Gautier** pg 9-10)



Belgium's historian Konraad Elst also remarks "that many early Christian saints, such as **Hippolytus** of Rome, possessed an intimate knowledge of Brahmanism." Elst even quotes the famous **Saint Augustin** who wrote:

"We never cease to look towards India, where many things are proposed to our admiration".

Unfortunately, remarks American **David Frawley**, "from the second century onwards, Christian leaders decided to break away from the Hindu influence and show that Christianity only started with the birth of Christ". Hence, many later saints began branding Brahmins as "heretics" and **Saint Gregory** set a future trend by publicly destroying the "pagan" idols of the Hindus.

It is unknown as to how Christianity arrived in India during the first century. If Christianity could reach India during the first century and find a sanctuary why could not Indian religions, especially Buddhism which was equally proselytizing reach western Asia and the Greco-Roman world and find a footing there? The road surely must have been open both ways.



Lamas at a prayer meeting

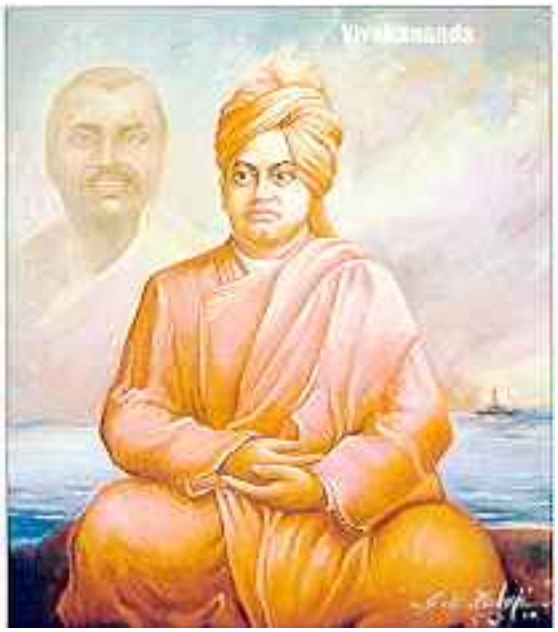
In 1842, two French missionary travelers to Tibet, **Hue and Gibet,** were shocked at the close resemblances between Catholic and Lamaistic rituals. They wrote, "The crozier, the exorcism, the censer with the five chains, the blessings which the lamas impart by extending the right head over the heads of the faithful, the rosary, the celibacy of the clergy, their separation from the world, the worship of saints, the fasts, processions, litanies, holy water – these are the points of contact the Buddhists have with us."

(source: **The Legacy of India - edited By G T Garratt** Oxford At The Clarendon Press).

Indeed, **Lamaistic Buddhism,** which did not follow the serene metaphysical teaching of the Buddha closely, represented demons and torments of hell as lurid as those of mediaeval Christianity. Even in the most Judaic of the epistles in the New Testament the phrase **"the wheel of birth"** occurs, which **Schopenhauer** ascribed to Indian influence.

In an interview in Detroit in 1894, **Vivekananda** said, "Our religion is older than most religions and the Christian creeds came directly from the Hindoo religion. It is one of the great offshoots. The Catholic religion also takes all its forms from us, the confessional, the belief in saints and so on, and a Catholic priest who saw this absolute similarity and recognized the truth of the origin of the Catholic religion was dethroned from his position because he dared to publish a volume explaining all that he observed and was convinced of" (Swami's reference was no doubt to **Bishop Brigandet's Life of Buddha**) (From **Vivekananda, New Discoveries by Marie Louise Burke,** 2nd ed, p 208). For more refer

to **Resurrection of the Dead In the Nag Hammadi Codices & Its Relationship to the Buddhist Doctrine of 'Rebirth**).



Great Indian sages, such as Sri Aurobindo or Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the founder of the Art of Living, which is practiced in more than 80 countries, have often remarked that the stories recounting how Jesus came to India to be initiated, are probably true. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar notes, for instance, that Jesus sometimes wore an orange robe, the Hindu symbol of renunciation in the world, which was not a usual practice in Judaism. "In the same way", he continues, "the worshipping of the Virgin Mary in Catholicism is probably borrowed from the Hindu cult of Devi." **Bells too, which cannot be found today in synagogues, the surviving form of Judaism, are used in church and we all know their importance in Buddhism and Hinduism for thousands of years.** There are many other similarities between Hinduism and Christianity: incense, sacred bread (prasadam), the different altars around churches (which recall the manifold deities in their niches inside Hindu temples); reciting the rosary (japamala), the Christian Trinity (the ancient Santana Dharma: Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh), Christian processions, the sign of the cross (Anganyasa), and so on.

The Catholic Church, however, developed with dualistic principles of God in heaven and creation below which have created an insoluble conflict between faith and reason. The conflict has reached its ultimate acuity in our day of scientific development. Hindus believe that the non-dualistic teachings of Christ have not been generally understood in the West.

Christianity's Hindu Heritage

Commenting on the teachings of Christian missionaries as Plotinus, Clement, Gregory, Augustine and the like, **Dean Inge** observes: "They are the ancient religion of the Brahmins masquerading in the clothes borrowed from the Jewish, Gnostic,Manichaen and Neo-Platonic allegories. That is why **Mahatma Gandhi told Romain Rolland** in Switzerland on his way back to India from the Round Table Conference (1911) that **Christianity is an echo of the Indian religion and Islam is the re-echo of that echo."**

(source: **India in Primitive Christianity - Arthur Lillie**).

Objective and open-minded scholars long ago conceded that Christianity is at heart a revamped form of Judaism. In the process of its development as something distinct from its mother religion, it became hybridized with so much pagan influence that it ultimately alienated its original Jewish base and became predominantly Gentile. The source of this pagan influence is varied and vague in the minds of most advanced Bible critics, but it may owe more to Hinduism than most people suspect.




The average person does not connect India with the ancient Middle East, *but the existence of some trade between these two regions is documented, even in the Bible.* Note the reference to spikenard in the Song of Solomon (1:12; 4:13-14) and in the Gospels (Mark 14:3; John 12:3). This is an aromatic oil-producing plant (*Nardostachys jatamansi*) that the Arabs call *sunbul hindi* and obtained in trade with India. It is axiomatic that influence follows trade, and the vibrant culture of India could not help but impact on anyone exposed to it. The influence on Judaism came for the most part indirectly, however, via the Persians and the Chaldeans, who dealt with India on a more direct basis. (Indeed, the Aryans, who invaded and trans- formed India over 1500 years before Christ, were of the same people who brought ancient Persia to its greatest glory. Persia's name today--Iran--is a corruption of *Aryan*.) The ancient Judeans absorbed much of this secondhand influence during the Babylonian captivity of the sixth century B. C., and during the inter testamental period, when Alexandria became the crossroads of the world, intellectuals both Jew and Gentile were exposed to a variety of ideas, some of which originated on the Indian Subcontinent.

From Pythagoras, who believed in the transmigration of souls, apparently because of his contacts with religious teachers from the east. Pindar, who believed in metempsychosis, Plato, who could not have been ignorant of Karma, through Klaxons, the Indian sage, who accompanied Alexander, Apollonius of Tyana, who came to Taxila to study under the Brahmins, Clement of Alexandria, the early Christian teachers of the second century A.D., who refers to Buddhists and Brahmins in his work and Plotimus, who went to Persia to meet the Brahmins, the Contacts between India and Greek thinkers seem to have been continuous.

According to **Klaus K. Klaustmaier,** in his book **A Survey of Hinduism** pg 18-19



"The kings of Magadha and Malwa exchanged ambassadors with Greece. A Maurya ruler invited one of the Greek Sophists to join his court, and one of the greatest of the Indo-Greek kings became famous as the dialogue partner of the great Buddhist sage Nagasena, while in the opposite direction, Buddhist missionaries are known to have settled in Alexandria, and other cities in the Ancient West. It is evident then, that Indian thought was present in the fashionable intellectual circuit of ancient Athens, and there is every reason to suppose that Indian religious and philosophical ideas exercised some influence on early and classical Greek philosophy. Both Greeks and Romans habitually tried to understand the religions of India by trying to fit them as far as possible into Greco-Roman categories. Deities in particular were spoken of, not in Indian but in Greek terms and called by Greek names. Thus Shiva, was identified as "Dionysos," Krsna (or perhaps Indra) as "Heracles." The great Indian epics were compared to those of Homer. Doctrinally, the Indian concept of transmigration had its counterpart in the metempsychosis taught by

Pythagoras and Plato; nor was Indian asceticism altogether foreign to a people who remembered Diogenes and his followers."

Parallels have also been found between the Biblical account of the creation of man by God in his own image and the creation of woman out of man (Genesis I :27) and the statements in the Hindu scriptures in the Hindu scriptures that God became man and created woman (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad(1:3 and 1:4) and Brahma as God divided himself into svayambhu Manu (man) and Satarupi (Woman the Bhagavata purana). There is a further parallel between the temptation of Adam and Eve, Who ate of the apple (Genesis III) and the references to two birds "beautiful of wing, inseparable friends, dwelling together in the same tree (the universe) of whom one (the individual being) eats the fruit of action, while the other (universal being) looks on and Svetesvatara Upanishad(4:6). The Indian scriptures, far from being in conflict with Western thought, seem very often to contain the same or parallel ideas as in Biblical literature. The ascent of man in the Books of Enoch is said to match a similar account in the Kausitaki Upanishad and even the concepts of the kingdom of God and the son of man have been discovered in the Rig Veda.

The precise pattern of influence was neither observed nor documented, but it can be inferred from the numerous uncanny similarities in concept and expression, not all of which can be coincidental. Let us examine the telltale evidence (none of which, it may be added, depends upon any apocryphal account of the alleged "lost years" of Jesus in India).



The Brahmin caste of the Hindus are said to be "twice-born" and have a ritual in which they are "born in the spirit." Could this be the ultimate source of the Christian "born again" concept (John 3:3)?

The deification of Christ is a phenomenon often attributed to the apotheosis of emperors and heroes in the Greco-Roman world. These, however, were cases of men becoming gods. In the Jesus story, the Divinity takes human form, god becoming man. This is a familiar occurrence in Hinduism and in other theologies of the region. Indeed, one obstacle to the spread of Christianity in India, which was attempted as early as the first century, was the frustrating tendency of the Hindus to understand Jesus as the latest avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu.

It is in the doctrine of the **Trinity** that the Hindu influence may be most clearly felt. Unknown to most Christians, Hinduism has a Trinity (or Trimurti) too: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, who have the appellations the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer (and Regenerator). This corresponds to the Christian Trinity in which God created the heavens and the earth, Jesus saves, and the Holy Spirit is referred to as a regenerator (Titus 3:5). It is interesting to note, furthermore, that the Holy Spirit is sometimes depicted as a dove, while the Hebrew language uses the same term for both "dove" and "destroyer"!



In the **Bhagavad Gita**, a story of the second person of the Hindu Trinity, (Vishnu) who took human form as Krishna. Some have considered him a model for the Christ, and it's hard to argue against that when he says things like, **"I am the beginning, the middle, and the end" (BG 10:20 vs. Rev 1:8).**

With the historical reality of Indian influence on the Middle East being an established fact, how can the Christians account for these similarities with anything less feeble than coincidence, or less bizarre than the notion of "Satanic foreknowledge and duplication," which is sometimes invoked to explain the similarities of Judeo-Christian precursors?

(source

:**http://www.infidels.org/library/magazines/tsr/1994/3/3hare94.html** - By **Stephen Van Eck**)

Christ spend his youth in India?

The celebration of the birthday of Christ might lose a little sheen if we seriously pursue the question, where did Jesus spend 18 years of his life, between the ages of 12 and 30? Both history and gospels, are completely silent about the life of Jesus before his 30th year.

A Chilean diplomat **Miguel Serrano** in his book, "**The Serpent of Paradise: The Story of an Indian Pilgrimage** (1963) has written of his rich and varied experiences among yogis and sadhus of India. He was looking for great mystics who he believed were living in the Himalayas guarding a magical science. **During his sojourn in Kashmir, Serrano came across evidence to suggest that Jesus Christ had come to India and that the tomb of Yousa-Asaf in Srinagar was in fact the tomb of Jesus.** He quotes a legend, according to which he was in Kashmir, the original name for Kashmir, Ka means "the same as" or "equal to" and shir means Syria. Manuscripts in the Sharda language, which is derived from Sanskrit, seem to bear close relationship to the biblical story. According to this Kashmir legend, Jesus came to Kashmir and studied under holy men, who taught him mysterious practices. Later the legend says, Jesus returned to the Middle East and he then began to preach among the ignorant masses of Israel the mystical truths he had learned in Kashmir. To impress and to convert them he often used the powers he had acquired through the practices of Yoga, and these were then referred to as miracles. Then in due course Jesus was crucified, but he did not die on the cross. Instead, he was removed by some Essenes brothers, restored to good health and sent back to Kashmir, where he lived with his masters until his death. There is yet another theory, which holds that the Jewish

race originated in India centuries ago and some of them came back almost by instinct in search of their roots. This theory ties in with the legend of Jesus Christ also came to live in India at the age of about 13. This legend asserts Jesus spent 17 years in India, finally returning to the country of his birth to preach the doctrine of salvation and to assert that he was the Son of God.

(source: **India Post - By Vinod Dhawan**. vol. 6 December 29, 2000. p. 44). For more refer to **Did Jesus die in Kashmir - by Abu Abraham**).

Divine Incarnations

We find mention of prophets, messengers and messiahs in the different religions of the world. In Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity we have the doctrine of Divine Incarnation. The Christian religion as organized is dualistic. The Christian have a doctrine of incarnation fitting into their theology and their partial view of history and creation. They have only one incarnation.



According to the Eternal Religion (Sanatana Dharma) taught in the Gita, there are many divine incarnations. An incarnation is a special manifestation of the Divine in history. Such manifestations take place in response to special needs of the time, in the altered circumstances of life and history. They come in times of decline of civilizations due to materialism which causes disintegration of man and society.

Krishna in the Gita makes the classic declaration about incarnation.

"O Descendant of Bharata! Whenever religion becomes tarnished and irreligion prevails, I create myself. I incarnate myself in every age for saving the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of religion. "

The birth of an incarnation, like the birth of the universe, is a mystery. In Sanatana Dharma incarnation is periodic manifestation in time of the power of the Divine. It is a mystery, but the power play of the Divine in history is a fact of experience. Krishna says in the Gita that incarnations start rolling anew the wheels of religion. Buddha also spoke of his movement as starting the wheel of religion.

Interesting Parallels between the Hindu/Buddhist temple and the Catholic Church.

Angels	Apsaras
Saints	Sants
Halos	Halos
Catacombs	Cave-temples
Cathedral floor plan	Chaitya hall floor plan

Rosary	Rosary
Orders of priests/nuns	Orders of monks/nuns (in Buddhism)
Repetition in prayer	Repetition in prayer
Symbolism of wheel	Symbolism of wheel
Tree of life	Tree of life
Use of relics	Use of relics (Buddhism)
Temptation of Jesus by Satan	Temptation of the Buddha by Mara
Circumambulation	Circumambulation

(source: **The Church and The Temple - By Subhash Kak - sulekha.com**).

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Buddha and Jesus



Alexander's invasion of India in 327. B.C. starts a closer interchange of thought between India and the West. Buddhism must have been prevalent in India for over a century before Alexander's time, and he made an effort to acquaint himself with Hindu and Buddhist thought. He succeeded in encouraging an ascetic called Kalanos to join his entourage. He himself married a princess from Bactria, and a hundred of his superior officers followed his example and took Asiatic brides.

Pyrrho is said to have taken part in Alexander's expedition to India and acquired a knowledge of Indian thought.

Pliny tells us of a certain Dionysius who was sent to India from Alexandria by Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247). Asoka, who ascended the throne of Magadha in 270.B.C., held a Council at Pataliputra, when it was resloved to send missionaries to proclaim the new teaching throughout the world. In accordance with this decision Asoka sent Buddhistic missions to the sovereigns of the West, Antiochus Theos of Syria, Ptolemy Philadelphius of Egypt, Antigonos Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexandria of Epirus. From Asoka's statements it may be inferred that his missions were favorably received in these five countries. Between 190 and 180 B.C. Demetrius extended the Bactrian Kingdom into India and conquered Sind and Kathiawar.

The Greeks who settled in India gradually became Indianized. Of the monuments which survive of the Indo-Greek dynasties is a pillar discovered at Besnagar in the extreme south of Gwalior State (140B.C.) The inscription on it in Brahmi characters says:



" This garuda column of Vasudeva (Vishnu) was erected here by Heliodorus, son of Dion, a worshipper of Vishnu, and an inhabitant of Taxila, who came as a Greek ambassador from the great King Antialcidas to Kind Kasiputra Bhagabhadra, the saviour, then reigning prosperously in the fourteenth year of his kingship."

The greatest of the Indo-Greek kings was **Menander**, who was converted to Buddhism by the Buddhist teacher Nagasena (180-160 B.C.) His conversion is recorded in the famous work **Milindapanha** (questions asked by King Milinda)

During all this period India and the West had extensive trade relations. When Alexander chose in Egypt the site for a city which was destined to perpetuate his name, the preparation for the blending of Eastern and Western cultures started. For a thousand years Alexandria continued to be a center of intellectual and commercial activity because it was the meeting-place of Jews, Syrians, and Greeks. **Milindapanha** mentions it as one of the places to which the Indians regularly resorted.



Two centuries before the Christian era, Buddhism closed in on Palestine. The Essenes, the Mandeans, and the Nazarene sects are filled with its spirits. (The Mandeans flourished in Maisan, which was the gate of entry for Indian trade and commerce with Mesopotamia. Indian tribes colonized Maisan, whose port had an Indian temple. Mandean gnosis is full of Indian ideas.)

Nearly five hundred years before Jesus, Buddha went round the Ganges valley proclaiming a way of life which would deliver men from bondage of ignorance and sin. In a hundred and fifty years after his death, tradition of his life and passing away became systematized. He was miraculously conceived and wondrously born. His father was informed by angels about it, and, according to **Lalitavistara,** the queen (Maya) was permitted to lead the life of a virgin for thirty-two months. On the day of his birth a Brahmin priest predicts his future greatness. Asita is the Buddhist Simeon. He comes through air to visit the infant Gautama. Simeon came by the apirit into the Temple. Buddha grew steadily in wisdom and stature. Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. His enlightenment was marked by thirty-two great miracles. The blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, and the lame walk freely. He set out to establish the kingdom of righteousness. He has twelve disciples. Buddha has his troubles with his disciples. Devadatta, Buddha's cousin, was the **Judas** among his followers. On the last day before his death, Buddha's body was again transfigured, and when he died a tremendous earthquake was felt throughout thee world.



Many of the parables between Buddha and Jesus are common. Buddha is a sower of the word. He feeds his five hundred brethren at once with a small cake which has been put into his begging bowl, and a good deal is left over, which is thrown away. In **Jataka** 190 we read of an eager disciple who finds no boat to take him across and so walks on the water.

Max Muller remarks that mere walking on water is not an uncommon story, and we must remember that the date of the Buddhist parable is chronologically anterior to the date of the Gospel of St. Luke. Between the language of Buddha and his disciples, and the language between Christ and his apostles, there are strange coincidences. When some of the Buddhist legends and parables sound as if taken from the New Testament, though we know that many of them existed before the beginning of the Christian era.

Richard Garbe assumes direct borrowing from Buddhism in the matter of Simeon, temptations, and the miracles of walking on the water, and loaves and fishes. **We have many parallels between Krishna and Christ.**

- A marvellous light envelops Mary when Christ is born. a similar light envelops Devaki before Krsna is born.
- There is universal gladness of nature at their birth.
- Herod inquires of the wise men, " Where is he that is born King of the Jews? "(Matthew ii 40
- Narada warns Kamsa the King that Krsna will kill him (Harivamsa ii 56)
- Herod is mocked by the wise men (Matthew, ii 16) and Kamsa is mocked by the demon that takes the place of Yasoda's infant (ibid ii 59).
- The massacre of the infants in found in both.
- Joseph came with Mary to Bethlehem to be taxed: Nanda came with Yasoda to Mathura to pay tribute.
- The flight into Egypt is similar to that into Braj.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says:



"The curious may find matter for reflection in these coincidences in the lives of Buddha and Christ. But those trained in European culture find it somewhat irksome, if not distasteful, to admit the debt of Christian religion to non-Christian sources, especially Hindu and Buddhist."

" In these cases, **Max Muller** writes, "our natural inclination would be to suppose that the Buddhist stories borrowed from our Christian sources and not vice versa. But here the conscience of the scholar comes in. Some of these stories are found in the Hinayana Budddhist Canon and date, therefore, before the Christian era." It is not unnatural to suspect that some of the prominent ideas traveled from the older to the younger system. As Christianity arose in a period of eclecticism, it is not impossible for it to have adopted the outlook and legends of the older religion, especially as the latter were accessible at the time when intercourse between India and the Roman Empire was quite common. Let us realize that Christianity was in a formative stage and Budhhism was both settled and enterprising.

Speaking of the Apocryphal gospels, such a cautious critic, as the late **Dr. Maurice Winternitz** says: " We can point to a series of borrowings from Buddhistic literature which are absolutely beyond all doubt"

(source: **Visvabharati Quarterly** Feb. 1937, p.14).



Sir Charles Eliot, a famous scholar and linguist of Oxford observed, " A number of Buddhist legends make their appearance in the Apocryphal gospels and are so obviously Indian in character that it can hardly be maintained that they were invented in Palestine or Egypt and spread thence Eastwards."

(source: **Hinduism and Buddhism - By Sir Charles Eliot** vol. iii (1921), p. 441).

" The similarity of Roman Catholic services and ceremonial to the Buddhist is difficult to explain. "When all allowance is made for similar causes and coincidences, it is hard to believe that a collection of practices such as clerical celibacy, the veneration of relics, the use of the rosary and the prominent ideas traveled from the older to the younger system.

T. W. Rhys Davids, the famous Pali scholar and author of " **Buddhist India**," wrote,

"It is not too much to say, that almost the whole of the moral teaching of the Gospels as distinct from the dogmatic teaching, will be found in Buddhist writings, several centuries older than the Gospels; that for instance, of all the moral doctrines collected together in the so-called Sermon on the Mount, all those which can be separated from the theistic dogmas there maintained are found again in the Pitakas."

"There is every reason to believe that the Pitakas [sacred books containing the legends of

Buddha] now extant in Ceylon are substantially identical with the books of the southern canon, as settled at the Council of Patna about the year 250 B.C. As no work would have been received into the Canon which were not then believer to be very old, the Pitakas may be approximately placed in the forth century B.C. and parts of them possibly reach back very nearly, if not quite to the time of Gautama (Buddha) himself.



Albert Schweitzer, who is regarded almost as a modern Christian saint, declined to accept the historicity of the traditional view of Jesus. Both A.. J. Edmonds, and Richard Garbe, have insisted on the Christian indebtedness to Buddhism.

Count Keyserling noticed a great affinity of spirit between Mahayana Buddhism and Christianity; and although he considered Mahayana Buddhism to be far superior to Christianity.

Otto Pfleiderer in his **Chrisitan Origin,** E. T. (1906), p.226, says: " These Buddhist parallels to the childhood stories of Luke are too striking to be classed as mere chance; some kind of historical connection must be postulated." **M. Labbe Huc**, Nineteenth century: " The miraculous birth of Buddha, his life and instructions, contain a great number of the moral and dogmatic truths professes in Christianity."

T. W. Doane, Nineteenth century, ...nothing now remains for the honest man to do but acknowledge the truth, which is that the history of Jesus of Nazareth, as related in the books of the New Testament is simply a copy of that of Buddha, with a mixture of mythology borrowed from other nations.



Scholars have been profoundly struck and at times perplexed by the remarkable similarities between the Gospel story and the life and teachings of the Budhha, as told in the Latitavistara, and between the Budhhist and Christian parables and miracles. Both the Buddha and Christ are miraculously conceived and wondrously born and angels rejoiced at both births. He was miraculously conceived and wondrously born. His father was informed by angels about it and the queen - mother Maya (Mary in case of Christ) was permitted to lead the life of a virgin for thirty-two months. Christ was born in the royal tribe of Judah, Buddha was born in a royal household. On the day of his birth a Brahmin (Asita) priest predicts his future greatness. **Asita is the Buddhist Simeon.** Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. Both reveal their unusual wisdom at about the same age, twelve. **Asita is the Buddhist Simeon.** Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. Both reveal their unusual wisdom at about the same age, twelve. **Asita is the Buddhist Simeon.** Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. Both reveal their unusual wisdom at about the same age, twelve.

Nothing is known of Jesus' life during the next seventeen years and there have



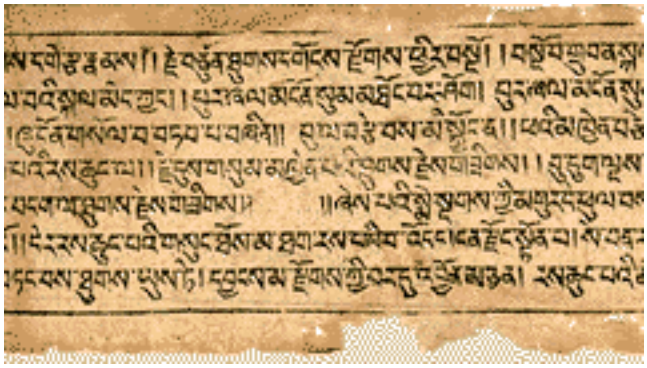
developed a variety of legends suggesting that he traveled to India, lived with the Essenes at Qumran. The Gospels, however, refute these suggestion by implication. Whether Jesus traveled abroad or not, that he chose to remain unknown after having revealed himself and his wisdom causes some surprise. As Jesus claimed to be God, it could not have been a period of preparation. In contrast, more is known of Buddha's life his childhood, youth, marriage, increasing discontent with the world, renunciation, quest of Enlightenment, and finally his attainment of the Buddhahood, followed by a long period of missionary activity until he died.

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The Vedas, Mithraism and Christianity

"These two are the Almighty of the Gods, they are noble.
They will make our people full of vigor.
May we attain you, Mitra and Varuna, wherever Heaven and the days overflow."

- Rig Veda vii.65 (Mitra and Varuna are in all hymns to the Sun as the Divine Lord and Friend)



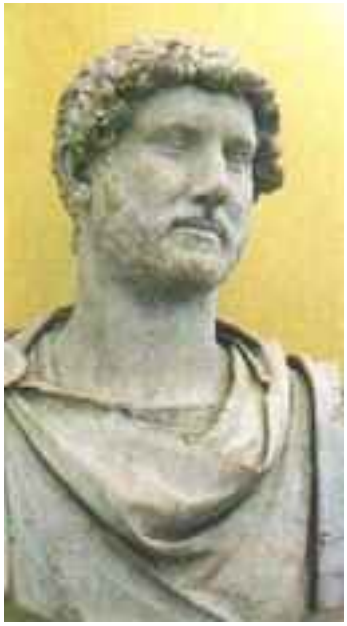
The contact between India and the West were more frequent in the period of the Roman Empire especially in the reign of Augustus, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. The Jatakas contain many references to Buddhist merchants and their adventures in distant lands. India had a reputation for high philosophy and religion in the middle of the second century A.D., for Lucian makes Demetrius, the Greek philosopher give up his property and depart for India, there to end his life among the Brahmins. **Clement of Alexandria,** who died about A.D. 220, knew the distinction between Hinduism and Buddhism. " There are, he says, some Indians who follow the precepts of Boutta,(Buddha) whom, by an excessive reverence, they have exalted into a god." Clement mentions that Pythagoras learnt from Brahmins among others.

The vast development of material prosperity in the Roman Empire had no spiritual purpose behind it. Its ultimate end seemed to be the satisfaction of selfishness, individual and corporate. The ancestral cults had ceased to hold the large part of the population in the Roman Empire. The religious-minded, for whom the Roman gods had lost their meaning and served only as occasions for civic ceremonial, sought to find spiritual solace outside the life of the society in an esoteric ideal of individual salvation. The people were attracted by the Eastern cults, which were streaming into the Empire, the cults of Isis or Mithras. Mithraism was a religion with roots in India and Iran spread into the Roman world. **Mithraism** was the first officially recognized monotheistic cult of the Roman world. By the third century Mithra had evolved in the Roman world into the sun-god, Sol Invinctus -- So far as is now known, Mithra appears as the bull-slayer only in his Roman manifestation. Mithraism was a formidable competitor of early Christianity. Renan's observation has often been quoted that if Christianity had failed, the whole of Europe would have been Mithraist.



First appears as an Aryan sun-god in **Sanskrit** (**Rig Veda**) and Persian literature circa 1400 BCE. The cult was introduced into the Roman empire in the 1st century BCE. The Mithra traditions and doctrines are collected in the Persian **Avesta** and a yasht, a special hymn of praise, is dedicated to Mithra. Mithra is the Persian name of the **Vedic Mitra**, the deity of light and truth, warring against the powers of darkness in association with **Varuna.** In India he was, in fact, regarded as the sun. In Vedic texts, the connection between Mithra and the bull, which later became the focal point of Mithraism, is perhaps more clearly found than in the **Avesta.** The cult of Mithraism appears to have come to the Roman Empire from Persia (Iran), having introduced to Rome by Cilician seamen in about 68 B.C. Mithras is a Greek form of the name of an Indo-European god, Mithra or Mitra. Mithra was conceived as the intermediary between man and the Supreme God and the redeemer of the human race. Mithraism was carried to the remotest corners of the empire. But despite these opportunites, circumstances conspired against Mithraism, and " the ultimate success, permanent and undoubted, fell to the combination of Jewish and Greek worship called Christianity."

There are however, many similarities between Christianity and Mithraism. Besides sharing faith in a divine mediator and the hope of resurrection, both taught the efficacy of prayer, sacramental union with God, and his providential presence in all the events of daily life. Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist of the Christians are analogous to certain rites of Mithraism. It was when Christianity spread into the pagan world that the idea of Jesus as a savior God emerged, emulating already existing concepts. It was only in 324, several centuries later, that the Church at the council of Nicaea, called by Emperor Constantine, formally accepted by a majority vote Jesus Christ as the Savior God. The coming of Christianity under state control was to preserve it as a religion, and was the death knell of all other sects and cults within the Roman Empire.



Had Constantine decided to retain Mithraism as the official state religion, instead of putting Christianity in its place, it would have been the latter that would have been obliterated.

"If Christianity was somehow stopped at its birth, whole world would be following Mithraism today." - Ernest Renan (1823-1892) was an important French theorist who wrote about a variety of topics. His famous essay **"What is a Nation?"** (Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?) was first delivered as a lecture at the Sorbonne in 1882.

To Constantine however, Christianity had one great advantage, it preached that repentant sinners would be forgiven their sins, provided that they were converted Christians at the time of their Passing, and Constantine had much to be forgiven for, He personally did not convert to the new religion until he was on his death bed, the reason being that only sins committed following conversion were accountable, so all sins committed by a convert, prior to conversion, didn't matter, and he could hardly have sinned too much whilst he was lying on his death bed. Mithraism could not offer the same comfort to a man like Constantine, who was regarded as being one of the worst mass-murderers of his time.

It was the birthday of Mithra, 25 December (winter solstice), that was taken by the early Christians as the birthday of Jesus. The need and urgency by the early Christians to compromise with existing traditions were further illustrated by the fact that even the Sabbath, the Jewish seventh day, Saturday, appointed a day of rest by God in the Mosaic Law and hallowed by his own resting day after the work of Creation, was abandoned in favor of the Mithraic first day, the Day of the Conquering Sun, Sunday. The worshippers of Mithra were called "Soldiers of Mithra" which is probably the origin of the term "Soldiers of Christ."



The most frequent theme of Christ as the Good Shepherd is reminiscent of a similar identification of Mithra, who was often called the Good Shepherd. And it is interesting to note that since Mithra was addressed as Dominus, Sunday must have been " the Lord's Day" long before Christian times. Concepts such as " the blood of the Lamb" or "Taurus the Bull" were similarly borrowed from Mithraism. The Last Supper (the Eucharist) was taken from Mithraism to combine with the sacred meal of Palestinian Christianity. The ceremony of eating an incarnate god's body and drinking his blood is of remote antiquity, with its origin in cannibalistic practices, and there could have been several sources for the Christian rite, but its connection with the Mithraic Eucharist is most apparent. The Mithraic Eucharist is the commemoration of Mithra's Last Supper in a cave with Sol Helios before ascending to Heaven. Some scholars believe that the Resurrection of Christ derived from the Vigil of Mithra, who after his death reappeared to watch continuously over the faithful. The Mithraic high priest's title, Pater Patrum soon became the title for the bishop of Rome, Papa or Pope.

Thus, the extent of the indebtedness of Christianity to pagan religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Mithraism) is very great indeed.

Christianity and Roman Decline

Whether the rise of Christianity with its train of bitter religious conflicts and persecutions was a contributing cause of the Roman decline or not, the two certainly coincided. During the following hundred years, Roman authority gradually weakened, Roman armies suffered defeats, and Rome was sacked. By the end of the fifth century there was nothing left of the Roman Empire in the West.

Europe lapsed into the Dark Ages for centuries. Total and devoted acceptance of the authority of the new faith, as interpreted by its priests or guardians on earth, inculcated amongst the people an attitude of surrender and they handed over the right and responsibility of thinking to others. Passive submissions suppressed scientific inquiry and academic integrity, the main characteristics of the preceding age of Alexandrian syncretism. Intellectual stagnation, religious intolerance, and racial and regional exclusiveness characterized Europe for the next thousand years.

(source: **Eastern Religions and Western Thought** - **By Dr. S Radhakrishnan**
India and World Civilization - **By D. P. Singhal**
The Bhagavad Gita: A Scripture for the Future - **By Sachindra K. Majumdar**).

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Buddhism and its relation to Hinduism - Some information

Buddha is recognized as the ninth avatar (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu. It was several hundred years before the time of Lord Buddha that his birth was predicted in Srimad-Bhagavatam. **Buddhism is an offshoot of Hinduism and is considered one of the heterodox schools of Hindu philosophy.** The teachings of Buddhism are not significantly different from those of Hinduism, but are essentially the same as the teachings of the Jnana Yoga (path of knowledge) school of Hinduism.

Following are the major views:

Buddhism and Hinduism both aim at transcending the phenomenal existence. Buddha rejected the ritualistic aspects of the Vedas, but DID NOT deny the higher teachings of the Upanishads. The Vedic rituals in Hinduism are recommended for a beginner for attaining concentration and meditation on the spiritual path. This position is very clearly conveyed in the Bhagavad Gita in the following words:

" To the knower of Truth (God), all the Vedas are of as little use as a small water-tank is during the time of a flood, when water is everywhere." (BG. 2.46)

For both Hinduism and Buddhism religion is salvation. Bodhi or enlightenment, which Buddha attained is an experience. Perfect insight (sambodhi) is the end and aim of the Buddhist eightfold path.

Both believe in theory of KARMA and REBIRTH with one major difference. Hinduism believes that the atman (individual self or spirit) transmigrates from one birth to another, Buddhism holds that nothing transmigrates from
one birth to another. In Buddhist view, karmas of one individual give birth to another, but no identity is retained between the two individuals.

Buddha declared the Self and the World are both unreal. To a Hindu, the Self is immortal

and the world is an illusive appearance. However, behind the illusive appearance of the universe lies the Ultimate Reality which is the
seed of all things and beings in the world.

Buddha advocated a monastic life for attaining nirvana, Hinduism teaches that truth can be realized by all people from all walks of life, including householders.

Buddha refused to discuss topics, such as the science of the soul, the creation of the universe and the existence of God. These are questions which occupy the center of interest in the Upanishadic literature.

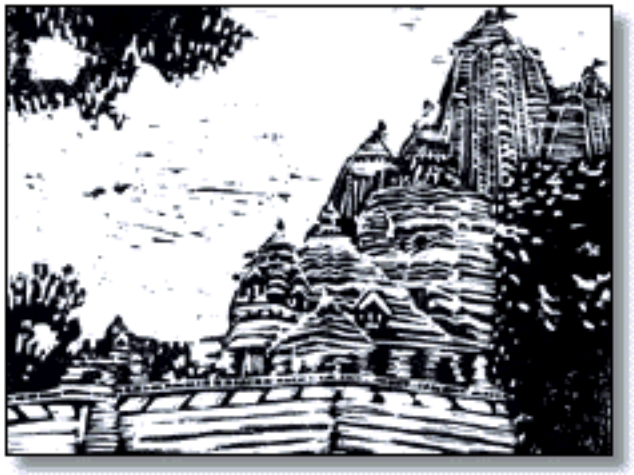
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Articles

1. **Christmas' Hindu Roots** - **By D. Parsuram Maharaj**
2. **Buddhism in Christianity**

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Christmas' Hindu Roots
D. Parsuram Maharaj (Trinidan & Tobago, West Indies)
http://www.swordoftruth.com/swordoftruth/articles/readersvoice/readersvoice3.html



Last year Christmas Trinidad & Tobago's Archbishop Pantin in his weekly column repeated what scholars have been asserting for years on the origins of Christmas. Archbishop Pantin essentially officially confirmed the celebration of Christmas was 'borrowed' from pre-Christian religions. This type of 'borrowing' was not new to Christianity that aggressively practised a process of inculturalisation in order increase its mass appeal and thereby win as many converts as possible. The practice is still employed by missionaries in Asia and even in Trinidad. What Archbishop Pantin did not develop was the celebration of the birth of the divine being was borrowed from a Hindu Deity. It is time that Hindus re-claim this celebration and its Hindu roots rather then to let continue to be hijacked by Christian mythology.

The festival that is now known as Christmas was actually a celebration for the Vedic Deity Mitra. According to "A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion" by John Dowson [1998] the Hindu Mitra was connected to the Persian Mithra which later was adopted by Rome. Mitra was a form of the sun, and in the Vedas he is generally associated with Varuna. Will Durant's "The Story of Civilisation, Volume III. Caesar and Christ" [1944] wrote "as far back as the second century the Eastern Christians celebrated the nativity on January 06th. In 354 some Western churches, including those of Rome, commemorated the birth of Christ on December 25th; it was ALREADY the central festival of Mitraism, the natalis invivti solis, or birthday of the unconquered sun".



The Christmas date of December 25 was originally the celebrated birthdate of the Roman version of Mitras. The 4th-5th century Church decided to 'borrow' that date for the sake of establishing a national holiday. The Iranian version of Mit(h)ra was called the "Light of the World" is another interesting fact to note. Mithraism explained the world in terms of two ultimate and opposing principles, one good (depicted as light) and the other evil (darkness). Human beings must choose which side they will fight for; they are trapped in the conflict between light and darkness. Mithra came to be regarded as the most powerful mediator who could help humans ward off attacks from demonic forces.

In the religions of antiquity the vast majority of the pre-modern world was syncretistic, meaning that one religion would often incorporate the myth and ritual of other cults with which it came in contact. Often the deities would simply change names. This suggests that we may be comparing Jesus (one individual) to the combined characteristics of multiple agents that are all called by the SAME NAME. Mitra--he is a mixture of Hindu Iranian, Greek, and Roman religious beliefs. Both Hindu and Iranian Mithraism predates Jesus .



Hindu thought was filtered to the West via Greek colonies which are known to have existed in India prior the time of the Buddha in the 6th century B.C.E. The Buddha actually refers to the Greeks in a discourse in the Middle Length Sayings. Alexander the Great's invasion brought Hellenism to India during the rise of the brilliant Mauryan empire (322-185 B.C.E.) in Northern India, and had significant impact on the upper class and urban segments.

After Alexander died, his empire divided into several pieces--one of which was called the Seleucid dynasty. In spite of the fact that the Seleucid and Mauryan dynasties were border-competitors, they still had a great deal of friendly interchange between them, and the first two kings of the Mauryan dynasty are referred to in Greek sources.



The peace treaty between them in 303 BCE included a marriage alliance, and Seleucus' ambassador Megasthenes lived for 10 years and travelled extensively in the Mauryan empire during the reign of the founding king Chandragupta (Sandrocottos in the Greek). Megasthenes gathered huge amounts of information about India and wrote a book (which is lost), many parts/information of which are preserved in the writings of Strabo, Arrian, and Diodorus.

One of the most famous of the kings of this dynasty was Ashoka. Although he is not mentioned in any Greek sources, he "records having sent missions from India bearing his message of the victory of the Dharma to the Greek kings Antiochus II of Syria, Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) of Egypt, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene and Alexander of Epirius."



Until his death in 232 BCE, he maintained frequent communications with the south and the west, even sending missionaries to Ceylon and to the West. Historical data and quotes shows, there was information about the religious content of proto-Hinduism transmitted to the West, and even about Buddhism. The last two centuries B.C.E saw the rise of the Parthian empire, which quickly became a barrier to cultural exchange.

There are material, significant, and pervasive similarities between Jesus Christ and other Savior-figures, and that these similarities are best explained by the hypothesis that the figure of Jesus is materially derived from or heavily influenced by these other Dying God/Savior-figures. The similarities between Jesus and the other relevant Savior-gods are material, significant, and pervasive enough to suspect a liberal borrowing. Scholars have proposed several theories to account for the obvious similarities between Christianity and the mystery religions. The birth and celebration of Christmas as a Christian festival is merely an example of one such borrowing.

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Buddhism in Christianity
http://www.hindunet.org/alt_hindu/1995_May_2/msg00015.html

A few months ago, I heard Jesus quoted "even to have an angry thought" was as punishable as actually murdering someone. This idea seemed to have a direct correlation with the Buddhist idea of "mental volition", that even our thoughts create karma. This seemingly obvious connection poses the question: what other teachings of Jesus Christ could be found mirrored in the teaching of Gautama Buddha?

There are three main types of literature on the subject: First, books that date from the end of the nineteenth century which attempt to show that there was Buddhist influence in the fertile crescent and in Greece during the years before the birth of Jesus. This speculation arose as a result of the translations of Buddhist texts into European languages that occurred during the British colonialism of India. Scholars recognized the similarity in the stories of the births and life styles of Jesus and Buddha. It was also noted that many of their teachings were parallel. In these seminal works there is much speculation about Buddhist influence in early Christianity. These books are often scholarly works that use sources such as the records of historians who were roughly contemporary with Jesus, and other texts: Biblical (Christian, Jewish), Greek and Arabic, in an attempt show an historical connection between the two religious traditions.

The second type of literature is the New Age genre books that attempt to tie the two masters together as emanations from the same cosmic divine source. In this group there is even a fairly extensive body of literature that claims that Jesus went to India and there studied from Hindu and Buddhist masters between the age of thirteen and thirty. These are referred to as the "lost years of Jesus".

The third type of literature, which could be called, "Creating a Christian-Buddhist Dialogue", seeks to compare and contrast the teachings of the two masters in an effort to

bridge the gap between cultures and make to the world a better place. This type of literature usually denies any borrowing or Buddhist influence in Christianity but does admit that certain elements within the two doctrines are similar..



Much of the early academic research that was done tended to center around the possibility of Buddhist influence in Palestine and in Greece during the two centuries prior to the birth of Christ. In India, around 270 B.C., the great king Ashoka ascended the throne, and after his conversation to Buddhism, he sent missionaries around the world to preach the word of the Lord Buddha. There are records, left by Ashoka, that indicate that "his missions were favorably received" in countries to the West. There are also records from Alexandria that indicate a steady stream of Buddhist monks and philosophers who, living in that area, which was at the crossroads of commerce and ideas, influenced the philosophical currents of the time.

There are strong similarities between Buddhist monastic teachings and Jewish ascetic sects, such as the Essenes, that were part of the spiritual environment of Palestine at the time of Christ's birth. The Essenes were a monastic order that did not marry. They lived in the desert and were very simple in their life styles. They did not believe in animal sacrifice and were vegetarians. They believed in the pre-existence of the soul and in angels as divine intermediaries or messengers from God. They were famous for their powers of endurance, simple piety and brotherly love. They were interested in magical arts and the occult sciences. John the Baptist was an Essene. His time of preparation was spent in the wilderness near the Dead Sea. Jesus was greatly influenced by his stay with John the Baptist. Many of the basic tenets found in the teachings of Jesus can be traced back to the ideas flourishing among groups such as the Essenes. Were these groups indeed influenced through several centuries of dialogue with Buddhist monks who traveled through Palestine?



Before, during, and after the death of Christ, there were Buddhist missionaries who visited Greece, Egypt and other countries in the Mediterranean area. One such visit is documented in 20 B.C. in Athens. In this account an ambassador from India was accompanied by a Buddhist philosopher who burned himself (to prove some point of impermanence?). His tomb became a famous tourist attraction and is mentioned by several historians. It has been argued that in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he alludes to this well known event when he writes that "though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing."

The fact that there was commercial trade between the Indian Subcontinent and Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt and the countries of the Fertile Crescent, for almost 2500 years before the birth of Christ is well documented. Cuneiform records dating from 2400 B.C. describe shipments of cotton cloth, spices, oil, grains, and such exotic items as peacocks from the Indus Valley region. Ideas as well as merchandise had been exchanged between the Middle East and India for centuries. Pythagoris is said to have been influenced by Oriental ideas and a Greek prince, Seleucus Nikator, shortly after the time of Alexander the Great, gave his daughter in marriage to the Indian sovereign and sent an ambassador, Megasthenes, to the court of Chandragupta, who was the grandfather of Ashoka. There were practitioners of Buddhism, living in the western parts of Askoka's empire who were from Greece and also from Palestine. This is known because one of the famous edicts of Ashoka, carved on a pillar in what is now the country of Afghanistan, is written in both in Greek and Aramaic, the languages spoken in Palestine at the time.



Stories of Buddhist origin, and some of the basic concepts of Buddhism, were known in the West prior to, during, and after the time of Jesus. The most famous Buddhist story that made its way into Christendom, is the tale of "Barlaam and Josephat," which enjoyed considerable notoriety during the Middle Ages and ultimately resulted in the canonization, in the sixteenth century, of Buddha, as a Catholic saint. In the story of Barlaam and Josephat, Josephat, which is a corrupted version of the word "Boddhisattva", was an Indian prince who was heir apparent to a throne occupied by his father, a tyrannical idolater who persecuted Christians. At Josephat's birth prophets predicted his future greatness as successor to the king, but one wise man said that the prince would achieve greatness not as a worldly king, but because he would convert to Christianity. To shelter his son, and prevent his conversion, the king kept him locked in the palace. Eventually, the young prince was allowed to leave the palace and saw a crippled man, a blind man and a senile man, and so learned of life's darker side (that life is suffering?). Josephat soon met a monk named Barlaam, who converted him to Christianity. The story continues that when Josephat went to search for Barlaam he had to suffer austerities and was tempted by the devil to give up his faith. He eventually found Barlaam and the two

lived as hermits until their deaths. Relics of these saints were worshipped in Europe and there were several churches built to Josephat in Russia, one in Vienna and in Portugal. As I said, they were canonized by the Catholic Church in the 16th century... Saint Josephat, the Boddhisattva.

Anyone who knows the story of the life of the Buddha will see the exact repetition of the tale in the story of Barlaam and Josephat: The fact that he was an Indian prince even provides the correct setting, the predictions at his birth of spiritual greatness, his early life spent locked in the castle and finally his exposure to people in pain and old age which led, in the case of the Boddhisattva, to enlightenment and in the case of Josephat to conversion. Even the austerities and temptations that they had to endure are parallel. There is no doubt that this is a Buddhist story transplanted and retold within a Christian context. The Buddhist origins of the story were obscured when the tale was retold in Europe, but earlier versions of the story exist in Arabic, which do not refer to Josephat's conversion, but which testify to the story's Buddhist roots. The fact that Saint Josephat was very popular in Europe, where his relics were worshipped, is an ironic aspect of this borrowing theory of Buddhist influence on Christianity since some scholars theorize that relic worship is a Buddhist implant into early Christianity. There are other Christian stories that have their origins in the Buddhist Jatakas Tales such as the conversion of the Roman general Placides, who was converted while hunting a beautiful deer.



There are numerous elements in Christian practices that could have originated from the many Buddhist missionaries who traveled from India spreading the teachings of the Buddha. Philosophically, Alexandria in Egypt was the center of early Christian thought. There is mention of a teacher called Ammonius Sakka, who had a great influence on the thinkers of the first century of the common era. Some scholars speculate that Ammonius Sakka could be a reversed form of "Sakya - Muni", one of the names of the Buddha, which means "the sage of the Sakya clan". (Sakya was Buddha's family name.) This philosopher-teacher who believed in reincarnation, has been called a Neo-Platonist. He was the teacher of Plotinus and Origen. Origen who was one of the early philosophers of the Christian church whose writings were later expunged at the Council of Nicea.

What are some other points of convergence between the practices of Christianity and Buddhism? There are a wealth of similarities: shaving or cutting of the hair of monastic initiates, ringing of bells, domed basilicas, shared legends, the practice of confession, relic veneration, celibacy, rosaries, monasticism, and the burning of incense. A comparison of the Sermon on the Mount with verses from the Dhammapada, yields a rich collection of interconnections and similarities. Even if some of these similarities are synchronistic in nature and are not borrowed, nonetheless, there are still many elements that have distinctive Buddhist overtones and which are not found within the predominant Jewish practices of the time. There are many stories about the life of Jesus and Buddha that are so similar that it is hard to believe that there was not some borrowing or merging of myths that occurred.



The story of the conception and birth of Christ in the Gospel of Luke has an uncanny resemblance to the birth stories of Buddha. In both cases the mother was a pure woman who had a vision and from this vision became pregnant with a extraordinary child, without the help of sexual intercourse. At their birth, each baby was surrounded by persons and events that marked them for greatness. Each was delivered outside while the mother was on a journey. Their births were both announced by angels in the heavens. It may be hard for us creatures of the twentieth century to appreciate the role of angels, but previously, they played an important part in the scheme of things: bringing messages, making great spiritual announcement with pomp and splendor. After the birth of Buddha a hermit sage, who had heard the celebrations of the angels, was told by them with great rejoicing that "In the city of Kaplilavastu, to king Suddhodana, a son is born. This boy will sit on the throne of enlightenment and become a Buddha." In the Christian story, the angels appeared in great awe-inspiring beauty and told the shepherds that a child was born that day who is Christ the Lord. The story of the conception and birth of Christ in the Gospel of Luke has an uncanny resemblance to the birth stories of Buddha. In both cases the mother was a pure woman who had a vision and from this vision became pregnant with a extraordinary child, without the help of sexual intercourse. At their birth, each baby was surrounded by persons and events that marked them for greatness. Each was delivered outside while the mother was on a journey. Their births were both announced by angels in the heavens. It may be hard for us creatures of the twentieth century to appreciate the role of angels, but previously, they played an important part in the scheme of things: bringing messages, making great spiritual announcement with pomp and splendor.



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The Biblical accounts of the birth of Christ are somewhat different in Luke and in Matthew. In Matthew the account of the visitation by the Magi is dealt with in great detail. These Magi were astrologers from the East, where astrology had been a developed science for centuries. They represented the pinnacle of foreign scholarly achievement; and it was they, rather than the Hebrew, who were able to discern that the baby who lay in the

manger in Bethlehem was a very special child. The word "Magi," is a Persian word that named a class of learned men who sought to master the occult sciences. This is the root of our word, Magic. Only later were they referred to as kings, initially they were called Holy Men. References to Magi in the Palestine of Jesus's day usually had negative connotations, but in Matthew's account, the reference is quite positive. Similarly, the infant Gautama was first adored by four divine archangels who presided over his birth in the wooded grove near Lumbini. Later, sages came to pay homage to the child and amazed his father. In both stories there is a reference to a star that announces the birth of the great child.



There are other similarities in the lives of these two great beings. Some may say that this type of comparison is inevitable when great spiritual leaders come into the world. However, some of the events in their lives have quite a resemblance. Both Buddha and Christ were precocious youths who confounded their teachers with their gifted knowledge. Both began their spiritual quest at about the age of thirty. Both fasted and prayed in the wilderness and both were tempted by the devil while practicing these austerities. The setting of these two accounts is almost identical as are the events. Both men were fasting when tempted by the devil who tried to entice them into worldly pleasures and trick them into using the magical powers that they possessed. Both men overcame the temptation and soon left their seclusion and took up the mission of a life of teaching and traveling. Jesus's life at this time seems very much like the age-old life of an Indian mystic or holy man. He traveled from village to village and lived off the hospitality of the people of the village. There are some differences, but, nonetheless, both Buddha and Christ got into trouble with the ruling aristocracies by their deliberate blindness to social status and by taking food and refuge from courtesans and prostitutes.

Both masters told their disciples to leave behind their homes and families and to follow him. Both sent his followers out to preach their message. Both were social revolutionaries who reacted against the conservative elements of their time. Both put an end to animal sacrifice which was popular in both Hinduism and Judaism. As you can see there are great similarities in the lives of these two great beings. Both forgave evil doers, both conquered death in a metaphysical sense. The earth shook when each of them died. Their messages are also similar: they told their followers to overcome anger, to practice non-violence, to "turn the other cheek" to be pure of mind and body.



There is, as well, the school of thought that says that Jesus traveled to India during the lost years of his youth. There is a temple in the state of Kashmir that is dedicated to Saint Issa. The priests say that Jesus traveled there two thousand years ago. Many of the miracles performed by Jesus are similar to miraculous powers possessed by holy men in India. Jesus even taught his disciples to perform these miracles such as Peter walking on the water. There is a work by a Russian who lived at the end of the 19th century, Nicolas Notovitch, who claims to have seen an ancient document that told the story of Saint Issa and his return to his home in the West and his subsequent violent death. These tales are unsubstantiated and somewhat fanciful, however the priests at the Kashmiri Temple to Saint Issa are devout and completely believe in the story. There are also visionaries such as Edgar Casey who had similar visions of Jesus. Jesus did adopt a remarkably Indian-like approach to wandering, begging and preaching immediately upon beginning his public career. There is, however, documented evidence that Buddhists traveled to the region where early Christianity was developing. It must be remembered that Christianity did not become the established religion for several hundred years and actually it was not the accepted religion of the European masses for almost a thousand years. During this period, when church theology was being formulated, there was much discussion about the true nature of the savior and many of the early ideas of the church were discarded in favor of ideas that would support the establishment of a centralized Church. These factors are a discussion for another time, but suffice it to say that many scholars have tried to prove that the Councils at Nicea expunged all references to reincarnation from the words of Jesus. He was after all, influenced by the Essenes, who did believed in transmigration of souls.

I realize that these ideas are heretical to some people. However to me, they are fascinating. That Jesus was divine, that He was God made man, I do not deny. I call Him an AVATAR, a Boddhisattva... but, I do not say that He is exclusive in this role.

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Yu, Chai-shin, Early Buddhism and Christianity, A comparative Study of the Founders' Authority, the Community, and the Discipline, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1981.
See also: Neander Hutchinson (Literature) Barlaam and Josephat

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Christianity: a naive beginning to a Buddhistic peace movement...(excerpts) The Will To Power
1888 By Nietzsche (1844-1900) the great German Philosopher, poet, classical philologist, who became one of the most provocative and influential thinkers of the 19th century. He was deeply influenced by Schopenhauer in his youth. One of the great European philosophers, **Friedrich Nietzsche's** beliefs were best expressed in his **Thus Spake Zarathustra,** in which his teachings are put into the mouth of the wandering prophet Zarathustra.

" Christianity: a naive beginning to a Buddhistic peace movement at the very seat of resentment - but reversed by Paul into a pagan mystery doctrine, which finally learns to treat with the entire state organization -wages war, condemns, tortures, swears, hates.

Paul starts from the need for a mystery felt by the broad, religiously excited masses: he seeks a sacrifice, a bloody phantasmogoria which will stand up in competition with the images of the mystery cults: God on the cross, blood-drinking, and unio mystica with the "sacrifice."

He seeks to bring the afterlife (the blissful, atoned afterlife of the individual soul) as resurrection into a casual relationship with that sacrifice (after the type of **Dionysus, Mithras, Osiris)**.

He needs to bring the concept of guilt and atonement into the foreground, not a new way of life (as Jesus himself had demonstrated and lived) but a new cult, a new faith, a faith in a miraculous transformation ("redemption" through faith).

He understood what the pagan world had the greatest need of, and from the facts of Christ's life and death made a quite arbitrary selection, giving everything a new accentuation, shifting the emphasis everywhere – he annulled primitive Christianity as a matter of principle.

The attempt to destroy priests and theologians culminated, thanks to Paul, in a new priesthood and theology - in a new ruling order and a church. The attempt to destroy the

exaggerated inflation of the "person" culminated in faith in the "eternal person" (in concern for "eternal salvation"), in the most paradoxical excess of personal egoism.

This is the humor of the situation, a tragic humor: Paul re-erected on a grand scale precisely that which Christ had annulled through his way of living. At last, when the church was complete, it sanctioned even the existence of the state."

For more interesting articles:

Raising a holy rukus - CNN
http://www.cnn.com/2000/books/news/09/21/jesus.mysteries/index.html

Christ And Christianity In The Year 2000 - The Jesus Myth
By N. S. Rajaram
http://www.swordoftruth.com

Christianity - By Emma Goldman
http://au.spunk.org/library/writers/goldman/sp001501.html
First published in April 1913, in the Mother Earth journal.

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Vedic Links to Judaism
Brahma/Saraswati - Abraham/Sarah?

According to **Dr. Venu Gopalacharya** " Abraham and Sarah (Sarai) refer to the Indian version of Brahma and Saraswati. This indicates that this is an abridgement of some of the versions in the Indian Puranas .

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has informed in his book, **Pracya Mattu Paschatya Sanskriti,** that the Greeks asserted that the Jews were Indians whom the Syrians called Judea, the Sanskrit synonym of which is **Yadava** or Yaudheya, and the Indians called them Kalanis, meaning orthodox followers of the scriptures.

**

" The Jewish bible says that Abraham and Sarai went to the Middle East to escape a terrible flood that had taken place in their original homeland, at approximately the time that **Dwaraka** sank under the sea. I think it significant that Sarai was the half sister of Abraham and that Saraswati was the half sister of Brahma. Sarai had a handmaiden named Hagar. Ghaggar was a tributary of the river Saraswati. It would not surprise me if the tombs of Abraham and Sarai at Hebron, Israel are also those of Brahma and Saraswati. *There are even those who think that Jerusalem's Temple mount could be the resting place of Krishna.* There is no doubt. The **Yadavas** founded ancient Israel. The real name of the Jews, Yahuda, seems to suggest this." (refer to **www.viewpoint.com**.)

The Jews spell the name of the city of 'Yerushalayim,' of which the Sanskrit synonym is Yadu Ishalayam, which means the temple of the Lord of the Yadus (the descendents of Lord Krishna's clan.)
Star of David - the Jewish emblem consists of two interlocking triangles, one pointing up, the other down, which is a Trantic Vedic symbol or **Shri Yantra.**

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Did You Know

Got the Time?



According to Astrophysicist **Carl Sagan**, the age of the universe is somewhere around 12 billion-years-old. The Hindu tradition has a day and night of Brahma in his range, somewhere in the region of 8.4 billion years.

Dr. Sagan said, "As far as I know, India is the only ancient religious tradition on the Earth which talks about the right time scale. In the West, people have the sense that what is natural is for the universe to be a few thousand years old, and that it is billions of years is mind-reeling, and no one can understand it. The Hindu concept is very clear. Here is a great world culture which has always talked about billions of years."

"The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. **It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond, to those of modern scientific cosmology.** Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years long. Longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang. And there are much longer time scales still."

There is the deep and appealing notion that the universe is but the dream of the god who, after a Brahma years, dissolves himself into a dreamless sleep. The universe dissolves with him - until, after another Brahma century, he stirs, recomposes himself and begins again to dream the great cosmic dream.

Carl Sagan further says: " The most elegant and sublime of these is a representation of the creation of the universe at the beginning of each cosmic cycle, a motif known as the cosmic dance of Lord Shiva. The god, called in this manifestation **Nataraja, the Dance King.** In the upper right hand is a drum whose sound is the sound of creation. In the upper left hand is a tongue of flame, a reminder that the universe, now newly created, with billions of years from now will be utterly destroyed."

These profound and lovely images are, I like to imagine, a kind of premonition of modern astronomical ideas."

(source: **Cosmos - By Carl Sagan** p. 213-214).

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For more information on this topic, please refer to chapters on **Indian Culture** and **Symbolism in Hinduism**).

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

Sanskrit was considered as "Dev Bhasha", " Devavani "or the language of the Gods by ancient Indians. The word sanskrita, meaning "refined" or "purified," is the antonym of prakrita, meaning "natural," or "vulgar." It is made up of the primordial sounds, and is developed systematically to include the natural progressions of sounds as created in the human mouth. Jawaharlal Nehru has said that Sanskrit is a language amazingly rich, efflorescent, full of luxuriant growth of all kinds, and yet precise and strictly keeping within the framework of grammar which Panini laid down two thousand years ago. It spread out, added to its richness, became fuller and more ornate, but always it stuck to its original roots. The ancient Indians attached a great deal of importance to sound, and hence their writing, poetry or prose, had a rhythmic and musical quality. Our modern languages of India are children of Sanskrit, and to it owe most of their vocabulary and their forms of expressions.

The Sanskrit grammarians wished to construct a perfect language, which would belong to no one and thus belong to all, which would not develop but remain an ideal instrument of communication and culture for all peoples and all time.

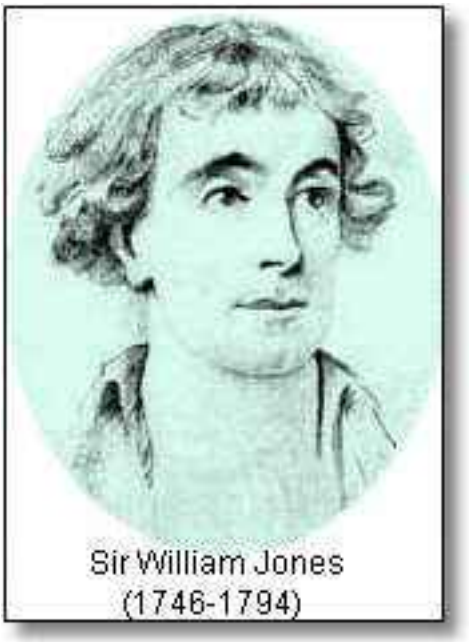


SANSKRIT - The Language of Ancient India.

Sanskrit (meaning "cultured or refined"), the classical language of Hinduism, is the oldest and the most systematic language in the world. The vastness and the versatility, and power of expression can be appreciated by the fact that this language has 65 words to describe various forms of earth, 67 words for water, and over 250 words to describe rainfall.

Sanskrit was a complete success and became the language of all cultured people in India and in countries under Indian influence. All scientific, philosophical, historical works were henceforth written in Sanskrit, and important texts existing in other languages were translated and adapted into Sanskrit. For this reason, very few ancient literary, religious, or philosophical documents exits in India in other languages. The sheer volume of Sanskrit literature is immense, and it remains largely unexplored.

(source: **Virtue, Success, Pleasure, Liberation** - **By Alain Danielou** p.17).(For more about Indian influence in Southeast Asia, please refer to chapter on **Suvarnabhumi**)



Sir William Jones (1746-1794) came to India as a judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta. He pioneered Sanskrit studies. His admiration for Indian thought and culture was almost limitless. He observed as long ago as 1784:

" The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either: yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs, and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all without believing them to have sprung from some common source which perhaps no longer exists..."

(source: **Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** pg 165).

Hindu literature is so vast, that he said: "human life would not be sufficient to make oneself acquainted with any considerable part of Hindu literature."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p.205).

Alain Danielou (1907-1994) son of French aristocracy, author of numerous books on philosophy, religion, history and arts of India and perhaps the first European to boldly proclaim his Hinduness. He settled in India for fifteen years in the study of Sanskrit. He had a wide effect upon Europe's understanding of Hinduism. He has observed:

"The creation of Sanskrit, the "refined" language, was a prodigious work on a grand scale. Grammarians and semanticists of genius undertook to create a perfect language, artificial and permanent, belonging to no one, that was to become the language of the entire culture. Sanskrit is built on a basis of Vedic and the Prakrits, but has a much more complex grammar, established according to a rigorous logic. **It has an immense vocabulary and a very adaptable grammar,** so that words can be grouped together to express any nuance of an idea, and verb forms can be found to cover any possibility of tense, such as future intentional in the past, present continuing into the future, and so on. Furthermore, Sanskrit possesses a wealth of abstract nouns, technical and philosophical terms unknown in any other language. Modern Indian scholars of Sanskrit culture have often remarked that many of the new concepts of nuclear physics or modern psychology are easy for them to grasp, since they correspond exactly to familiar notions of Sanskrit terminology."

(source: **A Brief History of India - By Alain Danielou** p. 57-58).

The renowned British Sanskrit scholar **Arthur Anthony Macdonell** (1854-1930) ummarized :

"Since the Renaissance there has been no event of such worldwide significance in the history of culture as the discovery of Sanskrit literature in the latter part of the eighteenth century."

(source: **In Search of The Cradle of Civilization: : New Light on Ancient India - By**

Georg Feuerstein, Subhash Kak & David Frawley p. 257).

In the opinion of **Friedrich Max Muller** (1823-1900) "Sanskrit is to the science of language what mathematics is to astronomy."

Schlegel in his book, **History of Literature**, says, "It has also the Divine afflatus of the Hebrew tongue."

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R. Patel** p. 76-77).

Sir Monier-Williams (1819-1899) Orientalist, professor of Sanskrit at Oxford in 1860. He made a lengthy and learned introduction to his monumental work: Sanskrit-English Dictionary. In his book Hinduism, on page 13, he says:

"India though it has more than five hundred spoken dialects, has only one sacred language and only one sacred literature, accepted and revered by all adherence of Hinduism alike, however diverse in race, dialect, rank and creed. That language is Sanskrit and Sanskrit literature, the only repository of the Veda or knowledge in its widest sense, the only vehicle of Hindu mythology, philosophy, law, the mirror in which all the creeds, opinions, and customs and usages of the Hindus are faithfully reflected and the only quarry whence the requisite materials may be obtained for improving the vernaculars or for expressing important religious and scientific ideas."

Dr. T. W. Rhys Davids, famous Pali scholar has said: "The introduction of the use of Sanskrit as the lingu-franca is a turning point in the mental history of the Indian people. The causes that preceded it, the changes in the intellectual standpoint that went with it, the results that followed on both, are each of them of vital importance."

(source: **Cultural Heritage of Ancient India - By Sachindra Kumar Maity** p.48).

According to **Forbes** magazine, (July, 1987), "Sanskrit is the most convenient language for computer software programming."

(Source: **The Hindu Mind -Fundamentals of Hindu Religion and Philosophy for all Ages - By Bansi Pandit** pg - 307).



NASA and others have been looking at Sanskrit as a possible computer language since its syntax is perfect and leaves little room for error.

(source: American Sanskrit Institute **http://www.americansanskrit.com**)

NASA researcher, **Rick Briggs** has written:

"In ancient India the intention to discover truth was so consuming, that in the process, they discovered perhaps the most perfect tool for fulfilling such a search that the world has ever known -- the Sanskrit language. There is at least one language, Sanskrit, which for the duration of almost 1000 years was a living spoken language with a considerable literature of its own. Besides works of literary value, there was a long philosophical and grammatical tradition that has continued to exist with undiminished vigor until the present century. Among the accomplishments of the grammarians can be reckoned a method for paraphrasing

Sanskrit in a manner that is identical not only in essence but in form with current work in Artificial Intelligence. This article demonstrates that a natural language can serve as an artificial language also, and that much work in AI has been reinventing a wheel millennia old.

The discovery is of monumental significance. It is mind-boggling to consider that we have available to us a language which has been spoken for 4-7000 years that appears to be in every respect a perfect language designed for enlightened communication. But the most stunning aspect of the discovery is this: NASA the most advanced research center in the world for cutting edge technology has discovered that Sanskrit, the world's oldest spiritual language is the only unambiguous spoken language on the planet. Considering Sanskrit's status as a spiritual language, a further implication of this discovery is that the age old dichotomy between religion and science is an entirely unjustified one.

It is also relevant to note that in the last decade physicists have begun to comment on the striking similarities between their own discoveries and the discoveries made thousands of years ago in India which went on to form the basis of most Eastern religions.

Why has Sanskrit endured? Fundamentally it generates clarity and inspiration. And that clarity and inspiration is directly responsible for a brilliance of creative expression such as the world has rarely seen.

Another hope for the return of Sanskrit lies in computers. Sanskrit and computers are a perfect fit. The precision play of Sanskrit with computer tools will awaken the capacity in human beings to utilize their innate higher mental faculty with a momentum that would inevitably transform the world. In fact the mere learning of Sanskrit by large numbers of people in itself represents a quantum leap in consciousness, not to mention the rich endowment it will provide in the arena of future communication."

(source: **Knowledge Representation in Sanskrit and Artificial Intelligence - By Rick Briggs Artificial Intelligence Magazine** 6(1) 32-39 1985).

W. C. Taylor wrote in T**he Journal of Royal Asiatic Society**: "It was an astounding discovery that Hindustan possessed, in spite of the changes of realms and variety; a language, the parent of all those dialects that Europe has fondly called classical - the source alike of Greek flexibility and Roman strength. **A philosophy, compared with which, in point of age, the lessons of Pythagoras are but of yesterday,** and in point of daring speculation Plato's boldest efforts were tame and commonplace. A poetry more purely intellectual than any of those of which we had before any conception; and systems of science whose antiquity baffled all power of astronomical calculation. This literature, with all its colossal proportions, which can scarcely be described without the semblance of bombast and exaggeration claimed of course a place for itself - it stood alone, and it was able to stand alone.



"To acquire the mastery of this language is almost a labor of a life; **its literature seems exhaustless**. The utmost stretch of imagination can scarcely comprehend its boundless mythology. Its philosophy has touched upon every metaphysical difficulty; its legislation is as varied as the castes for which it was designed.'

Count Magnus Fredrik Ferdinand Bjornstjerna (1779-1847) says: "The literature of India makes us acquainted with a great nation of past ages, which grasped every branch of knowledge, and which will always occupy a distinguished place in the history of the civilization of mankind."

Rev. William Ward wrote: "No reasonable person will deny to the Hindus of former times the praise of very extensive learning. The variety of subjects upon which they wrote prove that almost every science was cultivated among them. The manner also in which they treated these subjects proves that the Hindus learned men yielded the palm of learning to scarcely any other of the ancients. The more their philosophical works and lawbooks are studied, the more will the enquirer be convinced of the depth of wisdom possessed by the authors.

Mrs. Charlotte Manning says: "The Hindus had the widest range of mind of which man was capable."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p.201 - 203).

Jean Le Mee born in France in 1931 and studied Sanskrit at Columbia University, has observed:

"**Sanskrit is the artificial language par excellence, patiently refined sound by sound...embracing all the levels of being physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual.** It is ideally suited to describe and govern the nature of phenomena from the spiritual level to the physical. This range of applicability in the realm of nature paradoxically makes this most artificial language the most natural language, the language of nature."

(source: **Hymns from the Rig Veda - By Jean LeMee** ISBN: 0394493540 1975. p. xii).

Friedrich Max Muller (1823-1900) in Science of Languages p. 203, calls Sanskrit the "language of languages", and remarks that "it has been truly said that Sanskrit is to the Science of language what Mathematics is to Astronomy."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p.205).

S N Dasgupta and S. K. De have written:

"The majesty and grandeur of the Sanskrit language, the sonorousness of the word music, the rise and fall of the rhythm rolling in waves, the elasticity of meaning and the conventional atmosphere that appears in it have always made it charming to those for whom it was written. ...The wealth of imagery, the vividness of description of natural scenes, the underlying suggestiveness of higher ideals and the introduction of imposing personalities often lead great charm to Sanskrit poetry."

(source: **History of Sanskrit Literature - By Dasgupta, S. N. and S. K. De**).

"There is at least one language, Sanskrit, which for the duration of almost 1000 years was a living spoken language with a considerable literature of its own. Besides works of literary value, there was a long philosophical and grammatical tradition that has continued to exist with undiminished vigor until the present century. Among the accomplishments of the grammarians can be reckoned a method for paraphrasing Sanskrit in a manner that is identical not only in essence but in form with current work in Artificial Intelligence."

This paragraph demonstrates that a natural language can serve as an artificial language also, and that much work in AI has been reinventing a wheel millennia old. The discovery is of monumental significance. It is mind-boggling to consider that we have available to us a language which has been spoken for 4000-7000 years that appears to be in every respect a perfect language designed for enlightened communication. But the most stunning aspect of the discovery is this: NASA the most advanced research center in the world for cutting edge technology has discovered that Sanskrit, the world's oldest spiritual language is the only unambiguous spoken language on the planet."

The discussion until now has been about Sanskrit, the language of mathematical precision, the world's only unambiguous spoken language. But the linguistic perfection of Sanskrit offers only a partial explanation for its sustained presence in the world for at least 3000 years. High precision in and of itself is of limited scope. Generally it excites the brain but not the heart.

Sanskrit is indeed a perfect language in the same sense as mathematics, but Sanskrit is also a perfect language in the sense that, like music, it has the power to uplift the heart. Why has Sanskrit endured? Fundamentally it generates clarity and inspiration. And that clarity and inspiration is directly responsible for a brilliance of creative expression such as the world has rarely seen.



"The richness of Sanskrit language is almost beyond belief. Many centuries ago that language contained words to describe states of the conscious and the subconscious and the unconscious mind and a variety of other concepts which have been evolved by modern psychoanalysis and psyche-therapy. Further, it has many a word, of which there is no exact synonym even in the richest modern languages. **That is why some modern writers have been driven occasionally to use Sanskrit words when writing in English.**

Consider, for example, the following passage in **Dr. Raynor C. Johnson's The Imprisoned Splendour**.

"To facilitate discussion I propose to call this higher level **buddhi** (coming from a Sanskrit word meaning 'wisdom'). Buddhi apprehends Truth directly - fragments of truth only, of course...It offers no reason for its perceptions, but it makes no mistakes, and this wisdom is passed through the level of Mind, to be there clothed in intelligible form."

And the following words by **J. Robert Oppenheimer** in **Einstein: A Centenary Volume**:

" Einstein is also, and I think rightly, known as a man of very great goodwill and humanity. Indeed if I had to think of a single word for his attitude towards human problems, I would pick the **Sanskrit word Ahimsa**, not to hurt, harmlessness. "

(source: **India's Priceless Heritage - By Nani Palkhivala** published by Bharati Vidya Bhavan 1980 p. 24-25).

Georges Ifrah (?) French historian of Mathematics and author of the book, **The Universal History of Numbers**

"Sanskrit means “complete”, “perfect” and “definitive”. In fact, this language is **extremely elaborate**, almost artificial, and is capable of describing multiple levels of meditation, states of consciousness and psychic, spiritual and even intellectual processes. As for vocabulary, its richness is considerable and highly diversified. Sanskrit has for centuries lent itself admirably to the diverse rules of prosody and versification. Thus we can see why poetry has played such a preponderant role in all of Indian culture and Sanskrit literature. "

(source: **The Universal History of Numbers - By Georges Ifrah** p. 431).

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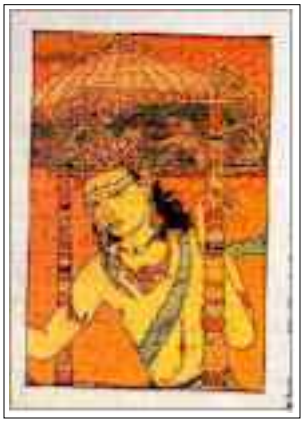
Joseph Campbell (1904-1987), was one of the foremost interpreters of myth in our time. **Campbell** was a prolific writer, dedicated editor, beloved teacher, inspiring lecturer, and an avid scholar of spiritual and cultural development. He referred to Sanskrit as:

"The great spiritual language of the world."

Alain Danielou (1907-1994) founded the Institute for Comparative Music Studies in Berlin and Venice, author of several books on the religion, history, and art of India. He said:

"Sanskrit is constructed like geometry and follows a rigorous logic. It is theoretically possible to explain the meaning of the words according to the combined sense of the relative letters, syllables and roots. Sanskrit has no meanings by connotations and consequently does not age. Panini's language is in no way different from that of Hindu scholars conferring in Sanskrit today."

(source: **Virtue, Success, Pleasure, Liberation - By Alain Danielou** p. 17).



No one has expressed this more eloquently than **Sri Aurobindo**, the great Indian sage and 20th century poet philosopher:

"The Ancient and classical creations of the Sanskrit tongue both in quality and in body and abundance of excellence, in their potent originality and force and beauty, in their substance and art and structure, in grandeur and justice and charm of speech and in the height and width of the reach of their spirit stand very evidently in the front rank among the world's great literatures.

The language itself, as has been universally recognized by those competent to form a judgment, is one of the most magnificent, the most perfect and wonderfully sufficient literary instruments developed by the human mind, at once majestic and sweet and flexible, strong and clearly-formed and full and vibrant and subtle, and its quality and character would be of itself a sufficient evidence of the character and quality of the race whose mind it expressed and the culture of which it was the reflecting medium.'

Professor A. L. Basham, taught at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. He has noted in his book **The Wonder That Was India**:

" Though its fame is much restricted by its specialized nature, there is no doubt that Panini's grammar is one of the greatest intellectual achievements of any ancient civilization, and the most detailed and scientific grammar composed before the 19th century in any part of the world."

(source: **The Wonder That Was India - By A. L. Basham** p. 390).

Cyril Edwin Mitchinson Joad (1891-1953) English philosopher and author of **The Story of Indian Civilization** has said:

"Sanskrit, a language which belongs to the Indo-European group and has been the chief literary vehicle of Indian thought, is an instrument admirably adapted to give expression to every subtlety of human thought, every nuance of human feeling...The writings of Indian poets and dramatists, historians and biographers, contain evidence not only of richness of imagination and variety of feeling, but of a remarkable talent for expressing precisely those adventures of the spirit, which chiefly give to human life its meaning and significance.

(source: **Indian Culture and the Modern Age - By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri** Annamalai University. 1956 p.179-180).

Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeran (1760-1842) in his Historical Researches Vol II p. 201, says: "The literature of the Sanskrit language incontestably belongs to a highly cultivated people, whom we may with great reason consider to have been the most informed of all the Epics. It is, at the same time, a scientific and a poetic literature." He also says: "Hindu literature is one of the richest in prose and poetry."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p.203).

Judith H. Morrison has observed:

"Sanskrit is a beautiful, powerful, resonating language, with a structure and richness not found within most modern languages. The logic and beauty within Sanskrit reflect the two levels needed to appreciate Ayurveda fully..."

(source: **The Book of Ayurveda: A Holistic Approach to Health and Longevity - by**

Judith H. Morrison p. 17).

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Grammar

The Sanskrit term for grammar is **vyakarana**, which etymologically means "differentiated analysis."

Panini's Sanskrit grammar, produced in about 1300 B. C. E. is the shortest and the fullest grammar in the world. Panini composed a Sanskrit grammar called the Ashtadhyayi. In 4,000 short verses, it revealed the inner mechanics of Sanskrit - how the language worked and how new words evolved.

Sir Monier-Williams (1819-1899) Orientalist, professor of Sanskrit at Oxford in 1860. He made a lengthy and learned introduction to his monumental work: Sanskrit-English Dictionary. He wrote:

"The Panini grammar reflects the wondrous capacity of the human brain, which till today no other country has been able to produce except India."



Panchavati

“By Sanskrit is meant the learned language of India - the language of its cultured

inhabitants, the language of its religion, its literature and science - not by any means a dead language, but one still spoken and written by educated men by all parts of the country, from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, from Bombay to Calcutta and Madras.

For example, the great linguist Panini gave the concept for meta-language-and constructed one-thousands of years before computer scientists began exploring the same idea. No one has been able to match him to this day.

The Sanskrit language is of wonderful structure, more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either. An example of the resemblance: the word for ten is dasha in Sanskrit, deka in Greek, and decem in Latin. Thousands of Sanskrit words such as pitah, brahta, raja have cognates in nearly all European languages. Based on the undeniable resemblance of these languages, philologists termed them Indo-European language.

"The grammar of Panini is one of the most remarkable literary works that the world has ever seen, and no other country can produce any grammatical system at all comparable to it, either for originality of plan or analytical subtlety."

His Sastras are a perfect miracle of condensation."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 229).

Albrecht Weber (1825-1901) author of **History of Indian Literature**, wrote:

"Panini's grammar is distinguished above all similar works of other countries partly by its thoroughly exhaustive investigation of the roots of the language, and the formation of words; partly by its sharp precision of expression, which indicates with an enigmatical succinctness whether forms come under the same or different rules. This is rendered possible by the employment of an algebraic terminology of arbitrary contrivance, the several parts of which stand to each other in the closest harmony, and which, by the very fact of its sufficing for all the phenomena which the language presents, bespeaks at once the marvelous ingenuity of its inventor, and his profound penetration of the entire material of the language."

(source: **Civilization Through the Ages - By P. N. Bose** p. 136).

Arthur A. Macdonell (1854-1930) author of **History of Sanskrit Literature** has remarked:

"The Sanskrit grammarians of India were the first to analyze word forms, to recognize the difference between root and suffix, to determine the functions of suffixes and on the whole to elaborate a grammatical system so accurate and complete as to be unparalleled in any other country."

(source: **Main Currents in Indian Culture - By S. Natarajan** p. 100 and **India's Past - By A A Macdonell** p. 123).

Horace Hyman Wilson (1786-1860) says: "The Hindus had a copious and a cultivated language."

"The Sanskrit," says **Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeran** (1760-1842) writes in **Historical Researches** vol. II p. 109-110, "we can safely assert to be one of the richest and most refined of any. It has, moreover, reached a high degree of cultivation, and the richness of its philosophy is no way inferior to its poetic beauties, as it presents us with an **abundance of technical terms to express the most abstract ideas."**



The distinguished German critic, **Schlegal**, in **History of Literature** p. 117, says:

"Justly it is called Sanskrit, ie. perfected, finished. In its structure and grammar, it closely resembles the Greek, but is infinitely more regular and therefore more simple, though not less rich. It combines fullness, indicative of Greek development, the brevity and nice accuracy of Latin; whilst having a near affinity to the Persian and German roots, it is distinguished by expression as enthusiastic and forcible as theirs."

He again says: "The Sanskrit combines these various qualities, possessed separately by other tongues: Grecian copiousness, deep-toned Roman force, the divine afflatus characterizing the Hebrew tongue." He also says: Judged by an organic standard of the principal elements of language, the Sanskrit excels in grammatical structure, and is, indeed, the most perfectly developed of all idioms, not excepting Greek and Latin."

The importance of this "language of languages" is clearly recognized when we consider, with **Sir William Wilson Hunter**, the fact that "the modern philology dates from the study of Sanskrit by the Europeans."

"I am not a little surprised to find that out of ten words in Du Perron's Zind Dictionary six or seven were pure Sanskrit." wrote **Sir William Jones.**

Mons. Dubois says that Sanskrit is the original source of all the European languages of the present day.

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p.205 - 207).

William Ward (1769-1823) notes: "These grammars are very numerous, and reflect the highest credit on the ingenuity of their authors. Indeed, in philology the Hindoos have perhaps excelled both the ancients and the moderns."

(source: **A View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos - By William Ward** volume II p 469 London 1822).

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"Probably in no other single sphere have Western scholars been so indebted to traditional India as in that of grammar. "

Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840-1900) has observed:

"The grammar of **Panini** stands supreme among the grammars of the world, alike for its precision of statement, and for its thorough analysis of the roots of the language and of the formative principles of words. By employing an algebraic terminology it attains a sharp succinctness unrivalled in brevity, but at times enigmatical. **It arranges, in logical harmony, the whole phenomena which the Sanskrit language presents, and stands forth as one of the most splendid achievements of human invention and industry.** So elaborate is the structure, that doubts have arisen whether its complex rules of

formation and phonetic change, its polysyllabic derivatives, its ten conjugations with their multiform aorists and long array of tenses, could ever have been the spoken language of a people."

(source: **The Indian Empire - By Sir William Wilson Hunter** p. 142).



Sir John Woodroffe aka **Arthur Avalon** (1865-1936) the well known scholar, Advocate-General of Bengal and sometime Legal Member of the Government of India. He served with competence for eighteen years and in 1915 officiated as Chief Justice.

He wondered why Sanskrit was not taught in British India:

"As regard the first point I am told that in an Indian University even Sanskrit is taught in English which means that only those who know the latter tongue can learn the classic language of event their own country. To me this seems an absurdity…In the same institution a European Sanskrit grammar is prescribed, the production of which was paid for at a larger price than would be offered to any Indian. Who offered it? Not the English. The Indian cannot I suppose write a grammar. **Yet India has Panini, Patanjali, Patanjali's Mahabhasya, Supadma, Kalapa, the Vakyapadiya, Bhopadeva, Sangkshiptasara, Siddantakaumudi, Laghukaumudi, amongst the ancient,** while the Vyakarana Kaumudi, Upakramanika of Ishvara Chandra Vidyasagara, and the Ashubodha of Taranatha Vachaspati head the moderns. How is it that all these have been displaced? A distinguished European Sanskritist once aksed me where I had learned Sanskrit, but that I had been and was still learning Sanskrit in this country. "Oh what a pity," he said, "Why" I asked? "They cannot teach Sanskrit in this country: they have no system." He replied. I laughed**. "They cannot teach Sanskrit in this country." – the country of Panini the founder of the science of language, the greatest grammarian the world had known,** and of innumerable pandits, men of real learning, few though men of the highest attainment now be. How has Sanskrit learning come down to us today if no one has been able to teach it?

(source: **Bharata Shakti – Collection of Addresses on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** - Ganesh & co. Madras1921 p. xix xx). For more on Sir John Woodroffe refer to **Quotes 251-270**).

Albrecht Weber (1825-1901) is laudatory in his appraisal of the achievement of Panini. He wrote:

"We pass at once into the magnificent edifice which bears the name of Panini as its architect and which justly commands the wonder and admiration of everyone who enters, and which, by the very fact of its sufficing for all the phenomenon which language presents, bespeaks at once the marvelous ingenuity of its inventor and his profound penetration of the entire material of the language."

(source: **Yoga: A Vision of its Future - By Gopi Krishna** p. 123).



Mrs. Charlotte Manning says: "The celebrated Panini bequeathed to posterity one of the oldest and most renowned books ever written in any language."

"The scientific completeness of Sanskrit grammar appeared to Sir William Jones so unaccountable that he wrote it with amazement and admiration."

Mrs. Manning further wrote: "Sanskrit grammar is evidently far superior to the kind of grammar which for the most part has contented grammarians in Europe." "Vyakrana," says the same authoress, "was not merely grammar in the lower acceptance of being an explanationo f declension, conjugation and other grammatical forms, but was from its commencement a scientific grammar or grammatical science in the highest sense which can be attributed to this term."

Lord Mountstuart Elphinstone observed: "His work (Panini's) and those of his successors have established a system of grammar, the most complete that ever was employed in arranging elements of human speech."

Friedrich Max Muller (1823-1900) wrote: "Their (Hindus) achievements in grammatical analysis are still unsurpassed in the grammatical literature of any nation."

"Panini, Katyayana, and Patanjali, are the canonical triad of grammarians of India," and, to quote Mrs. Manning once more, "such (grammatical) works are originated as are unrivalled in the literary history of other nations."

William Ward (1769-1823) author of **A view of the history, literature, and mythology of the Hindoos**, says: "Their grammars are very numerous and reflect the highest credit on the ingenuity of their authors."

As regards lexicons, Ward says: "Their dictionaries also do the highest credit to the Hindu learned men, and prove how highly the Sanskrit was cultivated in former periods."

Alexander Thomson, the late Principal of the Agra College, and one of the best philologist in India, used to say that **the consonantal division of the alphabet of the Sanskrit language was a more wonderful feat of human genius than any the world has yet seen."**

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 225-230).

Walter Eugene Clark writes in **The Legacy of India**, p. 339-340:

"Panini's grammar is the earliest scientific grammar in the world, the earliest extant grammar of any language, and one of the greatest ever written. It was the discovery of Sanskrit by the West, at the end of the 18th century, and the study of Indian methods of analyzing language that revolutionized our study of language and grammar, and gave rise to our science of comparative philology. The most striking feature of Sanskrit grammar is its objective resolution of speech and language into their component elements, and definition of the functions of these elements. Long before Panini (who names over sixty predecessors) the sounds represented by the letters of the alphabet had been arranged in an overly systematic form, vowels and diphthongs separated from mutes, semi-vowels, and sibilants, and the sounds in each group arranged according to places in the mouth where produced (gutturals, palatals, cerebrals, dentals, and labials). Words were analyzed into roots of which complex words grew by the addition of prefixes and suffixes. General

rules were worked out, defining the conditions according to which consonants and vowels influence each other, undergo change, or drop out. The study of language in India was much more objective and scientific than in Greece or Rome. The interest was in empirical investigation of language, rather than philosophical and syntactical. Indian study of language was as objective as the dissection of a body by an anatomist."

(source: **Our Heritage and Its Significance - By Shripad Rama Sharma** p. 152-153).



Leonard Bloomfield's (1887-1949) American linguist and author of **Language**, published in 1933) characterization of **Panini's Astadhyayi ("The Eight Books")**

"**as one of the greatest monuments of human intelligence is by no means an exaggeration; no one who has had even a small acquaintance with that most remarkable book could fail to agree.** In some four thousand sutras or aphorisms - some of them no more than a single syllable in length - Panini sums up the grammar not only of his own spoken language, but of that of the Vedic period as well. The work is the more remarkable when we consider that the author did not write it down but rather worked it all out of his head, as it were. Panini's disciples committed the work to memory and in turn passed it on in the same manner to their disciples; and though the Astadhayayi has long since been committed to writing, rote memorization of the work, with several of the more important commentaries, is still the approved method of studying grammar in India today, as indeed is true of most learning of the traditional culture."

While in the classical world scholars were dealing with language in a somewhat metaphysical way, the Indians were telling us what their language actually was, how it worked, and how it was put together. The methods and techniques for describing the structure of Sanskrit which we find in Panini have not been substantially bettered to this day in modern linguistic theory and practice. We today employ many devices in describing languages that were already known to Panini's first two commentators. The concept of "zero" which in mathematics is attributed to India, finds its place also in linguistics.

"It was in India, however, that there rose a body of knowledge which was destined to revolutionize European ideas about language. The Hindu grammar taught Europeans to analyze speech forms; when one compared the constituent parts, the resemblances, which hitherto had been vaguely recognized, could be set forth with certainty and precision."

(source: **Traditional India -** edited by **O. L. Chavarria-Aguilar** refer to chapter on **Grammar - By Leonard Bloomfield Hall -** Place of Publication: Englewood Cliffs, NJ Date of Publication: 1964 p. 109-113).

Cybernetics: NEW

It has even been suggested (by **Rick Briggs** NASA researcher - refer to **Quotes221_250**) that the 'structures' constructed by **Paanini** (followed by shaabdabodhas written later) could be useful in the development of efficient, high-level computing languages [we may presume here that these would eventually be based the systematics of deriving words from "roots" (dhaatus), avoiding the use of alphanumeric operator symbols, so characteristic of 'computer languages']. As of now, I understand that computer-based tests of the internal consistency of the

"Ashtaadhyaayee" are being developed by Dr. P. Ramanujan at the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing. Software based on Paaninean rules for the retrieval of word forms has been developed at the Siddhaganga Mutt, Karnataka Research of an advanced nature is also being carried out at the Academy of Sanskrit Research, Melukote, also in Karnataka.** While these could be regarded as very active areas of fruitful investigation, the practicality of some suggestions on the possibility of using the structure of Sanskrt for machine translation (See, for example, a method of numerical representation of inflections put forward by the present writer in an article contributed to "Samskrti-94" (the 1994 issue of the organ of the Samskrta Sangha of the Indian Institute of Science), remains to be tested. Paanini's ideas may also contain the germ of an understanding, based on linguistics, that could lead to the unraveling of the connections between brain activity and how the apparatus of human speech works. The pertinence here is in trying to answer, for example, the question, "Why is it easier to say jagat + naatha as jagannaatha or abd-ul + rahman as abd-ur-rahman (both of which exactly follow the relevant Paninean rule, the second, from a Semitic language, showing the universal applicability of Paninean phonetics)? Such investigations can be expected to yield results only in the far future, however, after much greater progress has been achieved in understanding how the speech centres of the brain function.

(source: **Whence and Whither of Indian Science - Can we integrate with our past and carry on from there? – Contributed by S. N. Balasubrahmanyam** - (Retd) Professor of Organic Chemistry at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore).

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Frederich von Schlegel, (1772-1829), German philosopher, critic, and writer, the most prominent founder of German Romanticism. Educated in law, he turned to writing. His brother, August Wilhelm von Schlegel, was a scholar and poet. With his brother, August Wilhelm, he published the Athenaeum, the principal organ of the romantic school. **Schlegel** study of Sanskrit and of Indian civilization, **On the Language and Wisdom of India** (1808), was outstanding. He said that:



"There is no language in the world, even Greek, which has the clarity and the philosophical precision of Sanskrit," adding that " India is not only at the origin of everything she is superior in everything, intellectually, religiously or politically and even the Greek heritage seems pale in comparison."

(source: **Arise O Arjuna - By Francois Gautier** ISBN 81-241-0518-9 Har-Anand Publications 2000 p. 25).

According to **Friedrich Max Muller** (1823-1900) even a modern language like English does not have sufficient means to express :

"high state of mental excitement" as done by Sanskrit. This shows the cultural development of the ancient Indians."

Max Muller continues his thoughts on the importance and primordiality of Vedic literature:

"Sanskrit no doubt has an immense advantage over all other ancient languages of the East. It is so attractive and has been so widely admired, that it almost seems at times to excite a certain amount of feminine jealously. We are ourselves Indo-Europeans. In a certain sense we are still speaking and thinking Sanskrit; or more correctly Sanskrit is like a dear aunt to us and she takes the place of a mother who is no more."

(source: **Chips From A German Workshop - By Max Muller** Volume I p 163).

Franz Bopp (1791-1867), German philologist, born in Mainz. He became professor of philology and Oriental literature at the University of Berlin. He became known as the founder of the science of comparative philology. Among his works is **A Comparative Grammar of the Sanskrit, Zend, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, Gothic, German, and Slavonic Languages** (1816). 36 years later, in 1852, Worterbuch (dictionary) appeared in Sanskrit.

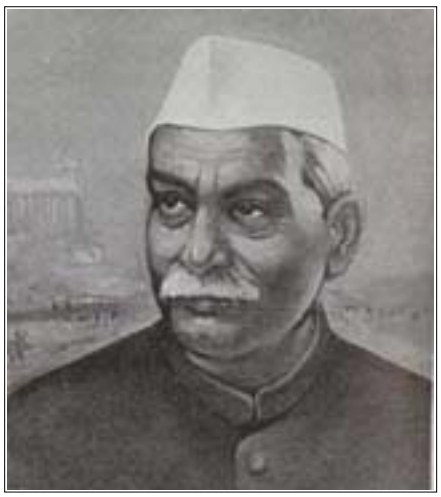
Arthur A. Macdonell (1854-1930) author of **History of Sanskrit Literature** Motilal Banarsidass Pub. ISBN: 8120800354 p. 717 has written:

"We Europeans, 2,500 years later, and in a scientific age, still employ an alphabet which is not only inadequate to represent all the sounds of our language, but even preserve the random order which vowels and consonants are jumbled up as they were in the Greek adaptation of the primitive Semitic arrangement of 3,000 years ago."

It is a Western deception of the Christian world to deny the Ancient Sanskrit language its due compliments.

Sardar K.M. Panikkar (1896-1963) pointed out:

"It is one common inheritance of Bharat. The unity of Bharat will collapse if it breaks away from Sanskrit and the Sanskritic traditions."



Dr. Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963) first President of India, said, "Sanskrit provided perhaps the most important focal point from which emanated cultural and political unity."

K. M. Munshi (1887-1971) aptly pointed out that "without Sanskrit Bharat would be nothing but a bundle of linguistic groups."

Shrimat Upendramohan, founder of Shastra Dharma Prachar Sabha, in his book **"Hindu Glory"** had written:

" The Sanskrit language is a marvel of marvels, an epitome of the people's genius, a picture of people's character, absolutely unique as a reflection of the perfect uniquity of the people of this land, of its social structure and of its Dharma. The vastness of the language, the copiousness of its lexicons, its fluidity or the capacity to embrace the existent and the non- existent equally

marks out the Sanskrit language as the language of languages, the language of the Gods (Deva Bhasa), the language of mere mortals, with their restricted notions, limited wants and closed outlook."

(source: **Reviving Sanskrit Teaching - By Mohan Gupta** **http://www.newsindia-times.com/20010622/viewpoint01.htm**)

Jawaharlal Nehru said: **"If I was asked what is the greatest treasure which India possesses and what is her greatest heritage, I would answer unhesitatingly that it is the Sanskrit language and literature and all that it contains. This is a magnificent inheritance, and so long as this endures and influences the life of our people, so long will the basic genius of India continue."**

(source: **Know your values - K R Malkani** **http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/291101/detide01.asp**).

B S V Prasad has written: "Sanskrit literature is a perfect form of a perfect pleasure. It becomes a lifelong obsession for most connoisseurs; I know of no other body of literature that is so wholesome, so cultivating and uplifting, and so timeless in its appeal to readers. Sanskrit literature easily spans a period of some 5000 years; even though the language was no longer being spoken in the streets as far back as 1000 BC, literature continues to be created in Sanskrit to this day."

(source: **Kalidasa and Ancient India - B S V Prasad** - sulekha.com).

The sheer volume of Sanskrit literature is immense, and it remains largely unexplored. History, philosophy, music, astronomy, geography, medicine and other disciplines. It is an immense reservoir that needs to be tapped so that we understand our own history over the past five millennia.

Sanskrit is a very scientific language. Linguists hold that it shows no trace of a growing language. Its entire grammatical mechanism is perfected, every tense, mood, every number and person of the verb is fixed and all terminations of the casts are firmly established. The antiquity and affinity in forms of grammar and roots of verbs induces the linguists to believe that the Persian, Greek, Teutonic, Slavonic and Celtic races are probably descendents of a common ancestor. Professor **Leonard Bloomfield** (1887-1949) of Chicago University holds that Sanskrit language specially the scientific basis of its grammar is "one of the greatest monuments of human intelligence." William Humboldt of Germany is of opinion that language cannot be created artificially, it is the manifestation of power and divinity in man.

The first drama and musical notes are also supposed to have originated from the Vedas. The beautiful literature of the Hindus took thousands of years to develop. It raised the status of Indian civilization and culture. Without knowing this one cannot know the inner soul and glory of India. Speaking only of the vast Vedic literature, the wonderful manifestation of human genius developed through hearing alone. **Moriz Winternitz** (1863-1937) wrote, "As the Veda, because of its antiquity, stands at the head of Indian literature no one who has not gained an insight into the Vedic literature can understand the spiritual life and culture of the Indians."

(source: **Ancient Indian Culture at a Glance - By Swami Tattwananda** p. 93-94).

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The Indian Theatre

The Indian Theatre - had its earliest beginnings in the Rig Veda which have a certain dramatic character. There are references to Nataka or the drama in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. It began to take shape in the song and music and dances of the Krishna legends. Panini, the great grammarian of the 6th century B.C.E. mentions some dramatic forms. A **Natya Shastra - is a treatise on the Art of Theatre.**



The dramatic writings of the Hindus are equally remarkable. External nature, as might be expected in a country which is "the epitome of the world," is the special forte of the Hindu poets, and, in no country, ancient or modern, has Nature (in contradistinction to man) been treated so poetically or so extensively introduced in poetry. Creation in perfect harmony with nature is a feature of the Hindu drama. The characters are all creations, perfect in themselves and in their fidelity to nature.

With regard to the extent to which the dramatic literature has been cultivated in India, **Sir William Jones** says that the Hindu theatre would fill as many volumes as that of any nation of modern Europe. The Mohammedan conquest of India resulted in the effectual repression of Hindu dramatic writings. Instead of receiving further development, the Hindu drama rapidly declined, and a considerable part of this fascinating literature was forever lost.

Horace Hyman Wilson (1786-1860) says: "It may also be observed that the dramatic pieces which have come down to us are those of the highest order, defended by their intrinsic purity from the corrosion of time." Rupaka is the Hindu term for "Play," and "Dasa Rupaka" or description of the ten kinds of theatrical compositions, is one of the best treatises on dramatic literature and shows the extent to which dramatic literature was cultivated by the Hindus.

The best known dramatists of the Hindus are Kalidasa and Bhavbhuti. **Kalidasa, "one of the greatest dramatists the world has ever produced,"** flourished in the reign of Vikramaditya in the first century B.C. while Bhavbhuti lived many centuries later. The masterpieces of Kalidasa is the play of Shakuntala. The plot of this "astonishing literary performance," as a great German critic calls it, is taken from the Mahabharata.

Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeran (1760-1842) speaks in rapturous terms of this **"far-famed drama," which is incomparable for its beauty, charm, tenderness and fidelity to nature, and which, in fact, stands at the head of the dramatic literature of the world.** He says: "And we must, in truth, allow Kalidasa to be one of those poets who have done honor not merely to their nation but to all civilized mankind."

Alexander Von Humboldt also notes the masterly mode in which Kalidasa describes "the influence of nature upon the minds of lovers, his tenderness in the expression of feelings, and above all the richness of his creative fancy" Her (Shakuntala's) love and sorrow," says **Sir William Wilson Hunter** (1840-1900) "have furnished a theme for the great, European poet of our age."



Europe first learned of the old Indian drama from **Sir William Jones's** translation of **Kalidasa's - 'Shakuntala,'** published in 1789. Something in the nature of commotion was created among European intellectuals by this discovery and several editions of the book followed. Translation also appeared in German, French, Danish, and Italian. Goethe was powerfully impressed and he paid a magnificent tribute to 'Shakuntala'. The idea of giving a prologue to Faust is said to have originated from Kalidasa's prologue, which was in accordance with the usual tradition of the Sanskrit drama. Kalidasa is acknowledged to be the greatest poet and dramatist of Sanskrit literature.

Professor Sylvain Levi, French scholar (1863-1935) Orientalist who wrote on Eastern religion, literature, and history. Levi was appointed a lecturer at the school of higher studies in Paris (1886), he taught Sanskrit at the Sorbonne (1889-94) and wrote his doctoral dissertation, **Le Théâtre indien** ("The Indian Theatre"). In **L'Inde et le monde** ("India and the World"), he discussed India's role among nations. **The Nataka, the Indian drama, says Levi, still remains the happiest invention of the Indian genius.** He said:

' Le nom de Kalidasa domine la poesie indienne et la resume brillamment. Le drama, l'epopee savante.'

(source: **The Discovery of India - by Jawaharlal Nehru** pg 159).

One of Kalidasa's long poems is the **Meghduta**, or **the Cloud Messenger.** A lover, made captive and separated from his beloved, asks a cloud, during the rainy season, to carry his message of desperate longing to her. To this poem and to Kalidasa, the American scholar, **Ryder**, has paid a splendid tribute. He refers to the two parts of the poem and says:

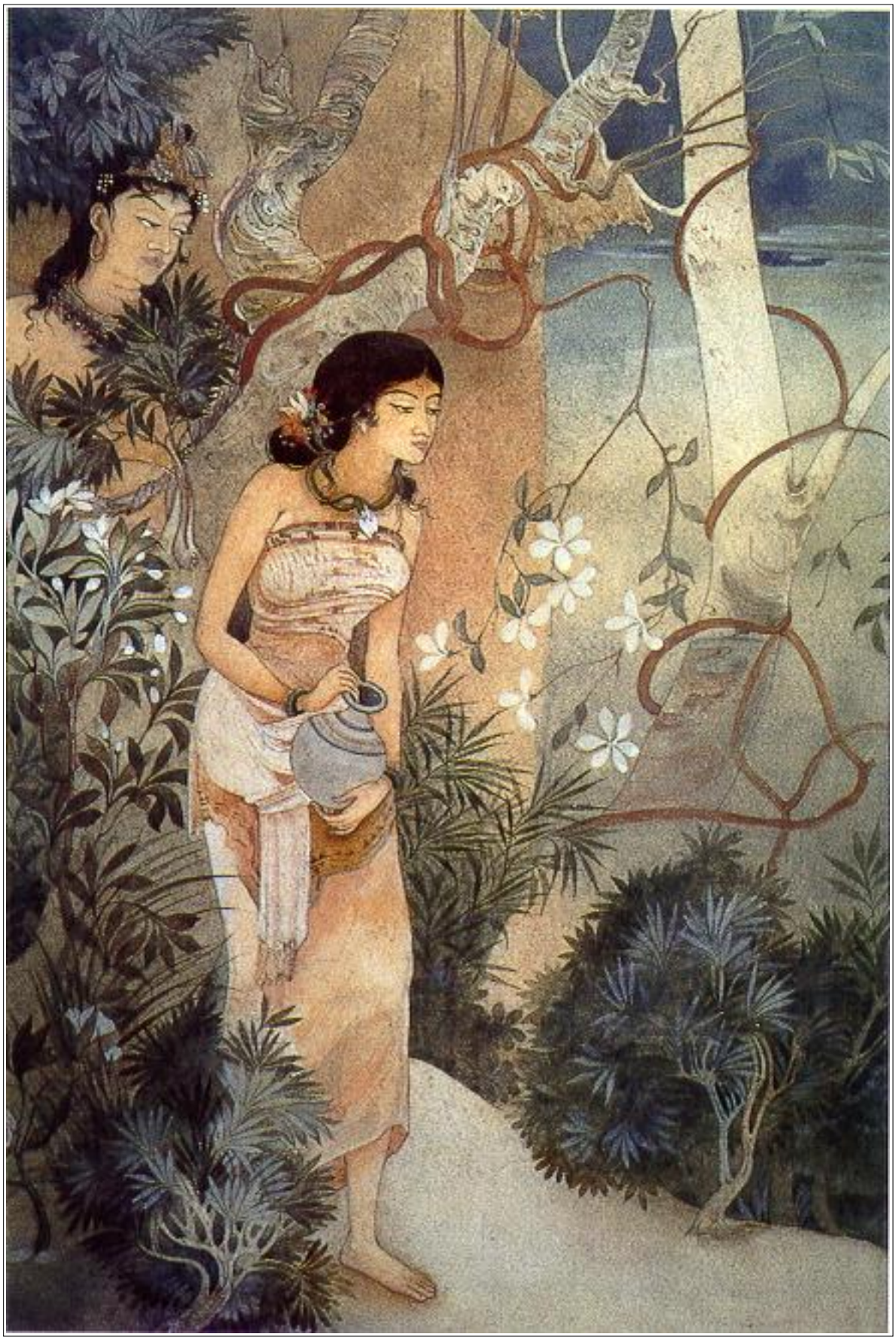
" The former half is a description of external nature, yet interwoven with human feelings; the latter half is a picture of human heart, yet the picture is framed in natural beauty. So exquisitely is the thing done that none can say which half is superior. Of those who read this perfect poem in the original text, some are moved by the one, some by the other."

(source: **The Discovery of India - by Jawaharlal Nehru** pg 159).

One of the lyrics, **Meghaduta** (The Cloud Messenger), influenced the German dramatist **Friedrich von Schiller's** drama *Maria Stuart* (1800), and **Shakuntala** provided the idea for the prologue to the German poet **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's Faust** (first part, 1808; second, 1832).

"**Kalidasa understood in the fifth century what Europe did not learn until the 19th century, and even now comprehends only imperfectly, that the world was not made for man, that man reaches his full stature only as he realizes the dignity and worth of life that is not human. That Kalidasa seized this truth is a magnificent tribute to his intellectual power, a quality quite as necessary to great poetry as perfection of form. Poetical fluency is not rare; intellectual grasp is not very uncommon; but the combination of the two has not been found perhaps more than a dozen times since the world began. Because he possessed this harmonious combination, Kalidasa ranks not with Horace or Shelley, but with Sophocles, Virgil and Milton."**

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** pg 159-160).



Shakuntala watercolor - By Kshitin Majumdar
(source: Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922 - By Partha Mitter fig. XXIX).

The ancient Indians attached a great deal of importance to sound, and hence their writing, poetry or prose, had a rhythmic and musical quality.

Vicomte de Francois Rene de Chateaubriand (1768-1848), who deeply influenced the Romantic movement in France, was an enthusiastic admirer of Shakuntala. He had lived in England as a refugee from Napoleonic France between 1793 and 1800, when Sir William Jones' translations of Sanskrit works were published.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. Pg 241).

E. H. Johnstone, has written about this: " The classical poets of India have a sensitiveness to variations of sound, to which the literature of other countries afford few parallels, and their delicate combination are a source of never-failing joy. Some of them, however, are inclined to attempt to match the sense with the sound in a way that is decidedly lacking in subtlety, and they have perpetrated real atrocities in the manufacture of verses with a limited number of consonants or even only one."

(source: **E. H. Johnstone's translation of 'Asvaghosa's Buddhacarita'** Lahore 1936).

Sir Monier-Williams (1819-1899) Orientalist, professor of Sanskrit at Oxford in 1860. He says about the great drama of **Mrichakatika**:

"The dexterity with which the plot is arranged, the ingenuity with which the incidents are connected, the skill with which the characters are delineated and contrasted, the boldness and felicity of the diction are scarcely unworthy of our own great dramatists. Nor does the parallel fail in the management of the stage business, in minute directions to the actors and various scenic artifices. The asides an aparts, the exits and the entrances, the manner, attitude, and gait of the speakers, their tones of voice, tears, smiles, and laughter are as regularly indicated as in a modern drama."

His views of **Kalidasa** and the great play - **Shakuntala**:

"No one can read this act (4th Act), nor indeed any act of play without being struck with the raciness and elevation of its author's genius, the exuberance and glow of his fancy, his ardent love of the beautiful, his deep sympathy with nature and nature's loveliest scenes, his profound knowledge of the human heart, his delicate appreciation of its most refined feelings, his familiarity with its conflicting sentiments and emotions."

(source: **Eminent Orientalists: Indian European American** - Asian Educational Services. p. 155-157).



Christian Lassen (1800-1876) in his **Indische Alterthumskunde** says, “Kalidasa may be considered as the brightest star in the firmament of Hindu artificial poetry. He deserves this praise on account of the mastery with which he wields the language, and on account of the consummate tact with which he imparts to it a more simple or more artificial form, according to the requirements of the subjects treated by him, without falling into the artificial diction of later poets or over-stepping the limits of good taste; on account of the variety of his creations, his ingenious conceptions, and his happy choice of subjects; and not less on account of the complete manner in which he attains his poetical ends, the beauty of his narrative, the delicacy of his sentiment, and the fertility of his imagination.”

H. Fauche, author of **Le Mahâbhârata,** 10 volumes, Paris 1863-1870, says, "The Meghaduta is without a rival in the elegial literature of Europe."

Sir Monier-Williams (1819-1899) in his book, **Indian Wisdom** says, "It combines the majesty of Homer with the tenderness of Virgil, the luxuriance of Ovid and the depth of Shakespeare. And yet it is simple enough to suggest the old Athenian boast of beauty without extravagance."

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p. 90).

Professor Arthur Berriedale Keith says that "The Sanskrit drama may legitimately be regarded as the highest products of Indian poetry, and as summing up in itself the final conception of literary art achieved by the very self-consious creators of Indian literature...**The Brahmin, in fact, much abused as he has been in this as in other matters, was the source of the intellectual distinction of India. As he produced Indian philosophy, so by another effort of his intellect he evolved the subtle and effective form of the drama."**

(source: **Sanskrit Drama - By A. Berriedale Keith** Oxford 1924 and **The Discovery of India by Jawaharlal Nehru** p 163-164).

Horace Hayman Wilson (1786-1860) who used to be professor of Sanskrit at Oxford University, has said:

"It is impossible to conceive language so beautifully musical or so magnificently grand, as that of the verses of Kalidasa.'"

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** pg 160).

Soviet historians, **K. Antonova, G. Bongard-Levin, and G. Kotovsky**, authors of **A History of India**, Moscow, Volume I and II 1973, refer to work of **Kalidasa**:

"one of the pearls of ancient Indian literature." and as **"an illustrious page of history of world's culture."**

(source: **A History of India - By K. Antonova, G. Bongard-Levin, and G. Kotovsky** Moscow, Volume I and II 1973 p. 169).

Commenting on Kalidasa's work **Arthur Berriedale Keith** has observed: "Indian criticism has ranked Meghadutta highest among Kalidasa's poems for brevity of expression,

richness of content, and power to elicit sentiment, and the praise is not undeserved."

In the opinion of **Arthur A. Macdonell** (1854-1930), "perhaps no other Sanskrit poem manifests such strikingly deep sympathy with the physical world, keen powers of observation, and skill in depicting an Indian landscape in vivid colors."

(source: **Main Currents in Indian Culture - By S. Natarajan** p. 91).

In both Sanskrit and Greek plays there is a sensitive awareness of nature and a feeling of being part of that nature.

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Shudraka's " Mrichhkatika" play

Long before Kalidasa, another famous play was produced - **Shudraka's "Mrichhkatika" or Clay Cart,** a tender rather artificial play, and yet with a reality which moves us and gives us a glimpse into the mind and civilization of the day.

An English translation of **Shdraka's "Mrichhkatika"** was staged in New York in 1924.



Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch, (1893-1970) the dramatic critic for **The Nation**, and author of **The Measure of Man on Freedom Human Values, Survival and the Modern Temper**. He wrote of the play as follows:

"Here, if anywhere, the spectator will be able to see a genuine example of that pure art theatre of which theorists talk, and here, too, he will be led to meditate upon that **real wisdom of the East which lied not in esoteric doctrine but in a tenderness far deeper and truer than that of the traditional Christianity which has been so thoroughly corrupted by the hard righteousness of Hebraism** …..A play wholly artificial yet profoundly moving because it is not realistic but real….Whoever the author may have been, and whether he lived in the fourth century or the eighth, he was a good man and wise with the goodness and wisdom which comes not from the lips or the smoothly flowing pen of the moralist but from the heart. An exquisite sympathy with the fresh beauty of youth and love tempered his serenity, and he was old enough to understand that a light-hearted story of ingenious complication could be made the vehicle of tender humanity and confident goodness….Such a play can be produced only by a civilization which has reached stability; when a civilization has thought its way through all the problems it faces, it must come to rest upon something calm and naïve like this. Macbeth and Othello, however great and stirring they might be, are barbarous heroes because the passionate tumult of Shakespeare is the tumult

produced by the conflict between a newly awakened sensibility and a series of ethical concepts inherited from the savage age. The realistic drama of our own time is a product of a like confusion; but when problems are settled, and when passions are reconciled with the decisions of an intellect, then form alone remains….**Nowhere in our European past do we find, this side the classics, a work more completely civilized."**

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 164).

In the following words **Juan Mascaro** pays tribute to the glory of the Sanskrit literature:

"Sanskrit literature is a great literature. We have the great songs of the Vedas, the splendor of the Upanishads, the glory of the Upanishads, the glory of the Bhagavad Gita, the vastness (100,000 verses) of the Mahabharata, the tenderness and the heroism found in the Ramayana, the wisdom of the fables and stories of India, the scientific philosophy of Sankhya, the psychological philosophy of yoga, the poetical philosophy of Vedanta, the Laws of Manu, the grammar of Panini and other scientific writings, the lyrical poetry, and dramas of Kalidasa. Sanskrit literature, on the whole, is a romantic literature interwoven with idealism and practical wisdom, and with a passionate longing for spiritual vision."

(source for quote: **The Bhagvad Gita - translated By Juan Mascaro.** Penguin Classics, 1962.).

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh wrote: " The ancient and classical literature of the Sanskrit tongue show both in quality and in body an abundance of excellence, in their potent originality and force and beauty, in their substance and art and structure, in grandeur and justice and charm of speech, and in the heightened width of the reach of their spirit which stands very evidently in the front rank among the world's great literature."

(source: **Foundations of Indian Culture - By Shri Aurobindo Ghosh** p. 255).

Arthur Anthony Mcdonnell (1854-1930) has observed : **"The Sanskrit Literature in quantity exceeds that of Greece and Rome put together."**

Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840-1900) author of **The Indian Empire: Its People, History and Products** has observed:

"The grammar of Panini stands supreme among the grammars of the world, alike for its precision of statement and for its thorough analysis of the roots of the language and of the formative principles of words. By applying and algebraical terminology, it attains a sharp succinctness unrivaled in variety, but at times enigmatical."

(source: http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Ithaca/3440/revelation.html).

For more information on Sanskrit please refer to **The Commemorative Sanskrit Souvenir 2003 of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.**

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Lyric Poetry

The Lyric poetry of the Hindus is the finest of its kind in the world, for the reason that the language in which it is written is the most melodious and musical on earth.

As **Horace Hyman Wilson** (1786-1860) remarks, the poetry of the Hindus can never be properly appreciated by those who are ignorant of Sanskrit. To judge of the merits of Hindu poetry from translations is to judge it at its worst.

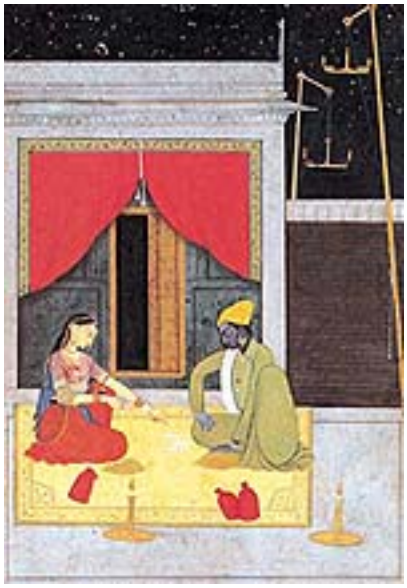
Gita Govinda is the finest extant specimen of Hindu lyric poetry, and it is difficult to find in any language lyrics that can vie with it in melody and grace. **Ralph Griffith** says: "The exquisite melody of the verse can only be appreciated by those who can enjoy the original."

Frederich von Schlegel (1772-1829) says in **History of Literature** p. 117:

"Tender delicacy of feeling and elegiac love cast a halo over Indian poetry," and "the whole is recast in the mould of harmonious softness, and is redolent of elegiac sweetness."

Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeran (1760-1842) wrote: "The Hindu lyric surpassed that of the Greeks in admitting both the rhyme and blank verse."

"Gita Govinda exhibits," says **Lord Mountstuart Elphinstone** (1779-1859) "in perfection of the luxuriant imagery and the voluptuous softness of the Hindu school."



Another Hindu lyric is the **Ritu Sangrah**, something like "Thompson's Seasons" in the English language. **Mrs. Manning** says about it: "Ritu Sangrah, a lyric poem by **Kalidasa**, is much admired not only by the natives of India, but by almost all students of Sanskrit literature."

Ralph T H Griffith (1826-1906) in his translation of "Ritu Sangrah" says: "Sir William Jones speaks in rapturous terms of the beautiful and natural sketches with which it abounds," and, after expressing his own admiration, adds, "it is much to be regretted that it is impossible to translate the whole."

Lyric poetry was extensively cultivated in India. **Sir William Wilson Hunter** (1840-1900) says: "The Brahmins displayed a marvelous activity in theological as well as in lyric poetry."

Special charm must attach to the lyric poetry of the Hindus, for, as Mrs. Manning remarks, "Nowhere is love expressed with greater force or pathos than in the poetry of the Hindus."

Megha Duta is an excellent example of purely descriptive poetry. Mrs. Manning says: “It is the most important of its kind, and is a favorite with the Europeans too.”

Horace Hyman Wilson (1786-1860) wrote: “The language (of Megh Duta) although remarkable for the richness of its compounds, is not disfigured by their extravagance, and the order of the sentences is in general the natural one. The metre combines melody and dignity in a very extraordinary manner, and will bear an advantageous comparison with the best specimens of uniform verse in the poetry of any language, living or dead.”

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 258-260).

Archibald Henry Sayce (1851-1940) British Orientalist says:

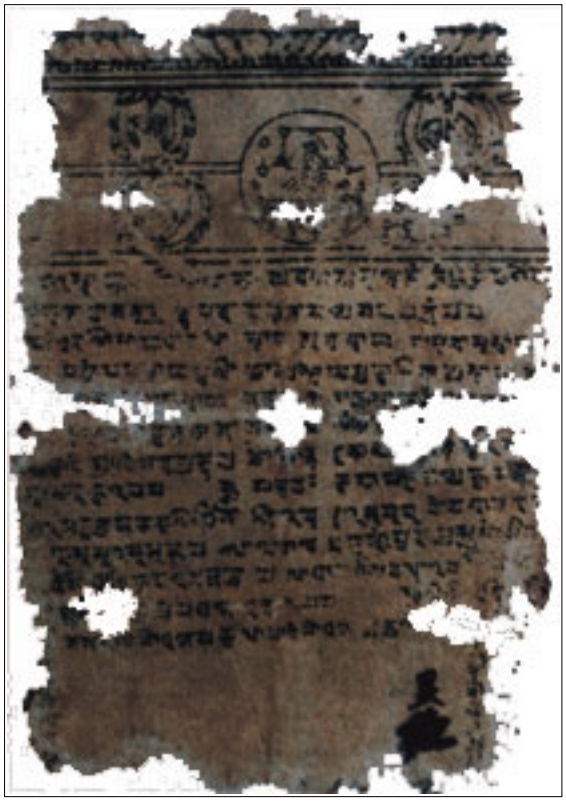
“ The Devanagri alphabet is a splendid monument of phonological accuracy, in the sciences of language.”

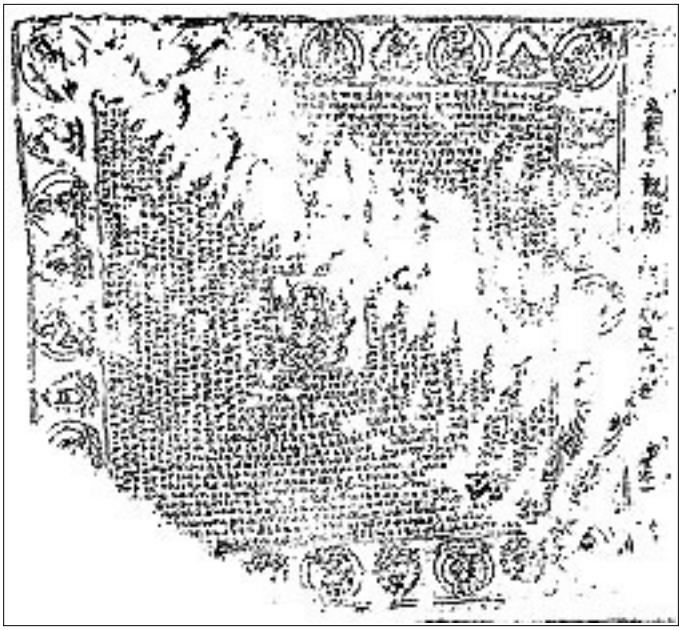
(source: **Indian Culture Through the Ages - Mohan Lal Vidyarthi** p. 61).

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Sanskrit Text Oldest Example of Printing

CHINA, November 25, 2001: The exact year in which woodblock printing was invented is still very much debated in academic circles because no artifacts or documentary records related to the earliest printing have been discovered. **However, a sheet with mantras of the Dharani Sutra, in Sanskrit, printed in the early Tang and unearthed in the suburban district of Xi'an is the earliest extant printing relic.** A picture of the still readable sheet is shown at below. The Dharani Sutra is the teaching of Buddha on "Longevity, the extinction of offenses, and the protection of young children.





(source: http://www.cgan.com.hk/english/cpg/engcp10.htm).

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Sanskrit had a vast influence among the nations of antiquity. In his book on **Chinese Buddhism**, **Reverend Joseph Edkins** says that the list of first and last letters in Chinese dictionaries are prepared in the third century A.D. and improved very much in the 6th century A.D. under Liang dynasty and that the Hindus came at that time to China, prepared the model of Chinese first letters, arranged them under heads of 36 consonants and instructed them on the manner of pronunciation with regard to the scientific basis of sound. In a different place, he says that probably the Tibetans and Koreans got their alphabets from the Buddhists and learnt to arrange them in the order as found in Sanskrit. From an account of **Hueng Sang** published in the latest book, **2500 Years of Buddhism**, it is known that the Chinese traveler, on his return journey from India to China, carried with him 657 Sanskrit books on Buddhism on horse back load. This shows the influence of Sanskrit not only on the ancient Chinese culture and religion but also on the arrangement of their letters proving the depth and popularity of this rich treasure.

(source: **Ancient Indian Culture at a Glance - By Swami Tattwananda** p. 93-99).

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Conclusion:



Francois Gautier, correspondent in South Asia of Le Figaro, France's largest circulated newspaper says:

" Sanskrit is the mother of all languages, and it could become the unifying language of India, apart from English, which is spoken only, by a tiny minority. "Sanskrit ought still to have a future as the language of the learned and it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongues cease entirely to be written or spoken", admonished 50 years ago Sri Aurobindo, India's great Sage and Seer.

A dead language, you say! Impossible to revive? But that's what they argued about Hebrew. And did not the Jewish people, when they got back their land in 1948, revive their "dead" language, so that it is spoken today by all Jewish people and has become alive again? The same thing ought to be done with Sanskrit. Let the scholars begin now to revive and modernize the Sanskrit language, it would be a sure sign of the dawning of the Renaissance of India. In a few years it should be taught as the second language in schools throughout the country, with the regional language as the first and English as the third. Then will India again have its own unifying language." (source: **http://www.pragna.org/Iss02412.html**).



Sanskrit has always inspired the hearts, mind and souls of wise people. The German scholar Max Muller, who did more than anyone to introduce Sanskrit to the West in the latter part of the 19th century, contended that without a knowledge of the language (Sanskrit), literature, art, religion and philosophy of India, a liberal education could hardly be complete - India being the intellectual and spiritual ancestor of the race, historically and through Sanskrit. Max Muller also pointed out that Sanskrit provides perfect examples of the unity and foundation it offers to the Celtic, Teutonic, Slavonic, Germanic and Anglo-Saxon languages, not to mention its influence on Asian languages. The transmission of Buddhism to Asia can be attributed largely to the appeal to Sanskrit. Sanskrit, the only language that was ever used over the whole of India and the one best expressive of her spirit and richness, is today on the way to extinction, its study discouraged in both North and South India.

Even in translation the works of Sanskrit evoked the supreme admiration of Western poets and philosophers like Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau, Melville, Goethe, Schlegel and Schopenhauer.

Sri Aurbindo, the sage from Pondicherry has said:

"Sanskrit ought still to have a future as a language of the learned and it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongue, ceases entirely to be written or spoken."

The fact is that Sanskrit is more deeply interwoven into the fabric of the collective world consciousness than anyone perhaps knows. After many thousands of years, Sanskrit still lives with a vitality that can breathe life, restore unity and inspire peace on our tired and troubled planet. It is a sacred gift, an opportunity. The future could be very bright.

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To Learn Sanskrit visit these sites:

Samskrita Bharati
http://www.samskrita-bharati.org/

Sanskrit Tutor
http://www.concentric.net/~sanskrit/tutor/tutor.html

Sanskrit Academy
http://www.samskrtam.org/

Sanskrit Software Catalog

http://www.gy.com/www/cat1/sa_cat.htm

Sanskrit Learning Tools
ftp://jaguar.cs.utah.edu/private/sanskrit/index.html

American Sanskrit Institute
http://www.americansanskrit.com

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Articles:

Why Is The West Crazy About A 'Dead' Language?
Ajit Kumar Jha finds some of the biggest stars in academia teach Sanskrit
http://www.indian-express.com/flair/20010610/fla-1.shtml

Imagine going to Varanasi to study the tragedies of the Greek playwright Sophocles. Ludicrous? It seemed equally foolish to me when on my way to California some years ago, I met the daughter of a Marxist political economist from Calcutta, who was headed for Chicago, to pursue her doctoral degree in Sanskrit. The double irony of the situation befuddled me: even the Marxists were turning over-zealous to revive Sanskrit, and strangely one had to go to the West to do so!

Yet the irony has been in place for over two centuries now. **Even as we neglect our rich cultural heritage, it is the West that has revived interest in the East.** Notwithstanding Edward Said's powerful attack on the "Eurocentric" epistemology of Orientalism, and political correctness apart, half a century after Independence, it is actually the Occident that is busy rediscovering the genius of the Orient.

Ever since 1786, when Sir William Jones, in a paper presented to the Royal Asiatic Society, in Calcutta, said, "the wonderful structure" of the Sanskrit language, is "more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either," the West has been busy learning from Sanskrit.

This Western passion for the oriental classics is not only limited to Peter Brook's brilliant dramatic rendering of the Sanskrit epic, *Mahabharata*, or to the more recent attempt by Lee Siegel to write a sensuously funny modern day *Kamasutra* in a fictionalised form, entitled *Love in a Dead Language*. There is a much more systematic tradition of Sanskrit learning of over two centuries. Not surprisingly to a question about why should one study Sanskrit today, and whether it has any future, **Professor Sheldon Pollock of the University of Chicago had the following answer: "It is indicative of the appalling quality of the public discourse on Sanskrit in India today that you even ask this question."**

While we battle each other on the streets on whether Sanskrit should be revived in the school curricula or not, top notch western universities have been busy churning one esoteric dissertation after another on Panini's *Ashtadhyay* and comparing Bhartihari's and Patanjali's grammatical logic.

There are essentially two traditions of teaching Sanskrit in the West today: one scholastic, as a classical subject taught in the universities; the other as a religious discourse in the various temples being built by the cash rich Indian diaspora. The scholastic tradition, which began a couple of centuries ago continues till today. The temple tradition is a post-1965 phenomena, the year President Lyndon Johnson liberalised immigration quotas. Today, the children of the first wave of professional Indian immigrants to the US—mainly doctors and engineers—have entered the university in large numbers. It is these alienated kids, desperate to discover their historical roots and cultural heritage, who are studying Sanskrit with a passion.

The British tradition

The first chair in Sanskrit in England, the Boden Chair, was set up at Oxford in 1831. Later chairs were founded in University College, London, Edinburgh, and Cambridge. The Boden chair continues till today in addition to two other faculty positions. Professor Richard Gombrich, the present occupant of the chair, is known worldwide for his extraordinary work on Theravada Buddhism.

According to Gombrich: "The reasons for studying Sanskrit today are the same as they ever were: that the vast array of Sanskrit texts preserves for us a valuable part of the cultural heritage of mankind, including much beautiful literature and many interesting, even fascinating, ideas."

Today Oxford offers three kinds of degrees in Sanskrit: the three-year BA, the two-year M.Phil in classical Indian religion, for which Sanskrit is taught intensively, and the D Phil. The majority of the undergraduates are usually British students, while the research students are mostly from overseas, including a few Buddhist monks and nuns from South-East Asia.

In an attempt to popularise Sanskrit, Gombrich, has become associated with a new publishing venture. In the style of the Loeb classical library of Latin and Greek, the series will produce readable translations of Sanskrit literary texts printed alongside the originals.

The chair of Sanskrit in Edinburgh was established by the endowment of John Muir. The university of Edinburgh offers either a full honours course in Sanskrit or a joint honours course with Latin, Greek or Linguistics. Unfortunately, the interest in Sanskrit in Britain arose largely through colonial involvement. This, Dr John Brockington, who today teaches Sanskrit in Edinburgh feels, "has been at once the strength and the weakness of Sanskrit studies in Britain". The end of British rule in 1947 dampened the interest in Sanskrit, for instance, the Edinburgh chair was disestablished in 1949.

The American tradition

The Sanskrit craze has, however, caught up in the US. Unlike Britain, and unlike its own past, it is totally demand driven.

But first, some background. The teaching of Sanskrit first began at Yale university

under professor Salisbury in the late 19th century. His student William Dwight Whitney became the pioneer in the development of American Sanskrit studies. This soon spread to Harvard, Berkeley, Chicago, Michigan, Pennsylvania and other campuses.

Today several American campuses offer Sanskrit along with modern Indian languages such as Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Tamil. Student unions sit on hunger strikes demanding more and more departments. It has happened at the University of Texas at Austin and in various California campuses.

Although Sanskrit began to be taught at the University of Michigan, as early as the 1890s as part of Oriental languages, today, it is attracting large undergraduate crowds. Until 1985, it was primarily a graduate subject attracting mainly foreign students. Not any more. Most second generation Indo-American kids majoring in engineering, medicine, and business studies read Sanskrit not as a specialised branch but to satisfy the four-term foreign language requirement.

The University of Chicago attracts almost 30 or more undergraduate students every year to study Sanskrit. There are five faculty members teaching Sanskrit. Ditto at Harvard University which has a full fledged department of Sanskrit. In the other US universities it is a part of the South Asian departments and very popular among the Indo-American kids.

However, the interest in Sanskrit persists even in those places where there is no demand. The last conference of the International Association of Sanskrit studies held at Turin, in Italy, according to Brockington was, an eye-opener. There were a number of Sanskrit scholars from the Eastern European countries, including Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria, and Russia. Unlike the US, most of these countries hardly have much of an NRI population. They hardly have any temples. No community funding, no involvement of local populations. Yet, the zeal for Sanskrit continues.

While we in India today consider Sanskrit a dead language, the Westerners consider it as simply a fascinating language, a language in which the genius of the human civilization was perfected to its fullest.

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While we battle each other on the streets on whether Sanskrit should be revived in the school curricula or not, top notch western universities have been busy churning one esoteric dissertation after another on Panini's *Ashtadhyay* and comparing Bhartihari's and Patanjali's grammatical logic.

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The wonderful structure of Sanskrit is better than Latin.

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Reviving Sanskrit Teaching

By Mohan Gupta
http://www.newsindia-times.com/20010622/viewpoint01.htm

The British tried to enforce cultural slavery on Bhartiyas by gradually diminishing the importance of Sanskrit study. The condition steadily deteriorated even after our independence and Sanskrit gradually effaced from the syllabus of studies. This neglect of Sanskrit is to such an extent that many people started saying that Sanskrit is a dead language. Believing what the Bharatiya people say, most of the world also started treating Sanskrit as a dead language. Attempts are also being made by pseudo-secularists to eliminate residual Sanskrit in all its forms not only from the curriculum of studies in Bharat but also from our lives. During British colonial rule Macaulay, who was entrusted by the British government to formulate a plan for education in Bharat, and who was himself ignorant of the values of Sanskrit, had the cheek to say, " A single shelf of a good European library is worth all the native literature of Bharat and Arabia." He wanted to introduce an education system that would be effective to Europeanize Bharat — in morals, in intellect, in taste, in opinions" so that Bharatiya shall remain Bharatiya "only in blood and color, but British in their behavior and thinking." The modern policy makers of education in Bharat are no thing but shameless offspring of Macaulay and are apish imitators of his policy. So we find all around us that English medium schools are mushrooming everywhere and the younger generations are being nurtured in an atmosphere of a peculiarly mixed up obnoxious culture.

Witness the arduous travails of the descendants of Macaulay together with the Left intelligentsia bearing fruit — a hell lot of schools and colleges enriching the future generation of Bharat with complete details the facts and foibles of British royalty and relieving them of the burden of bulky Puranas or encumbrance of the likes of Kalidasa, Tulsidas, Tukaram, Kabir and many other Bharatiya saints. This way they truly honor Macaulay's vow.

The greatest adversaries of the attempt to "Bharatiyakaran and spiritualised education" by Murli Manohar Joshi, are the descendants of these "Brown Sahibs", the secular politicians, the journalists, the top bureaucrats, in fact the whole westernized cream of Bharat. And what is even more paradoxical is that most of them are Hindus. It is they who upon getting independence, have denied Bharat its true identity and borrowed blindly from the British education system, without trying to adapt it to the unique Bharatiya mentality and psychology; and it is they who are refusing to accept "an Bharatiyakaran, nationalization and spiritualization" of Bharat's education system, which is totally western-oriented. And what Bharat is getting from this education is a youth, which apes the west.

We have reached a stage where, in the name of secularism, a determined effort is made to denigrate India's culture and national heritage and even to decry Sanskrit as Hindu and Brahminical language. Secularism is equated with anti-Hinduism; ergo, the teaching of Sanskrit would be tantamount to undermining secularism. Consider what The Hindu newspaper said on this subject: "The unique role claimed for Sanskrit in fostering cultural unity would be contested sharply not only in the context

of the Bharatiya historical experience but also in terms of deeply divided caste perceptions which would reject Sanskrit because of its perceived association with Brahmanical hegemony". What the writer says, in sum means, is that Sanskrit should be relegated to the ditch presumably along with the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, Aranyakas, not to mention the writings of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti to attain secular nirvana. According to pseudo- secular people, the right place for our culture apparently is the dustbin.

As Sanskrit has not got its rightful place in Bharat, and many non-Hindi speaking states are not prepared to accept Hindi as the national language of Bharat, English language is having a sway on whole of Bharat. English is being taught from grade I in some states of Bharat like West Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra and many more. If Sanskrit is not to be taught in schools, what else should be taught in its stead to prove our secularism: Arabic? Chinese? **And if Bharatiya students, studying in Bharat, are not to be taught the Vedas and the Upanishads on grounds that would be "communal" where are they to learn of their own heritage: at Harvard? in Chicago? Bonn where there are excellent centers of Sanskrit learning?**

Sanskrit is the one common national inheritance of Bharat. The south and the north, the west and the east have equally contributed to it. Sanskrit belongs to all Bhartiyas. No part of Bharat can claim it as its exclusive possession. All the three major Hindu philosophic concepts were formulated in Sanskrit by 'southern' - Madhva (dvaita), Sankara (advaita) and Ramanuja (vishishtadvaita).

The first thing that Bharatiya children should be taught is the greatness of their own culture. They should learn to revere the Vedas, they should be taught the genius of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, they should be told that in this country everything has been done, that it was an unsurpassed civilisation, when the west was still mumbling its first words, the Bharatiya civilisation reached heights, which have been since unsurpassed civilization. They should be taught early that Bharat's greatness is her spirituality, her worldwide wisdom. Bharat's Dharma, her eternal quest for truth, should be drilled in the child from an early age. And from this firm base, everything then can be taught - from the most modern forms of mathematics, to the latest scientific technologies.

Sanskrit is not only the richest and most scientific language of the world. It is the highest repository of our Shastras — the Shruti, the Smriti, Puranas, Ramayana, Mahabharata etc. The wisdom of age-old civilization and culture of Bharat has been enshrined in Sanskrit and it establishes proper discipline in the life and elevates man to divine order. Sanskrit is eminently the storehouse of all the effulgent truths of our long enduring civilization.

Sir Monier-William made a lengthy and learned introduction to his monumental work: Sanskrit-English Dictionary. In his introduction he wrote, "By Sanskrit is meant the learned language of India - the language of its cultured inhabitants, the language of its religion, its literature and science - not by any means a dead language, but one still spoken and written by educated men by all parts of the country, from

Kashmir to Cape Comorin, from Bombay to Calcutta and Madras" Upanishads are regarded as the highest form of human intellect and discipline by the best thinkers of the world. If education aims to build up the character of students and to impart highest intellect to them, can there be any better language than Sanskrit to teach students.

In a landmark judgment delivered in October 1994 the Supreme Court of Bharat held that without learning Sanskrit it was not possible to decipher Bharatiya philosophy, culture and heritage. All the classics such as Vedas, Puranas and Upanishads, and the most enlightening literature of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Banbhatta, Dandi etc. were in Sanskrit. The teachings of Sankracharya, Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, Nimbarka and Vallabhacharya would not have been possible without this language, said the judges of the apex court, laying special emphasis on the historical relevance of this ancient language.

Haunted by the ghost of secularism, many of our politicians are raising slogans against Sanskrit. But the learned judges of the Supreme Court, in their landmark judgment, have exploded the bogey of secularism and said in their verdict - "Secularism is neither anti-god, nor pro-god as it treats alike the devout, the agnostic and the atheist. We entertain no doubt in our minds that teaching Sanskrit alone as an elective subject can in no way be regarded as against secularism."

The rich treasures and high potentialities or capabilities of Sanskrit to cope with any situation need hardly be emphasized. This apart, it exerted a great unifying force on the entire subcontinent of Bharat over a very long period. It was Jawaharlal Nehru, who said, "Though the country was split up in the past into various political entities, the basic language Sanskrit and the thought it represented continued to keep and preserve Bharat as a whole."

Sardar K.M. Panikkar pointed out, "It is one common inheritance of Bharat. The unity of Bharat will collapse if it breaks away from Sanskrit and the Sanskritic traditions." Dr. Rajendra Prasad said, "Sanskrit provided perhaps the most important focal point from which emanated cultural and political unity." K.M. Munshi aptly pointed out that "without Sanskrit Bharat would be nothing but a bundle of linguistic groups."

Shrimat Upendramohan, founder of Shastra Dharma Prachar Sabha, in his book "Hindu Glory" had written, " The Sanskrit language is a marvel of marvels, an epitome of the people's genius, a picture of people's character, absolutely unique as a reflection of the perfect uniquity of the people of this land, of its social structure and of its Dharma. The vastness of the language, the copiousness of its lexicons, its fluidity or the capacity to embrace the existent and the non- existent equally marks out the Sanskrit language as the language of languages, the language of the Gods (Deva Bhasa), the language of mere mortals, with their restricted notions, limited wants and closed outlook." He had also lashed out strongly when a move was made to dethrone Sanskrit

from its glory and to deprive it of the status of a compulsory subject up to

matriculation as early as in 1936. Protesting strongly against this move, he made inflammatory arguments in his booklet - “Sanskrit Animus Begotten of Sin” - to prove that the: “The real objection to Sanskrit is that it is the greatest enemy of sin; that you can be brilliant master of Mathematics, Science, English, History etc. and yet be as sinful as your heart may desire. But Sanskrit with its inexorable Law of Karma, with its Hell and places of torment for sinners, who wish to live in the present and forget the future, who try to lull themselves in the belief that their own vicious Karma will not pursue them relentlessly in after-life, who hug to their fond bosom the disgraceful delusion that their sins will not be visited on their sinful heads.” He could see with his Divya Drishti (Divine Foresight) that Sanskrit was the sine-qua-non for Bharat’s life and culture and for the pursuit of her noble traditions.

Almost all the seats of power and authority as well as the commoners in Bharat are getting involved in corruption and crimes of all sorts. The police officers, highly placed administrators, the ministers and even the judges are reportedly involved in various crime and corruptions. What is the root cause behind this all-pervading corruption? Is it poverty? Surely not! It might be affluence, but surely not poverty. The charges are overwhelmingly against those who belong to the affluent and powerful sections of society. The financial scams that are sucking the country dry are far beyond the reach of the poor.

The Hindus as it was acclaimed by Col. Sleema, “never told a lie to save their reputation, property or even life.” The question that presents itself how such a deep-rooted faith, protecting the Bhartiyas through millenniums could die so fast almost suddenly, within a span of about fifty years after independence. The answer lies in English language and western education. The present education curricula in Bharat are un-Bharatiya, colonial, unrelated to our ground realities and needs, totally soul-less and devoid of ethical values. The colonial Macaulay system has produced Bhartiyas of slavish mentality. Self esteem and national pride which have been prevalent in Bharat since time immemorial, has been destroyed by the English education. It is because of British education system and worthy education ministers of Bharat that Bharat has the largest number of illiterates and will remain so as long as Macaulayites are at the helm of Bharatiya education affairs.

Macaulay had very little regard for Hindu culture, religion and education. The other major harmful effect of English education is that the pedophile people of western world rush to India for finding young boys and girls for their sexual pleasures as due to English language, pedophile people find the things much easy to manage in Bharat. They find their preys quite easy due to prevalent English language in Bharat.

Sayeed Naqwi wrote a few years back in **The illustrated Weekly of India**, **“May be if Sanskrit had been designated the official language of the country there would have been none of the rabid opposition to it as there is to Hindi, the country would have a unifying language and may be a national soul.”** The Commission headed by Radha Krishan and Kathori had strongly recommended the teaching of Sanskrit language in whole of Bharat. Sanskrit, which en- captures in it the eternal verities and soul entrancing truth and is rich with effulgent flow of

knowledge and wisdom, is the greatest builder of character. So, in these dark days of corruption and rampant crime, revival of Sanskrit is absolutely necessary.

It is stupid to argue that Sanskrit - the most scientific language evolved by man - could not have become the national link language because everyone would have to learn it. Only two percent of Jews could speak Hebrew when Israel was born. Now everyone, literally everyone, reads and write Hebrew. This is how nations are made great. As a people, we have denied ourselves a common Bharatiya language and have therefore lost our moorings and spirit. Till Bhartiyas quit their slavish mentality, they will not get respect anywhere in the world.

Let it be said in loud and clear terms: Present-day education is largely barren and soul- less. It calls to heaven for correction, and secularists are not the ones to fill in the lacunae. Those of us who are contemptuous of our past cannot be trusted to make amends for the future.

As regards teaching of Sanskrit which is a classical, not Hindu language, the point may be made that it will be hard to accommodate it within the three language formula, but can't a provision be made that instead of Hindi or English, students may be encouraged to learn Sanskrit which is the gateway to all our ancient writings? "Sanskrit ought still to have a future as the language of the learned and it will not be a good day for Bharat when the ancient tongues cease entirely to be written or spoken," admonished 50 years ago Sri Aurobindo, Bharat's great Sage and Seer. Let the scholars begin now to revive and modernize the Sanskrit language, it would be a sure sign of the dawning of the Renaissance of Bharat.

For maintaining the unity of Bharat and for finding its soul, Sanskrit must be made a compulsory subject from class III to X all over Bharat. There should not be any Bharatiya in the whole world, who either does not know Sanskrit or Hindi. It may indeed be said that one who knows Sanskrit is a better Bharatiya for he is in position to appreciate what every part of Bharat has contributed to it. Through Sanskrit we get something added to us from every part of Bharat. Knowledge of Sanskrit, however imperfect is a necessity and not a luxury.

Sanskrit should be declared the national language and a vigorous program put in place to explore its tremendous riches.

If human resources development minister Murli Manohar Joshi has his way, Sanskrit will become a compulsory language till the 12th standard. Joshi an ardent votary of Sanskrit has said, "We are discussing the possibility with the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) and the Central Board of Education."

Joshi has been talking of restoring the past glory of Sanskrit ever since he took charge of the human resources development ministry and his statement came before an International Conference on the subject. Joshi said that some states has already given Sanskrit the attention it deserved. He claimed that Haryana had made the language compulsory till the 12th grade, but said some states have ignored it. "There are states like Rajasthan which are interested in promoting Sanskrit and others like

Kerala and West Bengal which have totally sidelined the language," he said.

At present, Sanskrit is not part of three-language formula adopted by the government since the 1960s. Schools usually teach the subject between class VI and class VIII. From the 9th standard, students are given the option of choosing between Hindi and Sanskrit.

However, it will not be easy to push through Sanskrit in higher classes. "According to the policy document, Sanskrit is not part of the three -language formula," said Arjun Dev, a former NCERT faculty member.

Joshi said it was now "well established that Sanskrit is the most highly acclaimed international language." But, unfortunately, some Marxist academics were dismissive about the subject, he said, when pointed out that a section of teachers in schools and universities saw no glory in popularizing a subject that has no functional value.

Sanskrit is not only one of the most magnificent and precious heritages of our country, it stands absolutely on its own merit as the greatest language of the world. In fact, it is the most perfect literary instrument developed by the human mind and it is amazingly rich, efflorescent, resourceful and capable of expressing any idea strongly, clearly and precisely.

Haunted by the ghost of secularism, many of our political and intellectual leaders dither to accord the rightful importance that Sanskrit deserves for its much wider use in every field. To be precise, Sanskrit, which is one of the greatest heritages of all Bhartiyas alike, does not claim to be the language of any particular religious group. It is common property of all Bhartiyas.

In a landmark judgment the supreme court of Bharat declared in 1994 that, "Sanskrit occupies a unique position as the mother of all Aryan languages and its pursuit is absolutely necessary for nurturing our cultural heritage." Exploding the bogey of secularism, which was raised against the introduction of Sanskrit studies, the learned judges appropriately said, "Secularism is neither anti-god or pro-god, as it treats alike the devout, the agnostic and the atheist. We entertain no doubts in our minds that teaching of Sanskrit alone as an elective subject can in no way be regarded as against secularism."

The strongest argument for retaining and promoting Sanskrit studies, however, is the indisputable fact that it carries with it a dignified sense of values, the eternal verities and soul entrancing truths and the highest wisdom, which are the greatest builders of character. All out revival and propagation of Sanskrit is, therefore absolutely necessary to keep in check the cankers of moral degeneration. As it is one of the most precious treasures and the common inheritance of all Bhartiyas, it is the duty of all Bhartiyas to protect, preserve and propagate Sanskrit and to re - establish it in its pristine glory.

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Podium: Sanskrit in today's world

By Dr V. R. Panchamukhi

http://www.pragna.org/lss03303.html

The fact that the Sanskrit language, the rules of its grammar and the shabdabodh are of great utility in the development of computer language has been acknowledged by many computer experts in USA and Europe. Computer experts such as Dr Riq Briggs, Dr Vyas Housten and Dr David Lavin have written extensively bringing out the usefulness of the Sanskrit language in developing computer software. There are also many Indian experts and institutions, like the CDAC, which have been researching this subject of the use of Sanskrit in developing computer software. We can go to the extent of putting out a statement that if you want to learn a computer language then learn the Sanskrit language. However, this field has not received as much extensive support and development as it deserves.

The usefulness of Sanskrit literature for modern times can be demonstrated in two ways. Firstly, by unravelling the basic knowledge and wisdom that is contained in Sanskrit literature to the world, and by working out new theories and paradigms of knowledge that can be built on the basis of the principles laid down in Sanskrit literature.

Even though the knowledge of Ayurveda forms part of Sanskrit literature, there have not been many initiatives to demonstrate its validity to the modern world through modern means of validation and communication. The schism that exists between the traditional Ayurveda and the modern world, is responsible for the absence of pro-active initiatives for safeguarding the advantages of indigenous knowledge. The Ayurvedic world should establish R&D centres, adopt the modern approach of validation, pilot testing, etc. and complete the paper work for patenting their unique formulations.

For this purpose the institutional facilitation for preparing the traditional world to interact with the modern world and also facilitating patent registration, pilot testing and commercialisation need to be strengthened.

In order to eliminate the negative attitude towards Sanskrit from our midst, we must remove the fear that Sanskrit is a difficult language. In this context, the commendable work being done by a voluntary organisation called Sanskrit Bharati to conduct Sanskrit conversation classes deserves special mention. Such programmes should be conducted on an extensive basis in different parts of the country.

Here are five ways for bringing Sanskrit to the centre-stage of our cultural and intellectual pursuits. We should :

1. Encourage basic research on the linkages that exist between Sanskrit and science and launch innovative activities to bridge the gap between Sanskrit and the Modern World.

2. Encourage research and debate the application of Sanskrit in the development of computer software for language processing.

3. Produce documentaries and TV serials in simple Sanskrit for telecast.

4. Set up computer based networking among Sanskrit institutions and Sanskrit manuscript libraries for improving the communications among Sanskrit scholars and researchers. The Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati, proposes to launch a SANSK-NET Software for this purpose.

5. Finally, we should change the teaching methodology and launch innovative schemes for teaching people Sanskrit conversation.

(Excerpt from a broadcast talk by Dr V. R. Panchamukhi, Chancellor of the Rashtriya

Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati, courtesy The Hindustan Times, March 13, 1999)

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Some of the most forward-looking engineering students in India will soon be learning the ancient language of Sanskrit. The decision by the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Delhi** to offer science courses based on Sanskrit teachings.

Ancient Indians are credited with having made amazing discoveries in astronomy, architecture, medicine and other fields. They had a unique method of calculation, which is now called Vedic Mathematics. (For more refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture**).

Most of the information of that age was recorded in Sanskrit -- a language that hasn't been widely used in a thousand years.

Our notion of science comes from (the) West, in the same way that our notion of education, politics, literature, et cetera, come from the West," said Wagish Shukla, a mathematics professor at IIT, Delhi, who is also a Sanskrit scholar**.**

"We have become an intellectual colony of the West under amnesia, regarding the knowledge society we were.

"The problem today is that inputs from Sanskrit are disenfranchised from our education. For instance, when a student wants to understand a particular issue, he or she is debarred from finding out what Vedanta or Nyaya or Mimamsa (ancient Indian knowledge bases) has to say about it."

(source: **wired.com**).

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Indians in Israel-led study on Sanskrit poetry

Jerusalem: **Two Indian experts are part of an ambitious Israel-led project to chart the literary evolution of two millennia of Sanskrit poetry, or 'kavya'.**

"Since the discovery of Indian poetry by Western scholars in the 18th century, several histories have been written, but the story of Sanskrit's poetic evolution remains largely untold," said H.V. Nagaraja Rao of the International Sanskrit Research Centre at Mysore University.

"We have only a very rudimentary idea of major thematic shifts and stylistic breakthroughs of the 'mahakavya' tradition that held sway in the golden era of Indian literature between the first and 12th centuries -- epitomised in the works of the famous fourth century Indian poet and playwright Kalidasa," Rao told IANS.

"Our aim is to map the crucial social milieu of historic moments when innovative literary fashions were created, or when poets deviated from their predecessors to break new paths in 'kavya'," he said.

Rao is a Sanskrit grammar expert and is currently a research fellow at the Hebrew

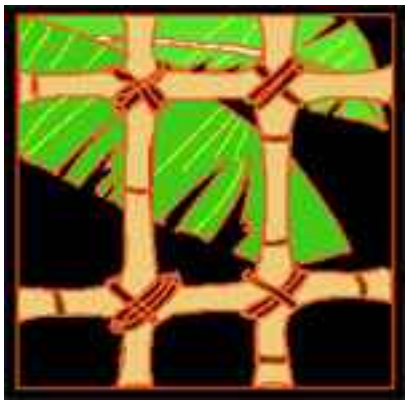
University's Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem. Rao is one of the 14 renowned Sanskrit scholars taking issue with the notion that 'kavya' poetic forms did not change through the centuries.

(source: **Indians in Israel-led study on Sanskrit poetry** - newindpress.com).

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Did You Know?

Ayurveda, a Sanskrit word means "The Science of Life"



Avurveda, a Sanskrit word meaning "The Science of Life", is a holistic health care which evolved on the Indian sub-continent some 4,000 years ago. Established by the same great sages who introduced the original system of meditation, yoga and astrology, Ayurveda surpasses all modern health care systems in it's range of therapeutic modalities. It uses a vast variety of natural approaches to health care including meditation, dietary recommendations, exercise, massage, allowing procedures and daily and seasonal regimens. Together they promote a state of physical and psychological well being by balancing the mind, body, behavior and environment. Ayurveda is the ancient Indian medical science, the origin of which can be traced back to the Vedas, which are the oldest available classics of the world. Vedas are the ancient books of knowledge, or science, from India.

Ayurveda is the only ancient independent scientific system of medicines. In the medieval period however, the system faced utter neglect at the hands of foreign rulers. Some authentic literature was destroyed in these turbulent times. Even then Ayurveda contributed to public health system due its safe and most effective herbal formulations and easy availability. The seers who initiated Ayurveda inducted in it sufficiency, soundness and sustenance, that is why it survived.

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ॐ नमः शिवाय

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

h o m e

s a n s k r i t

c o n t e n t s

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

Maharshi Bharadwaja is an august name in the pantheon of Hindu Sages who recorded Indian civilization, in the spiritual, intellectual, and scientific fields in the hoary past. The rishis transmitted knowledge from mouth to mouth and from ear to ear, for long eras. Written transmission through birch-backs or palm leaves or home made paper, are from this side of a thousand years. The word “yantra” is derived from the root yam, to control, and has been freely used in ancient India for any contrivance. Mechanical skills had produced in ancient India many accessories for scientific activities, such as surgical instruments in medicine, the pakayantras or laboratory equipment in medicine, Rasayana, and the astronomical yantras described in Jyotisa works. These belong to a different category. In the Mahabharata we hear of the Matsya-yantra or the revolving wheel with a fish which Arjuna had to shoot in order to win Draupadi in the svayamvara.

More interesting references are made by Valmiki to yantras on the field of battle, the continuity of which tradition we see later in the Arthasastra of Kautilya. The fortifications include equipment in the form of yantras. In Ayodhya 100.53, in the Kaccita-sarga, while enquiring about measures of defense, Rama asks Bharata whether the fort is equipped with yantras. Lanka, as a city built by Maya, is naturally more full of the yantras. The city, personified as a lady, is called yantra-agara-stani, informing us of a special chamber filled with yantras. (Sundara 3. 18). The Arthasastra of Kautilya is one of the books of culture which throws a flood of light on the particular epochs in which they arose. This work of 300 B.C.E. being a treatise on statecraft, speaks of yantras in connection mainly with battles, but also with architecture to some extent. An early work, a theoretical treatise and a text of great reputation, the Arthasastra forms our most valuable document on the subject of yantras.

And, as early as the Bhagavad Gita, the machine became an apt simile for man being a tool in the hands of the Almighty that sits in man's heart and by His mystic power makes man not only move but also delude himself into the notion of his being a free or competent agent.

“To deny to Babylon, to Egypt and to India, their part in the development of science and scientific thinking is to defy the testimony of the ancients, supported by the discovery of the modern authorities. - **L. C. Karpinski**

“Thus we see that India’s marvels were not always false.” - **Lynn Thorndike**.

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The following machines are to be made of a metal called Veera. An alloy formed by melting and fusing the three metals Kshwinka, Arjunika and Kanta (magnet), in three, five and nine parts respectively, is called Veeraloha or a metal namely Veera. When it undergoes shastraic processes, it cannot be destroyed by fire, air, water, electricity, cannon, gun-powder or the like. It will then be very strong, light, and of

golden color. The metal is specially meant for Machines.

Panchamukha Yantra

A machine of this name contains doors in east, south, west, north and top. Weighs 170 Ratals. Carries one thousand Ratals. By the help of electricity it can travel five Kroshas per hour. It is used as conveyance for men and in wars. Since the machine is conducted by the power of a spirit called Gaja it is named as Gajaakarshana Panchamukha Ratha.

Mrugaakasrshana Yantra

These are the machines drawn by such animals as oxen, asses, horses, camels, elephants and so on.

Chaturmukha Ratha Yantra

This machine has faces or openings on four sides. Weighs 120 Ratals. It can be conducted with any oil, preferably that of coconut shells, or with the help of electricity. Travels six Kroshas per hour. Used for traveling, wars, and transporting things.

Trimukha Ratha Yantra

This Machine weighs 116 Ratals. It has three doors, downwards, upwards and on one side. It can carry a weight of 600 Ratals. It is conducted with the help of oil extracted from knotted root of Simha-Krantha, and from that extracted out of the stalks of a kind of grass. If such oils are not available, electricity may be made use of. It is used for the purposes that the above machine, viz. Cahkra-mukha-Ratha Yantra is used.

Dwimukha Yantra

It weights 80 Ratals. Doors to east and west. Conducted by a wheel fitted with screws. Travels three Koshas per hour. Can carry a weight of three hundred Ratals. Used for the above purposes.

Ekamukha Ratha Yantra

This machine has only one door. Weighs 48 Ratals. Carries two hundred Ratals of weight. Travels with the help of oil extracted from the seeds of Kancha-Thoola or Sovlaalika or by electricity: speed 1 Keosha per hour. Used for the above purposes.

Simhaasya Ratha Yantra

This machine presents a front of a lion’s appearance. Possesses two doors. 75 Ratals in weight. Carries a weight of 50 Ratals. It can travel both on land and air. It has the quality of expanding and contracting. Used for the above purposes.

Vyaaghraasya Ratha Yantra

This is modeled after a tiger. Possesses wings. Weighs 64 Ratals. Carries 200 Ratals of weight. It travels in air expanding its wings with electric power, but contracting its wings with steam power. It is used for the above purposes.



Dolamukha Yantra

This is modeled after a litter. Contains two doors. Weights 50 Ratals. Carries 148 Ratals. Travels three Kroshas per hour. Conducted with the help of the electricity and an oil, viz Shilyusha extracted from wine.

Kurmamukha Ratha Yantra

This is modeled after a tortoise. Contains small doors. Weighs 32 Ratals. Used for only spying.

Ayah – Prasaarana Yantra

Out of those that are conducted by electricity this is one which travels on iron line spread on earth. It may be constructed to contain from 40 to 80 wheels. It resembles the railway train somewhat, weighs 4000 Ratals. Carries twenty-five thousand Ratals. Travels three Kroshas per hour with the power of electricity. It is used in transporting men and goods from place to place.

Panchamukee Yantra

This machine has five faces. Weighs 115 Ratals. Carries twelve thousand Ratals. Carries twelve thousand Ratals. Has another machine which enables the five doors to open or shut. Conducted with electricity. Speed four Kroshas per hour. Used for the above purposes.

Eka Chakra Yantra

This contains only one wheel. It is modeled after a trap. Weights 105 Ratals. Carries 800 Ratals. It is given motion and kept in motion by its wheels being worked by bellows. Travels three Kroshas per hour.

Trimukhi Yantram

This machine has three faces. Contains three compartments which can be separated. Weights one thousand Ratals. Travels on water. The three compartments are so arrayed that it can travel with the second compartment if the first is damaged, and if the second also gets damaged, the third compartment can safeguard the contents, by separating them as may be necessary. Should the topmost apartment be in a dangerous predicament, it can rise into heavens and travel in the air. Uses as above.

Jrumbhala Yantra

This machine has the door below. It is modeled after a shut umbrella. The covering is made of thick water-proof cloth which is manufactured out of the juice of the five trees or Pachavarga Kasheeree Vruksha. Weighs 42 Ratals. Carries 300 Ratals. It can expand into the shape of a tent by working a screw inside. So also it can contract into the former shape by working another screw. Appears like a flag. Used for secret wanderers like spying. With electric power or with the help of its wheels turned by bellows it can travel six Kroshas per hour.

Goodha Gamana Yantra

This machine can accommodate only three persons. Weighs half a maund. Appears like an ordinary tower. Contains five keys. Can travel on land as well as air. Its motion is almost invisble. Can travel eight Kroshas per hour with the power of an oil called Sinjurika. Used for secret travels.

Wyrajika Yantra

This machine is made of glasses of abhraka or mica. There are sixteen doors. Weights three Ratals. Carries five Ratals. Appears like a sparking light and as such none can know that it is a machine. Should anyone go near it, the sparkling light produced by turning an inner key will kill him. Can travel on water as well as on land. With the electric power of solar rays it can travel twelve Kroshas per hour. Used for journeys, in wars and in dispatching money.

Indranee Yantra

This machine is constructed with paper, manufactured out of grass belonging to Maunjavarga; the 3rd, 9th, 11th, 22nd, 30th and 42nd classes of grass are known as Pishangamunja, Pingala Munja, Rajjumnunja and son on. This machine cannot be destroyed by fire or water. It is exceedingly light and strong. It can travel 15 Kroshas per hour with the help of wind-worked wheels. Carries 100 Ratals.

Vishwaavasu Yantra

This machine has two doors. Weighs 148 Ratals. Carries three thousand Ratals. With the help of steam it travels two and a half Kroshas per hour. It can go both forward and backward. It can be expanded or contracted. Contains seven keys. Used for the above purposes.

Sourambhaka Yantra

This machine has three storeys. There are secret seats for 400 people to sit in each of the three storeys. The seats are not ordinarily visible. The storeys can alone be perceived. Weights 230 Ratals. Carries thirty-six thousand Ratals. It travels with the help of electricity or steam, or with the help of spirits of seventh kind of wine. Can go 32 Kroshas per hour. Useful in carrying men and things in warfare.

Sphotanee Yantram

This machine has only one door, weighs 50 Ratals. Carries 200 Ratals. Sails on water. Just like a bubble of water, sometimes it can rise above water and at times it can dive underneath water. Moves with the power of steam or of spirits of Kanajala Kshaara. Travels four Kroshas per hour. Used by marine spies.



Kamatha Yantram

This is modeled after a tortoise. Weights 500 Ratals. Carries eight thousand Ratals. Contains two doors. Travels under the surface of water. Used for the above purposes.

Parvathee Yantram

This is modeled after a lotus. Contains four doors. Weighs 69 Ratals. Carries 800 Ratals. A pole is fixed in the middle to contain keys inside to expand and contract the machine just like a lotus opens and shuts. With the help of the power of steam or electricity it cant travel 24 Kroshas per hour. Used in voyages to distant islands.

Thaaraamuckha Yantram

This contains a face of seven keys, sparkling like stars. Twelve doors. Weights two thousand Ratals. Carries twenty-five thousand Ratals. Out of the seven keys, if the first is pressed, a melodious music accompanied with every kind of musical instrument will be heard by those that are inside: if the second is pressed, dramatic scenery and action will be visible: by pressing the third, a stream of fresh water flows amidst the occupants, so that they may make use of water as they please: by pressing the fourth, plates with flowers, scents, plantains, camphor etc. will be ready before the occupants so that they may worship God: by pressing the fifth, plates of excellent food will be ready before them; while they are taking their dinner, the plates turn round through wires: by pressing the sixth: by pressing the seventh beds will be ready for all. Should the keys be kept as they were everything will vanish. With the help of steam or electricity it can travel four Kroshas per hour. Used for the above purposes.

Rohinee Yantram

This is modeled after a hollow bamboo and is of bamboo color. Weighs three thousand Ratals. Carries fifty thousand Ratals. Contains five hundred compartments in which gun-powder, bullets, weapons etc. can be preserved. Though fire breaks out nothing will be burnt or damaged, because the fire is suppressed by the nature of the metal with which it is composed. With the help of steam or electricity, it can run six kroshas per hour. It is used chiefly in wars.

Raakaasya Yantram

From the machine a glorious light will flow out just like moon-light once in three hours. This light illuminates a distance of sixty four Kroshas by which everything that lies in its range will be made clearly visible. Weights one ratal. In the machine there is a wheel turning to right round and round just like the Sun. Can travel on land, water and in air. Useful in finding out objects from afar off. With the help of spirits of sixteenth kind of wine it can travel four Kroshas per hour on land, eight kroshas on water and twelve Kroshas in air.

Chandramukha Yantram

This machine has a front like the moon's disk: it is dark in the middle and bright all round. Weighs 400 Ratals. Contains sixteen doors. Carries sixteen thousand ratals. Contains five storeys and sixty-eight cylinders. These cylinders are useful in filling the five kinds of smokes, the seven powers, thirty-two kinds of powders and forty-eight kinds of gas. When they are in those cylinders no harm is done to them. This travels in paths dug out inside the earth. Travels with the help of spirits of 13^{th} quality of wine. Speed sixteen kroshas per hour. Used in wars.

Anthaschakra Ratham

This is modeled after the crooked rod of a litter. This rod, resembling the two angularly bent rods of an oil mill, will be turning round and round always. There are thirty two screwed wheels. This machine must be fixed to the earth. It is used in transporting elephants, camels, horses, men, conveyances and son, or binging them near from a distance. This can be done by working at the screws inside. This must be fixed in the fitth circle of the warfield.

Panchanaala Yantram

This is fitted by joining five cylinders. There are distillery machines in each of these cylinders. These distilleries are used in manufacturing not only oils, spirits, etc. but also smokes, powders and so on. Weighs 230 Ratals. Travels three Kroshas per hour with the help of spirits of 9th class of wine.

Thanthreemukha Yantram

The front of this machine appears like a trap of wires. Inside the machine there is a magnetic wheel in the center. Behind this, there are exact representations of lions, tigers and other fierce animals all made of wires. In front there is a magnifying glass of 103 rd class. By working at the keys, these iron lions, tigers and so on can be made to roar and pounce upon people that come near it. By doing so, none can go near it. Weights 80 Ratals. Carries thousand Ratals. With the help of the powers of spirits of the third class wine, it can travel four kroshas per hour. Useful in wars.

Vegineee Yantram

This is modeled after an umbrella. It can run very fast by turning the screws at the junction of wheels. Can accommodate only three persons. Travels 8 kroshas per hour.

Shaktyudgama Yantram

This is a machine which spreads the electricity in sky. It has five storeys. Contains big glass vessels (containers) in each of them. In the first storey, the glass vessels will be filled with tar mixed with coal. In the second, the glass vessels will be filled with sea-foam or lather with the extract of tin. In the vessels of the third storey, sulpjur with the oil of the seeds of Visha mushti will be filled. Those of the 4th, will be filled with the five essences of oils of the Pranaksharas. The five balls along with mercury, are fitted in those of the fifth. Wires from these five vessels are united as per shastraic principles. The vessels of the first storey must be filled with electricity and through this the vessels of other storeys must be filled. Through this it can spread in the sky. The machine weighs 32 Ratals. Used in constructing airplanes.

Mandalaavartha Yantram

This is modeled after a spinning top. Contains six faces and sixty-four screws inside. Weighs 68 Ratals. Carries eight thousand Ratals. Like a top it turns round the armies and crowds of people, round and round. It can turn round thrice, a distance of two kroshas in an hour, with the help of electricity and spirit of eleventh of class of wine. Useful in wars and in mutinies of people.

Ghoshanee Yantram

This is modeled after an immense serpent. Contains three coverings and 24 faces. It is filled with electricity. Contains also 148 cylindrical apartments to stock poisonous gas. By working at the inner screws, it can produce a noise equal to 32 thunderbolts. Emits poisonous gas as it travels. The sound thus produced will be heard for a distance of 14 ¼ miles. People near it die of the mortal effects of the deafening noise and poisonous gas. Those who are beyond eight kroshas of it will swoon. Weighs 116 Ratals. Carries six thousand Ratals. Can travel six kroshas per hour, with the help of electricity and spirits of 13th kind of wine.



Ubhayamukha Yantram

This machine possesses the same symmetry on either side. Contains sixty-four small holes or doors on either side. Contains a fresh water stream inside. Above that stream, there flows another stream of tar. In the middle there are oils belonging to seven varieties. Contains 71 keys inside. By working at these keys, the poisonous gases, powers or anything of the kind that is injurious to lives, will be swept off in the range of twelve miles (roughly) around the machine and purifies the atmosphere. Weighs 48 Ratals. Carries 108 Ratals. Travels five Kroshas per hour with the help of electricity or spirits of 27th class of wine. Use for purifying atmosphere whenever and wherever necessary.

Thridala Yantram

This is modeled after a three-leafed Bilwa patra…. Having three compartments. The first is square, the second is triangular, and the third is a hexagon in shape. Each of these compartments has two doors. Each compartment is provided with Peshanee Yantras. A Peshanee Yantra is one which grinds grain such as wheat into powder. Always filled with flour. This machine is conducted by electricity.

Thrikuta Yantram

This machine has two towers, like the peaks of a mountain. Each of these towers is one hundred (bahu) or yards in height. Each of the towers contains 32 keys inside. There are cylinders at every key. Above the towers there are flags and wheels. In front there are instruments to measure the cold. Indicates the weather, wind, sun-light, rain, thunderbolt, fall of stars and other future phenomena.

Thripeetha Yantram

This machine contains three bases. In the first, there is a machine having three heads like the elephant's, but possessing two trunks in each head. In the second there is a three-headed instrument, each of the heads having two trunks of Vyali animal. In the third there is an instrument which has three heads, each of which has the appearance of a rhinoceros with tusks. They can be fitted together or separated as required. The first of these Yantras can stop a stream of water, suck up water of the stream and thus change the direction of the stream. The second can tear mountain asunder and thus create passage. The third can bore a hole in earth, suck up water from down below, and jet the same out through the tusks above its head. Weighs six thousand Ratals. Carries 80 Ratals. Travels and works by the help of steam, electricity and spirits of 23rd class of wine. This machine is used in constructing roads in water and bridges, and in piercing tunnels across mountains and rocks.

Vishwamukha Yantram

This is a very spacious machine. In it there are twelve cylinders containing magnifying glasses. These cylinders are very big and they are fitted that they can be turned into any direction as may be necessary. Weighs 1800 Ratals. Carries forty thousand Ratals. There are two stories in it, which can be separated or joined together with the help of keys. Travels twelve Yojanas with the help of spirits of 32nd quality, steam or electricity. The upper storey can be separated and can be soared into heavens. By fixing the cylinders to it in the sky an area of 24 Yojanas with forests, countries, seas, cities etc become clearly visible, and a picture/photo of the same can be obtained. Used in traveling and so on.

Ghantaakaara Yantram

This machine appears as though seven almirahs are fixed together. Various kinds of wires, the essence or dravaka of the 16th kind of magnet, and many other dravakas are filled in it. There are two bells of bell-metal or white brass in each of these almirahs, and they are so fitted as to produce a terribly alarming sound just like the alarm of a clock. By the waves produced news of the world at large can be learned. Used in gathering information and in pictures.

Vishthrithaasya Yantram

The machine contains a widely open mouth. Weighs 76 Ratals. Carries 120 Ratals. In front of this machine there are five keys appearing as turrets. In the first turret there is a vessel of Chandra Kantha stone of the sixth class. As soon as the moon rises, water oozes in this stone vessel and it is filled. The same water is used by the men in the machine to drink. The other turrets attract the powers of cloud, stars and so on. Travels three Yojanas per hour with the help of spirits of the 14th class or electricity. Used in traveling. Etc.

Kravyaada Yantram

This machine contains three faces. Weighs a hundred Ratals. Carries ten thousand Ratals. With the help of steam it can travel nine Yojanas per hour. Used in traveling and in carrying goods.

Shankhamukha Yantram

A machine containing a five faced boring instrument and resembling a conch shell is called Shankha mukha Yantram. There are keys to expand or contract the machine whenever or wherever necessary. Weighs a thousand Ratals. Used in constructing wells, digging, deep pits or boring holes in mines. It can dig 213 bahus or yards in an hour.

Used also for the purposes contained in the description.

Gomukha Yantram

This is modeled after the face of a cow. Weighs 80 Ratals. Carries 700 Ratals. There is a constant flow of water through this mouth. Travels two Yojanas per hour with the help of spirits of the 20th class. Used in supplying water.

Ambaraasya Yantram

This machine appears like sky for those who look at it. Weighs 180 Ratals. Carries 2400 Ratals. Used in transporting elephants, camels, and so on. Travels 3 Yojanas per hour with the help of steam and electricity.

Sumukha Yantram

This machine presents a beautiful face of a crab. Weights 118 Ratals. Carries 1150 Ratals. Can travel with the help of spirits of the 14th class, steam or electricity. Travels two Yojanas on land, four Yojanas in air, and three Yojanas in water, per hour. Used in traveling and transporting goods from place to place.

Thaaraamukha Yantram

The balls that are made out of the metal found where stars fall, are called Thaaraamanies. A machine which contains such balls is called Thaaraamukha Yantram. There are three big cylindrical pillars in it. There is another smaller machine inside this machine. The smaller machine contains some draavakas or acids, electricity, some glasses and so on. There are keys at the bottom of the three pillars, above named. By working the first key a brilliant light just like the rainbow will be produced. By working the second key a brilliancy light just like sun-light covered by clouds will be given out. By working the third key smoke will be issued out like dew. When this machine sails on sea, it can take the photos/pictures of all machines and animals that travel or stay both on and under the surface of the sea. Used in finding out objects that are both on and under the surface of the sea.

Manigarbha Yantram

This machine is round or circular in formation. Inside the machine there are balls called Souraka, Paavaka, and so on which attract the heat of solar rays. Weights 64 Ratals. Carries seventy thousand Ratals. Contains twelve faces to allow solar rays in. Travels three kroshas per hour with the help of the spirits of the third class. Used in traveling and attracting the heat of the sun-light.

Vahinee Yantram

This machine contains 16 keys and twelve metallic cylinders. Is 32 feet in height and 11 feet in circumference. Underneath there are 48 boring instruments. There are 96 wheels which throw off the mud dug. There are 22 keys which dig up rocks. There are twelve instruments sucking water up. This is a machine to be fixed in earth firmly. The water thus sucked up flows like streams. This machine can dig earth as far as 82 thousand feet deep. Used in digging earth and sucking water up.

Chakranga Yantram

This machine is modeled after a trap. There are wheels with stones throughout this machine. By turning one wheel plenty of wind blows out. By turning one wheel plenty of wind blows out. By turning another water flows down. In this way there are wheels by turning which fire, steam, poisonous gas, dew, power, colors and so on are issued. By the turning of the wheels it travels two kroshas per hour. Used in many ways.

Chaitraka Yantram

This machine is modeled after a scorpion. There are 24 joints inside. There is a key at every joint. Every key is numbered and colored differently. Music, melodious instruments, conversation, photos and many other wonders will be produced according to the definite key that is pressed. Those who go near it to enjoy these wonders will be not only photographed of their appearance but also of their mind. Used in Bhedopaya or in conquering enemies of deceit.

Chanchupata Yantram

This machine is modeled after a bird with its mouth open. Contains four wings. There are five keys to each of these wings. Wires are to be connected to earth from its open mouth. As long as these wires extend in earth, so long the earth will have acquired a peculiar power by which people, if standing in this area will be benumbed. By working the keys attached to the wings the people who stand in the infected area will faint, or the earth will crack and so on, according to the work allotted to be done by the keys.

Pingaaksha Yantram

This is modeled after a litter.

Throughout the body of this machine it is full of green eyes. There is a button in every one of these eyes. This is to be firmly fixed on the summit of a mountain. It is 60 ft. long and 14 ft. in circumference. This is to be fixed in a town or city when it is surrounded by enemies. From this machine keys are arranged and fixed through wires underneath the surface of the earth to the extent of twenty-four miles, around the place. Inside the machine buttons are arranged and numbered for all these keys outside. By pressing the first button it will act upon the particular key and the gates of the fort will be shut. By pressing another the moats will get filled with water. In this way, by pressing the other buttons wonderful phenomena such as tremendous fumes of fire, floods of water, cyclones etc. will be created according to the defined work of each key. This machine is used in defending a city or country against strong

enemies when offensive and defensive actions are at an end.

Puruhootha Yantram

This is modeled after a mrindanga, or musical instrument. It is 25 feet in height and as much in circumference. There is a machine called Shabda-sphota Yantra inside the machine. When the key is worked a tremendous noise bursts out equal to the simultaneous roar of 63 fierce lions. Used as per the nature of its work.



Ambareesga Yantram

This is modeled after an inverted earthen pot. 46 ft in height and 23 ft. in circumference. Contains keys resembling the feet of tortoise on all four sides. Travels in water 6 kroshas per hour with the help of Chakra Bhastrika. Used in finding the things on land under the surface of the seas and bringing them up.

Bhadraashwa Yantram

This is modeled after a horse. It possesses a tail of 38 ft. in length. Weighs 54 Ratals. It gallops like a horse with the help of spirits of 32nd class. Possesses three horses' speed. At the top of there are three-faced keys. When it is set to work by the key it goes on galloping just like a horse in a circular way. Circles a distance of twelve Yojanas per hour. While in gallops, brilliant sparks of light will come out and destroy all dew or fog covering that area and clear the atmosphere. Used in places and times of dew, where and when the dew obstructs the view.

Virinchi Yantram

This is like a globe in appearance. Around it there are 32 wires of 80 ft long and 40 ft in circumference, both in front and back of the machine. There are three keys to these wires. By working the first key, it becomes loaded with powder and bullets. By working the second it gets ready to the aim. By working the third it fires. It rends the mountains asunder to an extent of 24 feet per shot. Used in constructing tunnels in mountains and rocks.

Kuladhar Yantram

This is modeled after a crow. Contains three beaks like those of crows. Inside there is machinery of electricity and so on. At the top there are keys resembling small snuff boxes in which round buttons are inserted. When this machine is fixed on rocks and set to work it expels with the help of its beaks, slabs of stone as per desired dimensions. Cuts out 22 ft. stone in an hour. It is used in cutting stones.

Balabhadra Yantram

This is modeled after an inverted metal boiler. 64 feet long and 16 feet wide. On either side there are 16 ploughs 16 ft by 4 ft. wide, fixed. Each plough contains two wings. At the beginning and end of them there are turning screws. Inside there is

electricity or steam boiler. There are 24 keys above the machine. At the bottom of everyone of these keys are wheels. By the side there are 32 screws. As soon as they are pressed the machine goes on ploughing land. When the above 24 keys are set, the machine begins to run. Goes 3 Yojanas per hour. Ploughs an area of 3 Yojanas by 64 feet, per hour. The depth of the mud turned up in the land is 3 feet. Used in tilling the land.

Shaalmali Yantram

This machine is square in shape and white in color as of the flower of acaria Shireesha. At the top there are sixteen keys each intended for a definite work. By turning the first key, there appear a pair of hands the trunks of elephants and they can hold a weight of hundred Ratals. By working the second key that weight will be placed wherever necessary. The other keys are intended to carry up weights from deep water, and to arrange pieces of stone, timber or the like in or above water in constructing bridges or so. It can also bring down weights from a height of 200 feet.

Pushpak Yantram

This is crescent in formation. It is provided with many cradles suspended to it. There are 14 of them on each of the sideways and 8 in the middle, suspended. In those of the right hand side there are machines resembling pigs, while in those of the left wing there are sawing machines. In those of the middle there are screwed wheels suspended to chains. There are two wheels. This machine is to be in a place where timber is to be cut and sawn. If the first key of the upper wheel is turned, the above said pigs come down one by one. Bu working the second screw the pigs fall at the trunk of trees, beat them and cut them with tremendous noise and produce enormous quantity of smoke and fire. This fire spreads to the extent of 16 miles around, burns up all waste matter on land and clears the area. By the action of the fire on trees, the oil and so on will be extracted and stored up in bottles placed at the bottom of those trees. The heat of the fumes on the fire renders all the trees in that area soft like a plantain. The leaves of the trees fall down. By working the third key some more pigs come down and roam about that place exhaling tremendous breaths. Owing to this wind blown the ashes of that area will be swept off and the land cleared. In the same way, if the key on left side be turned, the saws from the cradles come down one by one. By turning the first screw of that wheel the saws will get themselves ready at the place. of the trees where they are to be sawn. By working the 3rd screw, the saws will go back to their cradles and from them pairs of hands like the trunks of elephants will come down. These pairs of hands will collect the pieces of timber that are sawn down. This machine weighs 180 Ratals. Can travel in forest with the help of steam power. It is a machine to be fixed to the earth. It can saw 3200 ratals of weight of timber per hour. Used in hewing and sawing timber in large quantities.

Ashtadla Yantram

This machine is modeled after a lotus containing 8 petals. Under each of these petals there will be an enclosure. In each of these enclosures. In each of these enclosures there will be the 8 things viz. smoke, electricity, water-vapor, air, Rushakam, Vishasaram, Manjusham and Katusaram which are described in Meghotpati Prakaranam. There is the key in the center of the lotus. In it there are eight screws for the 8 petals. By working any screw the things that are in the connected petal will go high above and form a cloud. By working the central key fumes like solar rays will be given out. As soon as the heat of these fumes acts upon those clouds formed before, they begin to rain. This machine is specialized to get rain.

Souryayana Yantram

This is like a pillar 116 feet high and 58 feet in circumference. At the top there is a sieve containing holes and made of glass of the 96th class called Somapa. From this sieve in this pillar there are twelve machines in order. Above the sieve there is a covering of 97th class of glass called Somasya Darpana. Above this covering there is a glass wheel called Kumudinee containing spokes made of 98th class of glass called Chandrika Darpana. In the twelve points of this machine there are twelve upper screws and twelve lower screws. Bu turning the first screw, the contents of the machine such as electricity, cold fluid, Shaitya Drava, Sudha Mushee, Soonruta, Pushkalee, Pranada, Dravinaamrutha, Sooraneee, Jambaalee, Lulita, Vaachaklavee, Gacyoosha, rise up in the definite proportions. Through the cylindrical tubes which are fixed to the wheels of the sieve these powers pass and touch the glass covering above. By turning the electric screw then, the wheel turns 1192 rounds in a minute. Then a power called Someeya of the lunar rays is attracted by this wheel and it gets down through the sieve. Thus the power fills in the bottle below in the form of gas. It must be kept air-tight. Its use is this. When such limbs as head, hands, feet, of a person are cut off, the limbs are fixed to the right place of the body and the body kept in a box. The body must be wrapped in a covering of the bark of a plant called Vaarshneeka Valkala. When to such a body the above Somadrava gas is injuncted 5 Rajanikas, the body is resuscitated. This must be done within five minutes after the injury is done. Used in setting the cut limbs right, or resuscitating the persons killed, in the above manner.

Book used for this chapter

Diamonds, Mechanisms Weapons of War Yoga Sutras - By G. R. Josyer.

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Did You Know?

Kaliyugi Arjuna in Modern India



The tradition of ancient Indian archery is kept alive even today by a handful of display archers in the country. In the early years of the current century a famous archer from South India, nicknamed **Kaliyugi Arjuna**, shot a number of tigers and other wild beasts with his bow and arrows. Possessed of a powerful physique and an uncanny aim, he did great things with his favorite weapon, and for some time taught archery to the students of the Prem Maha Vidyalaya, Brindaban.

He could shoot four arrows simultaneously from the same bow and hit four difficult and different targets all at once. He made people put up spectacle frames fitted with silver rupees instead of glasses, which he shot down with two arrows of such an impeccably calculated force as to displace the little discs without injuring the man. He smeared exceedingly sharp arrow-tips with chalk dust and shot them at the bare backs of students with a perfect delicacy of control, so that they left only chalk marks on their tender targets without even grazing them. But he could also shoot powerful shafts that ripped through copper and iron plates. He could easily support a football in mid air for more than five minutes with a continuous shower of arrows. **Imprisoned for seditious activities during the first world war, under the British Rule, he died in jail.**

We have seen many of these feats repeated by another archer not many years ago. As well as performing many of the exploits of Kaliyugi Arjuna he could easily hit four thin sticks set upright in the ground at a fair distance with as many arrows discharged together from the bow. And he could also hit his target with his back turned to it, only seeing its reflection in a mirror.

In antiquity, when almost every able-bodied man tried to learn the use of the bow, the standard of archery must doubtless have been high, with not a few outstanding masters of the great weapon.

(source: **Ancient Indian Warfare with Special Reference to the Vedic Period - By Sarva Daman Singh** appendix).

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Guest Book

Hindu Epics such as Mahabharata have often been described as myths. Dwaraka was submerged by the sea right after the death of Lord Krishna. This was regarded as a grandiose metaphor, part of a story filled with great myths. In the early eighties an important archaeological site was found in India, at Dwaraka, the site of the legendary city of Lord Krishna. Now, it is discovered that the whole coast of western India sank by nearly 40 feet around 1500 B.C. E. Why is that the rediscovery of Dwaraka has not attracted the same degree of attention in the West, as that of ancient Troy by Heinrich Schliemann?

The first clear historical record is dated 574 A.D. and occurs in the Palitana Plates of Samanta Simhaditya. This inscription refers to Dwaraka as the capital of the western coast of Saurashtra and still more important, states that Sri Krishna lived here. The establishment of one of the four of his pithas at Dwaraka by Sankaracharya attests to the great religious sanctity the place must have attained by the eighth century A.D.

Dr. S R Rao has written: "The discovery of the legendary city of Dwaraka which is said to have been founded by Sri Krishna, is an important landmark in the history of India. It has set to rest the doubts expressed by historians about the historicity of Mahabharata and the very existence of Dwaraka city. It has greatly narrowed the gap in Indian history by establishing the continuity of the Indian civilization from the Vedic Age to the present day."

Here is a report about the latest excavations done by Dr. S.R. Rao of the Marine Archaeology Unit of the National Institute of Oceanography of India. Following this report are a few articles and images.

The Towering personality of Lord Krishna

Sri Krishna is a towering personality and it is difficult to separate the human aspect of his life from the divine in Krishna concept. He is a grand mystery and everyone has tried to understand him in his own way, according to his spiritual light or vision. The Yogis considered him to be the absolute truth, the Gopis the highest object of love, the warriors as an ideal hero, Kamsa as an object of fear and Sisupala as an object of hate.

Whether one thinks of him as an object of love or hate, one attains him. Yudhishthira attained him through friendship and Narada by devotion. Krishna is the embodiment of intellectual and spiritual glory. No other single idea has so much influenced the course of India's religion, philosophy, art and literature as the life and personality of Krishna. As a child he was wonderful, as a youth he was physically most perfect and beautiful. as an intellectual he was the very embodiment of Vedic scholarship and his teachings in the Gita embody the immortal message of desire less action, knowledge and single-minded devotion. "As a fighter he was without rival, as a statesman most shrewd, as a social thinker very liberal, as a teacher the most eloquent, as a friend never failing, and as a householder the most idea." It is with his help that the Pandavas were able to overcome all opponents and win the battle of Mahabharata.

In the words of **Annie Wood Besant** (1847-1933) was an active socialist on the executive committee of the Fabian Society along with George Bernard Shaw. "He (Krishna) is so fundamentally the God, who is human in everything, who bends in human sympathy over the cradle of the babe, who sympathizes with the play of the youth, who is the friend of the lover, the blesser of the bridegroom and the bride, who smiles on the young mother when her first born lies in her arms, everywhere the God of love and human happiness; what wonder that his winsome grace has fascinated the hearts of men."

(source: **Discourses on Hindu Avataras - By Annie Wood Besant**).



Krishna-kanhiya
*(source: **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India - By Colonel James Tod**).*

Sister Nivedita - **Margaret Noble** (1867-1911 wrote: "**The Grand Personality that towers over Kurukshetra** and enunciates the body of doctrines which all India knew....to be the core of **dharma** combines within himself the divinity of the Indian Shiva, the virility of the Greek Heracles, the simplicity of the Judian Christ, the tenderness of the Buddha, the calm, austerity and learning of any teacher of the Upanishads."

It is however, essential to note that the Mahabharata itself treats Krishna both as a God and as a man, so does its essential part of the Gita. (IX. II).

Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador in the court of Chandragupta Maurya (4th century B.C) makes the first reference to the deification of Vasudeva. He says that Heracles (who is closest to Krishna-Vasudeva) was held in high regard by the Sourasenoi (Surasenas) who possessed two large cities namely Methora (Mathura) and Cleisobora (Krishnapura, that is Vraja and Vrindavana). Apart from references by Megasthenes to the deification of Krishna-Vasudeva, Buddhist texts mention the existence of shrines dedicated to Vasudeva (Krishna) and Baladeva (Balarama).

Heliodorus, the son of Dia (Dion), a resident of Taxila had come to Besnagar as an envoy of the Greek king Antalikata (Antialkidas) to the court of Kasiputra Bhagabhadra during his 14th regnal year. Antialkidas is placed between 175-135 B.C. The Greek king Agathocles (2nd century B. C) was also devoted to the Bhagavata cult. The figures of Krishna and Balarama are

shown on his coins found in the excavations at Al-Khanuram in Afghanistan.



Stambha or the column had been erected in BC 113 by Heliodorus, a Greek ambassador to India, a devotee of Krishna/Vasudeva at Videsha. Heliodorus' Column publicly acknowledged in the most conspicuous way that Vasudeva, or Krishna, as the "God of gods."

1) Trini amutapadani‹[su] anuthitani 2) nayamti svaga damo chago apramado "Three immortal precepts (footsteps)... when practiced lead to heaven-self-restraint, charity, consciousness." From this **inscription** it is clear Heliodorus was a Vaisnava, a devotee of Visnu. He also had written on his column's inscription that "Three immortal precepts when practiced lead to heaven–self-restraint, charity, and conscientiousness." These three virtues appear in the exact same order in the great epic - **The Mahabharata**. (For more refer to **The Heliodorus Column - gosai.com**).

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The column was ordered by Heliodurus, a Greek or Greek-named envoy of the Indo-Bactrian king, Antialkidas. He came to the court of King Kasiputra Bhagabhadra, the ruler of the Besnagar area, from Taxila. **To celebrate his conversion into Hinduism a pillar was erected which is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. Heliodorus calls himself a devotee of Krishna/Vasudeva, one of the names of Visnu.** Such offerings were common in fulfillment of religious vows (thus 'votive' offerings) at that time. This same column has survived to the present, and is one of the primary pieces of evidence used to prove the existence of Vasudeva-Krishna (Krishna-Balarama) worship in the pre-Christian era. On the column erected in Besnagar in central India near Vidisha, north of Madhyapradesh State, at 113 BC (sometimes also dated 140/150 BC) he calls himself a worshiper of Vasudeva (Vishnu). This is the first known record that other than Indian-born person became a follower of Vishnu (Vaishnava).

"This Garuda-column of Vasudeva (Visnu), the god of gods, was erected here by Heliodorus, a worshiper of Visnu, the son of Dion, and an inhabitant of Taxila, who came as Greek ambassador from the Great King Antialkidas to King Kasiputra Bhagabhadra, the savior, then reigning prosperously in the fourteenth year of his kingship." (Transliteration and translation of this ancient Brahmi inscription was published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (London: JRAS, Pub., 1909, pp. 1053-54.)

Dr. S. Radhakrishan wrote: "The Bhagavad Gita is "both metaphysics and ethics brahmavidya and yogasastra, the science of

reality and the art of union with reality. The truths of spirit can be apprehended only by those who prepare themselves for their reception by rigorous disciplines"

Dwaraka had found a place in the texts on grammar, for **Panini, the great grammarian**, refers to Cakragirti, which is identified with Cakratirtha at the mouth of the river Gomati where Dwaraka is situated. The durgavidhana and durganivesa prakaranas of the **Arthasastra of Kautilya** prescribe the layout of a city. The description of Dwaraka in the Mahabharata and Jnata-dharma-katha as large, well-fortified and prosperous due to sea trade confirms hat it was a port city.

(source: **The Lost City of Dvaraka - By S. R. Rao** ISBN 8186471480 p. 1 -25).

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Dwaraka – The Importance of Heritage

Dwaraka has a special importance as one of the major Hindu pilgrim place, known as the capital of **Lord Krishna's Kingdom.** It is also an important historical monument. The region of the west coast, where Krishna was to settle the Yadavas was full of flowering and fruit-bearing trees. Here grew the nagacampas, grapes, coconut trees and many others. It was the land of the hunter Ekalavya. Dronacarya had also lived here. Krishna decided to built a new city here and laid the foundation at an auspicious moment. He named the new city Dvaravati. Much later the **poet Magha** in his Sisupalavadha, sarga2, describes in slokas 31 onwards, the city of Dwaraka, sloka 33 can be translated:

"The yellow glitter of the golden fort of the city in the sea throwing yellow light all round looked as if the flames of vadavagni came out tearing asunder the sea."

Literary texts like the **Mahabharata, Harivamsha, Sijupdlavadha and Puranas** contain traditions about foundation of Dwaraka, its planning and glory. Before the legendary city of Dwaraka was discovered some scholars were of the view that the Mahabharata being only a myth it would be futile to look for the remains of Dwaraka and that too in the sea. Others held that the Mahabharata battle was a family feud exaggerated into a war.



The Mahabharat war at Kurukshetra with Krishna as the charioteer to Arjuna.

Excavations done by Dr. S. R. Rao at Dwaraka prove that the descriptions as found in these texts are not to be discarded as fanciful but are to be treated as based on actualities as seen by their authors. **The architecture of the old Dwaraka of Shri Krishna is majestic and wonderful.** The great poet Premanand has in his "Sudama Charit" described its splendid beauty and majesty. Dwaraka is mentioned as Golden City in **Shrimad Bhagvad Gita, Skand Purana, Vishnu Purana and also in Harivansha and Mahabharat.**

Dwaraka on mainland which was one of the busiest ports of the Mahabharata Period met a sudden end due to the fury of the sea. After the Mahabharata War Krishna lived for 36 years at Dwaraka. At the end, the Vrshnis, Bhojas and Satvatas destroyed themselves in a fratricidal feud at Prabhasa but Krishna did not interfere to save them. The portends of destruction seen by Sri Krishna who advised immediate evacuation of Dwarakaare stated in Bhagavata Purana. Dwaraka abandoned by Hari (Krishna) was swallowed by the sea. The submergence took place immediately after Sri Krishna departed from the world.

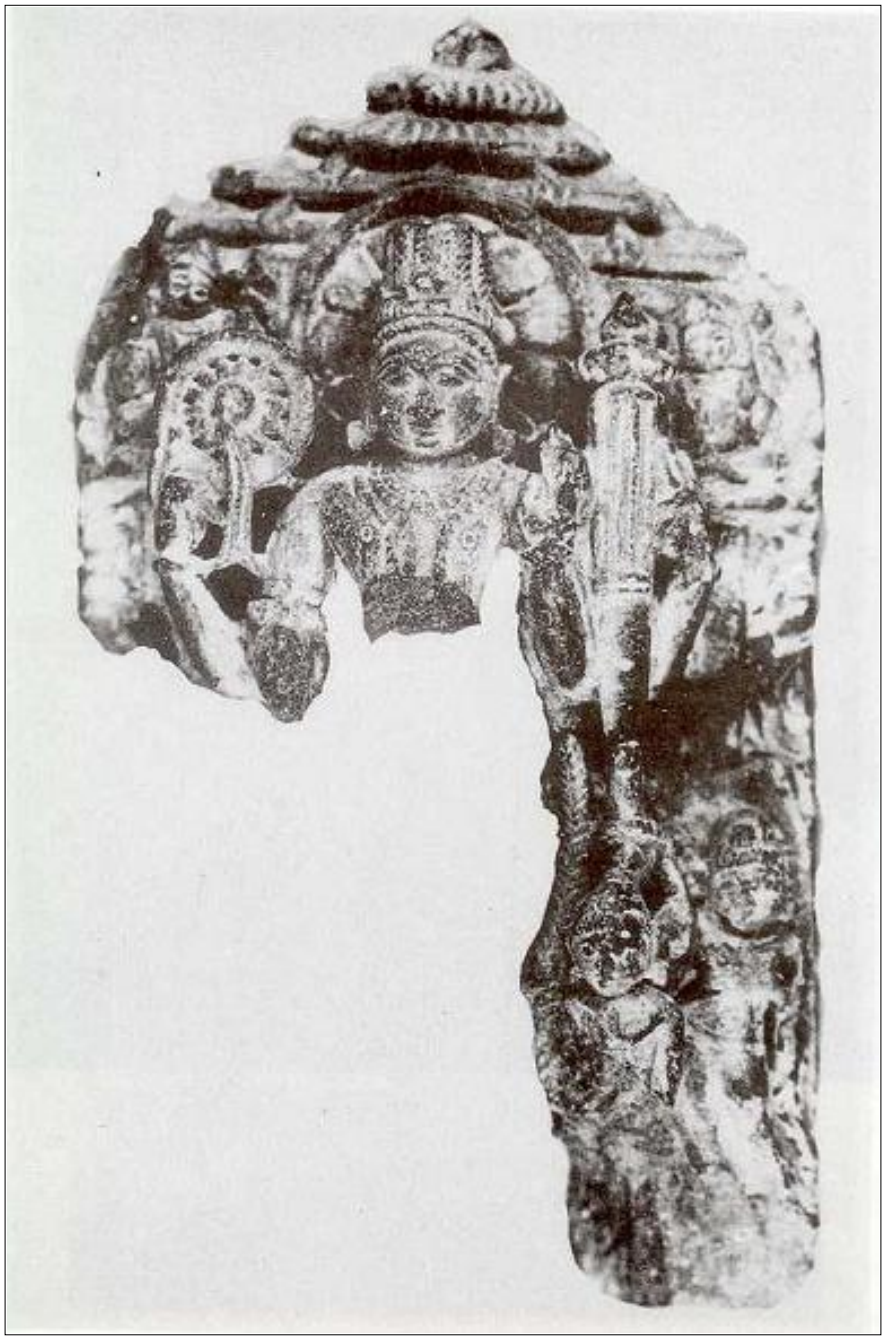
Construction of Dwaraka

Interesting descriptions about its construction are found in **Puranas**.

"Fearing attack from Jarasangh and Kaalayvan on Mathura, Shri Krishna and Yadavas left Mathura and arrived at the coast of Saurashtra. They decided to build their capital in the coastal region and invoke the Vishwakarma the deity of construction. However, Vishwakarma says that the task can be completed only if Samudradev, the Lord of the sea provided some land. Shri Krishna worshipped Samudradev, who was pleased and gave them land measuring 12 yojans and the Lord vishwakarma build Dwaraka, a "city in gold".

This beautiful city was also known as Dwaramati, Dwarawati and Kushsthali. Another story says that at the time of the death of Shri Krishna, who was hit by the arrow of a hunter near Somnath at Bhalka Tirth, Dwaraka disappeared in the sea.

The information and material secured through underwater excavation off Dwaraka corroborates with the references to the City of Dwaraka, made in the Great Epic Mahabharata and various other Sanskrit literary works. In **Mahabharata,** there is a specific account about the submerging of Dwaraka, by the sea which reads thus:



Sculpture of Vishnu from onshore excavation, Dwaraka.

"The sea, which had been beating against the shores, suddenly broke the boundary that was imposed on it by nature. The sea rushed into the city. It coursed through the streets of the beautiful city. The sea covered up everything in the city. Even as they were all looking, Arjuna saw the beautiful buildings becoming submerged one by one. Arjuna took a last look at the mansion of Krishna. It was soon covered by the sea. In a matter of a few moments it was all over. The sea had now become as placid as a lake. There was no trace of the beautiful city which had been the favourite haunt of all the Pandavas. Dwaraka was just a name; just a memory."

The importance of the discovery of Dwaraka lies not merely in providing archaeological evidence needed for corroborating the traditional account of the submergence of Dwaraka but also indirectly fixing the date of the Mahabharata which is a landmark in Indian history. The Thermoluminiscence date of the pottery from Bet Dwaraka which is also connected with the Krishna legend is 3520 years Before Present. Identical pottery is found in the submerged city of Dwaraka. Thus the results have proved that the account in **Mahabharata** as to the existence of a beautiful capital city of Dwaraka of Sri Krishna was not a mere figment of imagination but it did exist.

Besides the sea-ports, there were renowned cities which were washed away by the rivers on whose banks they were situated. We may cite here the case of Hastinapura and Pataliputra, situated on the bank of the river Ganga and falling victims to flood-fury. The Mahabharata mentions that Hastinapura was washed away by the Ganga and consequently the Pandavas had to migrate to Kaugdmbi. Pataliputra which was the premier city of the land *(agranag-ara)* and the test of the excellence of all the

cities *(samasta-nagarf-nikasdyamand)* in the words of Dandin, the author of the *DaSakumaracharita,* later became the worst victim of inundation. The submerged parts of these cities are to be treated as protected monuments and great treasures of our ancient heritage. If Dwaraka excavations throw a flood of light on the history of the city which was associated with the life events of Krishna, the under-water excavations of Ayodhya situated on the bank of the river Sarayu might yield valuable information about the historicity of Rama, his age and contemporary urban status.

(**note:** Lord Krishna was born at midnight on Friday July 27, 3112 BCE. This date and time has been calculated by astronomers on the basis of the planetary positions on that day recorded by Sage Vyasa. Mahabharata War took place on November 22, 3067 BCE. The Bhagavad Gita was compiled around 500 BCE. - source: **The Hindu Mind - By Bansi Pandit**).

Marine archaeology is a new subject and a little-explored one, mainly due to the lack of funds, scientific and other necessary equipment and even trained divers, besides a dearth of qualified marine archaeologists.



A pioneer in this field is **Dr S R Rao**, formerly of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and now with the National Institute of Oceanography in Goa. With all the existing limitations, he has done considerable work in the Bet Dwaraka region, where he found an entire submerged city, with rubble and masonry structures, several shell and pottery items and seals. The Mahabharata and Harivamsha describe Krishna,s capital Dwaraka and how it was submerged by the sea in great detail, a description that coincides in many ways with what the divers found. **Unfortunately, the doubting Thomases of our historical world, a school of Indian historians who regard Indian literature as, myth do not want to acknowledge this interpretation, in case it gives credence to the story of Krishna, whose capital was submerged by the sea.** It is ridiculous not to correlate archaeology and literature. Mythology is, the science of primitive man, his manner of explaining the universe. Records of natural phenomena and historical events ˜ invasions, migrations, etc. ˜ are stored as myths. If literature and archaeology had not been correlated, we would never have known the history of ancient Greece. **And how many people are aware of the fact that the only (ancient) temple for Matsya ˜ Vishnu's incarnation at the time of the great flood ˜ is to be found at Shankhodhara in Bet Dwaraka.**

(source: **Marine archaeology and the study of the past - By Nanditha Krishn -** newindpress.com).

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Further Excavations of the Submerged City of Dwaraka - By S.R. Rao - Recent Advances in Marine Archaeology

(Proceedings of Second Indian Conference of Marine Archaelogy of Indian Ocean countries.Jan1990)
Published for the Society for Marine Archaeology National Inst. of Oceanography India. 1991

Since 1983 the Marine Archaeology Unit of the National Institute of Oceanography is engaged in the offshore exploration and excavation of the legendary city of Dvaraka in the coastal waters of Dwaraka in Gujarat. Brief accounts of the findings of the underwater search for the lost city have appeared in **Progress and Prospects of Marine Archaeology in India, 1987, Marine Archaeology of Indian Ocean Countries, 1988, 40 years of Research - A CSIR Overview, 1988 and Journal of Marine Archaeology, 1990.** The present paper deals with the more significant results of further excavations in 1988 and 1989 and discusses archaeological and literary evidence for the identification of the port city of Dvaraka of the protohistoric period. It also

draws attention to the scientific data available from the underwater excavations in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Kutch.



A brief account of the discovery of the submerged city of Dwaraka of Mahabarata fame and the salient features of the structures exposed as a result of underwater excavation con-ducted at Dwaraka and Bet Dwaraka by the Marine Archaeology Unit of the National Institute of Oceanography under the direction of the author from 1983 to 1987 appeared in 1988 (Rao, S.R. 1988, 47-53). Offshore exploration of the legen-dary city at Dwaraka was resumed in 1988 and continued through 1990, further seaward of the **Temple of Samudranardyana (Sea God)** at Dwaraka with a view to trace the plan and extent of the port-city and the purpose of the massive stone walls built on the banks of ancient Gomati. It was also necessary to ascertain whether its architectural features were in conformation with the description of the city of Dwaraka given in the epic Mahabharata. A second object was to obtain more corroborative evidence for reclamation referred to in the epic. Thirdly, the nick point where the ancient Gomati river joined the sea had to be determined. Lastly, the cause of submergence of the city was another problem that needed further investigation.

Onshore and offshore excavation in the island of Bet Dwaraka which, according to tradition, was the resort of Sri Krishna was resumed in November, 1987 and continued through 1988. The main objective was to trace the landward extension of the submerged protohistoric township near Balapur Bay where, in the intertidal zone a submerged wall had been traced in the earlier expedition (Rao, S. R. 1988, 49).

Marine Archaeological expedition at Bet Dwaraka

The trenches dug by the Public Works Department in the 'Talao' area near Balapur village for building an earthen embankment were examined, but no remains of any protohis-toric settlement came to light confirming thereby that there was no landward extension of'the ancient town. Most part of the ancient township was swallowed by the sea and the mud flats of Balapur extending over I km seaward had buried the ancient relics. One Trench (A) to the south of the Old Cus-tom House, and the other itrench (Al) in the intertidal zone at the toot of the Custom House mound were sunk to estab-lish the sequential relationship between the two sectors of habitation. (Fig. 1) The short duration of 3 or 4 hours at low tide when land was exposed near the shore, rendered excavation in ::Iavev deposit very difficult. Even so, a rubble foundation, 35 cm broad, and a few sherds of a large storage jar lying on the floor of the house were exposed in Trench (Al). Several worked columella of conch shell found lying in a line suggested that the house belonged to a shell-worker. Excava-tion had to be abandoned after digging to a depth of 20 cm because of high water table in lowest tide also. Trench Al was however extended on the west and the extension was marked XA1, but no structure came to light. Layer I of trench Al is surface humus, layer 2 consists of fine grained silty sand mixed with shingle and layer 2A, where shells and pottery are found, is darkish clay. No pottery was found in layers 2 and 2A of XA I.

A trench '2 x 2 m was laid above the rain gully in the Custori-. House mound to ascertain the cultural sequence. In all, 10 layers were distinguished. Layers I to 4 upto lm depth yielded Muslim glazed ware and Ted ware of early medieval period. In Layers 5 and 6 in 1-1.3m depth the Red Polished Ware assignable to the first five centuries of the Christian era was found. One sherd inscribed with the letter *sya* meaning I of in Brahmi characters of the lst-2nd century A.D. was recovered Layers 8-10 yielded a few sherds of the Lustrous Red Ware and coarse red ware of the post-Harappan phase. Natural soil could not be reached. A large number of shell bangles and a couple of worked columella were found in the medieval and early historic deposits. A bead of li3h bone is the only find from the post-Harappan deposit. It was decided to postpone to a later date the excavation of the intertidal zone and- the mound further north of the earthen embank-ment of the Talao where Late Harappan pottery has been found.

Massive stone protection wall-cum-pier in BDJ VIII

In the course of exploration of the near shore and intertidal zones south of Balapur Bay on 4th January, 1988 Mr Rajan, diver-archaeologist and Mr Sirsath, photographer discovered a massive rubble wall exposed in lowest low tide and the site has been designated as BDK Vill (Pi. 18-19). The wall remains submerged at high tide under a column of 2 in water above its top. Excavation was conducted on both the sides of the eastern arm of this structure on the 9th and 10th January in order to expose

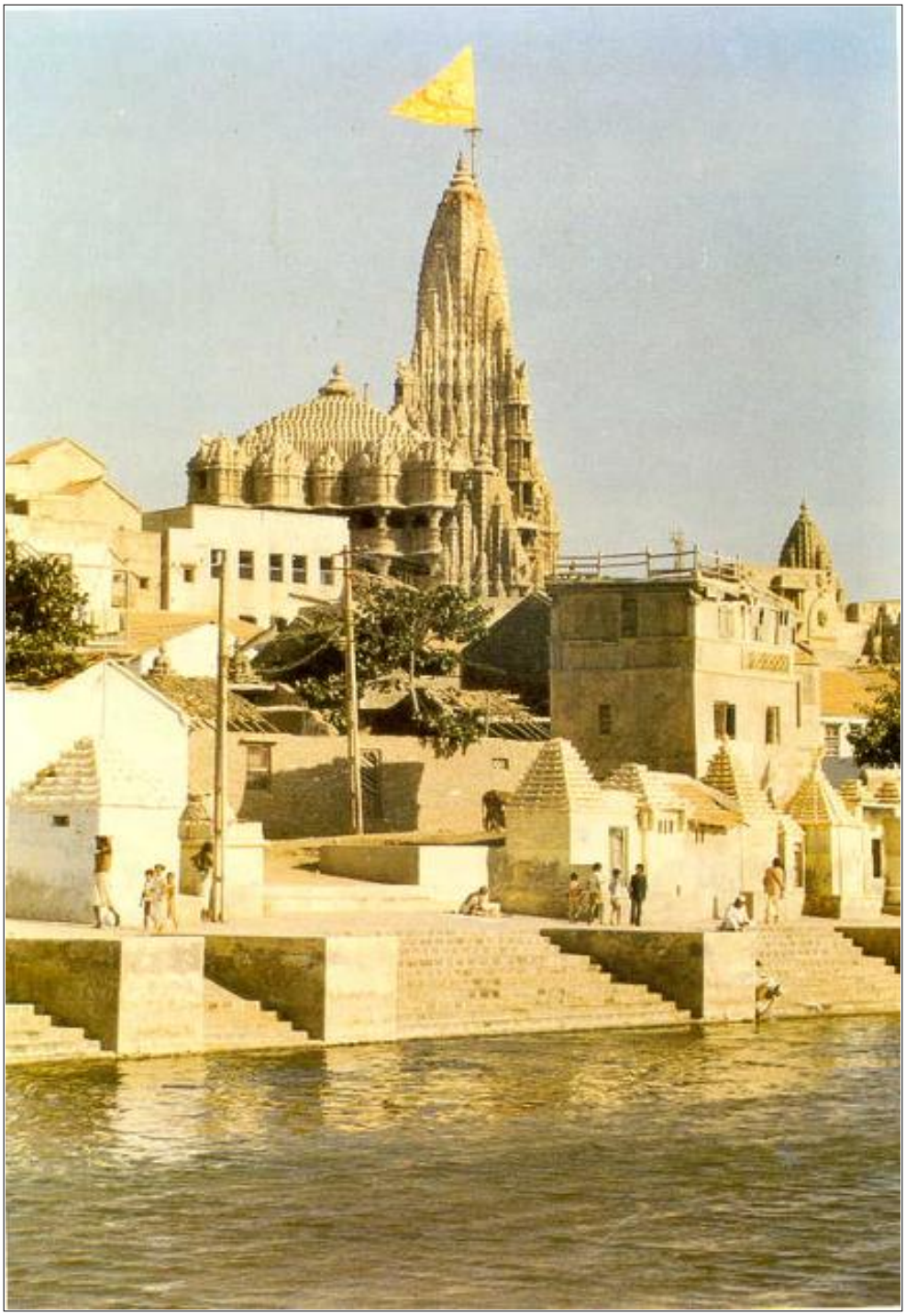
to full extent the height of the structure and determine ' the nature and purpose of constructing such a large enclosure which is 558 m in its peripheral length. (Fig.2)



Trenches measuring 1 x 1.2 m were laid on its southern and northern faces. In all, 9 courses of dressed and undressed stones, of which 4 courses are covered by silty clay deposit were traced The wall was constructed on the bed rock. The stone masonry is heavily incrusted with barnacles and other sea organisms. It is very difficult to remove the incrustation with-out chiselling it. Originally the wall must have been atleast 2.5 to 3 m high. Presently it is only 1.5 m in height. The enclosure wall is an irregular hexagon on plan. An interesting feature of construction is the use of wedge-shaped blocks of stone for the shell, while the core is made up of rubble-filling. That the structure is man-made becomes apparent from the use of dressed stones closely laid and also from the box technique of construction. The thickness of the wall at the base is 2.5m while the extant tapering top is 1.5 to 2m thick. The pottery found in the trench is coarse grey ware but heavily rolled resulting in the disappearance of the slip and decoration if any. Only one sherd of the sturdy red ware of the post-Harap-pan phase was found in the extremely small trench. Provision-ally the structure is datable to 15th century B.C. on the basis of the sturdy red ware. Within the enclosure there must have been very important public buildings - may be warehouses and other structures relating to shipping, for, not far from here are two rock-cut stipways for launching boats. The massive protection wall could have also served as a pier.

Dwaraka

The Research Vessel *Vedhavati* arrived on 31st December at Dwaraka duly equipped with diving gear, echosounder, heavy compressor, airlift etc. For the next three days Sri. Srinivasa Bandodkar, Chief-diver-photographer and other divers and diver trainees searched for and cleared the sub-merged structures of the ancient city exposed in the earlier expeditions. They were found partly disturbed and partly covered by sediments and vegetation. Swells and currents had disturbed a few blocks of the top courses of walls. They were photographed and marked by fresh buoys. New areas beyond 500 m seaward of the Samudrandrayana temple were explored and the thick growth of vegetation on ancient build-ings were removed. On 3rd January a small stone structure was found 200 m north of buoy 35, and the overburden of 2-3 m thickness was airlifted before exposing the topmost course of dressed stones. Lying nearby is a partly damaged bastion which is semi-circular in plan (PI. 20). The dressed stones used in its construction are l ' -2 m long 0.3 m thick. A lunate-shaped dressed block appears to be the *chandrtdild* (moonstone of a temple).



Dwarakadish temple on the river Gomati, Dwaraka

Two stone walls, one each near buoys 40 and 41, were laid bare (PI. 21-24). The stones used in the construction are I to 2 m long, 0.5 to 0.7 m wide and 0.3 m thick. All structures near here arc gridded and their position is fixed by sextant. Excavation in layer 3 yielded a sherd of a miniature bowl with everted rim in Lustrous Red Ware of Rangpur III type. The slip has how-ever completely disappeared and the core of the fabric has a pitted surface due to wave action. The sea became choppy and the currents strong from 15th to 21st January and the boats were heavily rolling. In an attempt to reach the shore the crew of the dingy was thrown out by heavy breakers but there was no serious injury to anyone. Underwater explora-tion was suspended for 3 days and limited search was underta-ken next 3 days. In the solstice (14th January) arbital move-ments seem to be responsible for the abnormal roughness of the sea with waves breaking 3ni high near buoy 19 and causing considerable damage to ancient structures in the sea bed. Taking advantage of the lowest tide - 0.12 (Okha) on 21st January the sea bed of nearshore zone front Samudra-narayana Temple to the Light House was surveyed. Some well dressed architectural members including a semicircular moonstone *(chandrafila)* of a public building were exposed 30m seaward of Samudrandrayana indicating the existence of an earlier temple. Two rock-cut channels were also expo-sed to the north of Samudranar5yana. A few iron rings fixed in the wavecut bench at the foot of Samudrandrayana indicated that small boats could be ferried through the rock-cut channels from the sea and river channel and secured to mooring rings in the early centuries of the Christian era.



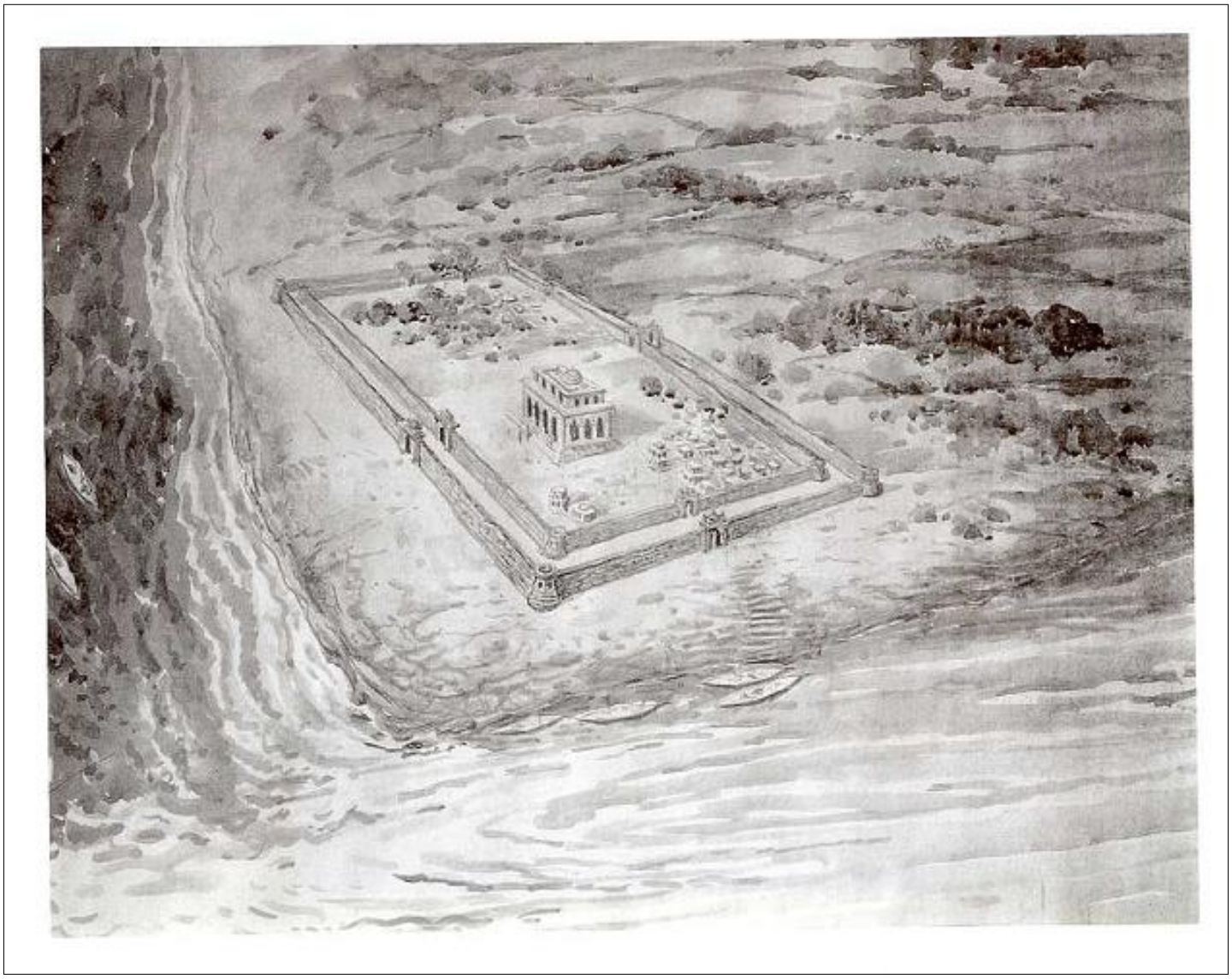
A pier-like structure was exposed on the left batik of the channel opposite buoy 35 and the construction suggests that it could be used as a jetty or quay on the river bank, for several triangular and prismatic stone anchors were found lying nearby. Further seaward a large area was searched manually and buoys 41 to 54 were placed to indicate the location of structures or anchors. On the left bank 3 anchors were found near buoy 53, one each near buoys 50 and 51 -and three more near buoy 55. Trench 15 was laid near buoy 53. Airlifting was done near buoy 54 for collecting samples. Layer 1 consisted of fine sand; layer 2 was slightly coarse sand, and layer 3 con-sisted of coral and shingle covering bed rock. The total thickness of sediment is I in. A slierd of a large sturdy jar and stein of a dish-on-stand were recovered from layer 3. Two bastions were exposed near buoy 59 on the right bank and Trench 12 was sunk here for obtaining stratigraphic evidence and pot-tery for determining tile age of the structures. Stone anchors found near buoys 45, 46, 47, 48 and 51 have been documented. A large single-holed semispherical stone base of a flag post (Fig. 3) was found *in situ* near buoy 48. It is 53 cm in diameter at the base and the height is 30 cm.

The larger triangular 3-lioled anchors are 63 to 95 cm in length, 43 to 50 cm broad at the base and 25 to 29 cm at the top (Fig. 4). The prismatic anchors are 1.2 to 2.3 m long, 33 cm broad at the base and are tapering at the top.

Excavation near buoy 35 yielded a copper *Iota* and a white marble statue with broken legs, but the rest of the body is missing. A pedestal of black stone with 4 pointed feet for em-bedding in the earth mty be an altar and it is doubtful if it was used as quern because there is no depression caused by rubbing Fartlier away near buoy 55 on the left bink a trench (15)was sunk and the sediments were removed through fanning action. It is here that a copper bell and brass parts of what looks like a miniature cliariot (PI. 26) were recovered.

The perforated arches might have supported a canopy of a wagon type chariot. As reverting was known to the Harap-pans it is no wonder if the metalsmith of protohistoric Dwaraka could also revet the bars and drive holes in the brass-like metal. The metal objects of the Dwaraka chariot are found to be made of brass. Unfortunately very little information is available on the antiquity of brass before 300 B.C. at Taxila and at Prakash in the late phase of NBP. The brass from Prakash is either copper-Zinc alloy (17.75% Zinc, remainder copper) or leaded brass (25.86% Zn, 8.34% Ph and remain-der copper). Lead was used in Lothal in 2000 B.C. as can be seen from two lead pieces one containing 91.42% and the other 99.54% pure. The sleeved axe of Lothal contains 96.27 copper, and 2.51% lead, while the grooved rod contains 57.75 copper, 9.02 tin and 3.31%. The advanced metal technol-ogy can be inferred from the use of iron stakes in Bet Dwaraka to which reference is made in the *Mahabharata.* Ancient Indian steel dates back to 600 B.C. at Rajghat (Bharadwaj 1984, 143), but iron technology was developed by 1500 B.C. at Dwaraka in Gujarat and at Gufkrol in Kashmir (A.K. Sharma in this volume).

The presence of several structural remains between buoys 51 and 55 and also between 51 and 53 necessitated gridding the entire area for purposes of preparing the site plan of the township. Further west near buoy 59 a stone pillar with a square base and cylindrical shaft was found in the seabed. It is indicative of the fact that a public building of religious or secular importance existed here. Two triangular anchors were found near buoy 58 and a single-holed anchor was traced near buoy 53.



Artist's view of ancient fortified Dwaraka in Kusasthali

In the absence of Mini Ranger III needed for very accurate fixing of positions, the sextafit was used and checked with the distances between structures measured manually. For instance, buoy 53 is about 1200 m from Samudrandrdyana and the bastion of inner gateway (str. 1) at buoy 35 is 200 m sea-ward of buoy 8 which itself is 200 m seaward of Samud-randrdyana. The bastion of the outer gateway is near buov 59. The position of buoys especially those marking bastions, gate-ways and protection walls had to be rechecked subsequently with the help of Mini Ranger III.

Two coils of steel wire lost by a boat in comparatively recent times were found near buoy 35. As they were heavily damaged their retrieval was not attempted. A large prismatic anchor 137 cm long was recovered from the station marked by buoy 46. Rajan took soundings at 50 m intervals along the banks of the Gomati channel and across it also for studying the gradient and width of the channel, but these had to be further checked with the echosounder readings at closer intervals.

Expedition 1989-90:

The main purpose of the expedition was to determine the limits of the submerged city and the nick point where the Gomati joined the sea 3500 years ago when Dwaraka was built. This could be achieved by echo-sounding, side scan sonar and shallow seismic profiling surveys Which could indicate anamolies and provide the bathymetric data. Simultaneously through optical and manual surveys the anamolies could be examined to distinguish man-made constructions from natural formations. It was also felt necessary to fix precisely the position of structures already discovered and determine the course of the ancient channel of Gomati river. The profiles would help to establish the shifting of the flow channel if any. The area covered in the course of the survey is 5 x 6 km upto 25 m depth so as to include a 'spit' referred to by Pathak (Pathak *et al* 1988, 58-62).



The MFV Sea Master and Sharda Devi were engaged for exploration and survey. A dingy with outboard engine ferried between the main boats and shore. At three locations namely A4, A5 and A3 along the right bank of submerged channel of Gomati anchors were found.

Southward of A5 a stone pillar and bastion were -located at the station P which is gridded. At 60' southwest of Dwdrkddhish-Samudran5r5yana transit line a bastion in situ (S4), a fallen bastion (S3) (PI. 24), a disturbed wall (PI. 25) and a large stone slab (S4) were found. Further south of S4 is another bastion (S2). These structures are in 7 m depth. Towards the west several anchors were discovered at stations A2, A8 and All, in 8m depth. Heavy growth of vegetation on the bastions and walls had to be cleared care-fully before photographing and plotting them. A very interesting feature of the masonry is the L-shaped joints in setting heavy dressed blocks of stone for constructing bastions in high energy zone (PI. 28). Even so a couple of bastions have collapsed, but others in deeper waters namely low energy zone are in situ. Three groups of structures at S2 were grid-ded. A spherical anchor with 2 holes is recorded at A12, about 70' NW of the grid. The following is the resume of anchors and structural remains found in the course of the present expedition:

Al fragmentary anchor

A2, A3, A8, A9, A10, All, A13 prismatic anchors
'A7 and A12 triangular anchors St, S3 wall
S2 bastion (fallen), S9 bastion in situ

Others S4 to S8 and S10 to 13 are dislodged architectural members, mainly large dressed blocks. Two iron anchors were found -near A13. One of them is 1.5m long and has 5 arms.

Geophysical Survey - a summazy of the results of Geophysical survey carried out by Vora's team has been received. The salient points of observation and recommendations of the team are mentioned briefly below (Fig. 5).

High resolution Marine Geological and Geophysical Sur-veys carried out off Dwaraka for marine archaeological pur-pose was aimed at finding direct or indirect evidences of the existence of relics of sunken ships and submerged ports beyond the area already surveyed by MAU. Another objec-tive was to suggest places for diving based on the data collected.

The surveys were carried out in December 1989 in 2 to 22 m water depth over an area of 5 x 2 km by echosounding, side scan sonar and shallow seismic profiling (Fig. 5); scale adopted was 1:5000.



The survey area was divided into two parts, north and south for convenience. In the northern part from Rupen port to Dwaraka Light House, 45 lines perpen-dicular to the shore were surveyed while south of Dwaraka Light House 22 lines parallel to shore were surveyed. The results of the survey indicated extension of Gomati for about 1.5 km in NE-SW direction and its channel is about 400 m wide. Apart from this channel, other submerged drainage systems were also noticed. Other Geomorphic features present in the area include scarps, terraces and pinnacles. Sonographs collected from the area show large tonal variations through-out the area which includes furrows of various sizes and directions, and. at times ripples, boulders etc. The channels of Gomati as revealed by echograms are highly significant. The present channel along the Gomati Ghat was not the original course of the river 4000 years ago. It was to the south of temple of Samudranardyana and the channel was wider. The river seems to have joined the sea through more than one channel and the structures so far traced lie along the central channel. Nearshore, the submerged Gomati bed shows a deep wide symmetrical V-shaped channel, either side of which is at the same elevation. A small channel formation is seen to the south. Bending of contours in the area in more than 13 m water depth towards shore in southwest direction indicates a deposital phase, while in lesser contours there is a strong erosional activity. The result is that many structures built of smaller fractional blocks are destroyed in shallower waters, while those built of heavier blocks to serve as piers, wharf, protection walls and jetty are only partly destroyed and buried under I to 2 m thick sediment especially beyond 12 m water depth.

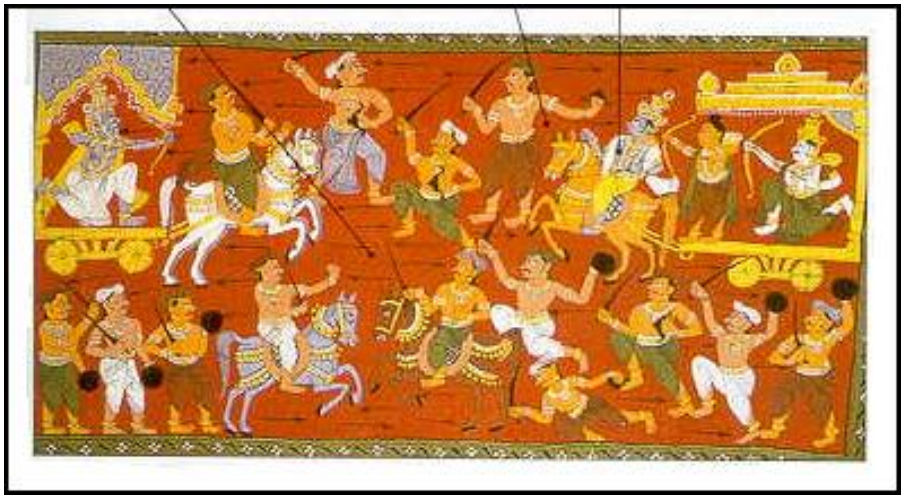
Though there are some anomalies present on the sea floor nothing more could be said about them until divers verified whether they were natural phenomena or man-made objects. Shallow seismic profiles showed no penetration in the area. However five locations were given to the diving team of MAU for direct inspection. At one such point a large iron anchor was found by diver archaeologists. Accurate position fixing of the five points with mini ranger had to be postponed to the next season as the sea became rough, but the position of some of the marker buoys, where structures were discovered by MAU was fixed with sextant. The map obtained from Dwaraka Municipality did not show accurately the present shore line and it is to be surveyed and redrawn for position fixing. On the left bank of Gomati the divers uncovered three arms of a large rectangular structure (Str. 5-6) and a corner bastion (Str 7) at buoys

68-69 and 70. Opposite the inner gate way on the right bank, the width of one of the submerged channels of. Gomati is 170 m. Further westward of structure 7, four 3-holed anchors were exposed.

On January 14, 1989 the wave cut bench and iron rings fixed in it were exposed a few metres seaward of SN at lowest low tide. A mooring pillar and a. fragmentary deity in black stone were recoverd from the rocky bed near the Light house.

On January 21, two rock cut channels meant for sluicing small boats were exposed to view between SN and Light House. The Iron rings and rock-cut channels belong to period 11, while the protection walls, and enclosures on either bank at buoy 35 and extending 500 m scawdfd belong to period 1. The farthest point of structural activity so far traced is about 1.2 km seaward of SN, but a plan of the city can be made out upto 800 m. A pier - like structure on the left bank where a plat-form which could be used for loading and unloading exists might have been the jetty for smaller boats. The terraced top of an escarpment nearly 1.5 km seaward of SN was the main anchorage for the ocean going vessels. That there existed a port-installation here is indicated by the collapsed building blocks lying scattered at the foot of the scarp but further examination of this scarp and another rock standing high further northwest will have to be made by divers for preparing the ancient limit of the port-town.

Discussion



Dwaraka was a city-state extending upto Bet Dwaraka (Sankhodhara) in the north and Okhamadhi in the south. Eastward it extended upto Pindara. The 30 to 40 meter-high hill on the eastern flank of Sankhodhara may be the Raivataka referred to in the *Mahabharata 2 . The general layout of the city of Dwaraka described in ancient texts agrees with that of the submerged city discovered by MAU. Four enclosures are laid bare; each one had one or two gateways (Fig. 6). The port Aramda (Arambhadvdra)* on way to Bet Dwaraka was the first gateway in the outer fortifications. The bastions flanking gateways of submerged Dwaraka resemble those of Kusinagara and Sravasti carved on the Gateways of Sanchi Stupa. The *prasada* referred to in the epic must be the high fort walls of Dwaraka, a part of which is extant. The epic says that flags were flying in the city of Dwaraka. This can be corroborated by the stone bases of flag posts found in the sea bed excavation. Umashankar Joshi is of the view that *antardvipa* in the region of Kugasthali referred to in the *Mahabharata* must be Bet Dwaraka (Sankhodhara). The *Bhagavata Purana* says that before leaving his mortal frame Sri Krsna put the ladies and children in boats and sent them to Sankhodhara. Hirananda Sastry also identified the *antardvipa of Mahabharata* with Bet Dwaraka.

The buildings built of smaller fraction stone blocks are razed to the ground leaving only small portions of the thick fort walls, bastions and protection walls (built with massive stones) which are too heavy to be moved by tides and cur-rents. From the structural remains in Dwaraka and Bet Dwaraka waters, it is possible to visualise that the city-ports were large and well planned. Every significant antiquity that corroborates a statement of the *Harivamsa* is the seal bearing the motif of a 3-headed animal representing the bull, unicorn and goat. The *HarivamSa* says that every citizen of Dwaraka had to carry a *mudra* as a mark of identifications The seal *(mudra)* found in the excavation belongs to 15th-16th century B.C.

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Legend of Dwaraka - By T.R. Gopaalakrushnan NEW

Krishna- the protector of Mathura, the lord of Dwaraka and the reciter of the Bhagwad Gita on the battlefield of Kurukshetra-is one of the most enduring legends of India. Are Krishna and Dwar-aka actual historical entities? For a majority of Indians, the answer is an unequivocal yes. Some archaeologists and historians too are now willing to accept that the common man's faith does have a basis in fact.

The strongest archaeological support comes from the structures discovered under the sea-bed off the coast of Dwaraka in Gujarat by the pioneering team led by Dr S.R. Rao, one of India's most respected archaelogists. An emeritus scientist at the marine archaeology unit of the National Institute of Oceanography, Rao has excavated a large number of Harappan sites including the port city of Lothal in Gujarat. In his book The Lost City of Dwaraka (Aditya Prakashan, Rs 1500), published in 1999 he writes about his undersea finds: "The discovery is an important landmark in the history of India. It has set to rest the doubts expressed by historians about the historicity of Mahabharata and the very existence of Dwaraka city. It has greatly narrowed the gap in Indian history by establishing the continuity of the Indian civilisation from the Vedic Age to the present day."

But there are archaeological finds that do attest to Krishna as a historical figure.



For instance excavations in Bedsa (near Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh) have unearthed the remains of a temple of 300 BC in which Krishna (Vasudeva) and Balarama (Samkarshana) are identified from their flagstaff. Krishna's son Pradyumna, grandson, Aniruddha and another Yadava hero, Satyaki, have also been identified.

A more recent historical record, dated 574 AD, occurs in what are called the Palitana plates of Samanta Simhaditya. This inscription refers to Dwaraka as the capital of the western coast of Saurashtra and states that Krishna lived here.**No one has so influenced the course of India's religion, philosophy, art and literature as Krishna.** Traditional belief is that Krishna lived in Dwaraka at the end of the Dwapara Yuga. Dwaraka, in fact, is considered one of the seven holiest and most ancient Indian cities. The others are Ayodhya, Mathura, Haridwar, Varanasi, Kanchi and Ujjain, which together are known as Mokshada-that which leads to salvation.

According to Hindu historical tradition, Kali Yuga began with the death of Krishna more than 5,000 years ago. The Puranas are emphatic on the cultural degradation that set in after the Mahabharata war, which is seen as one of the most important turning points in ancient Indian history. Krishna, according to traditional belief, participated in that transition.

"Krishna very much existed in flesh, blood and bones," said Madhav Acharya, archaeologist at the Haryana archaeological department. "It is difficult, if not impossible, for a thing like the Mahabharata to be believed till today in the same spirit and faith unless there is some truth to the story. And that truth is the power struggle, and the main characters. One of them was Krishna. The power struggle is not a myth. If the heart of the story is to be believed as a historical event, then Krishna too should be seen as a historical character."

For more of this article, please go to the link given below.
(source: **Legend of Dwaraka - By T.R. Gopaalakrushnan - the-week.com** - cover story June 1 2003).

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Underwater museum, in Dwaraka yet to surface
Friday January 8th 1999

India Abroad News Service BANGALORE - Nearly two decades after marine archeologists found the lost city of Dwaraka off the coast of Gujarat the state government continues to drag its feet on a proposal to establish the world's first underwater museum to view the remains of the city submerged in the Arabian Sea.



The proposal for the museum, submitted by the Marine Archeology Center of the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) in Goa, involves laying a submarine acrylic tube through which visitors can view through glass windows the ruins of the city said to have been be ruled by Sri Krishna, 3,500 years ago.An alternative suggestion is to have acrylic wells, to be accessed through boats, from which the remains can be viewed. Another proposal that remains on paper is for setting up a marine archeology museum of Dwaraka antiquities found in the sea.

Discovered in 1981, the well-fortified township of Dwaraka extended more than half a mile from the shore and was built in six sectors along the banks of a river before it became submerged. The findings are of immense cultural and religious importance to India.

"The search for the lost city has been going on since 1930," S.R. Rao, former adviser to the NIO who is still actively involved in the excavations, told *India Abroad.* "It is only after marine archaeologists started exploring the seabed near modem Dwaraka from 1981 that the structural remains of the city were found."

Rao said that if a fraction of the funds spent on land archeology were made available for under-water archaeology, more light could be thrown on Dwaraka, which had much archeological signifi-cance because it was built during the second urbanization that occurred in India after the Indus Valley civilization in northwestern India. Dwaraka's existence disproves the belief held by Western archeologists that there was no urbanization in the Indian subcontinent from the period between 1700 B.C. (Indus Valley) and 550 B.C. (advent of Buddhism). As no information was available about that period,

they had labeled it the Dark Period.

Among the objects unearthed that proved Dwaraka's connection with the Mahabharata epic was a sea engraved with the image of a three-headed animal. The epic mentions such a seal given to the citizens of Dwaraka as a proof of identity when the city was threatened by King Jarasandha of the powerful Magadh kingdom (now Bihar). The foundation of boulders on which the city's walls were erected proves that the land was reclaimed from the sea about 3,600 years ago. The epic has references to such reclamation activity at Dwaraka. Seven islands mentioned in it were also discovered submerged in the Arabian Sea.

Pottery, which has been established by thermoluminiscence tests to be 3,528 years old and carrying inscriptions in late Indus Valley civilization script; iron stakes and triangular three-holed anchors discovered here find mention in the Mahabharata.

"The findings in Dwaraka and archeological evidence found compatible with the Mahabharata tradition remove the lingering doubt about the historicity of the Mahabharata," said Rao. 'We would say Krishna definitely existed." What is needed, he added, is the political will to reconstruct the cultural history of the Vedic and epic periods of northern India.



The maritime museums at sites of ' wrecks and submerged ports are absolutely essential, and portable antiquities should be conserved properly, lie emphasized. If the proposal to have a maritime museum is accepted by the Gujarat government, it would be the first of its kind in India, he pointed out. Recounting the start of exploration for Dwaraka, Rao said, "We carried out the original survey with just four scuba divers, while the operation called for the services of around 200 divers and other staff." But for the work to progress now, more equipment is needed, besides funds and time, he warned, adding:

"We need two barges, one mounted with a crate, and equipment such as an airlift. We need 30 or 40 divers and engineers. The work should go on for at least six months and cannot be halt-ed midway."

According to Rao, the project would need at least Rs. 20 million ($476,000).Funds would have to be provided by the Gujarat government and its tourism department Other possible sources are the federal Department of Ocean Development (DOD), which organizes big projects such as expeditions to Antartica, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), which have not contribute much, Rao said.

"The findings in Dwaraka and archeological evidence found compatible with the Mahabharata tradition remove the lingering doubt about the historicity of the Mahabharata. We would say that Krishna definitely existed" - S.R. Rao.

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3. Dwaraka museum in Gujarat likely to throw light on Indus Valley civilization
Rediff on the Net

The proposed underwater museum at Dwaraka, the first of its kind in the world, and a marine archaeology museum will throw more light on the Indus Valley civilisation and enable researchers to peep into the history of the lost city of the Mahabharata era.



The Marine Archaeology Centre and the National Institute of Oceanography have jointly submitted a proposal with technical details for the preservation of the site to the Gujarat government. The Gujarat Government Tourism Corporation has held meetings with a foreign expert for promoting Dwaraka as a tourist destination, according to S R Rao, the president of the Society for Marine Archaeology.

The project envisages an estimated investment of over Rs 20 million. Unfortunately no follow-up action is forthcoming. The entire nation and even foreign countries are anxiously waiting for the preservation of the submerged city, which is not only of historical importance, but also of emotional interest since its founder was Lord Krishna, Rao said.

As per the proposal, marine acrylic tubes would be laid through which visitors could pass and view the remains of the historic city from windows. Acrylic walls could also be made which could be accessed by boats. Dwaraka, the submerged city in the Arabian Sea, off the Gujarat coast, is well connected with the other parts of the country. While most of Dwaraka is submerged in the Arabian Sea, tourist are attracted to the places which are not submerged -- Nageshwar Mahadev, Rukmani *mandir*, Shardapath and Dwarakashish temple. The mainland city was well-planned and boasted a good harbour. The full plan of the submerged city on the mainland has been ascertained and plotted on the basis of the individual structures discovered in six fortified sectors extending up to one km from the shore.

Dwaraka has been mentioned as golden city in the **Shrimad Bhagwat Gita, Skand Purana, Vishnu Purana** and also in ***Harivansh*** and **Mahabharata**. It is rated as the seven most ancient cities in the country. UNI

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Dwarka remains may soon be protected as underwater world cultural heritage site
By Rajesh Kumar
http://www.indian-express.com/ie/daily/20000714/ina14051.html

NEW DELHI, JULY 13: Old shipwrecks -- like that of the Titanic -- which have been lying buried under the sea with their precious treasure along with the submerged city of Dwarka off the Gujarat coast, for centuries, could soon vie for the status of an underwater world cultural heritage site.

Over 200 experts from 84 countries, who gathered under the aegis of UNESCO in Paris recently to examine a draft convention on the issue, unanimously agreed that underwater cultural heritage was in urgent need of protection from destruction and pillaging.

Currently, structures or properties lying under water can not claim the status of cultural heritage. The absence of any protective mechanism has left them open to pillaging and destruction by treasure hunters and curious deep-sea divers. The experts agreed that the definition of cultural heritage needed to be expanded in order to protect underwater heritage as well.

The submerged city of Dwarka is believed to be an important site having both historical and cultural value for India. Legend has it that the remains -- the wall of a city is clearly visible while the rest is yet to be discovered -- are in fact, that of the ancient city of Dwarka mentioned in stories of Lord Krishna.



The Gujarat government and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) are currently toying with the idea of creating a museum and an underwater viewing gallery once the structures have been protected. After that, Dwarka could also stake the claim for the coveted underwater world heritage status, UNESCO's South-East Asia office here said.

Experts agreed that salvaging operations did tend to be a free for all. Robert Grenier, director of the International Committee on Underwater Cultural Heritage of the International Council On Monuments and Sites, said that while salvage action gave people freedom to look for things, it disregarded the aspect of preserving cultural heritage.

Several British and French ships laden with precious treasure that had sunk on their way across the Atlantic ocean during their voyages in the 18th century have been plundered by the sea pirates for valuables. In fact, some of the ships that were believed to be of immense historical and cultural value for future generations have been completely stripped off all their components by pirates for their antique value. ``With rapid advancement in technology, deep-sea diving and gaining access to heavy articles buried with the shipwrecks has become easy and affordable for pirates. In the absence of any effective protection, these properties of immense historical and cultural value are being looted and vandalised," an expert from Canada said.

The wrecks at Louisberg Park in Nova Scotia off the Canadian coast are held up as a fine example of how the under water cultural treasures can also be protected with help of legislation and political will, much like other structures of the same importance. The French Ministry of culture too has come out with a comprehensive background material on the underwater cultural heritage that needs protection. The document also cites relevant laws under which they can be protected and how.

Representatives of the United Nations Division of Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea, the International Maritime Organisation, the International Seabed Authority and the World Underwater Federation, along with UNESCO, participated in the meeting.

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Dwarika - The Eternal City
By Brinda Ramesh
http://www.tourindia.com/htm/homepage.htm May 2001

Dwarka has always been the most important pilgrimage centre on the western coast of India. Situated in Saurashtra, at a point where the Gomti river meets and Arabian sea, it has acquired multifarious names down the ages: Dwarka- the gateway to eternal happiness; Dwaravati, Swarnapuri - the city of gold, and Swarnadwarika, the golden gateway. The last

three names derive from the fact that Dwarka, being the western gateway of India through which trade entered the country, was always prosperous and wealthy.

Ancient economics apart, Dwarka was and still remains a place of tremendous religious importance to Hindus. Legend associates it with Lord Krishna, who spent his early childhood and youth in Mathura, but then he slew the mighty Kamsa. For this, he and his tribe of followers, the Yadavas, were attacked repeatedly by Kamsa's father-in-law Jarasandh. Tired of these repeated wars, Krishna migrated with his entire clan of Yadavas to Dwarka which was a much safer place.

In Dwarka, Krishna is supposed to have built a mighty kingdom on a site selected for him by Vishnu's learned 'vahan', Garud. The city he built is supposed to have extended over 104 kms. It was well fortified and surrounded by a moat, spanned by bridges, which were removed in the event of attack by an enemy. According to legend, the gods assisted Krishna in the construction of this magnificent city.



Archaeological excavations have unearthed artifacts that prove that modern Dwarka is the sixth settlement of the name on this site. The earlier cities have been, at various times, swallowed by the sea. The waves of the sea still lap the shores of this famous town, lending scenic beauty to this important pilgrimage destination.

The Dwarkadhish temple, dedicated to Lord Krishna, is the focal point of all pilgrimages. Parts of it date from the 12th-13th century and others from the 16th, but the *Jag Mandir*, its sanctum sanctorum, is supposed to be 2,500 years old. The hall in front is richly carved and supported by 60 massive pillars, each one hewn out of a single stone slab. Many of the sculptures date from the Maurya, Gupta and Chalukya periods. Some of the subjects are of Jaina and Buddhist origin. The temple is 157 feet high.

Another important pilgrimage site in the ancient city of Dwarka is Gomti ghat. The myth attached to the original temple says that it was built overnight at the instructions of Vajranabh, the great-grandson of Sri Krishna, by the divine craftsman Vishvakarma. Archaeologists are undecided about the date of construction of the temple that exists now, but it is generally believed that it was rebuilt in the 10th or 11th century A.D after the original temple was destroyed, probably during the Muslim invasions.

Most of the temples and pilgrimage spots around Dwarka are associated with Sri Krihsna and the Vaishnavite tradition. However, the temple of Somnath, which is not very far from this place, is dedicated to Siva as Nagnath or Nageshwar Mahadev, and enshrines one of the twelve 'Jyotirlingas' which according to the Puranas manifested themselves as columns of light in different parts of the country. The magnificent temple that stands there now is a replica of the original temple.

The 13th century Arab source refers to the glories of the temple thus: "Somnath - a celebrated city of India situated on the shore of the sea is washed by its waves. Among the wonders of that place was the temple in which was placed the idol called Somnat. This idol was in the middle of the temple, without anything to support it from below or to suspend it from above. It was held in the highest honour among the Hindus, and whoever beheld it floating in the air was struck with amazement..."

Dwarka also has the distinction of being one of the four seats or *matts* established by the Adi Shankaracharya in the 8th - 9th century A.D, The other three are Jyotirmath, Jagannath Puri and Sringeri. The *matt* in Dwarka, known as Sharda Peeth, carries out extensive research work in Sanskrit and is home to many renowned scholars.

This then is Dwarka, centre of religion, mythology, history and scholasticism, its shores everlastingly cleansed by the eternal seas.

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Dwarka site pre-dates civilization

http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon2.asp?cat=\story6&d=FRONT_PAGE

An archaeological site, dating back to 7500 BC and older than hitherto oldest known human civilisations including those found in the Valley of Sumer, Harappa and Egypt, was discovered by a team of Indian marine archaeologists in the Gulf of Cambay off Gujarat coast.

"For India, it was the first time that such an important discovery was reported from near Dwaraka site, the off-shore region where underwater archeological exploration was in progress," Union Minister for Science and Technology Murli Manohar Joshi said at a crowded Press conference here on Wednesday.

The early civilisations known to mankind hitherto were in the Valley of Sumer around 3,500 BC, Egyptian Civilisation (3,000 BC) and Harappan (2,500 BC), explained Dr Joshi, adding that all the findings have been alongside a palaeolithic age river course traced upto nine km south of the Saurashtra coastline.

The antiquity of some of the artefacts, discovered by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) which carried out a series of surveys in the area, from the site such as the wood log reflects a very ancient culture in the present Gulf of Cambay, which may have got submerged subsequently, Dr Joshi said.



Carbondating on the log, carried out by the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany (BSIP) and the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI), suggested that it could belong to 7,500 BC and these settlements were probably the oldest neolithic sites discovered in the country, he said.

He said a multi-disciplinary team comprising of NIOT, National Institute of Oceanography, Archeological Survey of India, Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, BSIP, NGRI and specialists from universities were constituted to conduct further studies. The team would be provided with most modern equipment and infrastructure to carry out the studies, he said.

"Further investigation of this area was important as it might throw some light on the development of human civilisation, besides having a bearing on the Indian history," said Dr Joshi.

The recovery of remnants of wood logs by the NIOT was an indication of existence of a very ancient culture in the area which got subsequently submerged. The surveys had also revealed significant seismic activities and more studies were needed, Dr Joshi said.

Following the last year's discovery of indications of possible settlements, the NIOT scientists undertook a confirmatory survey in November using advanced marine underwater survey technologies with side scan sonar and sub-bottom profiler.

The materials collected at the site included artefacts, possible construction elements with holes and studs, pot shreds, beads, bones with significant signs of human activity in the area.

A detailed examination had revealed riverine conglomerates at a water depth of 30 to 40 m between 20 km west of Hazira near Surat.

Prof S N Rajguru, former Head of Department of Archaeology, Deccan College, Pune, who was also present, said the discovery could have been a coastline settlement when the sea level was low.

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4. Photos from Marine Excavations at Dwaraka

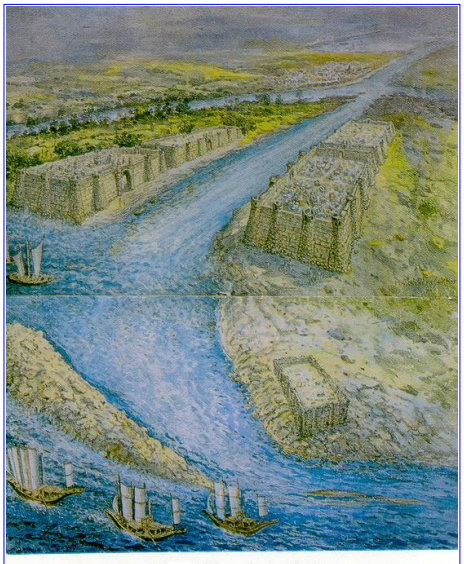
Click on the thumbnails to zoom in.



A circular bastion of submerged fort wall of Dvārakā.



A long wall plotted and photographed by diver-archaeologists.



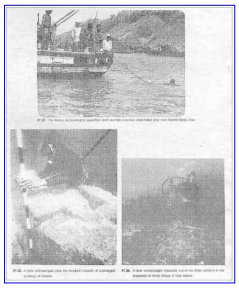
Harbour of ancient Dvārakā.

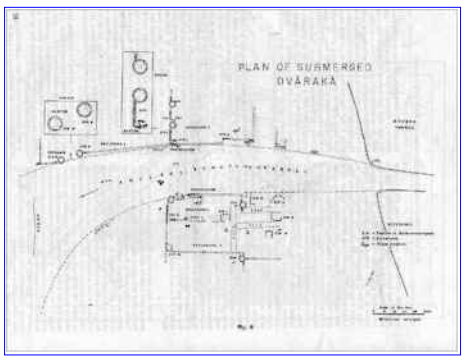


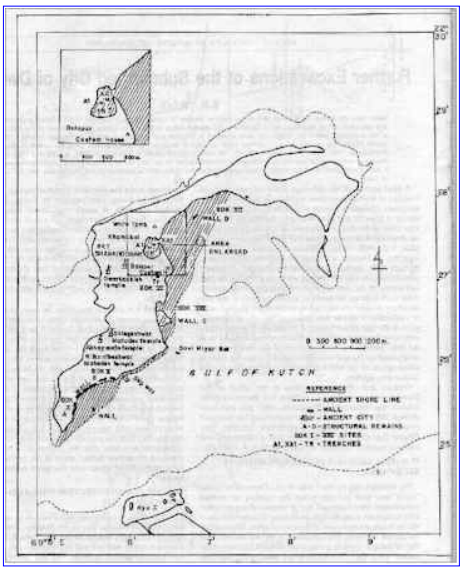
A prismatic stone anchor at buoys A-4–A-5, DWK.

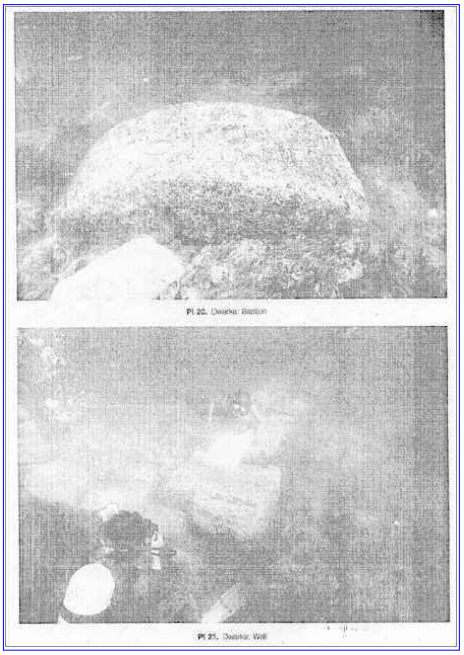


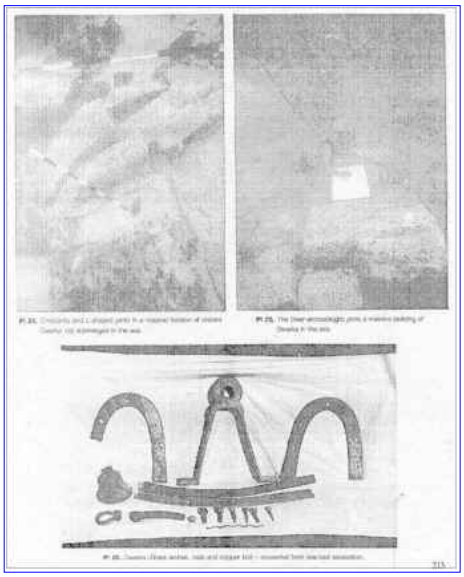
Large bastion at buoy 8 in Zone 1, DWK.

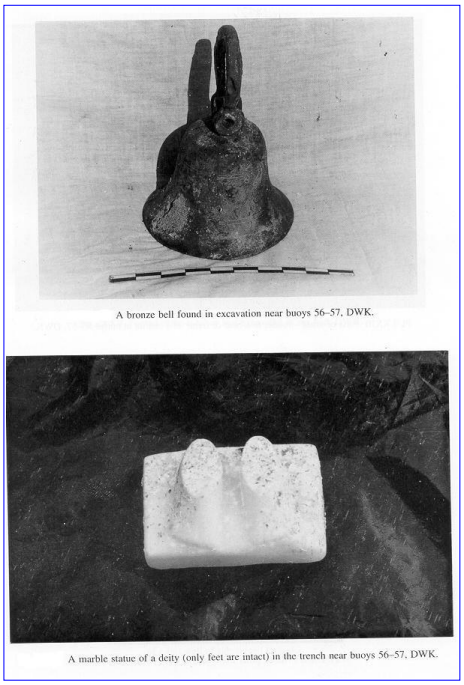








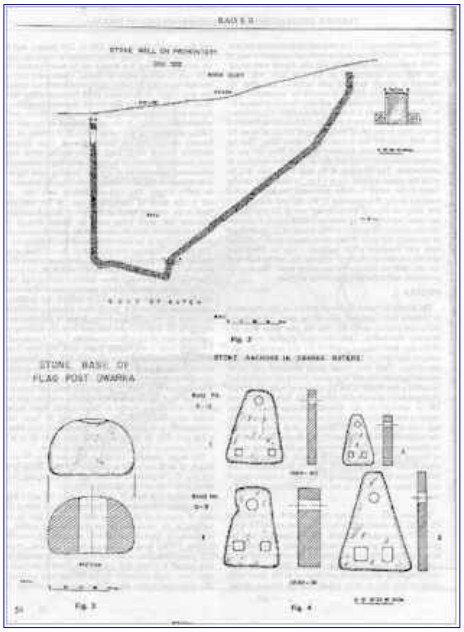




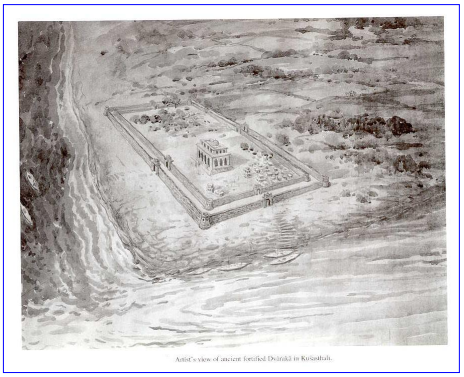
A bronze bell found in excavation near buoys 56–57, DWK.

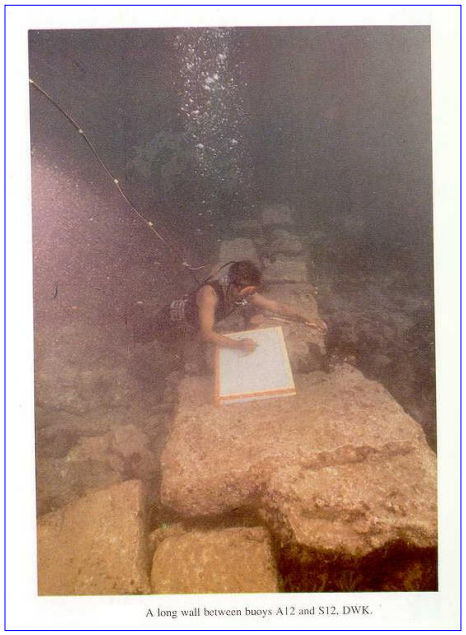
A marble statue of a deity (only feet are intact) in the trench near buoys 56–57, DWK.











Relevant Links and Books:

National Institute of Oceanography **http://www.nio.org/**

The Lost City of Dvaraka - By S.R. Rao

(S.R. Rao served the Archaeological Survey of India for over 32 years. He is the discoverer of a large number of Harappan sites including the port city of Lothal in Gujarat)

Excavations At Dwarka - By Zainuddin Dawood Ansari and Madhukar Shripad Mate.

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Did You Know?

Masters of the Sea



Despite recent concerns about possibly losing caste from crossing the sea, history reveals India was the foremost maritime nation 2,000 years ago (meanwhile Europeans were still figuring out the Mediterranean Sea). **India's maritime history predates the birth of western civilization. The world's first tidal dock is believed to have been built at Lothal around 2300 BC during the Harappan civilization, near the present day Mangrol harbour on the Gujarat coast.**

It had colonies in Cambodia, Java, Bali, Philippines, Sumatra, Japan, China, Arabia, Egypt and more. Through Persians and Arabs, India traded with the Roman Empire. The Sanskrit text, **Yukti Kalpa Taru**, explains how to build ships, such as the one depicted in the ajanta caves. It gives minute details about ship types, sizes and materials, including suitability of different types of wood. The treatise also elaborately explains how to decorate and furnish ships so they're comfortable for passengers.

In ancient times the Indians excelled in shipbuilding and even the English, who were attentive to everything which related to naval architecture, found early Indian models worth copying. **The Indian vessels united elegance and utility, and were models of fine workmanship.**

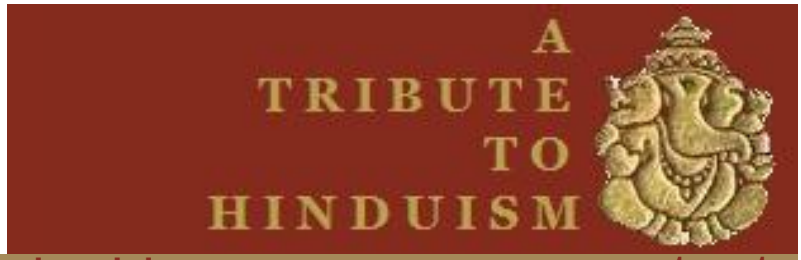
Sir John Malcolm wrote :

"Indian vessels "are so admirably adapted to the purpose for which they are required that, not withstanding their superior science, Europeans were unable, during an intercourse with India for two centuries, to suggest or at least to bring into successful practice one improvement. "

(for more information please refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture**, **Suvarnabhumi and Seafaring**).

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The cultural relations between India and China can be traced back to very early times. There are numerous references to China in Sanskrit tests, but their chronology is sketchy. The Mahabharata refers to China several times, including a reference to presents brought by the Chinese at the Rajasuya Yajna of the Pandavas; also, the Arthasastra and the Manusmriti mention China. According to French art historian, Rene Grousset, the name China comes from "an ancient" Sanskrit name for the regions to the east, and not, as often supposed, from the name of the state of Ch'in," the first dynasty established by Shih Huang Ti in 221 B.C. The Sanskrit name Cina for China could have been derived from the small state of that name in Chan-si in the northwest of China, which flourished in the fourth century B.C. Scholars have pointed out that the Chinese word for lion, shih, used long before the Chin dynasty, was derived from the Sanskrit word, simha, and that the Greek word for China, Tzinista, used by some later writers, appears to be derivative of the Sanskrit Chinasthana. According to Terence Duke, martial arts went from India to China. Fighting without weapons was a specialty of the ancient Kshatriya warriors of India. Both Arnold Toynbee and Sir L. Wooley speak of a ready made culture coming to China. That was the Vedic culture of India.

Until recently, India and China had coexisted peacefully for over two thousand years. This amicable relationship may have been nurtured by the close historical and religious ties of Buddhism, introduced to China by Indian monks at a very early stage of their respective histories, although there are fragmentary records of contacts anterior to the introduction of Buddhism.

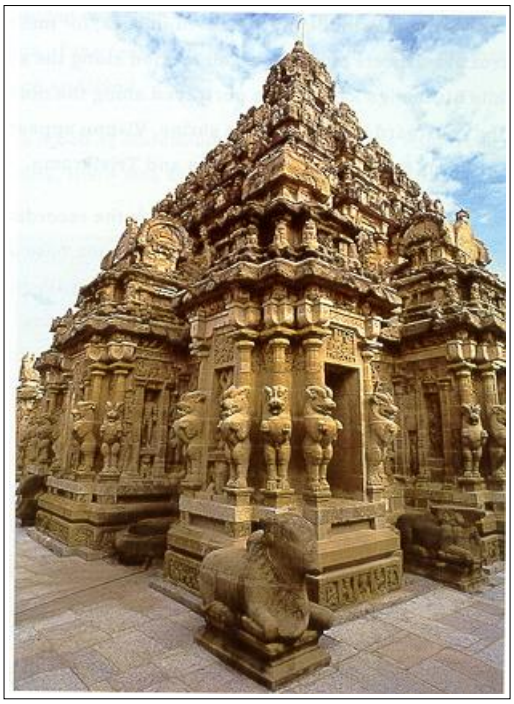
Gerolamo Emilio Gerini (1860 -1913) has said: “During the three or four centuries, preceding the Christian era, we find Indu (Hindu) dynasties established by adventurers, claiming descent from the Kshatriya potentates of northern India, ruling in upper Burma, in Siam and Laos, in Yunnan and Tonkin, and even in most parts of southeastern China." The Chinese literature of the third century is full of geographic and mythological elements derived from India. "I see no reason to doubt," comments Arthur Waley in his book, The Way and its Power, "that the 'holy mountain-men' (*sheng-hsien*) described by Lieh Tzu are Indian rishi; and when we read in *Chuang Tzu* of certain Taoists who practiced movements very similar to the *asanas* of Hindu yoga, it is at least a possibility that some knowledge of the yoga technique which these *rishi* used had also drifted into China."

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Bhaarat: Teacher of China

Hinduism and Buddhism, both have had profound effect on religious and cultural life of China. Chinese early religion was based on nature and had many things in common with Vedic Hinduism, with a pantheon of deities.



"Never before had China seen a religion so rich in imagery, so beautiful and captivating in ritualism and so bold in cosmological and metaphysical speculations. Like a poor beggar suddenly halting before a magnificent storehouse of precious stones of dazzling brilliancy and splendor, China was overwhelmed, baffled and overjoyed. She begged and borrowed freely from this munificent giver. The first borrowings were chiefly from the religious life of India, in which China's indebtedness to India can never be fully told."

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p. 338).

The story of **Sun Hou Tzu, the Monkey King, and Hsuan Tsang.** It is a vicarious and humorous tale, an adventure story akin to the **Hindu epic of Ramayana**, and like Ramayana, a moral tale of the finer aspects of human endeavor which come to prevail over those of a less worthy nature. **The book ends with a dedication to India:** I dedicate this work to Buddha's pure land. May it repay the kindness of patron and preceptor, may it mitigate the sufferings of the lost and damned....'

(source: **Eastern Wisdom - By Michael Jordan** p -134-151).

Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren (1760-1842) an Egyptologist and author of **Historical researches into the politics, intercourse, and trade of the Carthaginians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians** observes that:

"the name China is of Hindu origin and came to us from India."

"**M. de Guigues** says that Magadha was known to the Chinese by the name Mo-kiato, and its capital was recognized by both its Hindu name Kusumpura, for which the Chinese wrote Kia-so-mo-pon-lo and Pataliputra, out of which they made Patoli-tse by translating putra, which means son in Sanskrit, into their own corresponding word, tse. Such translation of names has thrown a Veil of obscurity over many a name of Hindu origin. Hindu geography has suffered a great loss."

(source: **Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society** Volume. V).

Lin Yutang (1895-1976) author of **The Wisdom of China and India**:



"The contact with poets, forest saints and the best wits of the land, the glimpse into the first awakening of Ancient India's mind as it searched, at times childishly and naively, at times with a deep intuition, but at all times earnestly and passionately, for the spiritual truths and the meaning of existence - this experience must be highly stimulating to anyone, particularly because the Hindu culture is so different and therefore so much to offer." Not until we see the richness of the Hindu mind and its essential spirituality can we understand India...."

"India was China's teacher in religion and imaginative literature, and the world's teacher in trignometry, quandratic equations, grammar, phonetics, Arabian Nights, animal fables, chess, as well as in philosophy, and that she inspired Boccaccio, Goethe, Herder, Schopenhauer, Emerson, and probably also old Aesop."

(source: **The Wisdom of China and India - By Lin Yutang** p. 3-4).

Sir William Jones (1746-1794) came to India as a judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta. He pioneered Sanskrit studies. His admiration for Indian thought and culture was almost limitless. **He says that the Chinese assert their Hindu origin."**

(source: **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan; or the Central and Western Rajput States - By James Tod**

Volume I, p. 35-57).

Amaury de Reincourt (1918 -) was born in Orleans, France. He received his B.A. from the Sorbonne and his M.A. from the University of Algiers. He is author of several books including **The American empire** and **The Soul of India**, he wrote: " The Chinese travelers' description of life in India... reveals great admiration from all concerned for the remarkable civilization displayed under their eyes."

"India sent missionaries, China sending back pilgrims. It is a striking fact that in all relations between the two civilizations, **the Chinese were always the recipient and the Indian the donor." "Indian influence prevailed over the Chinese, and for evident reasons: an undoubted cultural superiority owing to much greater philosophic and religious insight, and also to a far more flexible script."**

(source: **The Soul of India – by Amaury de Riencourt** p 141 and 161).

China (Cinaratha) in the Epic of Mahabharata

It is well known that in the **Mahabharata** the **Cinas** appear with the Kiratas among the armies of king **Bhagadatta of Pragjyotisa or Assam**. In the Sabhaparvan this king is described as surrounded by the Kiratas and the Cinas. In the Bhismaparvan, the corps of Bhagadatta, consisting of the Kirtas and the Cinas of yellow color, appeared like a forest of Karnikaras. It is significant that the Kiratas represented all the people living to the east of India in the estimation of the geographers of the Puranas. Even the dwellers of the islands of the Eastern Archipelago were treated as Kiratas in the Epics. The reference to their wealth of gold, silver, gems, sandal, aloewood, textiles and fabrics clearly demonstrates their association with the regions included in Suvarnadvipa. Thus, the connection of the Kiratas and Cinas is a sure indication of the fact that the Indians came to know of the Chinese through the eastern routes and considered them as an eastern people, having affinities to the Kiras, who were the Indo-Mongoloids, inhabiting the Tibeto-Burman regions and the Himalayan and East Indian territories, the word Kirata being a derivation from kiranti or kirati, the name of a group of people in eastern Nepal.





In early Indian literature China is invariably shown to be connected with India by a land-route across the country of the Kiratas in the mountainous regions of the north. In the Vanaparvan of the Mahabharata the

Pandava brothers are said to have crossed the country of the Cinas in course of their trek through the Himalayan territory north of Badri and reached the realm of the Kirata king Subahu. The Cinas are brought into intimate relationship with the Himalayan people (Haimavatas) in the Sabhaparvan also. The land of the Haimavatas is undoubtedly the Himavantappadesa of the Pali texts, which has been identified with Tibet or Nepal. In the Sasanavamsa this region is stated to be **Cinarattha**. Thus, it is clear that China was known to the Indians as lying across the Himalayas and was accordingly included in the Himalayan territories. In the **Nagarjunikonda** inscription of Virapurusdatta, China (Cina) is said to be lying in the Himalayas beyond Cilata or Kirata. These references to the proximity of China to the Himalayan regions, inhabited by the Kiratas, show that there were regular routes through the Tibeto-Burman territories, along which the Indians could reach China.

Some such land-route is implied in the remark of the Harsacarita of Banabhatta that Arjuna conquered the Hemakuta region after passing through Cina. Of course, the route across Central Asia is perhaps alluded to in the itinerary of Carudatta from the Indus Delta to China across the country of the Hunas and the Khasas, described in the Vasudevakindi, and there is probably a reference to the sea-route, passing through Vanga, Takkola and Suvarnadvipa, in the Milindapanho. But there is no doubt that in a large number of ancient Indian texts China is mentioned near the eastern Himalayan regions, through which regular routes, connecting this country with India, passed from fairly early times. It was along these routes that India came into contact with China for the first time and developed commercial relations with her, that are referred to by Chan K'ien in the second century B.C.

In Yunnan there is a large number of old pagodas. Some of them are the oldest and most beautiful in China. Their cornices and corner decoration, showing rows of pitchers (mangala ghata), betray unmistakable Indian influence. Many bricks of these pagodas bear Sanskrit inscriptions, containing Buddhist mantras and formulae in a script, which is identical with that current in Nalanda and Kamarupa in the 9th century. The beautiful bronze statue of Avalokitesvara from the pagoda of Ch'ung Sheng Ssu near Ta-li is an index to the high standard of culture and craftsmanship attained by the Buddhists of Yunan.

In earlier times, the people of the east, Magadha and Videha, were in contact with Yunan, as the traditions of Purvavideha show. The two names, Purvavideha and Gandhara, seem to represent these two successive eastern and western streams of Indian colonial and cultural expansion in this region.

Henry Rudolph Davies (1865 -) says that Besides Buddhism, Shaivism was also popular in Yunan as is manifest from the prevalence of the cult of Mahakala there. This ancient Indian colony in the south of China was the cradle of Sino-Indian cultural relationship for a long time.



It was an important outpost of Indian cultural expansion along the eastern land-routes, which **Colonel Gerolamo Emilio Gerini** (1860 -1913) author of **Researches on Ptolemy's geography of eastern Asia (further India and Indo-Malay archipelago** p. 122 -124 has described as follows:

"During the three or four centuries, preceding the Christian era, we find **Indu (Hindu) dynasties established by adventurers, claiming descent from the Kshatriya potentates of northern India, ruling in upper Burma, in Siam and Laos, in Yunnan and Tonkin, and even in most parts of southeastern China.** From the Brahmaputra and Manipur to the Tonkin Gulf we can trace a continuous string of petty states, ruled by those scion of the **Kshatriya race, using the Sanskrit or Pali language in official documents or inscriptions; building temples and other monuments after the Indu (Hindu) style and employing Brahmana priests for the propitiatory ceremonies,** connected with the court and state. Among such Indu (Hindu) monarchies (Theinni) in Burma, of Muang Hang, C'hieng Rung, Muang Khwan and Dasarna (Luang P'hrah Bang) in the Lau country; and of Agranagara (Hanoi) and Campa in Tonkin and Annan."

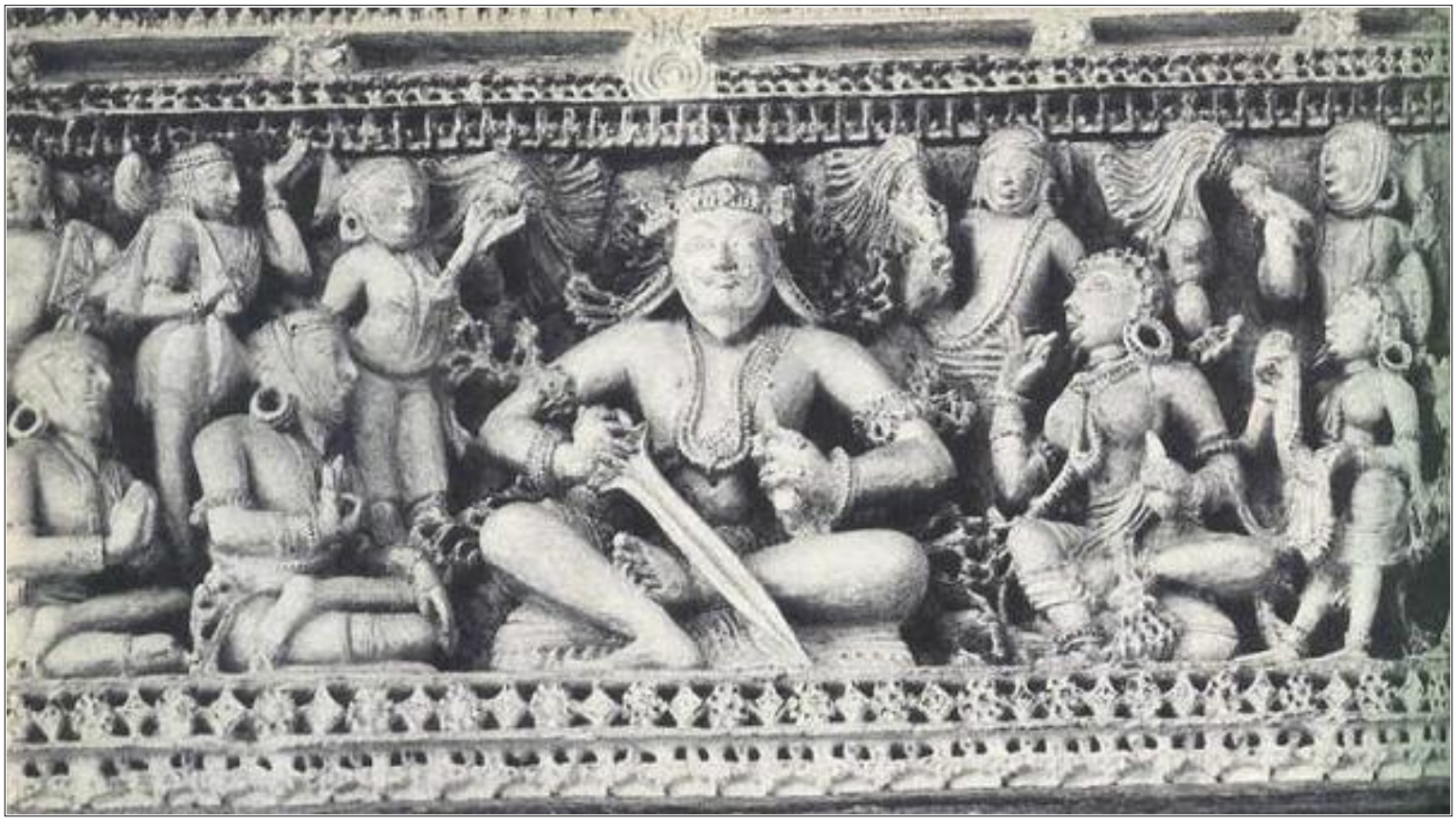
"The names of peoples and cities, **recorded by Ptolemy** in that region, however few and imperfectly preserved, are sufficiently significant to prove the presence of the Indu (Hindu) ruling and civilizing element in these countries, undoubtedly not so barbarous as the Chinese would make them appear."

"It is evident through the medium of those barbarians that **China received part of her civilization through India."**

Among these colonies Tagong and upper Pugan were called Mayura; Prome was Sriksetra; Sen-wi (Theinni) was

Sivirastra; Muang Hang, Chieng Rung and Muang Khwan were the three divisions of Ching Rung kingdom, which the prince of Yong, named Sunandakumara, united under Mahiyagananagara; Luang P'hrah Bang was Dasarna; Hanoi was Agranagara; Tagaung was Brahmadesa (P'o-;o-men), where a Sanskrit inscription, dated in Gupta era 108 – 426 A.D. refers to Hastinapura, situated in that country; and, of course, Yunana was Purvavideha or Gandhara. Thus, from Arakan, where the Mrohaung inscriptions attest the efflorescence of Indian culture, language and literature, to Yunnan, whose history we have traced above, Indian culture made a triumphant advance in ancient times.

(source: **Yün-nan; the link between India and the Yangtze – by Henry Rudolph Davies** Cambridge University press 1909 an **India and The World - By Buddha Prakash** p. 141-150).



India was known as T'ien-chu to the Chinese.

China, like Southeast Asia too, was colonized to some extent by the ancient Hindus. The religion and culture of China are undoubtedly of Hindu origin. According to the Hindu theory of emigration, Kshatriyas from India went and established colonies in China. India was known as T'ien-chu to the Chinese.

Colonel James Tod (1782-1835) author of **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India** has written:

"The genealogies of China and Tartary declare themselves to be the descendents of "Awar," son of the Hindu King "Pururawa."

According to the traditions noted in the Schuking, the ancestors of the Chinese, conducted by Fohe, come to the plains of China 2,900 years before Christ, from the high mountains Land which lies to the west of that country. This shows that the settlers into China were originally inhabitants of Kashmir, Ladakh, Little Tibet and the Punjab, which were parts of Ancient India.

Kakuzo Okakura, speaking of the missionary activity of Indian Buddhists in China, says that at one time in the single province of Lo-yang there were more than 3,000 Indian monks and 10,000 Indian families to impress their

national religion and art on Chinese soil.

(source: **The Ideals of the East With Special Reference to the Art of Japan - By Kakuzo Okakura** p. 113).



Hu Shih, (1891-1962), Chinese philosopher in Republican China. He was ambassador to the U.S. (1938-42) and chancellor of Peking University (1946-48). He said:

"India conquered and dominated China culturally for two thousand years without ever having to send a single soldier across her border."

Court Bjornstjerna (1779-1847) author of **The Theogony of the Hindoos with their systems of Philosophy and Cosmogony** says: " what may be said with certainty is that the religion of China came from India."

Chinese authors, too, according to **Mountstuart Elphinstone** (1779-1859) noted, Indian ambassadors to the court of China.

The **Mahabharata** refers to China several times, including a reference to presents brought by the Chinese at the Rajasuya Yajna of the Pandavas; also, the **Arthasastra** and the **Manusmriti** mention China.

According to **Rene Grousset** (1885-1952) French art historian in his book **Rise and Splendour of Chinese Empire** ASIN 0520005252 p. 79:

"**the name China comes from "an ancient" Sanskrit name for the regions to the east, and not, as often supposed, from the name of the state of Ch'in," the first dynasty established by Shih Huang Ti in 221 B.C.**



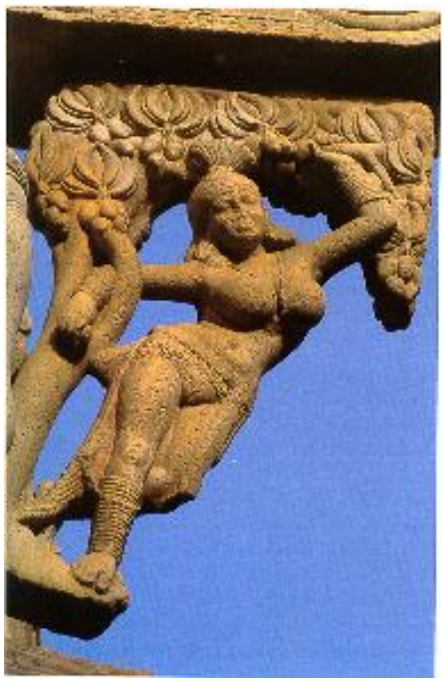
Brahma - Chinese version
(source: Our Heritage and Its Significance - By S. R. Sharma)

The **Sanskrit** name Cina for China could have been derived from the small state of that name in Chan-si in the northwest of China, which flourished in the fourth century B.C. Scholars have pointed out that the Chinese word for lion, shih, used long before the Chin dynasty, was derived from the Sanskrit word, simha, and that the Greek word for China, Tzinista, used by some later writers, appears to be derivative of the Sanskrit Chinasthana. The Chinese literature of the third century is full of geographic and mythological elements derived from India.

" I see no reason to doubt," comments **Arthur Waley** in his book, **The Way and its Power**, "that the 'holy mountain-men' (*sheng-hsien*) described by Lieh Tzu are Indian rishi; and when we read in *Chuang Tzu* of certain Taoists who practiced movements very similar to the *asanas* of Hindu yoga, it is at least a possibility that some knowledge of the yoga technique which these *rishi* used had also drifted into China."

Both **Sir L. Wooley** and British historian **Arnold Toynbee** speak of an earlier ready-made culture coming to China. They were right. That was the Vedic Hindu culture from India with its Sanskrit language and sacred scripts. The contemporary astronomical expertise of the Chinese, as evidenced by their records of eclipses; the philosophy of the Chinese their statecraft, all point to a Vedic origin. That is why from the earliest times we find Chinese travelers visiting India very often to renew their educational and spiritual links.

Author **Kenneth Ch'en** has said:



"Neo-Confucianism was stimulated in its development by a number of Buddhist ideas. Certain features of Taoism, such as its canon and pantheon, was taken over from Buddhism. Works and phrases in the Chinese language owe their origin to terms introduced by Buddhism. Chinese language owe their origin to terms introduced by Buddhism, while in astronomical, calendrical, and medical studies the Chinese benefited from information introduced by Indian Buddhist monks. Finally, and most important of all, the religious life of the Chinese was affected profoundly by the doctrines and practices, pantheon and ceremonies brought in by the Indian religion."

(source: **Buddhism in China - By Kenneth Ch'en** ISBN 0691000158 p. 3).

How China was part of the Indian Vedic empire is explained by **Professor G. Phillips** on page 585 in the 1965 edition of the **Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society**. He remarks,

"The maritime intercourse of India and China dates from a much earlier period, from about 680 B.C. when the sea traders of the Indian Ocean whose chiefs were Hindus founded a colony called Lang-ga, after the Indian named Lanka of Ceylon, about the present gulf of Kias-Tehoa, where they arrived in vessels having prows shaped like the heads of birds or animals after the pattern specified in the **Yukti Kalpataru** (an ancient Sanskrit technological text) and exemplified in the ships and boats of old Indian arts."

Chinese historian Dr. Li-Chi also discovered an astonishing resemblance between the Chinese clay pottery and the pottery discovered at Mohenja daro on the Indian continent. **Yuag Xianji,** member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, speaking at the C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar Foundation, Madras, March 27 1984 said,

" Recent discoveries of ruins of Hindu temples in Southeast China provided further evidence of Hinduism in China. Both Buddhism and Hinduism were patronized by the rulers. In the 6th century A.D. the royal family was Hindu for two generations. The following Tang dynasty (7th to the 9th century A.D.) also patronized both Hinduism and Buddhism because the latter was but a branch of Hinduism. Religious wars were unknown in ancient China. There was extensive maritime trade and religious exchanges between India and China at this period (Ad 1-600) and the massive expansion of Indian influence into southern China through Jih-nan and Chiao-chih, in what is now northern Vietnam.

Albert Etienne Terrien de Lacouperie, author of **Western Origins of Chinese Civilization** states that the maritime intercourse of India with China dates from about 680 B.C. when the sea traders of the Indian ocean" whose "Chiefs were Hindus" founded a colony, called Lang-ga, after the Indian name Lanka, about the present gulf of Kiaotchoa....And throughout this period the monopoly of the sea borne trade of China was in their hands."

In the second century A.D., Indians from the Sindhu during the time of Rudradaman, the Khshatrapa Satrap of Kattiawad, took presents by sea to China.

(source: **Milinda Panha - Vide** p. 127-327).



The sea route from India and China through the port of Tamraliptis was under the special protection of the Indian kings. When the Chinese pilgrim, **Hiuen-Tsiang**, wanted to return to China in A.D. 645, Bhashkarvarman the king of Kamrup (Assam) and a vassal of King Harsha, told him: "But I know not, if you prefer to go, by what route you propose to return; if you select the southern sea route, then I will send official attendants to accompany you." **Itsing** sailed from China for India in A.D. 671 and returned to China twenty-four years later by the sea route from Tamralipiti.

Through its compassionate Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and its promise of salvation to all alike, its emphasis on piety, meditation, its attractive rituals and festivals, its universality and its tolerance, "the religious life of the Chinese has been enriched, deepened, broadened, and made more meaningful in terms of human sympathy, love, and compassion for all living creatures." **The doctrine of karma brought spiritual consolation to innumerable people. The concept of karma is to be found in all types of Chinese literature from poetry to popular tales.**

India never imposed her ideas or culture on any nation by military force, not even on the small countries in her neighborhood, and in the case of China, it would have been virtually impossible to do so since China has been the more powerful of the two. So the expansion of Indian culture into China is a monument to human understanding and cultural co-operation - the outcome of a voluntary quest for learning. While China almost completely suppressed other foreign religions, such as Zoranstrianism, Nestorian Christianity, and to some extent Manichaeanism, she could not uproot Buddhism. At times, Buddhism was persecuted, but for two thousand years it continued to Indianize Chinese life even after it had ceased to be a vital force in the homeland and long after it had lost its place as the dominant religion of China. In fact, Indianization became more powerful and effective after it was thought that Buddhism had been killed in China.

The introduction of Buddhism is one of the most important events in Chinese history, and since its inception it has been a major factor in Chinese civilization. **The Chinese have freely acknowledged their debt to India, often referring to her as the "Teacher of China," and Chinese Buddhists have pictured India as a Western Paradise, Sukhavati.** That Chinese philosophy blossomed afresh after the impact of Buddhism indicates both a response to and a borrowing of Indian ideas. The advent of Buddhism meant for many Chinese a new way of life, and for all Chinese, a means of reassessing their traditional beliefs. A new conception of the universe developed, and the entire Chinese way of life was slowly but surely altered. The change was so gradual and so universal that few people realized it was happening.



The Chinese Quietists practiced a form of self-hypnosis which has an indisputably close resemblance to Indian Yoga. The Chinese Taoist philosopher **Liu-An (Huai-nan-tzu)** who died in 122 B. C, makes use "of a cosmology in his book which is clearly of Buddhist inspiration."

The first mention of India to be found in Chinese records is in connection with the mission to Ta-hsia (Bacteriana) of a talented and courageous Chinese envoy, **Chang Chien** (Kien), about 138 B.C. Fourteen years later, having escaped after ten years as a captive of the Huns, he returned home and in his report to the Chinese Emperor he referred to the country of *Shen-tu* (India) to the southeast of the Yueh-chih (Jou-Chih) country. There are other traditional stories suggestive of earlier links, but Chang Chien's reference to Indian trade with the southwestern districts of China along the overland route corresponding to the modern Yunnan road indicates the existence of some sort of commercial

relations well before the second century B.C. **The find of Chinese coins at Mysore, dated 138 B.C. suggests maritime relations between India and China existed in the second century B.C.** Passages in a Chinese text vaguely refer to Chinese trade relations with countries in the China Sea and Indian Ocean, such as **Huang-che** (Kanchi or a place in the Ganges delta), as well as to the exchange of diplomatic missions.

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Trade & Commerce

The chronicle 'Sung-chu' states that all the precious things of land and water came from India. Gems made of rhinoceros' horns and king-fishers' stones, serpent pearls and asbestos cloth, they are being innumerable varieties of these curiosities, were imported into China from India. According to the **Chin-hsi-yu-chiu-t'** u rare stone came to China from the countries of Chi-pin (Gandhara or Kashmir). Moreover, po-tie (a fine textile, probably muslin) was produced in India; and as early as A.D. 430 Indian po-tie was sent to China from Ho-lo-tan or Java. In A.D. 519, King Jayavarman of Fu-nan (Kamboja/Cambodia) offered saffron with storax and other aromatics to the Chinese court. Laufer also suggests that in the sixth century saffron was traded from India to Cambodia. In the **T'ang Annals**, India in her trade with Cambodia and the interior orient, "export to those countries diamonds, sandalwood and saffron." India was a good market for Chinese silk. **Kalidasa** mentions this silk fabric (Chinamsuka) as one of the most fashionable textiles among the richer sections of society. Silk and silk-products were also much demanded luxury articles even in the reign of Harshavardhana. The countries lying on the route from Kashgar (India) to China, were collectively called by historians and geographers as **'Ser-India',** first imbibed Indian culture and then developed into important trade centers.

(source: **Cultural Heritage of Ancient India - By Sachindra Kumar Maity** p.119-124). For more information refer to chapter on **Suvarnabhumi** and **Seafaring in Ancient India**).

There can be little dispute that trade was the main motivation for these early contacts. This is supported by finds of beads and pottery, in addition to specific references in historical texts. By the early centuries of the Christian era, Sino-Indian trade appears to have assumed considerable proportions. Chinese silk, **Chinamsuka,** and later porcelain were highly prized in India, and Indian textiles were sold in southwest China. **The similarity between the Chinese and Indian words for vermilion and bamboo, ch'in-tung and ki-chok, and sindura and kichaka, also indicates commercial links.** At least by the fifth century, India was exporting to China wootz steel (wootz from the Indian Kanarese word ukku), which was produced by fusing magnetic iron by carbonaceous matter.



With goods came ideas. It has often been contended that merchants were not likely to have been interested in philosophy or capable of the exchange of ideas. This is an erroneous belief which disregards historical evidence and, as **Arthur Waley** points out, is **"derived from a false analogy between East and West. It is quite true that Marco polo 'songeait surtout a son negoce'. But the same can hardly be said of Indian or Chinese merchants.** Buddhist legend, for example, teems with merchants reputedly capable of discussing metaphysical questions; and in China Lu Puwei, compiler of philosophical encyclopedia **Lu Shih Ch'un** Chiu, was himself a merchant. Legend even makes a merchant of Kuan Chung; which at any rate shows that philosophy and trade were not currently supposed to be incompatible."

India had contact with China from the early period through three routes. One was through the Central Asian region, the second was through Yunan and Burma. The third was by sea to the South Indian ports. The Arthasastra, the Mahabharata, and the Manu-Smriti show knowledge of China. Through all these routes trade and Hindu culture passed to China. Indian arts and sciences were carried to China along with Buddhism. Images,

rock-cut caves and the fresco paintings show distinctly Indian influence on the Chinese art. Indian astronomy, mathematics and medicine were spread in China by the scholars who visited it. Several Sanskrit works on these sciences were translated into Chinese.

Chushu-King, a Chinese monk started for India in 260 A.D. But he returned from Khotan. Fa-hien, the first Chinese pilgrim to India stayed here during the Gupta period for some years. Che-mong another monk accompanied by a few others spent 20 years (404-424) in the pilgrimage of India. Hieun Tsang and I-Tsing during the 7th century are well-known. On his return to China, Hiuen Tsang was given a great national welcome by his emperor and the people as well.

(source: **Ancient Indian History and Culture - By Chidambara Kulkarni** p.233 -234).

Land and Sea Routes



The art of shipbuilding and navigation in India and China at the time was sufficiently advanced for oceanic crossings. Indian ships operating between Indian and South-east Asian ports were large and well equipped to sail cross the Bay of Bengal. When the **Chinese Buddhist scholar, Fa-hsien,** returned from India, his ship carried a crew of more than two hundred persons and did not sail along the coasts but directly across the ocean. Such ships were larger than those Columbus used to negotiate the Atlantic a thousand years later. **Uttaraptha** was the Sanskrit name of the ancient highway which connected India with China, Russia and Persia (Iran).

The trade routes between China and India, by both land and sea, were long and perilous, often requiring considerably more than two years to negotiate. The overland routes were much older and more often used, but the sea routes gained popularity with progress in shipbuilding and seamanship. Formidable and frightening as the physiography of the land routes was, the traffic through the passes and along the circuitous routes around the mountains was fairly vigorous.

According to the work of mediaeval times, **Yukti Kalpataru,** which gives a fund of information about shipbuilding, **India built large vessels from 200 B.C. to the close of the sixteenth century.** A Chinese chronicler mentions ships of Southern Asia that could carry as many as one thousand persons, and were manned mainly by Malayan crews.

Long before the northwestern routes were opened about the second century B.C. and long before the development of these Indianized states, there were two other routes from India to China. One of these began at **Pataliputra** (modern Patna), passed through Assam (Kamarupa of old) and Upper Burma near Bhamo, and proceeded over the mountains and across the river valleys to Yunnanfu (Kunming), the main city of the southern province of China. The other route lay through Nepal and Tibet, was developed much later in the middle of the seventh century when Tibet had accepted Buddhism.



In addition to land routes, there was an important sea link between India and China through Southeast Asia. During the course of the first few centuries of the Christian era, a number of Indianized states had been founded all over Southeast Asia. Both cultures met in this region, and the Indianized states served as an intermediary stave for the further transmission of Indian culture and Buddhism to China.

Ancient Greek geographers knew of Southeast Asia and China (Thinae) were accessible by sea. Ptolemy mentions an important but unidentified Chinese port on the Tonkinese coast. Ports on the western coast of India were Bharukaccha (Broach); Surparka (Sopara); Kalyana; on the Bay of Bengal at the mouth of the Kaveripattam (Puhar); and at the mouth of the Ganges, Tamaralipti (Tamluk). At least two of these ports on the Bay of Bengal - Kaveripattam and Tamaralipti - were known to the Greek sailors as Khaberos and Tamalitis. At first Indian ships sailed to Tonkin (Kiao-Che) which was the



principal port of China, Tonkin being a Chinese protectorate. Later all foreign ships were required to sail to Canton in China proper. Canton became a prosperous port and from the seventh century onward the most important landing place for Buddhist monks arriving from India. Generally Chinese monks set out for the famous centers of learning in India, like the University of Taxila, and Nalanda.

India had census enumeration earlier than China, since such enumeration is mentioned in Kautilya's Arthasastra. China had its first census in 2 A.D.

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Contributions

Mathematics:

The Chinese were familiar with Indian mathematics, and, in fact, continued to study it long after the period of intellectual intercourse between India and China had ceased."

(source: Cited in **Sarkar, Hindu Achievements in Exact Science**, p. 14).



Literature: The great literary activity of the Buddhist scholars naturally had a permanent influence on Chinese literature, one of the oldest in the world. In a recent study a Chinese scholar **Lai Ming**, says that a significant feature in the development of Chinese literature has been the "the immense influence of Buddhist literature on the development of every sphere of Chinese literature since the Eastern Chin period (317 A.D.)." The Buddhist sutras were written in combined prose and rhymed verse, a literary form unknown in China at the time. The Chinese language when pronounced in the Sanskrit polyphonic manner was likely to sound hurried and abrupt, and to chant the Sanskrit verses in monophthongal Chinese prolonged the verse so much the rhymes were lost. Hence, to make the Chinese sutras pleasant to listen to, the Chinese language had to be modified to accommodate Sanskrit sounds. Consequently, in 489, Yung Ming, **Prince of Ching Ling,** convened a conference of Buddhist monks at his capital to differentiate between, and define the tones of, the Chinese language for reading Buddhist sutras and for changing the verses. A new theory emerged called the Theory of Four Tones. The introduction into China of highly imaginative literature such as the Mahayana sutras and the Indian epics, like **Ramayana and Mahabharata**, infused into Chinese literature the quality of imagination which had been hitherto lacking. Taoist literature, such as the book Chuang-tzu, did perhaps show some quality of imaginative power, but on the whole Chinese literature, especially Confucianist, was narrow, formal, restricted, and unimaginative.

Mythology: The Chinese sense of realism was so intense that there was hardly any mythology in ancient China, and they have produced few fairy tales of their own. Most of their finest fairy tales were originally brought to China by Indian monks in the first millennium. The Buddhists used them to make their sermons more agreeable and lucid. The tales eventually spread throughout the country, assuming a Chinese

appearance conformable to their new environment. For example, the stories of Chinese plays such as *A Play of Thunder-Peak, A Dream of Butterfly,* and *A Record of Southern Trees* were of Buddhist origin.



Drama: Chinese drama assimilated Indian features in three stages. First, the story, characters, and technique were all borrowed from India; later, Indian technique gave way to Chinese; and finally, the story was modified and the characters became Chinese also. There are many dimensions to Chinese drama, and it is not easy to place them accurately in history. However, the twelfth century provides the first-known record of the performance of a play, a Buddhist miracle-play called Mu-lien Rescues his Mother based on an episode in the **Indian epic, the Mahabharata**. The subject matter of the Buddhist adaptation of the story, in which Maudgalyayana (Mu-lien in Chinese) rescues the mother from hell, occurs in a Tun-huang pien wen. Significantly, the play was first performed at the Northern Sung capital by professionals before a religious festival.

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Amartya Sen Nobel Prize winner writes in the Times of India:

"It is not often realized "that even such a central term in Chinese culture as Mandarin is derived from a **Sanskrit word, namely Mantri** which went from India to China via Malaya."

Chinese translation - the first printed book in the world was the Chinese translation by Kumarajiva (a half Indian half Turkish scholar) of a Buddhist Sanskrit text, Vajrachchedikaprajnyaparamita

(source: **India, according to Amartya Sen - by M.V. Kamath Publication: Afternoon Despatch & Courier**)..

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Grammar: Phrases and words coined by Buddhist scholars enriched the Chinese vocabulary by more than thirty-five thousand words. As the assimilation was spread over a long period of time, the Chinese accepted these words as a matter of course without even suspecting their foreign origin. Even today words of Buddhist origin are widely used in China from the folklore of peasants to the formal language of the intelligentsia. For example, *poli* for glass in the name of many precious and semi-precious stones is of **Sanskrit** origin. *Cha-na,* an instant, from *kshana*; *t'a,* pagoda, from *stupa*; *mo-li,* jasmine, from *mallika*, and terms for many trees and plants are amongst the many thousands of Chinese words of Indian origin. Indian grammar also undoubtedly stimulated Chinese philological study. Chinese script consists of numerous symbols, which in their earliest stage were chiefly pictographic and ideographic.

The word used in the old **Sanskrit** for the Chinese Emperor is **deva-putra,** which is an exact translation of ' **Son of Heaven.**'
I-tsing, a famous pilgrim, himself a fine scholar of Sanskrit, praises the language and says it is respected in far countries in the north and south. ..**'How much more then should people of the divine land (China), as well as the celestial store house (India), teach the real rules of the language.'**

Jawaharlal Nehru has commented:

"Sanskrit scholarship must have been fairly widespread in China. It is interesting to find that some Chinese scholars tried to introduce Sanskrit phonetics into the Chinese language. A well-known example of this is that of the monk Shon Wen, who lived at the time of the Tang dynasty. He tried to develop an alphabetical system along these lines in Chinese."

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 197-198).



Art: Indian art also reached China, mainly through Central Asia, although some works of Buddhist art came by sea. Monks and their retinues, and traders brought Buddha statues, models of Hindu temples, and other objects of art to China. **Fa-hsien** made drawings of images whilst at Tamralipiti. **Hsuan-tsang** returned with several golden and sandalwood figures of the Buddha; and **Hui-lun** with a model of the Nalanda Mahavihara. **Wang Huan-ts'e**, who went to India several times, collected many drawings of Buddhist images, including a copy of the Buddha image at Bodhgaya; this was deposited at the Imperial palace and served as a model of the image in Ko-ngai-see temple. The most famous icon of East Asian Buddhism know as the "Udayana" image was reported to have been brought by the first Indian missionaries in 67, although there are various legends associated with this image and many scholars believe it was brought by **Kumarajiva.** However, this influx of Indian art was incidental and intermittent, and was destined to be absorbed by Chinese art. This combination resulted in a Buddhist art of exceptional beauty.

One of the most famous caves - **Ch'ien-fo-tung, "Caves of the Thousand Buddhas,**" because there are supposed to be more than a thousand cave. So far, about five hundred caves have been discovered. These caves were painted throughout with murals, and were frequently furnished with numerous Buddha statues and sculptured scenes from the **Jatakas.**
Many other caves were initiated in the reign of **Toba Wei Emperor, T'ai Wu. Some also contain images of Hindu deities, such as Shiva on Nandi and Vishnu on Garuda.**

Images coming from India were considered holy, as suggested by Omura, in his History of Chinese Sculpture. This significantly underlines the depth of Chinese acceptance of Indian thought.



Music: The Chinese did not regard music as an art to be cultivated outside the temples and theatres. Buddhist monks who reached China brought the practice of chanting sacred texts during religious rites. Hence, Indian melody was introduced into Chinese music which had hitherto been rather static and restrained. **Indian music was so popular in China, that Emperor Kao-tsu (581-595) tried unsuccessfully to proscribe it by an Imperial decree. His successor Yang-ti was also very fond of Indian music.** In Chinese annals, references are found to visiting Indian musicians, who reached China from India, Kucha, Kashgar, Bokhara and Cambodia. Even **Joseph Needham**, the well-known advocate of Chinese cultural and scientific priority admits, "Indian music came through Kucha to China just before the Sui period and had a great vogue there in the hands of exponents such as Ts'ao Miao-ta of Brahminical origin." **By the end of the sixth century, Indian music had been given state recognition. During the T'ang period, Indian music was quite popular, especially the famous Rainbow Garment Dance melody.**

A contemporary Chinese poet, **Po Chu-yi,** wrote a poem in praise of Indian music. **"It is little wonder," an official publication of the Chinese Republic says, "that when a Chinese audience today hears Indian music, they feel that while possessing a piquant Indian flavor it has a remarkable affinity with Chinese music."**



Science: A major Buddhist influence on Chinese science was in scientific thought itself. Buddhist concepts, such as the infinity of space and time, and the plurality of worlds and of time-cycles or **Hindu Kalpas** (*chieh*) had a stimulating effect on Chinese inquiry, broadening the Chinese outlook and better equipping it to investigate scientific problems. For example, the **Hindu doctrine of pralayas**, or recurrent world catastrophes in which sea and land were turned upside down before another world was recreated to go through the four cycles- differentiation (ch'eng), stagnation (chu), destruction (juai), and emptiness (kung) - which was later adopted by Neoconfucianists, was responsible for the Chinese recognition of the true nature of fossils long before they were understood in Europe. Again, the Indian doctrine of Karma (tso-yeh), or metempsychosis, influenced Chinese scientific thought on the process of biological change involving both phylogeny and ontogeny. Buddhist iconography contained a biological element. Buddhism introduced a highly developed theory of logic, both formal and dialectical, and of epistemology.

Tantric Buddhism reached China in the eighth century and the greatest Chinese astronomer and mathematician of his time, **I-hsing** (682-727), was a Tantric Buddhist monk. While the work of Indian mathematicians was carried westward by the Arabs and transmitted to Europe, it was taken eastward by Indian Buddhist monks and professional mathematicians.



Astronomy: There is also some evidence that works on Indian astronomy were in circulation in China well before the T'ang period. In the annuals of the Sui dynasty, numerous Chinese translations of Indian mathematical and astronomical works are mentioned, such as Po-lo-men Suan fa (The Hindu Arithmetical rules) and Po-lo-men Suan King. These works have vanished, and it is impossible to assess the degree of their influence on Chinese sciences. However, there is definite evidence of Indian influence on Chinese astronomy and calendar studies during the T'ang dynasty. During this period, Indian astronomers were working at the Imperial Bureau of Astronomy which was charged with preparing accurate calendars. Yang Ching-fang, a pupil of Amoghavajra (Pu-k'ung), wrote in 764 that those who wished to know the positions of the five planets and predict what Hsiu (heavenly mansion) a planet would be traversing, should adopt the Indian calendrical methods. Five years earlier, Amoghavajra had translated an Indian astrological work, the Hsiu Yao Ching (Hsiu and Planet Sutra), into Chinese.



At the time there were three astronomical schools at Chang-an: Gautama (Chhuthan), Kasyapa (Chiayeh), and Kumara (Chumolo). In 684 one of the members of the Gautama school, Lo presented a calendar, Kuang-tse-li, which has been in use for three years, to the Empress Wu. Later, in 718, another member of the school, Hsi-ta (Siddhartha), presented to the Emperor a calendar, Chiu-che-li, which was almost a direct translation of an Indian calendar, **Navagraha Siddhanta of Varahamihira,** and which is still preserved in the T'ang period collection. It was in use for four years. In 729 Siddhartha compiled a treatise based on this calendar which is the greatest known collection of ancient Chinese astronomical writings. This was the first time that a zero symbol appeared in a Chinese text, but, even more important, this work also contained a table of sines, which were typically Indian. I-hsing (682-727) was associated with the Kumara school and was much influenced by Indian astronomy. Indian influence can also be seen in the nine planets he introduced into his calendar, Ta-yen-li. The nine planets included the sun, moon, five known planets, and two new planets, **Rahu and Ketu**, by which the Indian astronomers represented the ascending and descending nodes of the moon.

Chinese New Year

Dates from 2600 BC - A complete cycle takes 60 years, divided into 12 year elements. Each of these 12 years is named after an animal favored by the Buddha.

(source: **China welcomes the New Year** - BBC). Chinese 60 year cycle has strong resemblance to Tamil Calendar and Indian Hindu Calendars. For more refer to **The Tamil Calendar**).

Medicine

Chinese medicine, was influenced by Ayurveda, and similarities include the extensive use of natural herbs.

(source: **Balm from the East - By Jenny Hontz** - LA Times).

According to **Terence Duke** " Many Buddhists were familiar with the extensive knowledge of surgery common to Indian medicine and this aided them both in spreading the teachings and in their practice of diagnosis and therapy. Surgical technique was almost unknown within China prior to the arrival of Buddhism.." The renowned Buddhist teacher **Najarjuna** is said to have translated at least two traditional works dealing with healing and medicines in the first centuries of our era. A section of his Maha-Prajnaparamita Sutra is quoted by the Chinese monk I Tsing in his commentary upon the five winds (Chinese: Wu Fung; Japanese: Gofu). This description enables us to see that the breath **Hatha Yoga termed prana** is in fact forming only part of a wider system known in Buddhism."

(source: **The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China** p.139-145).



Evidence of Indian influence on Chinese medicine is even more definite. A number of Indian medical treatises are found in Chinese Buddhist collections: for example, the Ravanakumaratantra and Kasyapasamhita. From its very inception, Buddhism stressed the importance of health and the prevention and cure of mental and physical ailments. **Indian medical texts were widely known in Central Asia, where parts of the original texts on Ayur Veda have been found as well as numerous translations.**

The T'ang emperors patronized Indian thaumaturges (Tantric Yogis) who were believed to possess secret methods of rejuvenation. Wang Hsuan-chao, who returned to India after the death of King Harsha had been charged by the Chinese Emperor in 664 to bring back Indian medicines and physicians.

Considering that Indian medicine, especially operative surgery, was highly developed for the time, it is not surprising that the Chinese, like the Arabs, were captivated by Indian medical skills and drugs. Castration was performed by Chinese methods but other surgical techniques, such as laparotomy, trepanation, and removal of cataracts, as well as inoculation for smallpox, were influenced by Indian practices.

Acupuncture

In modern day acupuncture lore, there is recounted a legend that the discovery of the vital bodily points began within India as a result of combative research studies undertaken by the Indian ksatreya warriors in order to discover the vital (and deadly) points of the body which could be struck during hand-to-hand encounters. It is said that they experimented upon prisoners by piercing their bodies with the iron and stone

"needles' daggers called Suci daggers. common to their infantry and foot soldiers, in order to determine these points.

This Chinese legend reflects and complements the traditional Indian account of its origins, where it is said that in the aftermath of battles it was noticed that sometimes therapeutic effects arose from superficial arrow or dagger wounds incurred by the Khastriya in battle.

(source: **The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China** p.139-145).

The alternative form of medicine known as acupuncture is believed to have originated in China. **In Korean academics, students are correctly told that acupuncture originated in India.** An ancient Sanskrit text on acupuncture preserved in the Ceylonese National Museum at Columbo in Sri Lanka.

The custom of ancestor worship was an adoption of Indian custom. There is presence of Indian motifs in various Buddhist caves in China.

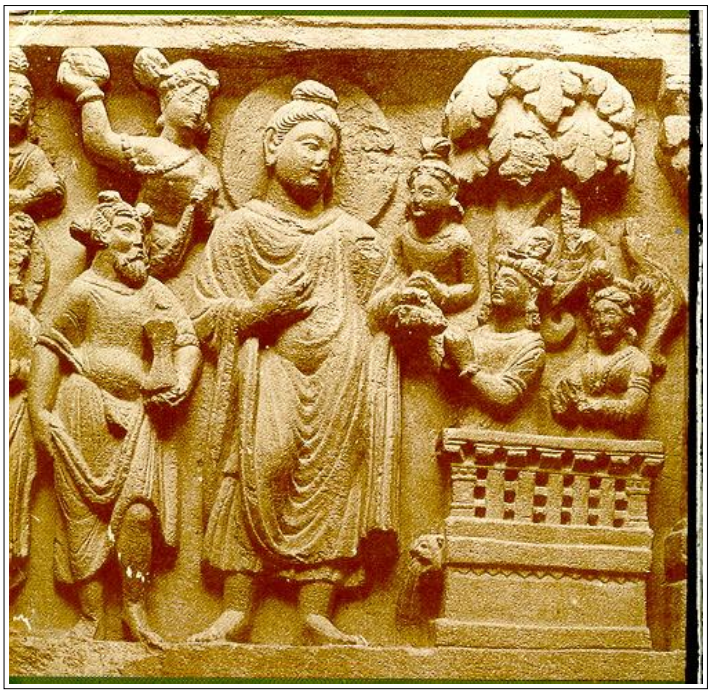
Martial Arts/Games

According to author **Terence Dukes**:



"Fighting without weapons was a specialty of the Ksatreya (caste of Ancient India)and foot soldier alike. For the Ksatreya it was simply part and parcel of their all around training, but for the lowly peasant it was essential. We read in the Vedas of men unable to afford armor who bound their heads with turbans called Usnisa to protect themselves from sword and axe blows. Fighting on foot for a Ksatreya was necessary in case he was unseated from his chariot or horse and found himself without weapons. Although the high ethical code of the Ksatreya forbid anyone but another Ksatreya from attacking him, doubtless such morals were not always observed, and when faced with an unscrupulous opponent, the Ksatreya needed to be able to defend himself, and developed, therefore, a very effective form of hand-to-hand combat that combined techniques of wrestling, throws, and hand strikes. Tactics and evasion were formulated that were later passed on to successive generations. This skill was called Vajramukhti, a name meaning "thunderbolt closed - or clasped - hands." The tile Vajramukti referred to the usage of the hands in a manner as powerful as the vajra maces of traditional warfare. Vajramukti was practiced in peacetime by means of regular physical training sessions and these utilized sequences of attack and defense technically termed in Sanskrit nata."

"Prior to and during the life of the Buddha various principles were embodied within the warrior caste known as the **Ksatreya** (Japanese: Setsuri). **This title - stemming from Sanskrit root Ksetr meaning "power," described an elite force of usually royal or noble-born warriors who were trained from infancy in a wide variety of military and martial arts, both armed and unarmed.**



In China, the Ksatreya were considered to have descended from the deity Ping Wang (Japanese: Byo O), the "Lord of those who keep things calm." Ksatreyas were like the Peace force - to keep kings and people in order. Military commanders were called Senani - a name reminiscent of the Japanese term Sensei which describes a similar status. The Japanese **samurai** also had similar traits to the Ksatreya. Their battle practices and techniques are often so close to that of the Ksatreya that we must assume the former came from India perhaps via China. The traditions of sacred Swords, of honorable self-sacrifice, and service to one's Lord are all found first in India.

"In ancient Hinduism, **nata** was acknowledged as a spiritual study and conferred as a ruling deity, **Nataraja, representing the awakening of wisdom through physical and mental concentration.** However, after the Muslim invasion of India and its brutal destruction of Buddhist and Hindu culture and religion, the Ksatreya art of nata was dispersed and many of its teachers slain. This indigenous martial arts, under the name of **Kalari or Kalaripayit** exists only in South India today. Originating at least 1,300 years ago, India's Kalaripayit is the oldest martial art taught today. It is also the most potentially violent, because students advance from unarmed combat to the use of swords, sharpened flexible metal lashes, and peculiar three-bladed daggers.

When Buddhism came to influence India (circa 500 B.c), the Deity **Nataraja** was converted to become one of the four protectors of Buddhism, and was renamed Nar (y)ayana Deva (Chinese: Na Lo Yen Tien). He is said to be a protector of the Eastern Hemisphere of the mandala."

INDIA

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Ksatreya Vajramukti

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Simhanta

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Bodhisattva Vajramukti

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Trisatyabhumi

↓

Trican Nata

↓

Dharmapala

↓

Mahabhuta Pratima

↓

CHINA

↓

Seng Cha

↓

Pu Sa Chin Kang Chuan
(Bodhisattva Vajramukti

↓

(Po Fu) (Huo Ming) (Pa She) (Pai Chin)

↓

Seng Ping

⬇

Chuan Fa or Kung Fu

⬇

(Karate) (Tae Kwon Do) (Thai Boxing) (Ju Jitsu) (Judo) (Aikido)

(source: **The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China** p.3 - 158-174 and 242).

Kalaripayattu, literally "the way of the battlefield," still survives in Kerala, where it is often dedicated to Mahakali. The Kalari grounds are usually situated near a temple, and the pupils, after having touched the feet of the master, salute the ancestors and bow down to the Goddess, begin the lesson. Kalari trainings have been codified for over 3000 years and nothing much has changed. The warming up is essential and demands great suppleness. Each movement is repeated several times, facing north, east, south and west, till perfect loosening is achieved. The young pupils pass on to the handling of weapons, starting with the "Silambam", a short stick made of extremely hard wood, which in the olden times could effectively deal with swords. The blows are hard and the parade must be fast and precise, to avoid being hit on the fingers! They continue with the swords, heavy, and dangerous, even though they are not sharpened any more, as they are used. Without guard or any kind of body protection; they whirl, jump and parry, in an impressive ballet. Young, fearless girls fight with enormous knives, bigger than their arms and the clash of irons is echoed in the ground. The session ends with the big canes, favorite weapons of the Buddhist traveler monks, which they used during their long journey towards China to scare away attackers.

The "Urimi" is the most extraordinary weapon of Kalari, unique in the world. This double-edged flexible sword which the old-time masters used to wrap around the waist to keep coiled in one hand, to suddenly whip at the opponent and inflict mortal blows, is hardly used today in trainings, for it is much too dangerous.

This indigenous martial arts, under the name of **Kalari or Kalaripayit** exists only in South India today. **Kalarippayat is said to be the world's original martial art.** Originating at least 1,300 years ago, India's Kalaripayit is the oldest martial art taught today. It is also the most potentially violent, because students advance from unarmed combat to the use of swords, sharpened flexible metal lashes, and peculiar three-bladed daggers. More than 2,000 years old, it was developed by warriors of the Cheras kingdom in Kerala. Training followed strict rituals and guidelines. The entrance to the 14 m-by-7 m arena, or kalari, faced east and had a bare earth floor. Fighters took Shiva and Shakti, the god and goddess of power, as their deities. From unarmed kicks and punches, kalarippayat warriors would graduate to sticks, swords, spears and daggers and study the marmas—the 107 vital spots on the human body where a blow can kill. Training was conducted in secret, the lethal warriors unleashed as a surprise weapon against the enemies of Cheras.



Father and founder of Zen Buddhism (called C'han in China), **Boddidharma**, a Brahmin born in Kacheepuram in Tamil Nadu, in 522 A.D. arrived at the courts of the Chinese Emperor Liang Nuti, of the 6th dynasty. He taught the Chinese monks Kalaripayattu, a very ancient Indian martial art, so that they could defend themselves against the frequent attacks of bandits. In time, the monks became famous all over China as experts in bare-handed fighting, later known as the Shaolin boxing art. The Shaolin temple which has been handed back a few years ago by the communist Government to the C'han Buddhist monks, inheritors of Boddhidharma's spiritual and martial teachings, by the present Chinese Government, is now open to visitors. On one of the walls, a fresco can be seen, showing Indian dark-skinned monks, teaching their lighter-skinned Chinese brothers the art of bare-handed fighting. On this painting are inscribed: "Tenjiku Naranokaku" which means: **"the fighting techniques to train the body (which come) from India…"**

(source: **A Western Journalist on India: a ferengi's columns - By Francois Gautier** Har-Anand Publications ISBN 8124107955 p. 155-158).

Yoga has had an enormous influence on all forms of Indian spirituality, including Hinduism, Buddhist, and Jain and later on the Sufi and Christian. The teaching of Buddhism which arose in India are similar to those of yoga: striving toward nirvana and renouncing the world. Indeed, some kind of meeting between yoga and early

Buddhism certainly took place, and one of the Buddhist schools is actually called Yogachara (practice of Yoga). **Indian Buddhism spread throughout Asia, some ideas from Yoga were carried into Tibet, Mongolia, China, and from there on into Japan. Indeed, Zen is a specific form of Yoga's dhyana or 'transcendental meditation' and the word Zen (like the Chinese tchan) is a simple phonetic development from Sanskrit dhyana.**

(For information on Yoga, refer to chapter on **Yoga and Hindu Philosophy**).



The famous **Shao-lin** style of boxing is also attributed to Indian influence. **Bodhidharma,** (8th century AD) who believed in a sound mind in a sound body, taught the monks in the Shao-lin temple this style of boxing for self-defense for rejuvenating the body after exacting meditation and mental concentration.

According to the History channel martial arts were introduced in China by an Indian named **Bodhidharma,** who taught it to the monks so that they could defend their monasteries. He was also said to have introduced the concept of **vital energy or chi ("prana" probably corresponds to this). This concept is the basis acupuncture.**

Chuan Fa, the Buddhist martial arts, preserved many Ksatreya techniques in their original forms. The monks to practiced Chuan Fa were often the sole preservers of the Ksatreya art of **Avasavidya**, called in Chinese Huo Ming or Hua Fa.

During the first millennium, Indian racing games reached China. The well-known expert on the history of Chinese games, **Karl Himly**, on the authority of a passage from the **Jun Tsun Su**, a work of the Sung period (960-1279), suggests that the Chinese game t'shu-p'u was invented in western India and spread to China in the time of the Wei dynasty (220-265). **T'shu'p'u** is, in fact, the Chinese adaptation of the **Indian chatus-pada** (modern chupur).

Chess was introduced from India, ca. 700. through the ancient trade route from Kashmir. The oldest and best of the native Chinese games, wei-ch'i, did not appear until 1000. Cubical dice (chu-p or yu-p'i), although found in ancient India and Egypt, are generally believed to have reached China from India, possibly quite early. **Arthur Waley** is of the opinion that the prominence of the number six in the Book of Changes was derived from the six sides of cubical dice. In China the first indisputable sources appeared only around 800 AD. **"The King of Kanauj had sent the game of chess to the court of Sasanian King Kusrau I Anshirvan** (531-579).

Education



The University of Nalanda built in the 4th century BCE was one of the greatest achievements of ancient India in the field of education. The Chinese scholar and traveler **Hiuen Tsang** (600-654 AD) stayed at the Nalanda University in the 7th century, and has left an elaborate description of the excellence, and purity of monastic life practiced here. **He found Indians "high-minded, upright and honorable.**

China received Mahayanic Buddhism and Sanskrit texts from the Central-Asian provinces of India in 67 A.D. After that China became Hinduized not only in theology and metaphysics, but in every department of thought and activity. Thousands of Hindus lived in Chinese cities, eg. at Changan in the N.W. and at Canton on the sea, as priests, teachers, merchants, physicians, sculptors and "interpreters." The name of Chinese tourists, students, philosophers, and translators, also, in India is legion. The Chinese founded their drama on Hindu precedents, imported musical instruments (stringed) from India, and introduced even some of the acrobatic feats, dances and sports prevalent among the Hindus.

During his Indian tour the great Itsing (634-712) mastered Hindu medicine at the University of Nalanda. Hindu mathematics and logic were cultivated among the intellectuals of China; Sanskrit treatises on painting and art criticism, eg. Sadamga (six limbs of painting) in Vatsayana's Kamasutra (erotics), Chitralaksana (marks of painting), etc. furnished the canons of the Chinese art during its greatest epoch (Tang and Sung Dynasties 600-1250); and the traditional Confucianism had to be reinterpreted, eg. by Chu-Hsi (1130-1200) in the light of the imported Hindu philosophy. **China became a part of "Greater India" in poetry, aesthetics, folk-festivals, morals, manners, and sentiments.** The "Augustan Age" of Chinese culture, the age of the mighty Tangs and brillant Sungs, was the direct outcome of the "holy alliance" for centuries between India and China.

(source: **Creative India - By Benoy Kumar Sarkar** p. 78-79). For more on education, refer to chapter on **Education in Ancient India**).

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Ling Yin Temple and India

Lin Yin Temple is home to the 19-metre-high Golden Buddha statue. Inscriptions found in the temple say the statue came flying from India.

Fei Lai Feng - Peak Flown From Afar (also named Ling Jiu Feng), stands next to Lin Yin Temple and is a must-see in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. There are many legends about the peak's name. **A well-known legend states that an Indian monk named Huili arrived in the valley 1,600 years ago and was surprised to see a peak so dissimilar from any other one in the valley. He believed that the peak had flown over from India because the shape, although unique in China, was common in India.** However, he did not know why the peak would have flown to this spot so far from his country.





Inscriptions found in the temple say the statue came flying from India. Big Wild Goose Pagoda - Dayanta - Sanskrit scriptures he had brought back from India.

Big Wild Goose Pagoda (Da Yan Ta - Dayanta) which was built in 652 AD in the Tang Dynasty. Xuanzang, a prominent Buddhist scholar of the time, planned to have a huge stone pagoda built to house the **Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures he had brought back from India**. It contains a large volume of Buddhist scriptures which were obtained from India by the eminent monk Xuanzang. **The pagoda was modeled after the one in India.** It was given the same name in memory of Xuan Zang in praise of Buddhism.

(source: **Ling Yin Temple** and **travelchinaguide.com** and **visitchina**

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Bhaarat's influence on Japan

Hinduism and Buddhism went from India to China and Korea to Japan. Images of Ganesha and Vishnu have been found throughout Japan. Numerous Buddhist deities were introduced into Japan and many of these are still very popular.

According to **D. P. Singhal**, "some Hindu gods, who had been incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon, were amongst them. For example, **Indra,** originally, the god of thunder but now also the king of gods, is popular in Japan as **Taishaku** (literally the great King Sakra); **Ganesha** is worshipped as **Sho-ten or Shoden** (literally, holy god) in many Buddhist temples, and is believed to confer happiness upon his devotees. A sea-serpent worshipped by sailors is called Ryujin, a Chinese equivalent of the Indian naga. **Hariti and Dakini** are also

worshipped, the former as **Kishimo-jin**, and the latter by her original name. Bishamon is a Japanese equivalent of the Indian Vaisravana (**Kubera**), the god of wealth.



Brahma - Japan

Even Shinto adopted Indian gods, despite its desperate efforts after the Meiji Revolution to disengage itself from Buddhism. The Indian sea god **Varuna,** is worshipped in Tokyo as Sui-ten (water-god); the Indian goddess of learning, **Saraswati**, has become Benten (literally, goddess of speech), with many shrines dedicated to her along sea coasts and beside lakes and ponds. **Shiva** is well known to the Japanese as Daikoku (literally, god of darkness), which is a Chinese and Japanese equivalent of the Indian Mahakala, another name of Shiva. Daikoku is a popular god in Japan. At the Kotohira shrine on the island of Shikoku, sailors worship a god called **Kompera**, which is a corruption of the Sanskrit word for crocodile, Kumbhira. The divine architect mentioned in the Rig Veda, **Vishvakarma**, who designed and constructed the world, was regarded in ancient Japan as the god of carpenters, Bishukatsuma. The Indian **Yama**, the god of death, is the most dreaded god of Japan, under the name of **Emma-o**, the king of hell.

According to author **Donald A. Mackenzie**: "The Indian form of myth of the **Churning of the Milky Ocean** reached Japan. In a Japanese illustration of it the mountain rests on a tortoise, and the supreme god sits on the summit, grasping in one of his hands a water vase. The Japanese Shinto myth of creation, as related in the **Ko-ji-ki** and **Nihon-gi**, is likewise a churning myth. Twin deities, Izanagi, the god, and Izanami, the goddess, sand on "the floating bridge of heaven" and thrust into the ocean beneath the "Jewel Spear of Heaven". With this pestle they churn the primeval waters until they curdle and form land."

(source: **Myths of Pre-Columbian America** - **By Donald A. Mackenzie** ASIN 185958490X p.190-191).

The climbers wearing traditional white dress, who scale the sacred Mount Ontake as a religious observance, sometimes have inscribed on their robe Sanskrit **Siddham** characters of an ancient type. Sometimes they put on white Japanese scarfs (tenugui) which carry the Sanskrit character OM, the sacred syllable of the Hindus.

According to **Terence Dukes**, "The Gagaku dances of Japan contain many movements derived from the **Indian Nata** and the Chinese Chuan Fa."

(source: **The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China** p.206).

The cultivation of cotton in Japan is traced to an Indian who had drifted to the shore of Aichi Prefecture in 799. To commemorate the event, the Japanese named the village where the shipwrecked Indian had landed Tenjiku; Tenjiku was the Japanese name for India, and means Heaven.



The popular Japanese game of sunoroku or sugoroku (backgammon played at the royal of the Nara rulers and still popular in Japan is of Indian origin. In Japan the game is played as nard. Nard is generally regarded as an Iranian game, but the ninth century Arab scholar, **Al Yaqubi,** considered nard an Indian invention used to illustrate man's dependence on chance and destiny. According to Wei-Shu, sugoroku was brought to China in ancient times from Hu country, which at that time meant a country somewhere in the vicinity of India. Again, as Karl Himly has pointed out, the Hun Tsun, Sii, written during the Sung period (960-1279), states that t'shu-pu, another Chinese name for sugoruku, was invented in western India, that it was known in its original form as **chatushpada**, and that it reached China during the Wei period (220-265).

There is some Indian influence on Japanese art. A similarity between Shinto rituals and Hindu rituals (for example ringing the bell as one enters the temple). Narushima (Narasimha) Bishamondo is a famous temple in Japan.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal**). For more on Japan refer to chapter on **Suvarnabhumi**).

The influence of Indian thought and culture on Japan was very great. **Maurice Winternitz**, while reviewing **Geschichte der Japanischen Literature**, says:

"In view of so much Indian influence in Japanese literature, it is possible to assume that the 'Keuyogen' or double meaning of Japanese poetry may in any way be connected with that form of Alankara of the Indian Kavya, which is exactly in the same method."

The distinguished Japanese scholar, **Mr. J. Taka Kusu**, says: " But I should like to emphasize the fact that the influence of India, material and intellectual, must have been much greater in an earlier period than we at present consider to have been the case. There were, for instance, several Indians, whom the Kuroshiwo current, washing almost the whole southern coast, brought to the Japanese shore." He further says, " It cannot be denied that several Indians came to Japan, especially in view of so many Indians finding their way to China by sea."

He then relates how a Brahmin Bodhisen Bharadvaja, known generally as the "Brahmin Bishop" came with another priest from India via Champa (Cochin China) to Osaka, then to Nara, where they met another Indian ascetic and taught Sanskrit to the Japanese. "His monastery and tombstone, with a written eulogy, still exist in Nara. Just at the time a Japanese alphabet or syllables is said to have been invented. The fifty syllables, Gojuin, are arranged by a hand, evidently with a practical knowledge of Sanskrit method."

(source: **Journal of Royal Asiatic Society** for 1905, p. 872-873). The official record of Japan, Nihon-ki and Ruijukokushi describe how **cotton** was introduced in Japan by two Indians who reached Japan in July 799 and April 800 A.D.

(For more refer to Vide Dr. Taka Kusu's "What Japan owes to India" in the Journal of the Indo-Japanese Association for January, 1910). It is noteworthy that some of the scriptures of the Japanese priests preserved in the Horyuji Temple of Japan are written in Bengali characters of the eleventh century.

(source: Daito Shimaji's " India an Japan in Ancient Times," in the Journal of Indo-Japanese Association for January 1910).

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Common Terms: Sanskrit/Chinese/Japanese

Archarya - Master	Achali	Ajari
Dharma - Law	FA	Ho

Pratima - movement warrior techniques of the Hindu ksatreyas	Hsing	Kata
Sunyatapani -	Tang-Shou	Karate/To De
Dharmahasta	Chuan Fe	Kempo
Marga - The Way	Tao	Do
Guhya-Sutra	Mi-Ching	Mikkyo
Nagarjuna	Lung Shu	Ryuju/Ryusho/Ryumyo
Mudra - ritual gesture	Yin	In
Mandala a special zone or area	Mantolo	Mandara
Vajramukti	Ching Kang, Chieh T'o	Kongogedastsu
Sangha - congregation or group followers	Seng	So
Narya - strong or manly	Na-Li	Nara, Naha
Nata	Na-Pa, Na-Ra	Nara, Napa, Nafa
Yoga - to yoke	Yui Cha	Yu Ga

(source: **The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China** p.485-491).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that China was more influenced by India than India by China. Whilst Chinese monks came to acquire knowledge and take it back, the Indian monks went to China on specific religious missions to impart knowledge. There is hardly any evidence that the Chinese monks brought with them any work which was translated into an Indian language. **It seems that during this period of Sino-Indian contact, the psychological atmosphere was one in which India was naturally accepted as the giver and China as the taker.** Whilst the best in Indian thought was carefully studied and carried back to China, Chinese ideas filtered through India whether they represented the best of their culture or not.

According to **Jawaharlal Nehru** in his book "**The Discovery of India**"

"The most famous of the Chinese travelers to India was **Hsuang Tsang** who came in the seventh century when the great T'sang dynasty flourished in China and King Harshavardhana ruled over in North India. Hsuang-Tsang took a degree of Master of the Law at **Nalanda University** and finally became vice-principal of the university.



His book the **Si-Yu-Ki** or the Record of the Western Kingdom (meaning India), makes fascinating reading. He tells us of the system of the university where the five branches of knowledge were taught. 1. Grammar 2. Science of Arts and Crafts 3. Medicine 4. Logic and 5. Philosophy. **Hsuan-Tsang was particularly struck by the love of learning of the Indian people.** Many Indian classics have been preserved in Chinese translation relating not only to Buddhism but also to Hinduism, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, etc. There are supposed to be 8,00 such works in the Sung-pao collection in China. Tibet is also full of them. There used to be frequent co-operation between Indian, Chinese and Tibetan scholars. A notable instance of this co-operation, still extant, is a Sanskrit-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary of Buddhist technical terms. This dates from the ninth century and is named the **'Mahavyutpatti.'**

Soon after Hsuan-Tsang's death in China, yet another famous pilgrim made the journey to India - **I-tsing** (or Yi-tsing). He also studied at Nalanda University for a long time and carried back several hundred Sanskrit texts.

He refers to India as the West (Si-fang), but he tells us that it was known as **Aryadesha** - Arya means noble, and desha region - the noble region. It is so called because men of noble character appear there successively, and people all praise the land by that name. It is also called the **Madhyadesha** - the middle land, for it is in the center of a hundred myriads of countries.

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 193-194).



Yet Chinese culture had some influence on India. The gabled roofs of houses on the western coast of India show a Chinese influence, as do the temples and houses in the Himalayan regions. Some Chinese influence is noted on Gupta coins. The use of a certain kind of silk (china-msuka) in India, different kinds of fruits including pears (cinaraja-putra), peaches (cinani), and lichis, the technique of fishing in the backwaters, and the porcelain industry all owe something to Chinese influence. Indians also learned the art of papermaking from China.

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Articles

India and China

By V. B. Metta
http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/5185/2-2china.html

It is a curious fact that Chinese culture, though so distinctive, all-pervasive and compulsive, could not come to India, or if it did come, it could not leave any lasting marks behind it.



Archaeologists and scholars tell us that Chinese ideas and ideals came to India with the Kushan Kings of the North, who were Tartars, but the influence that that dynasty has left on India is almost negligible. We are also told that there is influence of Chinese art on the Ajanta paintings. But that is only a theory, since there is nothing characteristically Chinese about these frescoes. **The influence of India on China however is undeniable. It is not merely in religion that India influenced China, but in most subjects that go to make up national culture.**

The Chinese, always proud of their civilization, looked upon the outside world with contempt. They called the tribes living to their North "Hun slaves," and the tribes living to the North-West "barbarians," while the Japanese were denominated by them "Dwarf Pirates." **But their attitude towards India was different. India was known to them by a number of names, not one of which was contemptuous. She was called Hsin Tu, the Kingdom of the Hindus, or Ti Yu, the Western Land; to Buddhists she was Fu Kuo, the Land of the Buddhas.**

Pre-Buddhistic Influence



It is probable that there was contact between India and China even before the birth of Buddha; certain similarities of thought and belief between pre-Buddhist Indians and pre-Confucian Chinese go to strengthen that theory. **According to Hindus, the world sprang from the union of Purusha and Prakriti, the Male and Female Principles; the ancient Chinese writers thought the same—the Purusha and Prakriti of Indians being called Yang and Yin in China. There is also the worship of mountains in both countries; what the Himalayas have been to Hindus that Mount Tai has been to the Celestials.** I do not think that these are mere coincidences due to the similarity of all early beliefs. There was a good deal of action and reaction of early Asiatic

civilizations upon each other of which a proper history has yet to be written.

With the rise of Buddhism we are, historically speaking, on firmer ground. It is said that Asoka's missionaries had gone to China. There are however no records left of it. But we do know as a matter of historical fact that in 67 A.D., the Emperor Ming Ti received Kashyapamadanya from India, who bore with him presents of images and sculptures for the Chinese emperor. Since then the intercourse between the two countries continued uninterrupted till at least the eighth century. During that time it is estimated that between thirty to forty Indian scholars went to China, and some two hundred Chinese scholars came to India, who took back with them to their country Indian books, paintings, and statues.

The influence of India on China can be traced on Music, Architecture, Painting, Sculpture, Literature, Mythology, Philosophy and Science.

Influence of Hindu Music



We learn from Chinese writers that Indian music had displaced Chinese music in the seventh century in northern China; records of this music are said to be preserved in Japan. Although Chinese architecture is mainly wooden, still Indian architecture has succeeded in influencing it. There were certain temples built during the Tang Period in China which were the offspring of Indian and Chinese styles of architecture. Those temples are however in ruins now, and so they cannot be studied properly. But the Chinese pagoda fortunately still exists. It is called Chinese, though the country of its origin was Nepal. The Newars, a people living in the Valley of Nepal, evolved it by making certain alterations in the Hindu temple. Those alterations were: (1) They built the pagoda on a platform and not on the ground direct like the Hindu temple; (2) They tilted up the roof of their building, mainly because the rainfall in the country is very heavy. **Mr. Ernest Havell is of opinion that the pagoda was a modification of the stupa, while Mr. Sylvain Levi thinks that it represents an Indian style of architecture which has now disappeared.** When the pagoda went from Nepal to Tibet and from thence to China is not definitely known yet. The oldest pagoda in China is, I think, of the sixth century.

In **painting**, India influenced China considerably. From the East Chin dynasty to the Tang dynasty there was continuous intercourse between the two countries, and Indian paintings went to China in great numbers and influenced, if not actually displaced for a time Chinese painting in the North. This Indian School of Painting flourished in China till the rise to power of the Southern Sungs who favored the purely Chinese style of painting. I shall never forget the exquisite, ethereally delicate pictures painted on silk of this period which I saw at an exhibition at Messrs. Yamanaka's art galleries in New York in 1923. The manager of the galleries on seeing that I was an Indian, approached me, and pointing at the pictures in front of us, remarked with his inimitable Japanese smile, "They are all Indian really!" Then there are the wall paintings of the **Tun Huang Caves (the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas) which Sir Aurel Stein and others have recently excavated in Chinese Turkestan.**



A Chinese writer tells us that before the introduction of Buddhism there was no sculpture in three dimensions in China. But most of the early Chinese Buddhist sculpture was destroyed by an Emperor who was anti-Buddhist. There are, however, the rock sculptures and reliefs at Lo Yang and Lung Men of that period still left intact which show the influence of Indian sculpture on them. There are also sculptures to be found at Yung Kwang which closely resemble the Indo-Greek sculptures of Gandhara.

The **Sanskrit language** and literature have influenced China to a certain extent, since the Buddhist Scriptures had to be translated into Chinese. On account of the study of Sanskrit—which, by the way, is the language of the Mahayana Buddhism and not Pali as some people imagine—the Chinese were inspired to invent an alphabetical system. This alphabetical system which has now disappeared, was called *Ba-lamen Shu or Brahminical writing.* **Sakuntala**, the masterpiece of the great Indian dramatist **Kalidasa**, was translated into Chinese, and is said to have influenced the Chinese drama. In mythology, many Buddhist deities of India were adopted by the Chinese; for example, Kwan Yin, the Chinese Goddess of Mercy, was the Indian Tara. **It has**

been suggested that Lao Tze got his idea of Tao—the Way—from the Hindu Brahman, Universal Soul. It is likely that the Indian sciences of Astronomy and Medicine influenced the astronomical and medical sciences of the Chinese. There is very good scope for a competent scholar to make a full study of Indian influence on China and other Far-Eastern countries, and write a book on the subject.

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British Imperialism and Christian Missionaries in China
(excerpts from Glimpses of World History - By Jawaharlal Nehru (1934) p. 445-449)

India had sent in the past many a good thing to China. Bt the Opium war with Britain was a beginning of a unsavory chapter in Chinese history.



This was the beginning of China's troubles with the imperialistic Powers of the West. Her isolation was at an end. She had to accept foreign trade; and she had to accept, in addition, Christian missionaries. **These missionaries played an important part in China as the vanguard of imperialism.** Many of China's subsequent troubles had something to do with missionaries. Their behavior was often insolent and exasperating, but they could not be tried by Chinese courts. Under the new treaty foreigners from the West were not subject to Chinese law or Chinese justice. They were tried by their own courts. This was called "extra-territoriality", and it still exists, and is much resented. The converts of the also claimed this special protection of 'extra-territoriality." They were in no way entitled to it; but that made no difference, as the great missionary, the representative of a powerful imperialist nation, was behind them. Thus village was sometimes set against village, and when, exasperated beyond measure, the villagers or others rose and attacked the missionary, and sometimes killed him, then the imperialist Power behind swooped down and took signal reparation. **Few occurrences have been so profitable to European Powers as the murders of their missionaries in China!** For they made each such murder the occasion for demanding and extorting further privileges.

It was also a convert to Christianity who started one of the most terrible and cruel rebellions in China. This is the **Taiping Rebellion,** started about 1850 by Hung Hsin-Chuan. This religious maniac had extraordinary success and went about with the war-cry **"Kill the idolaters"**, and vast numbers of people were killed. The rebellion devastated more than half China, and during a dozen years or so it is estimated that at least 20,000,000 people died on account of it. At first the missionaries blessed it and later repudiated Huang. To the Chinese government, the missionary did not come as a messenger of religion and good will. He was an agent of imperialism.

"First the missionary, then the gunboat, then the land-grabbing - this is the procession of events in the Chinese mind."

The foreign barbarians cared little what the Chinese thought of them. They felt secure in their gunboats and with their modern weapons of war.

"Whatever happens,
We have got
The Maxim gun,
And they have not!"

***

England waited in the wings as they vied for the key to absolute control of China. Western culture and beliefs moved slowly into the foreground in China, especially the Christian doctrine spread by missionaries which found itself at the center of the Taiping ideology.



The English, when told "Take away your opium, and your missionaries, and you will be welcome" chose to come with both and throw welcome to the wind. The fact that the English had the power in the first place to disregard the Emperor and his



ambassadors was a blow to Chinese esteem. Suddenly these little European nations from far away were threatening the traditions and tenements kept by China for thousands of years. For the next ten years, Hung joined Leang-afa as a street preacher. With several close friends, he founded the Society of God Worshippers and remained the head of that organization until the March of 1847, when **he returned to Canton to study with Isaachar T. Roberts. Roberts was an American Southern Baptist missionary, who adopted Hung as a special student and encouraged his ideas of rebellion.** Later, the missionary was to change his mind, calling Hung and his fellow revolutionists "coolie kings" who were "crazy and unfit to rule".

"In search of further guidance, Hong spent two months with an American Baptist missionary, the Reverend Issachar Jacox Roberts, receiving scriptural instruction. Leaving before he was ready for baptism – on which score the Reverend Mr. Roberts was quite right – Hong returned to his native place near Canton. There he and his followers, now calling themselves God Worshipers, made themselves socially unacceptable by **smashing idols** and Hong lost his position as schoolmaster."

(source: **Dragon by the Tail; American, British, Japanese, and Russian Encounters With China and One Another By John Paton Davies Jr**.

Christian influence upon the ideology of the Taiping Rebellion, 1851-1864
by Eugene Powers Boardman)

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Hindu-Chini bhai bhai
Jyoyti Malhotra
http://www.indian-express.com/ie20010521/nat19.html

New Delhi, May 20: China and India are expected to take a great leap forward in their relationship, with Beijing inviting the Shankaracharya of Kanchi, Sri Jayendra Saraswati, on a tour of China later in October this year.

The Shankaracharya is among a handful of major religious leaders worldwide who have ever been invited by officially atheist China, on a red carpet journey that will take him and his 15-member team across the old cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Hangzhou.



The Shankaracharya's trip is being described as a ''civilisational journey'', in the manner of the ancient travelers who travelled from India to the Middle Kingdom and back. But it is bound to add an interesting new dimension to modern-day contacts between Asia's giants, who at the best of times seem to regard each other as competitors.

Clearly, the Shankaracharya's trip from October 10 to 17 is also an attempt to break the gathering distrust between the two countries. The fact that the invitation comes from the China Association of International Friendly Contact (CAIFC) in Beijing — all ''autonomous'' and ''independent'' bodies in China are linked to the government — whose president is the former Chinese foreign minister Huang Hua, makes it even more significant.

Beijing, in fact, seems to be rolling out the red carpet with deliberate intent. Jayendra Saraswati will meet Li Peng, the second-most important leader in all China as well as Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji in Beijing, besides Buddhist and Taoist leaders (both groups are native to China) in Shanghai.

Significantly, during the week the Shankaracharya will visit, Beijing will also throw open the gates of the formerly forbidden city to Hindu devotees from the rest of the world, Kanchi sources said. The political importance of the

journey has not escaped New Delhi, although diplomats wished not to make comments.

For example, the Beijing-Shanghai-Hangzhou trip is the same route that was given to former US president Richard Nixon when he made his pathbreaking visit to China in 1972.

Analysts pointed out that Beijing has been ‘‘under siege’’ for some years now, with the banned Falun Gong sect gathering worshipers across the country and the West pressurizing China to allow more religious freedom.

By letting in Shankaracharya, the analysts added, the Chinese seem to be sending many messages at the same time. First, that the people of India must be engaged at many levels, not only political. Second, Hinduism is certainly no threat to sects like the Falun Gong. And third, as China opens up slowly, **‘‘Western nations, along with their cultural motifs, must back off.’’**

The Kanchi group, comprising of the pontiff’s close aides Venkateshwaran, Rajaram, M.D. Nalapat, Sundar and R. Sarathy, who visited Beijing in end-April to finalise details, said they were ‘‘very pleasantly surprised’’ at the extremely warm reception they received.

They said they were able to wrap up both major details as well as the finer points of the trip in a matter of weeks. **The Catholic Pope, they pointed out, has been trying to go to China or even Hong Kong for the last 17-odd years, but Beijing has steadfastly refused to give him a visa.**

On the other hand, the letter formally delivered by CAIFC emissaries to Kanchipuram a few days ago, is extremely warm in tone, inviting ‘‘Your Holiness’’ to visit China as ‘‘distinguished guests of the Chinese people as well as the goodwill ambassadors of **our great neighbor India with which China has a history of thousands (of) years of friendly exchanges’’.**

Interestingly, it is the small details that seemed to have warmed the cockles of the Shankaracharya camp. Such as the fact that the pontiff will be able to carry his personal cook with him along with the special rice that he eats. And though the vegetables will be provided by the Chinese side, water will come straight from a borewell in the earth and not from an impersonal tap in the wall.

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Did You Know



Tea - (Chai), the national drink of the Anglo-Saxons, is an indirect Indian legacy to the Western civilization.



It is also a favored drink of the Chinese, Japanese, Russians and others. The original home of this shrub was in Assam, (Kamarupa of old) India, and from there in the third century A.D. it traveled to China and by the middle of the seventeenth century, it appeared in England. In the eighteenth century "tea gardens" began to appear in London and attracted especially women who preferred them to the stuffy tea houses in the congested city. Scholars too were attracted - Dr Samuel Johnson and Boswell lent distinction to these gardens.

(Source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p- 396)

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Neither historical events nor cross-cultural currents can explain the unique parallels in the myths and imagery of ancient Egypt and India. Walafrid Strabo (c. 809–849) German scholar has said: "The lotus flower, sacred to Buddha and to Osiris, has five petals which symbolizes the four limbs and the head; the five senses; the five digits; and like the pyramid, the four parts of the compass and the zenith. Other esoteric meanings abound: for myths are seldom simple, and never irresponsible."

Indian contacts with the Western world date back to prehistoric times. Trade relations, preceded by the migration of peoples, inevitably developed into cultural relations. Evidence of Indian contact with the ancient civilizations to her west, however is certain. Knobbed pottery vases came to Sumer from India and so did cotton. In the Akkadian tongue, Indian cotton was expressed by ideographs meaning "vegetable cloth." Assurbanipal (668-626 B.C) cultivated Indian plants including the "wool-bearing trees" of India.

According to the Skandha Purana, Egypt (Africa) was known as Sancha-dvipa continent mentioned in Sir Willliams Jones' dissertation on Egypt. At Alexandria, in Egypt, Indian scholars were a common sight: they are mentioned both by Dio Chrysostom (c. 100 A.D.) and by Clement (c. 200 A.D.) Indirect contact between ancient India and Egypt through Mesopotamia is generally admitted, but evidence of a direct relationship between the two is at best fragmentary. Peter Von Bohlen (1796-1840) German Indologist, compared India with ancient Egypt. He thought there was a cultural connection between the two in ancient times. There are elements of folk art, language, and rural culture of Bengal which have an affinity with their Egyptian counterparts and which have not been explained satisfactorily in terms of Aryan, Mongolian, or Dravidian influences. There are similarities between place names in Bengal and Egypt and recently an Egyptian scholar, El Mansouri, has pointed out that in both Egypt and India the worship of cow, sun, snake, and river are common.

Recently, more definitive evidence suggesting contact between India and Egypt has become available. A terracotta mummy from Lothal vaguely resembles an Egyptian mummy and a similar terracotta mummy is found also at Mohenjodaro. In this context it is of interest to note that the Egyptian mummies are said to have been wrapped in Indian muslin. Characters similar to those on the Indus seals have also been found on tablets excavated from Easter Island.

Of all the Egyptian objects and motifs indicating some contact between India and Egypt during the Indus Valley period, "the cord pattern occurring in a copper tablet in the Indus Valley and on three Egyptian seals is the most striking link between the two countries. Gordon Childe has said, "In other words, in the third millennium B.C. India was already in a position to contribute to the building up of the cultural tradition that constitutes our spiritual heritage as she notoriously has done since the time of Alexander."

Introduction
The Lotus and the River
Cultural Contacts with Egypt
The Sun King and Dasharatha
The Persian Connection
Links to Ancient Egypt
Conclusion

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Introduction



Peter Von Bohlen (1796-1840) German Indologist, compared India with ancient Egypt. He thought there was a cultural connection between the two in ancient times.

(source: **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German** - **By Valentine Stache-Rosen**. p.15-16).

In his book, **Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys in India**, **Paul William Roberts,** states:

" Recent research and scholarship make it increasingly possible to believe that the Vedic era was the lost civilization whose legacy the Egyptians and the Indians inherited. There must have been one. There are too many similarities between hieroglyphic texts and Vedic ones, these in turn echoed in somewhat diluted form and a confused fashion by the authors of Babylonian texts and the Old Testament."

(source: **Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys in India - By Paul William Roberts** p. 300).

It is believed that the Dravidians from India went to Egypt and laid the foundation of its civilization there. the Egyptians themselves had the tradition that they originally came from the South, from a land called **Punt**, which an historian of the West, **Dr. H.R. Hall,** thought referred to some part of India.

The Indus Valley civilization is, according to Sir John Marshall who was in charge of the excavations, the oldest of all civilizations unearthed (c. 4000 B.C.) It is older than the Sumerian and it is believed by many that the latter was a branch of the former.

(source: **The Bhagvad Gita: A Scripture for the Future** - Translation and Commentary by **Sachindra K. Majumdar** p. 28).

Adolf Erman (1854-1937) author of **Life in ancient Egypt** and **A handbook of Egyptian religion**, says that the persons who were responsible for a highly developed Egyptian civilization were from **Punt**, an Asiatic country, a description of which is unveiled by this scholar from the old legends - a distant country washed by the great seas, full of valleys, incense, balsum, precious metals and stones; rich in animals, cheetahs, panthers, dog-headed apes and long tailed monkeys, winged creatures with strange feathers to fly up to the boughs of wonderful trees, especially the incense tree and the coconut trees.

Dr. Erman further says that analyzing the Egyptian legends makes it clear that from Punt the heavenly beings headed by Amen, Horus and Hather, passed into the Nile valley...To this same country belongs that idol of **Bes**, the ancient figure of the deity in the Land of Punt.

M A Murray author of **Legends of Ancient Egypt** rightly observes that as a race the Egyptians are more Asiatic than African. He cites the type 'P' as depicted by Hatshepsut's artists as his support.

(source: **The Aryan Hoax: That Dupes The Indians - By Paramesh Choudhary** p. 225).

Klaus K. Klostermaier, in his book **A Survey of Hinduism** p. 18 says:

"For several centuries a lively commerce developed between the ancient Mediterranean world and India, particularly the ports on the Western coast. The most famous of these ports was Sopara, not far from modern Bombay, which was recently renamed Mumbai. **Present day Cranganore in Kerala, identified with the ancient Muziris, claims to have had trade contacts with Ancient Egypt under Queen Hatsheput, who sent five ships to obtain spices, as well as with ancient Israel during King Soloman's reign.** Apparently, the contact did not break off after Egypt was conquered by Greece and later by Rome.





India - Yaksha (dwarf) image discovered in cave 2nd century BC. Egypt Bes. depicted as a deformed dwarf. 3rd century BC. (source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 70 - 71).

Max Muller had also observed that the mythology of Egyptians (and also that of the Greeks and Assyrians) is wholly founded on Vedic traditions. **Eusebius,** a Greek writer, has also recorded that the early Ethiopians emigrated from the river Indus and first settled in the vicinity of Egypt.

In an essay entitled **On Egypt from the Ancient Book of the Hindus** (Asiatic Researchers Vol. III, 1792), British **Lt. Colonel Wilford** gave abundant evidence proving that ancient Indians colonized and settled in Egypt. The British explorer **John Hanning Speke**, who in 1862 discovered the source of the Nile in Lake Victoria, acknowledged that the Egyptians themselves didn't have the slightest knowledge of where the Nile's source was. However, Lt. Colonel Wilford's description of the Hindus' intimate acquaintance with ancient Egypt led Speke to Ripon Falls, at the edge of Lake Victoria.

Louis Jacolliot (1837-1890), who worked in French India as a government official and was at one time President of the Court in Chandranagar, translated numerous Vedic hymns, the **Manusmriti**, and the Tamil work, **Kural.** This French savant and author of **La Bible Dans L'Inde** says:

"With such congruence before us, no one, I imagine, will appear to contest the purely Hindu origin of Egypt, unless to suggest that: "And who tells you that it was not Indian that copied Egypt? Any of you require that this affirmation shall be refuted by proofs leaving no room for even a shadow of doubt?

"To be quite logical, then deprive India of the Sanskrit, that language which formed all other; but show me in India a leaf of papyrus, a columnar inscription, a temple bas relief tending to prove Egyptian birth."

(source: **Hinduism in the Space Age - by E. Vedavyas** p.117).

Heinrich Karl Brugsch agrees with this view and writes in his **History of Egypt** that,

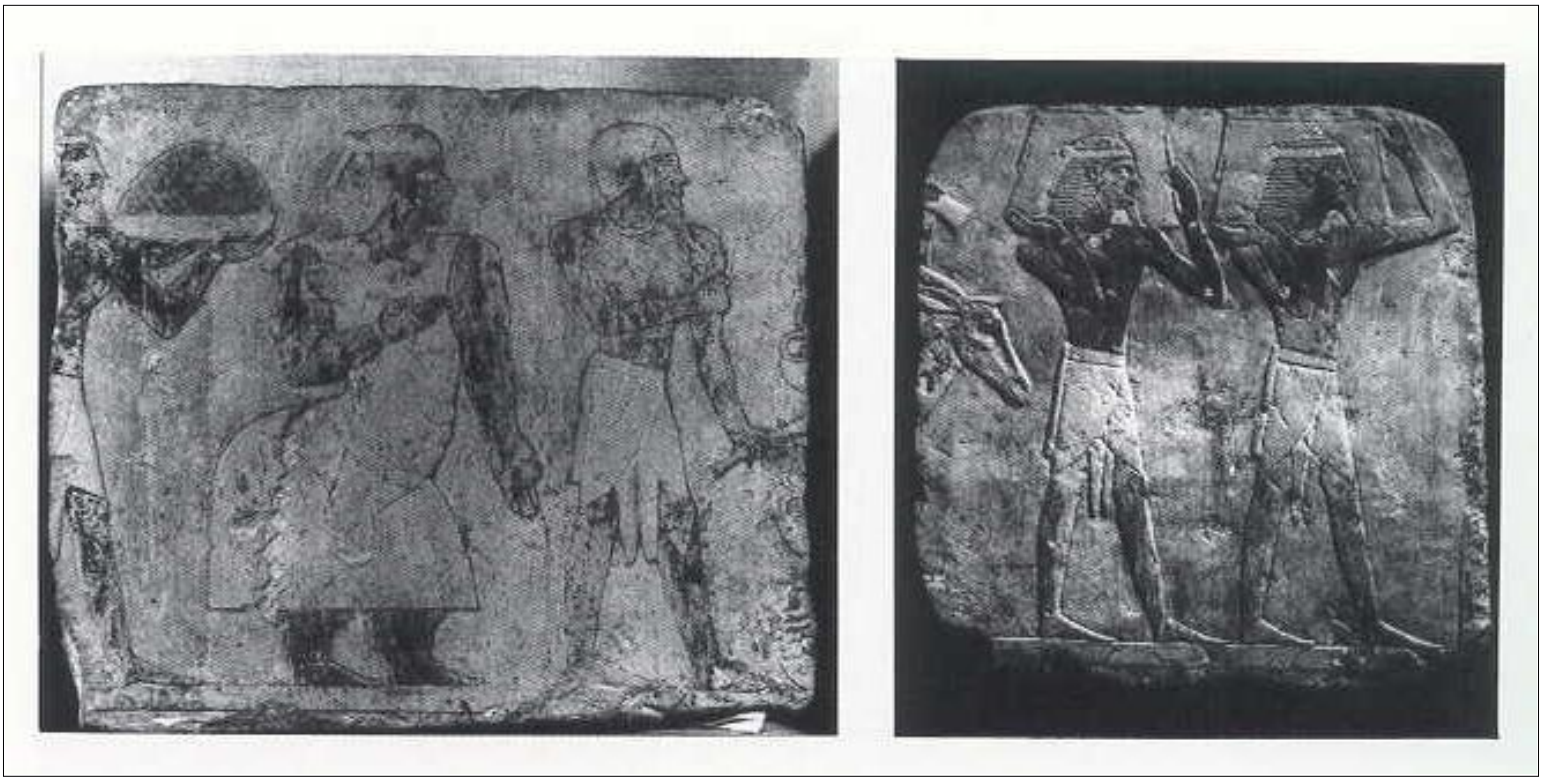
"We have a right to more than suspect that India, eight thousand years ago, sent a colony of emigrants who carried their arts and high civilization into what is now known as Egypt." The Egyptians came, according to their records, from a mysterious land (now known to lie on the shores of the Indian Ocean)."

Col. Henry Steel Olcott, a former president of the **Theosophical Society**, who explained in a March, 1881 edition of The Theosophist (page 123) that:

"We have a right to more than suspect that India, eight thousand years ago, sent a colony of emigrants who carried their arts and high civilization into what is now known to us as Egypt...This is what Bengsch Bey, the modern as well as the most trusted Egyptologer and antiquarian says on the origin of the old Egyptians. Regarding these as a branch of the Caucasian family having a close affinity with the Indo-Germanic races, he insists that they 'migrated from India before historic memory, and crossed that bridge of nations, the Isthus of Suez, to find a new fatherland on the banks of the Nile."

The Egyptians came, according to their own records, from a mysterious land...on the shore of the Indian Ocean, the sacred Punt; the original home of their gods...who followed thence after their people who had abandoned them to the valley of the Nile, led by Amon, Hor and Hathor. This region was the Egyptian 'Land of the Gods,' Pa-Nuter, in old Egyptian, or Holyland, and now proved beyond any doubt to have been quite a different place from the Holyland of Sinai. By the pictorial hieroglyphic inscription found on the walls of the temple of the Queen Haslitop at Der-el-babri, we see that this Punt can be no other than India. For many ages the Egyptians traded with their old homes, and the reference here made by them to the names of the Princes of Punt and its fauna and flora, especially the nonmenclature of various precious woods to be found but in India, leave us scarcely room for the smallest doubt that the old civilization of Egypt is the direct outcome of that the older India."

(source: **Theosophist for March 1881** p. 123).



A representation of the physical characteristics of Ita, wife of the chief of Punt - People of Punt carrying baskets of myrrh. (source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 32).

Edward Pococke (1604–1691) English Orientalist says: "At the mouths of the Indus dwell a seafaring people, active, ingenious, and enterprising as when, ages subsequent to this great movement.....these people coast along the shores of Mekran, traverse the mouth of the Persian Gulf, and again adhering to the sea-board of Oman, Hadramant, and Yeman (the Eastern Arabia), they sail up the Red Sea; and again ascending mighty stream that fertilizes a land of wonders, found the kingdom of Egypt, Nubia and Abyssinia. These are the same stock that, centuries subsequently to this colonization, spread the blessings of civilization over Hellas and her islands."

(source: **India in Greece - By Edward Pococke** p. 42).

Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren (1760-1842) an Egyptologist has observed: "It is perfectly agreeable to Hindu manners that colonies from India, i.e., Banian families should have passed over Africa, and carried with them their industry, and perhaps also their religious worship." "Whatever weight may be attached to Indian tradition and the express testimony of Eusebius confirming the report of migrations from the banks of the Indus into Egypt, there is certainly nothing improbable in the event itself, as a desire of gain would have formed a sufficient inducement."

(source: **Historical Researches - Heeran** p. 309).

Ethiopia, as is universally admitted now, was colonized by the Hindus. **Sir William Jones** says: "Ethiopia and Hindustan were

possessed or colonized by the same extraordinary race."

(source: **Asiatic Researches** - volume I p. 426).

Louis Jacolliot has written:

“Egypt received from India, by Manes or Manu, its social institutions and laws, which resulted in division of the people into four castes, and placing the priest in the first rank; in the second, kings; then traders and artisans; and last in the social scale, the proletaire – the menial almost a slave.”

Manu – Manes – Minos – Moses

A philosopher gives political and religious institutions to India and named Manu. The Egyptian legislator receives the name of Manes.

A Cretan visits Egypt to study the institutions with which he desired to endow his country, and history preserves his memory under the name of Minos.

Lastly, the liberation of the servile caste of He brews founds a new society and is named Moses.

Manu, Manes, Minos, Moses – these four names overshadow the entire ancient world, they appear at the cradles of four different peoples to play the same role.

Let us beware, the times of Brahminism, of Sacerdotalism, of Levitism, in India, in Egypt, in Judes, presents nothing to compare with the flames of Inquisition, the Vandois massacres, or St. Bartholomew’s resound with Te Deum of exultation.

(source: **Bible in India: Hindoo Origin of Hebrew and Christian Revelation** p 60 - 67 and 125).

Philostratus introduces the Brahman Iarchus by stating to his auditor that the Ethiopians were originally an Indian race compelled to leave India for the impurity contracted by slaying a certain monarch to whom they owed allegiance."



Two ancient civilizations, contemporaneous, both growing along the banks of rivers which flow down from mountains, through desert. Both rivers support crocodiles and both people worship river gods and crocodiles and worship cows and have a wonderfully developed cosmogony. Both have a form of caste system. Both have contributed immensely to world culture in almost every field. Surely they must have interacted despite the vast geographical distances involved. There is evidence to suggest contact between the two from around BCE 3000 with the findings of Indian muslin, cotton and dhania (coriander) in Egypt. After about the third century BCE, during the time of Ptolemy Euergetes an Indian sailor was found shipwrecked on the coast of the Red Sea. He was taken to Alexandria where, in exchange for hospitality, he agreed to show the Ptolemy's men a direct sea route to India across the Indian Ocean. Thus began a most profitable period of contact between these two nations. During Emperor Ashoka's reign ambassadors were exchanged. Contact continued until Egypt came under Roman Law. After a short hiatus renewed ventures were undertaken now bigger and powerful markets of Rome clamoring for goods. Although trade was the reason for exchange many ideas that influenced each other's art and iconography also passed back and forth. There is a large body of evidence which documents the close relationships between these two countries. There has always been evidence to suggest indirect means of contact between these two.

"It is testified by Herdotus, Plato, Salon, Pythagoras, and Philostratus that the religion of Egypt proceeded from India....It is testified by Neibuhr, Valentia, Champollian and Weddington that the temples of upper Egypt are of greater antiquity than those of lower Egypt...that consequently the religion of Egypt, according to the testimony of those monuments....came from India...The chronicles found in the temples of Abydos and Sais and which have been transmitted by Josephus, Julius Africanus, and Eusebius, all testify that the religious system of the Egyptians proceeded from India."

"We have Hindu chronologies (besides those of the Puranas concerning the Yuga) which go still further back in time than the Tables of the



Egyptian kings according to Manetho."

There was intimate relations between India and Egypt. It is pointed out that in the processions of Ptolemy Philadelphus (265-246 BCE) were to be seen Indian women, Indian hunting dogs, Indian cows, and Indian spices.

According to the **Jewish chronicles,** there was a sea voyage to the East in the time of **Soloman** (c. 800 BCE). and many articles were brought from there. The use of the Indian names for merchandise raises a strong presumption in favor of their Indian origin. **The word 'Sindhu' found in the library of Assurbanipal, is used in the sense of Indian cotton. The Hebrew Karpas is derived from the Sanskrit Karpassa.**

One of the Jataka stories makes a reference to a trading voyage to the kingdom of Baveru and scholars have interpreted it as the Indian form of Babylon. This points to trade between India and Babylon. The Boghz koi inscriptions of the 14th century BCE. contain the names of such deities as Mitra, Varuna, Indra etc. These names indicate that there was a very close contact between India and Western Asia before the 14th century BCE.

there are imported Indian iron, and steel, and Indian cotton cloth; the broad cloth called monache and that called sagmatogene, and girdles, and coats of skin and mallow-colored cloth, and a few muslins, and colored lac.

Gustav Oppert (1836-1908) born in Hamburg, Germany, he taught Sanskrit and comparative linguistics at the Presidency College, Madras for 21 years. He was the Telugu translator to the Government and Curator, Government Oriental Manuscript Library. He wrote a book **Die Gottheiten der Indier ("The Gods of the Indians")** in 1905. In his book Oppert discussed the chief gods of the Aryans and he compares Aditi with Egyptian Isis and the Babylonian Ea.

(source: **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German** - By Valentine Stache-Rosen. p.81-82).



We are not completely in the dark on the question of Indian influence on Greece. Speaking of ascetic practices in the West, **Professor Sir Flinders Petrie** (1853-1942) British archaeologist and Egyptologist, author of **Egypt and Israe**l (1911) observes:

"The presence of a large body of Indian troops in the Persian army in Greece in 480 B.C. shows how far west the Indian connections were carried; and the discovery of modeled heads of **Indians at Memphis,** of about the fifth century B.C. shows that Indians were living there for trade. Hence there is no difficulty in regarding India as the source of the entirely new ideal of asceticism in the West."

(source: **Eastern Religions & Western Thought - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 150).

He feels that the doctrine of rebirth, favored by keeping all bodily senses in abeyance, and brought to pass by driving out the twelve inner torments by their antitheses, was accepted in Egypt under the Indian influence.

(source: **Religious Life in Egypt - By W. M Flinders Petrie** p. 211).

Friedrich Wilhelm, Freiherr von Bissing (1873-1956) wrote:

"The land of Punt in the Egyptian ethnological traditions has been identified by the scholars with the Malabar coast of Deccan. From this land ebony, and other rich woods, incense, balsam, precious metals, etc. used to be imported into Egypt."

(source: **Prehistoricsche Topfen aus Indien and Aegypten - By Friedrich Wilhelm, Freiherr von Bissing**. Chapter VIII).

The Egyptians similarly called their ancient land Puanit (land of Panis (poenis or traders) in Egyptian : Word corrupted to a meaningless Punt) and before that, Amenti. Puanit can be reached leading off the Red Sea (South-east direction) to India [specifically East India, since Egyptians had more in common culturally with East India , theologically similar cat headed goddess Shashti, ancient references to embalming and afterlife in the area and the unmistakable 'bengali' accent in Egyptian (v becomes b, a becomes o or u (Eg Vena becomes Benu)] and Amenti should be Indonesia. The polynesians both in Madagascar and in Fiji seem to trace their origins to Indonesia. Indonesia is also geographically central to almost all ancient temple-building cultures, barring Europe

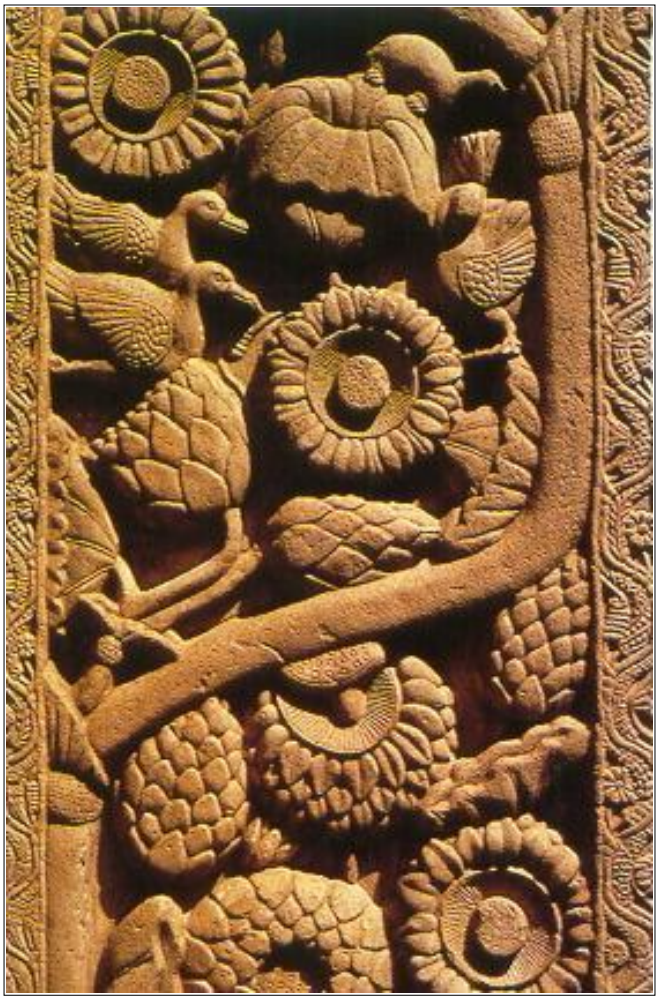
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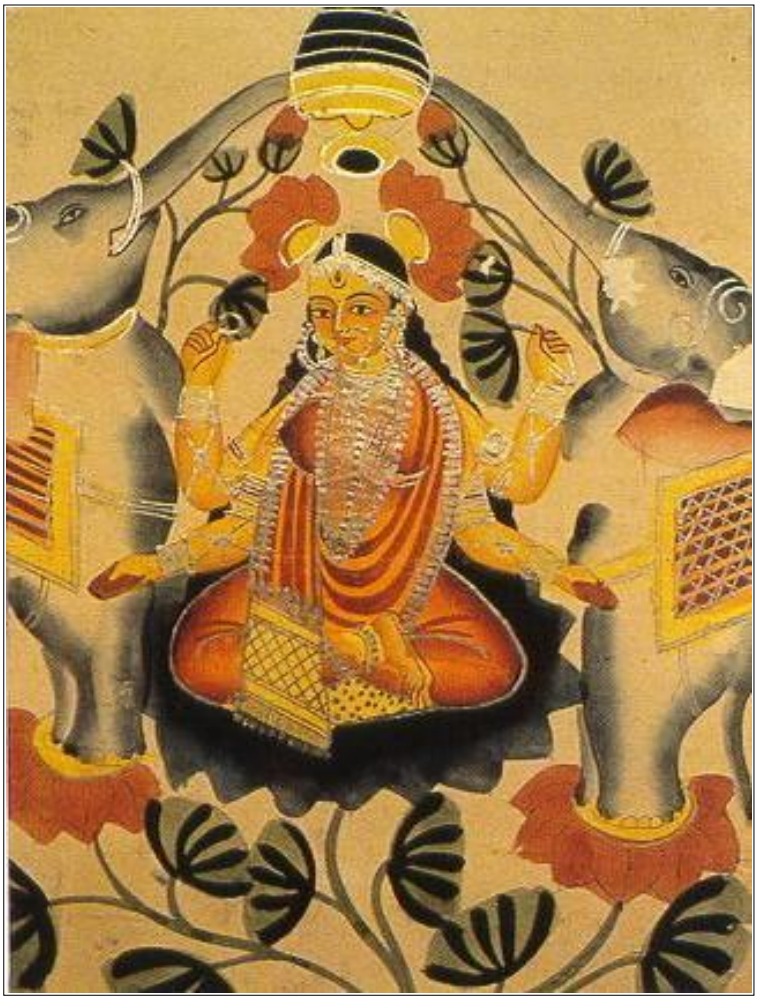
The Lotus and the River

The flower so prolific in the imagery of both India and Egypt, grows out of the waters and opens its petals to be warmed by the sun: to be fertilized. From the earliest imagery in stone at Sanchi, of the first century BC in India, the lotus is associated with Sri, the goddess of fertility, who is later invoked as Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and abundance - being worshipped by Buddhists, Jains, and Hindus alike. The lotus is held in each hand by Surya, signifying the fertilizing powers of the sun as he travels through the universe.

In Egypt, the blue lotus appears in the earliest wall paintings of the VI Dynasty at the pyramids of Saqqara and in all funerary stelae. They are offered to the deceased, and held in the hand as thought they possess the power to revitalize them: to bring the deceased back to life. Carved out of blue lapis, along with the golden falcon and the sun that are the symbols of the god Horus, the **lotus** appears among the funerary treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamen.

The **lotus** then, becomes a leitmotiv, a symbol most apt since its links the waters with the sun, the earth to sky - signifying fertility and regeneration in both Egypt and India. For, it is the seed of the plant which spells out the cycle of birth-decay-death and rebirth that forms the essential pattern of belief in these two riverine and agricultural societies. In India and Egypt, the rivers Saraswati and Ganga and the Nile have brought sustenance to the land and nourished these civilizations which have survived five millennia. Both these rivers, the Ganga and the Nile, are personified and worshipped. They provide the dramatic backdrop against which myths and indeed created, to explain the topographic conditions of the land.





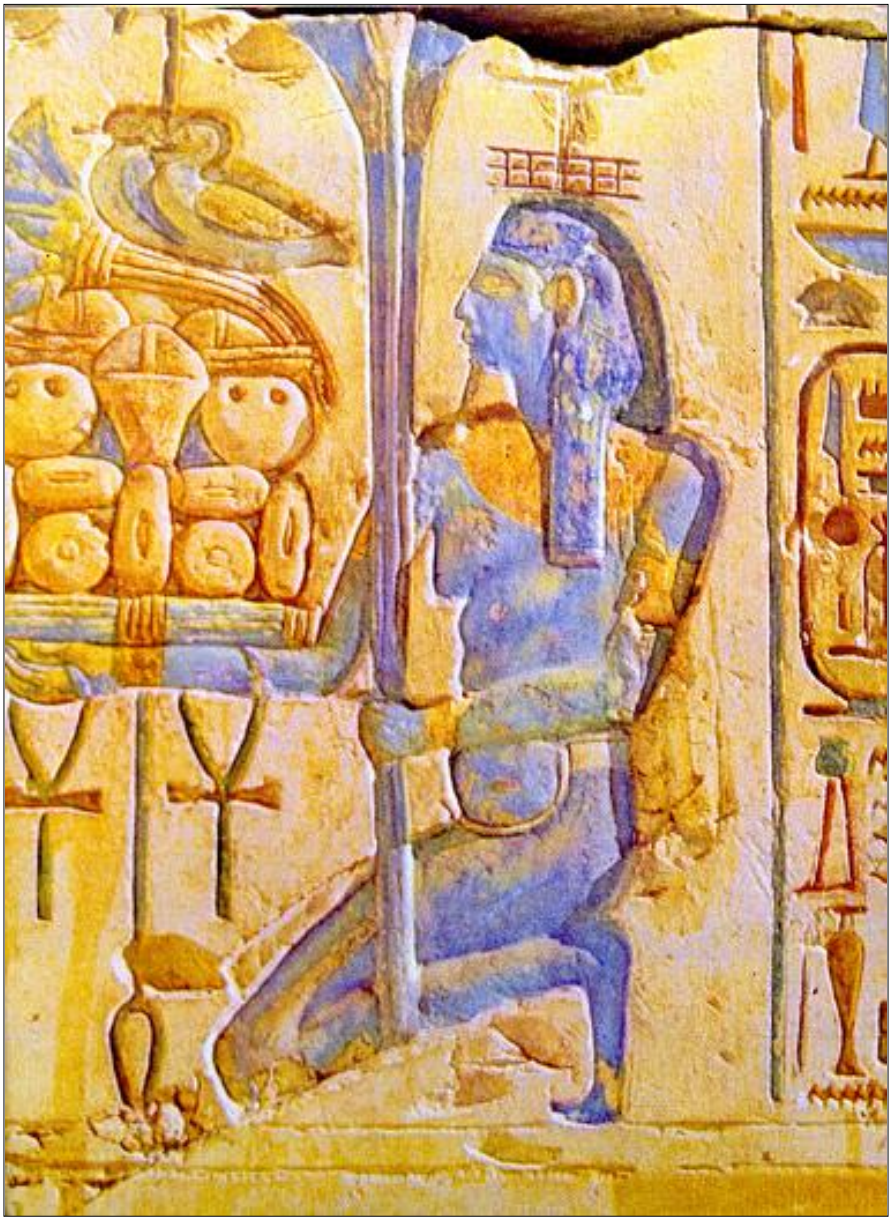
Lotus in full bloom. Railing pillar in stupa , Sanchi *Gajalakshmi seated on Lotus. Kalaghat painting*
(source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 4).

From its source in the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal, the Ganga flows some two thousand five hundred kilometers, through the rich deltaic region which is known as Aryavarta, in the most densely populated area of India. Puranic myths recount the divine origins of Ganga, as she fell from heaven to earth in response to penance performed by the sage Bhagiratha: to bring the powers of water to an earth parched for over a thousand years. At the seventh century seaport of Mahabalipuram in south India, this epic theme is entirely carved out of a granite rock spanning almost fifty feet. A natural cleft in the rock allows the rain water to pour down in great torrents - as though this were the descent of a mighty river. Besides this cleft are carved the serpentine forms of the naga devatas (snake divinities), the sun and the moon, the gandharvas and kinnaras (celestial beings), the hunters and animals of the forest - all of them rejoicing in this great event where the divine rive is celebrated as

the savior of all mankind.

Here is a spectacular instance of the way in which myth is used to relate man to the environment. In this myth one senses an acute awareness of the ecological balance which needs to be maintained: of the vapors of the sea rising to the sky through heat, described in the myth as tapas, and then falling back to earth as the divine river, to flow down through the matted locks of Lord Shiva, on to the Himalayas, to flow back into the ocean.





River Goddess Ganga, Rameshvara Caves. Ellora. Hapi, god of the River Nile. Temple of Abydos, Egypt.
(source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 8 - 9).

As in India, so in Egypt, the river is personified in human form. A sandstone relief from the temple of Rameses II at Abydos depicts Hapi, god of the Nile, holding a pair of blue lotus stalks in his hands; suspended from the god's right arm is the ankh, the symbol of life. Unlike the Ganga, the blue god of the Nile is male, but with one female breast to symbolize his role as nourisher - releasing the waters each year to provide sustenance to mankind.

The main presiding deity of the Egyptian pantheon is Osiris, like Yama, god of the dead, whose story of life, death and regeneration has been transmitted to us in great detail by Plutarch.

Some extraordinary parallels with the Osirian myth are found among the myths and images of India. Lord Vishnu lied recumbent on the bed of the ocean asleep, as indeed Osiris lied prostate and dead on a bier.

The Hindi word for cow means also "ray of illumination," and in Egyptian lore a cow is sometimes depicted as the source of light in the sky.

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The Puranas, Nile and Lake Amara

Significant also is the fact that **Lieutenant Speake**, when planning his **discovery of the source of the Nile**, secured his best information from a map reconstructed out of **Puranas**. (Journal, pp. 27, 77, 216; Wilford, in Asiatic Researches, III).

It traced the course of the river, the "Great Krishna," through **Cusha-dvipa**, **from a great lake in Chandristhan, "Country of**

the Moon," which it gave the correct position in relation to the Zanzibar islands. The name was from the native Unya-muezi, having the same meaning; and the map correctly mentioned another native name, Amara, applied to the district bordering Lake Victoria Nyanza.

"All our previous information," says Speake, "concerning the hydrography of these regions, originated with the ancient Hindus, who told it to the priests of the Nile; and all these busy Egyptian geographers, who disseminated their knowledge with a view to be famous for their long-sightedness, in solving the mystery which enshrouded the source of their holy river, were so many hypothetical humbugs. The Hindu traders had a firm basis to stand upon through their intercourse with the Abyssinians."

(source: **Periplus of the Erythrean Sea - W.H. Schoff** p. 229-230).

The Puranas have a remarkable connection with one of the most important discoveries of the 19th century. In 1858, **John Hanning Speke** (1827-1864) – Speke was commissioned in the British Indian Army in 1844 – made the discovery that Lake Victoria was the source of the River Nile in Africa. **Speke wrote that to some Indian Pundits (Hindu scholars) the Nile was known as Nila,** and also as Kaali. Nila means blue and Kaali means dark – both apt descriptions for the Nile near its source. These are mentioned in several Puranas including the Bhavishaya.



This went against the conventional wisdom, for Lake Victoria was unknown at the time. Sir Richard Burton, the leader of the Nile expedition, had identified Lake Tangyanika as the source. Speke, however, following upon the advice of a Benares (Varansi) Pundit, insisted that the real source was a much large lake that lay to the north. Following this advice Speke went on to discover Victoria. The Pundit had also told him that the real source were twin peaks as Somagiri, '**Soma' in Sanskrit stands for moon** and 'giri' means peak, and Somagiri therefore are none other than the fabled **Mountains of the Moon in Central Africa!** The Pundit must have known all this. He published his book **Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile** in 1863.

(source: **Nostradamus and Beyond – N S Rajaram** p. 60 - 67).

Colonel Rigby now gave me a most interesting paper, with a map attached to it, about the Nile and the Mountains of the Moon. It was written by **Lieutenant Wilford**, from the **"Purans" of the Ancient Hindus**. As it exemplifies, to a certain extent, the supposition I formerly arrived at concerning the Mountains of the Moon being associated with the country of the Moon, I would fain draw the attention of the reader of my travels to the volume of the "Asiatic Researches" in which it was published. It is remarkable that the Hindus have christened the source of the Nile Amara, which is the name of a country at the north-east corner of the Victoria N'yanza. This, I think, shows clearly, that the ancient Hindus must have had some kind of communication with both the northern and southern ends of the Victoria N'yanza.

(source: **Journal of the Discovery of The Source of the Nile - http:/www.capitalnet.com/~jcbyers/Speke/nile-chap01.htm**).

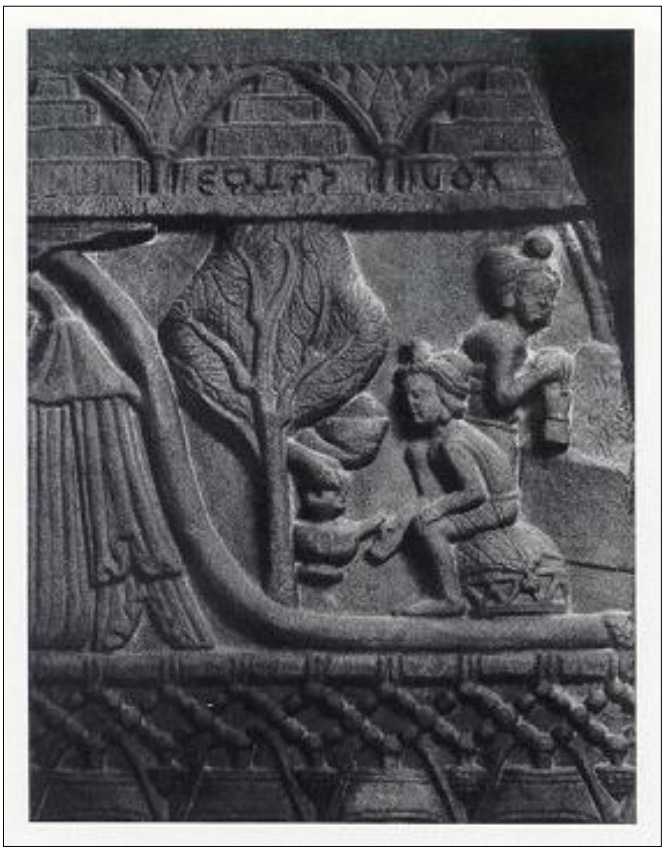
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Cultural Contacts with Egypt

All through the ages the peoples of India have had active intercourse with the other peoples of the world. Since the days of Mohenjo daro culture, the Hindus have never lived in an alleged "splendid isolation." It is generally assumed that internationalism or cosmopolitism is a very recent phenomenon in human affairs. As a matter of fact, however, culture has ever been international.

The dawn of human civilization finds the Hindus as captains of industry and entrepreneurs of commerce. **They were in touch with the Pharaohs of Egypt. The mummies of the Egyptians were wrapped in muslin which was imported from India.** Hindu trade gave to the land of the Nile ivory, gold, spices, tamarind-wood, sandal-wood, monkeys, and other characteristic Indian plants and animals. It is also believed that the textile craftsmen of Egypt dyed their cloth with Hindu indigo. Hindu ships brought the Indian commodities to the Arabian ports, or to the Land of Punt; and from there these were transported to Luxor, Karnak and Memphis.

Hindu commerce with the land of the Euphrates was more intimate and direct. As early as about 3000 B.C. the Hindus supplied the Chaldean city of Ur on the Euphrates with teak-wood. The Assyrians also, like the Egyptians, got their muslin from India. In fact, vegetable "wool", i.e. cotton, and wool producing plants have been some of the earliest gifts of Hindu merchants to the world. From the tenth to the sixth century B.C. the Assyro-Babylonian trade of the Hindus seems to have been very brisk. Hindus brought with them apes, elephants, cedar, teak, peacocks, tigers, rice, ivory, and other articles to Babylon, the Rome of Western Asia. It was through this Indo-Mesopotamian trade that the Athenians of the sixth century B.C. came to know of rice and peacocks.





(India) vanadevata's (wood spirit) hand issuing from tree trunk offering water. - (Egypt) deceased drinking water offered by tree divinity

(source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 69).

This expansion of Hindu activity influenced the literature of the time, e.g. the Vedas and Jatakas. A cylinder seal of about 2,000 B.C. bearing cuneiform inscriptions and images of Chaldean deities have been unearthed in Central India. In Southern India has been found a Babylonian sarcophagus.

Hindu trade with the Hebrews also was considerable. Soloman (1015 B.C), King of Judaea, was a great internationalist. In order to promote the trade of his land he set up a port at the head of the right arm of the Red Sea. He made his race the medium of intercourse between Phoenicians and Hindus. The port of Ophir (in Southern India) is famous in Hebrew literature for its trade in gold under Soloman. The Books of Genesis, Kings and Ezekiel indicate the nature and amount of Hindu contact with Asia Minor. It is held by Biblical scholars that the stones in the breast plate of the high priest may have come from India. The Hindus supplied also the demand of Syria for ivory and ebony. **The Hebrew word, tuki (peacock), is derived from Tamil (South Indian) tokei, and ahalin (aloe) from aghil.**

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The Sun King and Dasharatha

Subhash Kak has observed: "A sad consequence of the racist historiography of the 19th century Indologists and their successors is the **neglect of India's interaction with Africa. Cyril A Hromnik's Indo-Africa : towards a new understanding of the history of sub-Saharan Africa** (1981) is the only book on the Indian contribution to the history of sub-Saharan Africa that I am aware of, but it is just an exploratory study.

The Sun King and Dasharatha - Two historical persons with Indic connections -- one from North Mesopotamia and the other from Egypt.

The Sun King Akhenaten of Egypt (ruled 1352-1336 BC according to the mainstream view) was the son-in-law to Dasharatha, the Mitanni king of North Syria, through the queen, Kiya. (The name **Dasharatha** is spelled Tushratta in the Hittite cuneiform script, which does not distinguish between 'd' and 't' very well. Some have suggested that the Sanskrit original is Tvesharatha, “having splendid chariots.”) Letters exchanged between Akhenaten and Dasharatha have been found in Amarna in Egypt and other evidence comes from the tombs of the period that have been discovered in excellent condition.

The **Mitanni, who worshiped Vedic gods,** belonged to an Indic kingdom that was connected by marriage across several generations to the Egyptian 18th dynasty to which Akhenaten belonged. The first Mitanni king was Sutarna I (“good sun”). He was followed by Paratarna I (“great sun”), **Parashukshatra (“ruler with axe”),** Saukshatra (“son of Sukshatra, the good ruler”), Paratarna II, Artatama or Ritadhama (“abiding in cosmic law”), Sutarna II, Dasharatha, and finally Mativaja (Matiwazza, “whose wealth is prayer”) during whose lifetime the Mitanni state appears to have become a vassal to Assyria.



But how could an Indic kingdom be so far from India, near Egypt? After catastrophic earthquakes dried up the Sarasvati river around 1900 BC, many groups of Indic people started moving West. We see Kassites, a somewhat shadowy aristocracy with Indic names and worshiping Surya and the Maruts, in Western Iran about 1800 BC. They captured power in Babylon in 1600 BC, which they were to rule for over 500 years.

The Mitanni ruled northern Mesopotamia (including Syria) for about 300 years, starting 1600 BC, out of their capital of Vasukhani. (For Mitanni names, I give standard Sanskrit spellings rather than the form that we find in inscriptions in the inadequate cuneiform script, such as Wassukkani for Vasukhani, “a mine of wealth.”) Their warriors were called *marya*, which is the proper Sanskrit term for it.

In a treaty between the Hittites and the Mitanni, **Indic deities Mitra, Varuna, Indra, and Nasatya (Ashvins) are invoked.** A text by a Mitannian named Kikkuli uses words such as aika (eka, one), tera (tri, three), panza (pancha, five), satta (sapta, seven), na (nava, nine), vartana (vartana, round). Another text has babru (babhru, brown), parita (palita, grey), and pinkara (pingala, red). Their chief festival was the celebration of *vishuva* (solstice) very much like in India. It is not only the kings who had Sanskrit names; a large number of other Sanskrit names have been unearthed in the records from the area.

The Vedic presence via the Mitanni in Egypt and the Near East occurs several centuries before the exodus of the Jews. This presence is sure to have left its mark in various customs, traditions, and beliefs. It may be that this encounter explains uncanny similarities in mythology and ritual, such as circumambulation around a rock or the use of a rosary of 108 beads.

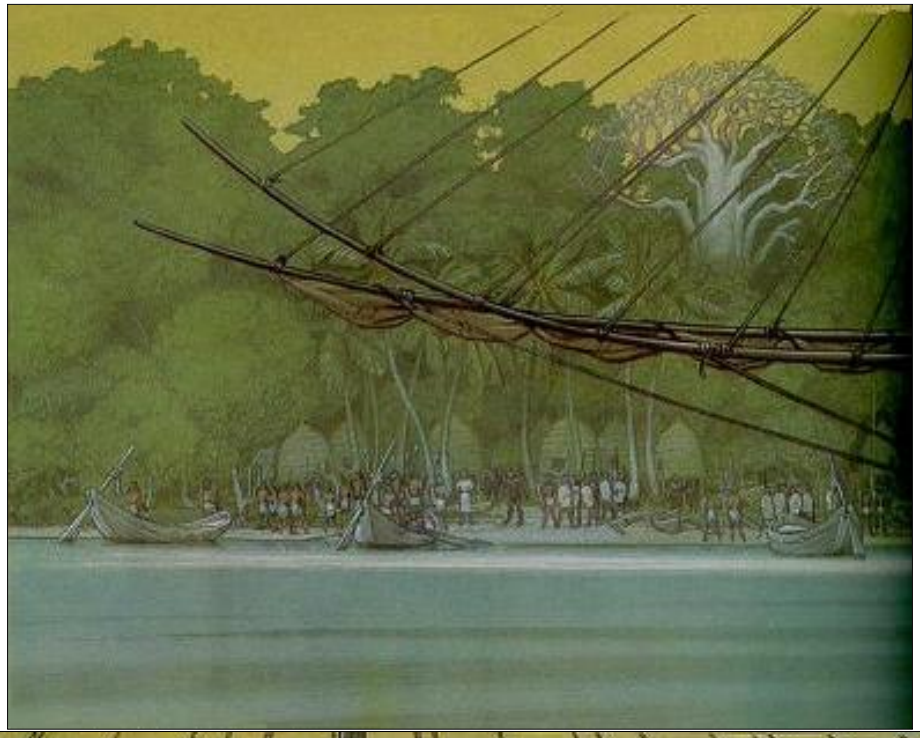
(source: **The Sun King and Dasharatha - By Subhash Kak sulekha.com).**

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India's Contact with the West

H. R. Hall writes in his book, **The Ancient History of the Near East** (London, 1913, p. 74): “There is no doubt that the Indus must have been one of the oldest centers of human civilization, and it seems natural to consider that the strange non-Semitic and non-Aryan people who came from the east to civilize the west was of Indian origin, particularly when we see to what point the Sumerians looked like Indians in appearance.”

The **Egyptians attributed an eastern origin to their culture, starting that they had come from the East by sea, from the land of “Punt”.** Maritime communications and trading from the mouths of the Indus to the south of Arabia and as far as the Egyptians coast – very important during the early period of Egypt – had always existed. The fact that the Egyptians had built a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea implies a considerable volume of trade toward the south and east. The center of sea trade between India and the Mediterranean appears to have been south of Arabia and Socotra (probably the Egyptian Pas-enka), the Greek Dioscorida, called Sukhadara dvipa (the Happy Isle) by the Indians.





By the pictorial hieroglyphic inscription found on the walls of the temple of the Queen Haslitop at Der-el-babri, we see that this Punt can be no other than India. "It is testified by Herdotus, Plato, Salon, Pythagoras, and Philostratus that the religion of Egypt proceeded from India. "The land of Punt in the Egyptian ethnological traditions has been identified by the scholars with the Malabar coast of Deccan. From this land ebony, and other rich woods, incense, balsam, precious metals, etc. used to be imported into Egypt."

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The geographical sections of the Puranas (Ancient Chronicles of India) mentions Mecca among the holy places, under the name of Makheshvara, together with its black stone as an emblem of the god Shiva.

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, written in the first century tells of the founding of the city of Endaemon, or modern Aden: “In the early days of the city when the voyage was not yet made from India to Egypt, and when they did not dare to sail from Egypt to the ports across the ocean (those of India), but all came together at this place, it received the cargoes from both countries.” The Periplus indicates that Endaemon had been founded by Indian

merchants, the Minas, whom Strabo calls Minaeans. Pliny speaks of the Minaeans as the most ancient of trading peoples and mentions relations between the Minaeans and King Minos of Crete. The prophet Ezekiel relates that their trading expeditions reached as far as the Phoenician city of Tyre.

According to Sergi, “the Egyptians and all other Hamitic peoples came out of Asia,” while according to Haddon, “at the beginning of history, some Asians came to Egypt, first from the south, eventually bringing with them bronze and probably also the plough and wheat.”

In the seventh century, St. Isidore made a summary in his Encyclopedia of knowledge derived from ancient Greek and Latin authors, many of whose works have now disappeared. He also speaks of “Ethiopians” in his Etymologiarium (IX.2.128): “They came in ancient times from the River Indus, established themselves in Egypt between the Nile and the sea, towards the south, in the equatorial regions. They became three nations: the Hesperians to the west, the Garamantes in Tripolitania, and the Indians in the east. (The Hesperians” are the ancient inhabitants of Spain; “Garamantes” can be connected to Karama “city in Dravidian); and “the Indians” refers to the inhabitants of Ethiopia, who were also mistaken in ancient literature for the inhabitants of India.”

Between the 6th and the first millennium B.C.E., relations between India and the Near East are evident. Precious stones – amazonite – coming from Nilgiri in southern India have been found at Ur prior to the Jemder Nasr period (3000 B.C.E). Indian seals have been found in Bahrain and in Mesopotamia in pre-Sargonic levels (2500 B.C.E). Traces of Indian cotton have been found, and there are archaeological indications of sea trade with India in the Larsa period (2170 to 1950 B.C.E). **The beams of the Temple of the Moon, at Ur of the Chaldees, and those of the palace of Nebuchadnezzar (6th century B.C.E.) were of teak and cedarwood coming from Malabar in southern India.**

(source: **A Brief History of India - By Alain Danielou** p. 12 - 20).

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The Persian Connection

F. Max Muller speaks of the colonization of Persia by the Hindus. Discussing the word 'Arya', he says: "But it was more faithfully preserved by the Zoroastrians, who migrated from India to the North-west and whose religion has been preserved to us in the Zind Avesta, though in fragments only. He again says: "The Zoroastrians were a colony from Northern India."

(source: **Science of Language - By Max Mulle**r p. 242-253).

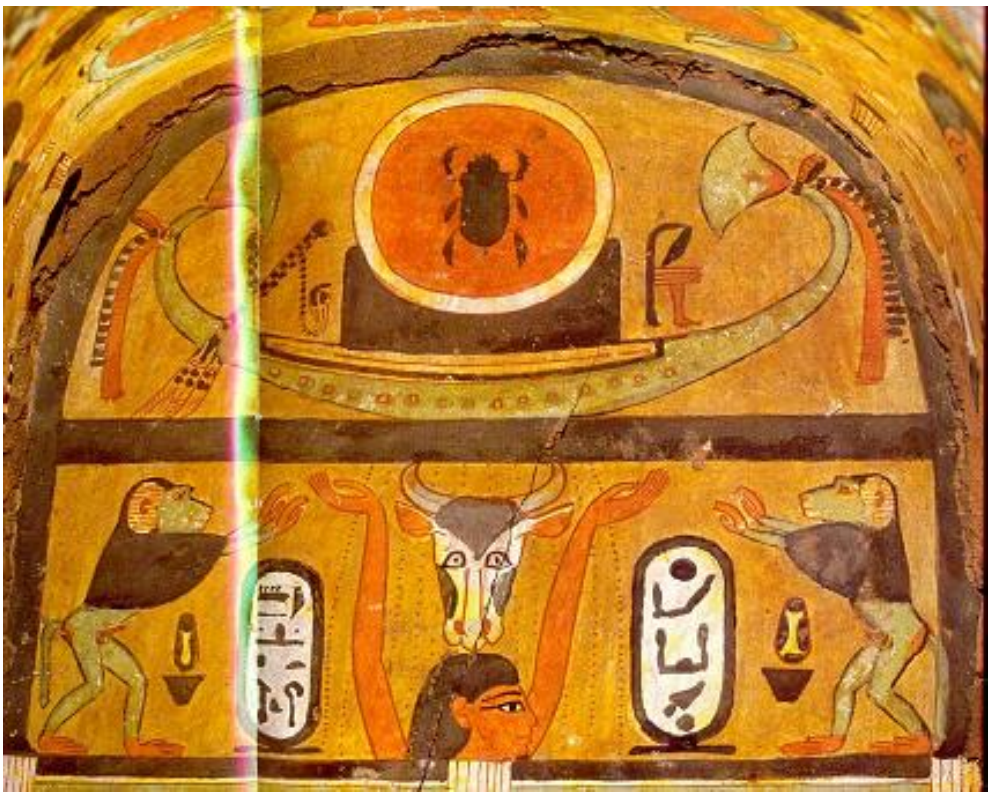
Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeran says: "In point of fact that Zind is derived from the Sanskrit, and a passage to have descended from the Hindus of the second or warrior caste."

(source: **Historical researches into the politics, intercourse, and trade of the Carthaginians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians - By A. H. Heeren** Volume II p. 220).

Sir William Jones writes: "I was not a little surprised to find that out of words in Du Perron's Zind Dictionary, six or seven were pure Sanskrit."

(source: **Sir William Jones' Works** Volume I p. 82-82).





(India) A terracotta solar plaque illustrating solar boat (Egypt) - solar boat
(source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 80-81).

Mr Haug, in an interesting essay on the origin of Zoroastrian religion, compares it with Brahminism, and points out the originally-close connection between Brahminical and the Zoroastrian religions, customs and observances. After comparing names of divine beings, names and legends of heroes, sacrificial rites, religious observances, domestic rites, and cosmographical opinions that occur both in the Vedic and Avasta writings, he says: "In the Vedas as well as in the older portions of the Zind-Avesta (see the Gathas), there are sufficient traces to be discovered that the Zoroastrian religion arose out of a vital struggle against a certain form of Brahminical religion had assumed at a certain early period.

After contrasting the names of the Hindu gods and the Zoroastrian deities, he continues: "These facts throw some light upon the age which that great religious struggle took place, the consequence of which was the entire separation of the Ancient Iranians from the Brahmins and the foundation of the Zoroastrian religion. It must have occurred when Indra

was the chief god of Hinduism."

(source: **Essays on the Parsees - By Haug** p. 288).

It is not easy to acertain when the Hindu colonization of Persia took place. It is certain, however, that it took place before the Mahabharata.

Col James Tod writes: "Ujamada, by his wife, Nila, had five sons, who spread their branches on both sides of the Indus. Regarding three the Puranas are silent, which implies their migration to distant regions. Is it possible that they might be the origin of the Medes? These Medes are descendants of Yayat, third son of the patriarch, Menu and Madai, founder of the Medes, was of Japhet's line. Aia Mede, the patronymic of the branch of Bajaswa, is from Aja 'a goat'. The Assyrian Mede in Scripture is typified by the goat."

(source: **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India** ISBN 8120612892 Volume I. p. 14).

Apart from the passage in Manu, (Manusmriti is much older than Mahabharata) describing the origin of the Ancient Persians, there is another argument to support it. Zoroaster, the Prophet of the Ancient Persians, was born from the emigrants from India had settled in Persia long enough to have become a separate nation. Vyasa held a grand religious discussion with Zoroaster at Balkh in Turkistan, and was therefore his contemporary. Zanthus of Lydia (B.C. 470), the earliest Greek writer, who mentions Zoroaster, says that he lived about six hundred years before the Trojan war (which took place about 1800 BC). Aristotle and Eudoxus place his era as much as six thousand years before Plato, others five thousand years before the Trojan War, (see Pliny: Historia Naturalis, XXX, 1-3). Berosus, the Babylonian historian, makes him a king of the Babylon between B.C. 2200 and BC 2000. It is, however, clear that the Hindu Colonization of Persia took place anterior to the Great War.

In the first chapter (Fargard) of the part which bears the name Vendidad of their sacred book (which is also their most ancient book), Hurmuzd of God tells Zapetman (Zoroaster)" "I have given to man an excellent and fertile country. Nobody is able to give such a one. This land lies to the east (of Persia) where the stars rise every evening." "when Jamshed (the leader of the emigrating nation), came from the highland in the east to the plain, there were neither domestic animals nor wild nor men."

Count Magnus Fredrik Ferdinand Bjornstjerna (1779-1847) author of the book, **The Theogony of the Hindoos with their systems of Philosophy and Cosmogony** says: "The country alluded to above from which the Persians are said to have come can be no other than then the north-west part of Ancient India - Afghanistan and Kashmir - being to the east of Persia, as well as highland compared to the Persian planes."

The Chaldeans were originally migrators from India. Count Bjornstjerna writes: "The Chaldeans, the Babylonians and the inhabitants of Colchis derived their civilization from India."

The Assyrians, too were of Hindu origin. Their first king was Bali Boal or Bel. This Boal or Bali was a great King of India in ancient times. He ruled from Cambodia to Greece. Professor Maurice says: "Bali...was the puissant sovereign of a mighty empire extending over the vast continent of India."

(source: **Hindu Raj in the World - By Krishan Lal Jain** p. 88-92).

The **code of Manu**, India's great law book, states that Dravidas, Yavanas (Greeks), Sakas (Scythians), **Pahlavas (Persians)**, Kambojas (Tibetans, Siamese, Burmese), and Sinas (Chinese), are sprung from Kshatriyas - the second highest caste who forgot their religion and went astray.

(source: **The Power of India - By Michael Pym** p. 218).

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Links to Ancient Egypt

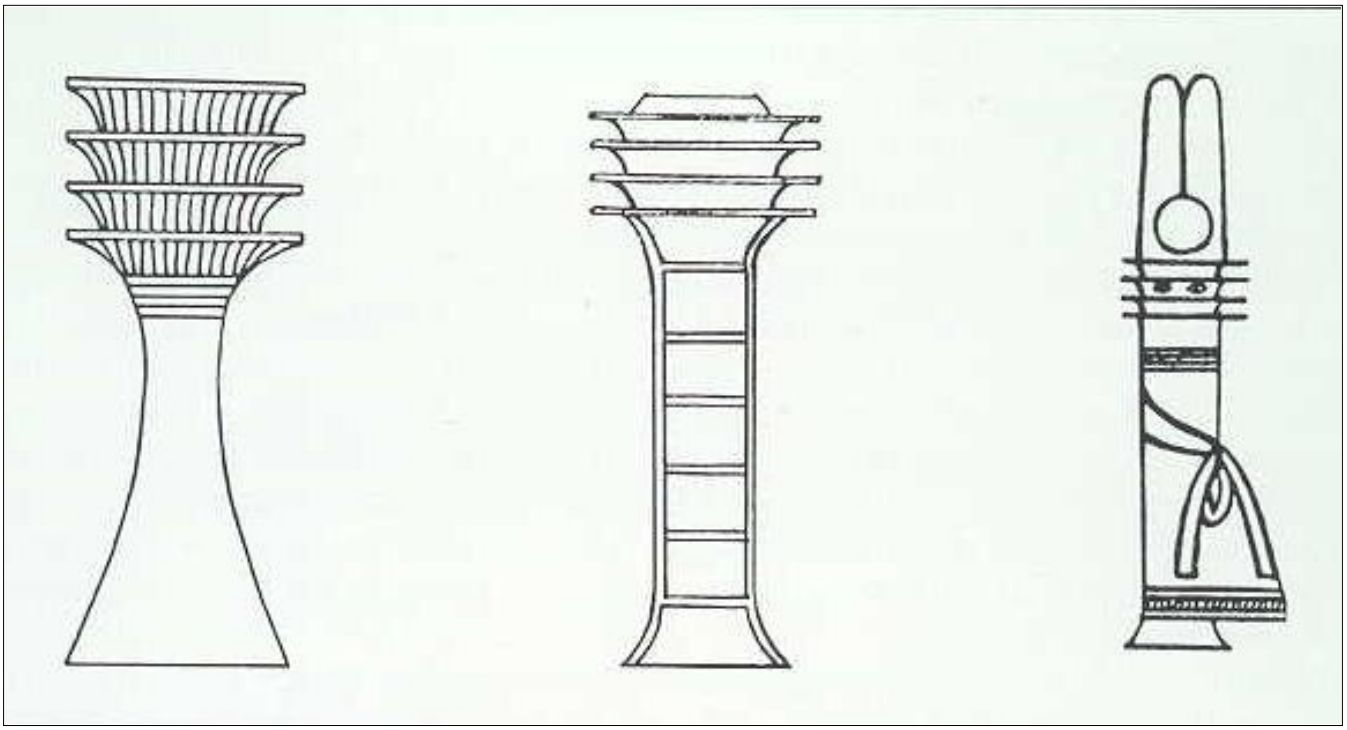
Difficult as it is to pin point exactly when communication between Egypt and India commenced, it is nevertheless intriguing to

note the remarkable parallels which go as far back as the second millennium BC, if not earlier, between the concept of the Egyptian maat and the Vedic rita - the divine order of nature or creation, as opposed to the chaos of falsehood. According to both the Egyptian and Indian traditions, it was the principal duty of the king to establish order in place of disorder or chaos. Other interesting points of similarity between the two ancient cultures were the deification of the forces of nature, faith in magical chants, deep-rooted mysticism, and an emphasis on symbolic expression.

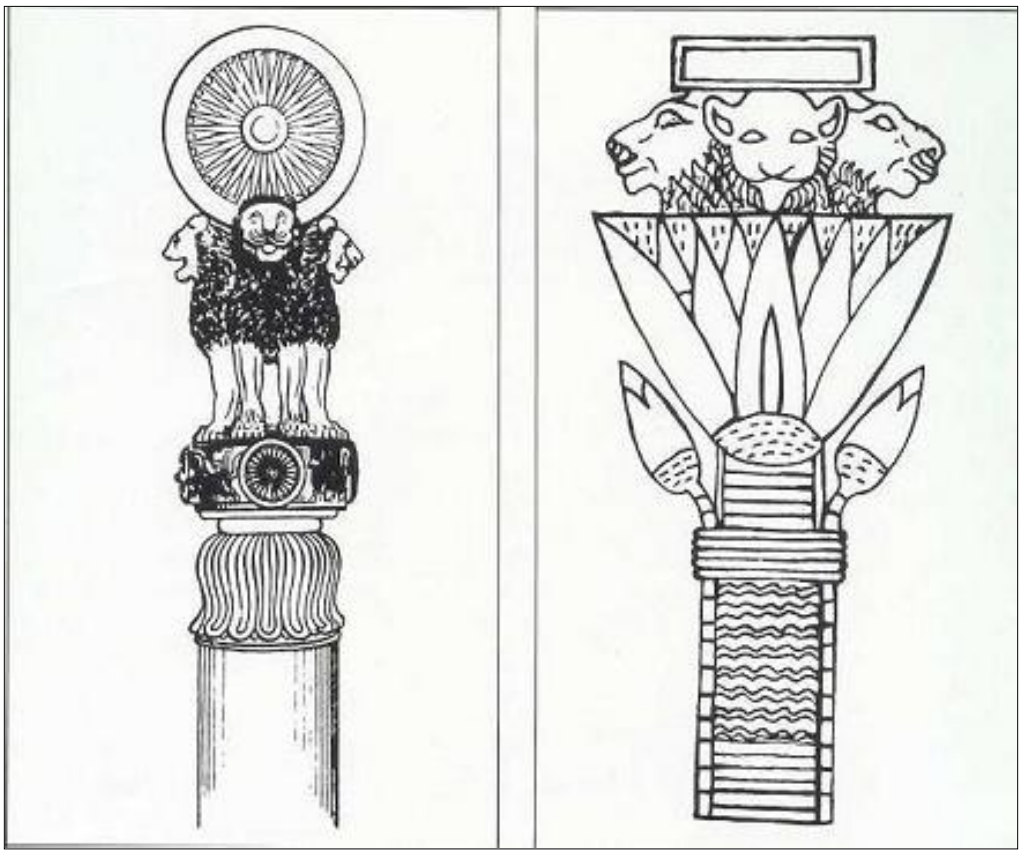
There is a close proximity between Hindu mythology and Egyptian mythology and rituals. "The Book of Dead" and Garuda Purana are similar. Both are recited at the time of death. Their gods and goddesses are also similar.

The brightest evidence of India's direct relations with Egypt is, however, preserved in the Mauryan Emperor Ashok's thirteenth rock edict, inscribed in the early decades of the third century B. C. In it, **Emperor Ashoka** refers to his contacts with Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (285-246 BC), in connection with the expansion of his policy of the propagation of the Law of Righteousness (dharma). In the Ashokan records of Ptolemy II is referred to as Turamaya. There can be little doubts that official embassies were exchanged between the Mauryan court and that of Ptolemy II. Pliny names the Egyptian ambassador of Ptolemy II to India as Dionysius.

(source: **Intercourse between India and the Western World - By H. G. Rawlinson** p. 92).



Forms of the Djed column - Egypt Pharaonic Age



Ashokan pillar with lion capital. India. Lotus pillar surmounted with lion heads Egypt. Pharanoic Age. (source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 66).

Ashoka, in his second rock edict, refers to the philanthropic activities undertaken by himself. He records that he had made arrangements for the medical treatment of men and animals in the territories of his own empire as well as in the region ruled by Antiochus Theos II of Syria (260-246 BC) and its neighboring kingdoms, which also included Egypt.

With the growth of India's links with the West, there was brisk communication in the area of trade with the Hellenistic world including Egypt, and it is believed that Indian traders reached the land of the Pharaohs. A Hellenistic writer, Agatharchides, the learned tutor of Ptolemy Soter II informs one about a colony of Indians on the island close to the mouth of the Red Sea, named Socotra, which in Sanskrit would be Sukhottara-dvipa (island of great joy). Socotra, must have functioned as one of many intermediary ports between Egypt and India.

Interestingly, it is stated that the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy IV, Philopator, lined a part of his yacht with Indian stones. The presence of Indians in Egypt in the third century BC has been attested by Athenaeus who observes that the processions of Ptolemy II Philadelphus also included women, cows, and hunting dogs from India.

(source: **India and Egypt: Influences and Interactions - edited by Saryu Doshi**).

Historians have long known that Egypt and India traded by land and sea during the Roman era, in part because of texts detailing the commercial exchange of luxury goods, including fabrics, spices and wine. Among their finds at the site near Egypt's border with Sudan: more than 16 pounds (7 kilograms) of black peppercorns, the largest stash of the prized Indian spice ever recovered from a Roman archaeological site.

Ships would sail between Berenike and India during the summer, when monsoon winds were strongest, Wendrich said. From Berenike, camel caravans probably carried the goods 240 miles (386 kilometers) west to the Nile, where they were shipped by boat to the Mediterranean port of Alexandria, she said. From there, they could have moved by ship through the rest of the Roman world. Mediterranean goods, including wine from the Greek island of Kos and fine tableware, moved in the opposite direction. This Indian cotton textile was excavated from a Roman trash dump in the ancient Egyptian town of Berenike. Local Ababda nomads dig in one of the streets in Berenike, which holds an array of artifacts that scientists say reveals an "impressive" sea trade between the Roman Empire and India.

(source: **cnn.com**)

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India's cultural links with Africa since Ancient times
by Medha Vishwas Gadre

India had established contacts with Africa long before the discovery of Monsoon winds by hippalus in 43 a.D. There are references to the geography of Africa in Puranas. **Dr. S. Musafar Ali,** notes that Salmalidwipa is the tropical part of Africa bordering, the Indian Ocean in the West. It included Madagascar, the Zang of Arab and Persian geographers, the Harina of Puranas and the Sankhdwipa of some other writers. The Hindus have accurate knowledge of many East African localities. **Col. John Speke**, the discoverer of the source of Nile, by actual discovery of Kushadwipa has confirmed the Puranic Statement regarding the source of Nile.

According to the Arab geographers the term Zangistan from which the term Zanzibar or Zang Coast is derived, covers the whole of the eastern part of the Africa, known to the Muslims. **Zang is obviously equivalent to the Sanskrit word 'Sankh'.** The Arabs probably borrowed the name from Puranas. Sankha-Dwipa signifies the Island of Shells.

Kakasaheb Kalelkar maintains that the very fact that the Puranas mention Miair, the ancient Egypt, establishes that the region must have been known to our forefathers. The ancient Hindus knew of great sweet water Lake Victoria, which they called Amar (Immortal) and the mountain of the Moon Rwenzore near the source of the Nile. Nile was clearly a Sanskrit word and secondly the Hindus were familiar with the source of the river Nile. The region between the central lake and east of Africa (part of Tanzania) is referred to as 'Chandrastan' and river Nile as Krishna in the Puranas. **According to Col. John Speke, the ancient Hindus must have had some kind of communication with both the Northern and Southern ends of Victoria Nyanza.** An Egyptians scholar, **El Manswori**, has pointed out that both in India and Egypt, worship of cow, sun, snake and river was common. Indian gods Shiva, Vishnu, Brahman are linked to the solar of Egypt as the Ishwara to the Orisis, Nandi to Apis and Hanuman to Cynocephalus. Both in India and Egypt the lotus flower too was held sacred.

The goddess Plator was a cow, the god Neferterm, a lotus flower, the goddess Neith was honored in the form of shield on which two crossed arrow were nailed. Mostly, however, the Egyptian deities were represented in animal forms. The god Khnum was Ram. Horus a Falcon, Thoth an Ibis, Sebek a Crocodile, the goddess Nut as Bubastis a cat and goddess Buto a Serpent. The most famous of these sacred animals, was a sacred bull of Memphis, Apis whom the Egyptians conceived to be the servant of god Ptolah, Nandi, Shiva!

Brisk trade led to Indian settlement to Egypt and Egyptian colonies in India. That contact between India and Egypt had become closer the period is confirmed by Athenaeus, who says that Indian women, hunting dogs, cows and spices carried on camels, figured in the procession of Ptolemy. The saloon of Ptolemy yacht was lined with Indian Memphis may indicate that the existence of and Indian settlement and a ptolemic grave stone have been excavated bearing signs of the wheel and trident. The infant deity Horus is represented in Indian postures seated on lotus.

The ancient kingdom of Ethiopia which evolved around the capital Axum, developed a written language, Ge'ez providing 200 years of documentation. The Ethiopians were allowed to control trade in gold, incense, ivory and also products imported from Indian Ocean. The port of Adulis by the time of Periplus had become a meeting point for the maritime trade and served as an outlet for Axum, itself a great collecting center for ivory from various regions. Later Cosmos confirmed that there is a multitude of elephants with large tusks from Ethiopia. These tusks were sent by boat to India, Persia and the Land of Himyariteis. The Indian silk was highly prized in the region than traditional cotton. The Roman Emperor Justinian had tried to persuade the Ethiopians to directly purchase the silk from India and sell it to the Romans in order to break the monopoly of Persians, their enemy.

Lilias Homburger in his paper says, **Historical conclusions from a study of Indo African language**, **the first dynastic Egyptians came from Indus Valley, following the same traders who had preceded them.** The use of Cowrie was brought from Maldive Islands, near the Indian Coast. According to Mrs. Leakey, "Cowrie shells from Maldive Islands were found in an Iron Age settlement near Nakuru in the Kenya Highlands, establishing the

possibility of very old trade contacts between India and Africa." According to another authority "the Indian who traded with Egypt used Cowrie shells for money. This system dated as far as 28th B.C.

The importance of India's trade relations with Axumite Empire was brought to the light by the discovery of 103 Kushana Gold Coins around 230 A.D. contained the legends in Prakrit and Kharoshti script as well as Greek. The Brahmi and Kharoshti script probably had an influence on the Auximite script. Indian merchants with Brahmi and Kharoshti alphabet were moving about, in Ethiopia as well as Egypt from the early pre-Christian centuries with vowel signs, affixed to the Kharoshti and Brahmi consonants could in this way brought to the cognizance of the Ethiopians who must have learnt their system of vowels, indications from India, from which they were also influenced in other respects. They recite the vowels in approximately the same order as is customary in Sanskrit.

(source: **Afro-Hindu Vision** ICCS Nagpur p 84 - 91).

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Masada and Ancient India

On the 15th of Xanthicus (roughly, April), AD 74, **Eleazer ben Yair,** the son of Judah the Galilean and leader of a Jewish community **besieged by invading Romans in their rock fortress of Masada**, rose to address his people. He had a simple message: There would be no surrender. They would all have to die, kill each other, with the last man killing himself.



Eleazer's listeners demurred. Sensing their fear, the charismatic leader rose again, to deliver a final exhortation. Eleazer's pulsating tour de force was not about Israel, the Jewish faith and the barbarians at the gate.

It was, the historian Josephus was to later record, an evocation of the Hindu rite of passage, of seeing death in the flesh as just another milestone on the soul's immortal journey. ''Are we not,'' Eleazer asked, ''ashamed to have lower notions than the Indians? And by our own cowardice?''

"We, therefore, who have been brought up in a discipline of our own, ought to become an example to others of our readiness to die. Yet, if we do stand in need of foreigners to support us in this matter, **let us regard those Indians** who profess the exercise of philosophy; for these good men do but unwillingly undergo the time of life, and look upon it as a necessary servitude, and **make haste to let their souls loose from their bodies;** nay, when no misfortune presses them to it, nor drives them upon it, **these have such a desire of a life of immortality, that they tell other men beforehand that they are about to depart; and nobody hinders them,** but every one thinks them happy men, and gives them letters to be carried to their familiar friends [that are dead], so firmly and certainly do they believe that souls converse with one another [in the other world]. So when these men have heard all such commands that were to be given them, they deliver their body to the fire; and, in order to their getting their soul a separation from the body in the greatest purity, they die in the midst of hymns of commendations made to them; for their dearest friends conduct them to their death more readily than do any of the rest of mankind conduct their fellow-citizens when they are going a very long journey, who at the same time weep on their own account, but look upon the others as happy persons, as so soon to be made partakers of the immortal order of beings. Are not we, therefore, ashamed to have lower notions than the Indians? and by our own cowardice to lay a base reproach upon the laws of our country, which are so much desired and imitated by all mankind?"

For more refer to **Wars of the Jews - By Flavius Josephus**

(source: **Hail Mogambo - By Ashok Malik -** indianexpress.com and **Josephus: Wars of the Jews., Book VII, Chapter VIII, section vii**).

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Conclusion

Sir William Jones says:

"Of the cursory observations on the Hindus, which it would require volumes to expand and illustrate, this is the result, that

they had an immemorial affinity with the old Persians, Ethiopians and Egyptians, the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Tuscans, the Scythians, or Goths, and Celts, the Chinese, Japanese, and Peruvians."

(source: **Asiatic Researches** - volume I p. 426).

The extensive maritime activities of India in the remotest time led to her earliest contacts with Egypt, Sumer, Babylon, Assyria, Judea and many other countries. There are strong indications showing that Egypt in remote antiquity derived her civilization from India. Those who went from India must have mixed themselves with the natives of the land and the indigenous culture absorbed, rejected or modified the impulse from India. Eusebius and Philostratus believe that Indians first colonized Abyssinia and gradually descended to Egypt watering her civilization. The earliest Ethiopian tradition says that they came from a land situated near the mouth of the Indus. While there can be little doubt that trade occupied a central position in the relations between India and Egypt through the ages, it must be remembered that commercial transactions brought in their wake intellectual and cultural exchanges.

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R. Patel** ASIN 0896844536 p. 1-4).

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Books used for this chapter

1. India and Egypt: Influences and Interactions - edited by Saryu Doshi
2. Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys in India - By Paul William Roberts
3. Hindu Raj in the World - By Krishan Lal Jain
4. India in Greece - by Edward Pococke
5. Hindu Superiority - Har Bilas Sarda
6. The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R. Patel

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For more links between India and Egypt, visit these sites:

Trade in and metal sources for the Indian Bronze Age Civilization
http://www.hindunet.org/saraswati/trade1.htm
http://www.hindunet.org/hindu_history/sarasvati/dictionary/8095TO.HTM

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Did You Know?

The Astronomical Code of the RgVeda



The Rigveda speaks of fire altars symbolizing the Vedic system of knowledge. The **fire altars built of bricks in elaborate designs,** are described in great detail in the **Taittirya Samhita, Satapatha Brahmana** and other early texts.

It is generally accepted that the geometric constructions of the fire altars represent the earliest Indian mathematics and geometry. There exists a scientific basis to the Vedic fire ritual.

Astronomy is central to the understanding of the Indian civilization, as it is to that of other ancient civilizations. That astronomy played a very central role in Vedic cultures is apparent from the innumerable references to naksatras and devas (heavenly bodies) in the earliest texts and the continuing cycle of ceremonies related to the calendar.

The nineteenth century Indologists were influenced by attitudes that were inimical to the spirit of free inquiry. **There were those who wished to fit the Vedic chronology within the straitjacket of biblical chronology** and this colored their interpretations. Most dismissed the idea of an underlying unity because such an idea had not yet arrived in physics, the governing metaphor being that of a mechanistic physics. Unfortunately, these notions soon got frozen and when science itself changed, there was no corresponding revolution in the academic Vedic exegesis.

The Astronomical Code presents a long forgotten code at the basis of the altars and the organization of the Vedic books. This discovery has the greatest implications for the understanding of ancient science and the chronology of the ancient world. Author Subhash Kak presents an astronomical key to unlock the secrets of the Rigveda. He shows why the Rigveda should be prior to 2000 BC and is perhaps much more older and how the earliest astronomy and mathematics arose in India.



He has discovered a long-lost astronomy of the Vedic texts which allows us to establish a chronology of that period with reasonable certainty. This chronology has the greatest significance in our understanding of ancient India and its civilization. It is generally accepted that the references to the Vedic gods Mitra, Varuna, Indra and the Nasatyas in the Hittite-Mitanni treaty of the second millennium B.C.E. refers to the Indo-Aryan rather than the Iranians. It appears that the Indic element was intrusive into South-western Asia starting about the beginning of the second millennium. If this intrusion was triggered by the collapse of the Harappan economy caused by the desiccation of the Saraswati river around 1900 B.C.E. then one can see how this intrusion was accompanied by a transmission of the astronomy of the fire altars and the planetary period values of the Rgveda. One might speculate that the Vedic astronomy was taken over by the Babylonians and it was built upon further during the flowering that took place there starting around 700 B.C. E.

The recognition of the central role of astronomy in the Vedic world view has great significance for the interpretation of the Vedic literature. In particular, many Rgvedic hymns turn out to have allusions to astronomical phenomena. Many hymns, considered paradoxical or unclear, can be understood within an astronomical framework. The astronomical references in the Vedic literature cannot be brushed aside any longer. These references can be helpful in constructing a chronology of the Vedic era.

(source: **Astronomical Code of the Rig Veda - By Subhash Kak** and **Astronomy and Its Role in Vedic Culture - By Subhash Kak** in **The Dawn of Indian Civilization** up to 600 BC - edited by **G. C Pande** p. 615 - 620).

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Indian civilization is distinctive for its antiquity and continuity. Apart from its own vitality, the continuity of Indian civilization is largely due to its ability to adapt to alien ideas, harmonize contradictions and mould new thought patterns. Her constant contacts with the outside world also gave India the opportunity to contribute to other civilizations. Whilst other ancient civilizations have long ceased to exist, Indian civilization has continued to grow despite revolutionary changes. The ancient cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Persia have not survived. But in India today, Hindus seek inspiration from concepts similar to those originally advanced by their ancestors.

Jawaharlal Nehru says in his book **The Discovery of India** " Till recently many European thinkers imagined that everything that was worthwhile had its origins in Greece or Rome. Sir Henry Maine has said somewhere that except the blind forces of nature, nothing moves in this world which is not originally Greek."

However, Indian contacts with the Western world date back to prehistoric times. Trade relations, preceded by the migration of peoples, inevitably developed into cultural relations. This view is not only amply supported by both philological and archaeological evidence, but by a vast body of corroborative literary evidence as well: Vedic literature and the Jatakas, Jewish chronicles, and the accounts of Greek historians all suggest contact between India and the West. Taxila was a great center of commerce and learning. "Crowds of eager scholars flowed to it for instruction in the three Vedas and in the eighteen branches of knowledge." Tradition affirms that the great epic, the Mahabharata, was first recited in the city." (An Advance History of India, R. C. Majumdar, H. C. Raychanduri p.64) Buddha is reputed to have studied in Taxila. Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy owe their origin to Indian thought and spirituality.

Alexander's raid, which was so significant to Western historians, seemed to have entirely escaped the attention of Sanskrit authors. From the Indian point of view, there was nothing to distinguish his raid in Indian history. Jawaharlal Nehru says, " From a military point of view his invasion, was a minor affair. It was more of a raid across the border, and not a very successful raid at that."

Indian Thought and the West



Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, has said,

"The Europeans are apt to imagine that before the great Greek thinkers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, there was a crude confusion of thought, a sort of chaos without form and void. Such a view becomes almost a provincialism when we realize that systems of thought which influenced countless millions of human beings had been elaborated by people who never heard the names of the Greek thinkers."

(source: **Eastern Religions and Western Thought - By Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** p. 350).

There has been too much inclination among Western writers to idealize the Greeks and their civilization, and they have tended to discover too much of the contemporary world in the Greek past. In fact almost everything was traced to ancient Greece. In all that concerned intellectual activity and even faith, modern civilization was considered to be an overgrown colony of Hellas. The obvious Greek failings, their shortcomings and the unhealthy features of their civilization, was rationalized and romanticized.

In the words of **Sir Charles Eliot**, who affirms that "**it is clearly absurd for Europe as a whole to pose as**

a qualified instructor in humanity and civilization. He writes: "If Europeans have any superiority over Asiatics it lies in practical science, finance and administration, not in philosophy, thought or art. Their gifts are authority and power to organize; in other respects their superiority is imaginary."

(source: **Hinduism and Buddhism - By Sir Charles Elliot** Curzon Press ISBN 0700706798 volume I (1920), pp. xcvi and xcviii)

Modern research, however, has marred this comforting image and is helping to put Greek culture into its proper historical perspective showing that, like any other culture, it inherited something from preceding civilizations, profited from the progress of its neighboring cultures (like India and Persia) and, in turn, bequeathed much to later generations.



We are not completely in the dark on the question of Indian influence on Greece. Speaking of ascetic practices in the West, **Professor Sir Flinders Patrie** (1853-1942) British archaeologist and Egyptologist, author of **Egypt and Israe**l (1911) observes:

" The presence of a large body of Indian troops in the Persian army in Greece in 480 B.C. shows how far west the Indian connections were carried; and the discovery of modeled heads of **Indians at Memphis,** of about the fifth century B.C. shows that Indians were living there for trade. Hence there is no difficulty in regarding India as the source of the entirely new ideal of asceticism in the West."

(source: **Eastern Religions and Western Thought - By Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** p. 150).

Gods of heaven

It is significant to note that although the Indians and Greeks (Yavanas) had come from the same Indo-European stock, they met as strangers in the sixth century B.C. Persian Empire. Soon, however, the cousins became associates in a a common cultural enterprise. Similarities in language, associated by similarities in religious beliefs, indicate that these two peoples must have either been in close contact at some early period or have had a common origin, even though neither had any recollection of those times.

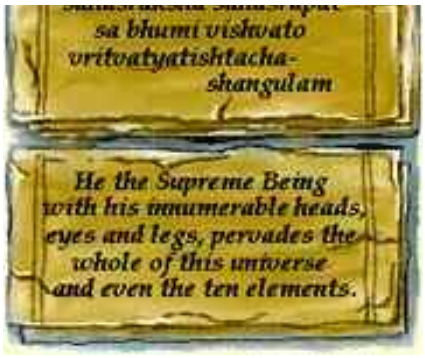


For example, the gods of heaven (Varuna - Ouranos; Dyaus - Zeus) and the dawn (Ushas - Aurora) were common to the Greeks and Indians. The most prominent characteristics of the gods of both races was their power of regulating the order of nature and banishing evil. The Olympian religion of the Greeks and Vedic beliefs had a common background. The Greek concept of *logos* was very close to the vedic *Vac,* which corresponds to the Latin Vox.

Both Greeks and Romans habitually tried to understand the religions of India by trying to fit them as far as possible into Greco-Roman categories. Deities in particular were spoken of, not in Indian but in Greek terms and called by Greek names. Thus Shiva was identified as 'Dionysos', and Hare Krishna as ' Hercules'.



In a passage of the **Rig Veda**, Vac is praised as a divine being. Vac is omnipotent, moves amongst divine beings, and carries the great gods, Mitra, Varuna, Indra and Agni, within itself. The doctrine of Vac



teaches that "all gods live from Vac, also all demi-gods, animals and people. Vac is the eternal being, it is the first-born of the eternal law, mother of the Vedas and navel of immortality." Vedic Aryans attached such great importance to the spoken word that one who could not correctly pronounce Sanskrit was called *barbar* (meaning stammering).

The Greek *barbaroi* had the same meaning. The brisk intercourse between India and Greece is attested by the fact that a special rule was inserted in the great grammar of Panini to distinguish three feminine forms of yavana: a Greek woman was yavani, the curtain was yavanika, and the Greek script was yavanani. There is also a striking similarity between the social life described in the Homeric poems- the Illiad and Odyssey- and that found in the Vedas. Homeric gods, like the heroes who believed in them, often rode in the horse driven chariots. Horse-chariotry was a feature of the life of the Indo-European people. The Homeric idea of a language of the gods is also found in Sanskrit, Greek, Old Norse, and Hittite literatures. Some scholars, like **Fiske,** have even asserted that elements of the Trojan war story are to be found in the war between the bright deities, and the night demons as described in the Rig Veda. It is clear from Homer that even they used articles of Indian merchandise which were known by names of Indian origin, such as Kassiteros (Sanskrit, Kastira), elephas (Sanskrit, ibha), and ivory.

Alain Danielou (1907-1994), son of French aristocracy, author of numerous books on philosophy, religion, history and arts of India, remarks that: "the Greeks were always speaking of India as the sacred territory of Dionysus and historians working under Alexander the Greek clearly mentions chronicles of the Puranas as sources of the myth of Dionysus." He quotes **Clement of Alexandria** who admitted that **"we the Greeks have stolen from the Barbarians their philosophy."**

Alexander's Insignificant Raid



Alexander is supposed to have invaded the Punjab in 326 B.C. Every schoolboy is taught and is expected to know, that he invaded India's Northwest. **Strangely, this event, so significant to Western historians, seemed to have entirely escaped the attention of Sanskrit authors.** Nowhere did **Sir William Jones,** (1746-1794),who came to India as a judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta and pioneered Sanskrit studies, find any mention of Greeks or any sign of Greek influence.

(source: **India Discovered** - **By John Keay** p. 33).

British historian **Vincent A. Smith**, conservatively appraised the impact of Alexander's invasion as follows:

"The Greek influence never penetrated deeply (into the Indic civilization)...On the other hand, the West learned something from India in consequence of the communications opened up by Alexander's adventure. Our knowledge of the facts is so scanty and fragmentary that it is difficult to make any positive assertions with confidence, but it is safe to say that the influence of Buddhist ideas on Christian doctrine may be traced in the Gnostic forms of Christianity, if not elsewhere. The notions of Indian philosophy and religion which filtered into the Roman empire flowed through channels opened by Alexander."

(source: **In Search of The Cradle of Civilization: : New Light on Ancient India - By Georg Feuerstein, Subhash Kak & David Frawley** p. 252-253).

Even more than the Vedas and the Epics, Sindh figures very prominently in, of all places, the annals of Sikander that is Alexander. **British historians used to talk of Alexander as ``the world conqueror'' who ``came and saw and conquered'' every land he had visited.** He is still advertised in Indian text-books as the victor in his war with India's Porus (Puru).

However, the facts as recorded by Alexander's own Greek historians tell a very different tale. And **Marshal Zhukov**, the **famous Russian commander in World War II,** said at the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, a few years back, that **India had defeated Alexander.**

Alexander fared badly enough with Porus in the Punjab. Indeed, Porus put him on the spot when he told him: ``To what purpose should we make war upon one another. if the design of your coming to

these parts be not to rob us of our water or our necessary food, which are the only things that wise men are indispensably obliged to fight for? As for other riches and possessions, as they are accounted in the eyes of the world, if I am better provided of them than you, I am ready to let you share with me; but if fortune has been more liberal to you than to me, I have no objection to be obliged to you." Alexander had no reply to the questions posed by Porus. Instead, with the obstinacy of a bully, he said: ``I shall contend and do battle with you so far that, howsoever obliging you are, you shall not have the better of me." But Porus did have the better of Alexander. In the fighting that ensued, the Greeks were so terrified of Indian prowess that they refused to proceed farther, in spite of Alexander's angry urgings and piteous lamentations. Writes Plutarch, the great Greek historian: ``This last combat with Porus took off the edge of the Macedonians' courage and stayed their further progress in India.... Alexander not only offered Porus to govern his own kingdom as satrap under himself but gave him also the additional territory of various independent tribes whom he had subdued." Porus emerged from his war with Alexander with his territory doubled and his gold stock augmented. So much for Alexander's ``victory" over Porus. However, what was to befall him in Sindh, was even worse. In his wars in Iran. Afghanistan, and north-west India, Alexander had made so many enemies that he did not dare return home by the same route he had come. He had, therefore, decided to travel via Sindh. But in Multan the Mallas gave him hell.

(source: **Alexander's Waterloo in Sindh** - By **K R Malkhani**).



According to Indian historian **Dr. R. C. Majumdar**, " The invasion of Alexander has been recorded in minute details by the greek historians who naturally felt elated at the progress of their hero over unknown lands and seas. **From the Indian point of view, there was nothing to distinguish his raid in Indian history.** It can hardly be called a great military success as the only military achievement to his credit were the conquest of petty tribes and States by installments. He never approached even within a measurable distance of what may be called the citadel of Indian military strength, and the exertions he had to make against Poros, the ruler of a small district between the Jhelum and the Chenab, do not certainly favor the hypothesis that he would have found it an easy task to subdue the mighty Nanda empire."

According to **Paul Masson-Oursel** and others, **"The importance of this Indian campaign of Alexander has been exaggerated. It had no decisive influence on the destinies of India, for its results were short-lived.**

H. G. Rawlinson, refers to the invasion, " had no immediate effect, and passed off like countless other invasions, leaving the country almost undisturbed."

Vincent A. Smith " India remained unchanged. She was never Hellenised. She continued to live her life of splendid isolation, and forgot the passing of the Macedonian storm. No Indian author, Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain, makes even the faintest illusion to Alexander or his deeds."

(Source: **Ancient India - By V. D. Mahajan** 1994. published by S. Chand & Company New Delhi. p. 265-268)

Jawaharlal Nehru in his book Discovery of India says, " From a military point of view his invasion, was a minor affair. It was more of a raid across the border, and not a very successful raid at that." He met with such stout resistance from a border chieftain that the contemplated advance into the heart of India had to be reconsidered. If a small ruler on the frontier could fight thus, what of the larger and more powerful kingdom further south? Probably this was the main reason why his army refused to march further and insisted on returning."

(source **Discovery of India** - **By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 114-115)



Another myth is propagated by the Western historians that Alexander was noble and kind king, he had great respects for brave and courageous men, and so on. The truth is other-wise. **He was neither a noble man nor did he have a heart of gold. He had meted out very cruel and harsh treatment to his earlier enemies. Basus of Bactria fought tooth and nail with Alexander to defend the freedom of his motherland. When he was brought before Alexander as a prisoner,**



Alexander ordered his servants to whip him and then cut off his nose and ears. He then killed him. Many Persian generals were killed by him.

The murder of Kalasthenese, nephew of Aristotle, was committed by Alexander because he criticised Alexander for foolishly imitating the Persian emperors. Alexander also murdered his friend Clytus in anger. His father's trusted lieutenant Parmenian was also murdered by Alexander. The Indian soldiers who were returning from Masanga were most atrociously murdered by Alexander in the dead of night. These exploits do not prove Alexander's kindness and greatness, but only an ordinary emperor driven by the zeal of expanding his empire.

(Source: **Alexander, the Ordinary - By Prof. Dinesh Agarwal** **http://www.itihaas.com/ancient/1.html**)

The religious scripture of ancient Iranians was the Avesta. The Avesta available today is only a fraction of what existed thousands of years ago. **When Alexander captured Iran (Persia) in 326 B. C. after a bloody war, he destroyed each copy of the Avesta available.** After return of political stability Persian priests tried to salvage the Avesta and much had to be written from memory. Another cruel legacy of Alexander.

(source: **Vedic Physics - By Raja Ram Mohan Roy** p. 8)

Marshal Zhukov, the famous Russian commander in World War II, said at the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, a few years back, that India had defeated Alexander

Indian Philosophy

By contrast, philosophical thought in India in the sixth century B.C. had become quite mature. It had reached a stage which could have been arrived at only after long and arduous philosophical quest. Jainism and Buddhism, the latter enormously influential in Indian and neighboring cultures, had emerged by this time. But even before their advent, the philosophical reflections of the early **Upanishads** (900-600 B.C.) had set forth the fundamental concepts of Hindu thought which have continued to dominate the Indian mind.

It is perhaps necessary to point out that there has often been a wide divergence between Indian and Western interpretations of Indian thought. Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy once even declared that a true account to Hinduism may be given in a categorical denial of most of the interpretation that have been made by Westerners or Western-trained Indians.



The tradition of Indian philosophic thought is as complex as it is long. The complexities of Indian philosophy have arisen through centuries of deep reflection on the many aspects of human experience, and, in the search for some reality behind the external world, various methods have been restored to ranging from experimental to the purely speculative. It is the oldest philosophical tradition in the world is to be traced in the ancient Vedas. Although the religious and philosophical spirit of India emerges distinctly in the Rig Veda, the Upanishads are its most brilliant exposition, for the Vedic civilization was naturalistic and utilitarian, although it did not exclude the cosmological and religious speculation.

Older than Plato or Confucius, the Upanishads are the most ancient philosophical works and contain the mature wisdom of India's intellectual and spiritual attainment. They have inspired not only the orthodox system of Indian thought but also the so-called heterodox schools such as Buddhism. In profundity of thought and beauty of style, they have rarely been surpassed not only in Indian thought but in the Western and Chinese philosophical traditions as well.

The Upanishads have greatly influenced Indian culture throughout history and have also found enthusiastic admirers abroad. **Schopenhauer** was almost lyrical about them. **Max Muller** said: " The Upanishads are the .... sources of .....the Vedanta philosophy, a system in which human speculation seems to me to have

reached its very acme." The Upanishads are saturated with the spirit of inquiry, intellectual analysis, and a passion for seeking the truth.



India, is the home of philosophy. Certainly India is a country where philosophy has always been very popular and influential. An American scholar has stated that teachers of philosophy in India were as numerous as merchants in Babylonia. The sages have always been heroes of the Indians. If philosophy did emerge in India earlier than in Greece, and if the two countries were in close contact soon after this emergence, it is not unlikely that Indian thought had some influence on Greek philosophy.

Indian Inspiration of Pythagoras

The similarity between the theory of Thales, that water is the material cause of all things, and the Vedic idea of primeval waters as the origin of the universe, was first pointed out by **Richard Garbe**. The resemblances, too, between the teachings of Pythagoras (ca. 582-506 B.C.) and Indian philosophy are striking. It was **Sir William Jones**, the founder of comparative philology, who first pointed out the pointed out the similarities between Indian and Pythagorean beliefs. Later, other scholars such as **Colebrooke, Garbe,** and **Winternitz** also testified to the Indian inspiration of Pythagoras.

Professor H. G. Rawlinson writes: " It is more likely that Pythagoras was influenced by India than by Egypt. Almost all the theories, religions, philosophical and mathematical taught by the Pythagoreans, were known in India in the sixth century B.C., and the Pythagoreans, like the Jains and the Buddhists, refrained from the destruction of life and eating meat and regarded certain vegetables such as beans as taboo" "It seems that the so-called Pythagorean theorem of the quadrature of the hypotenuse was already known to the Indians in the older Vedic times, and thus before Pythagoras (ibid). (**Legacy of India** 1937, p. 5).

Professor Maurice Winternitz is of the same opinion: "As regards Pythagoras, it seems to me very probable that he became acquainted with Indian doctrines in Persia." (Visvabharati Quarterly Feb. 1937, p. 8).

It is also the view of **Sir William Jones** (Works, iii. 236), **Colebrooke** (Miscellaneous Essays, i. 436 ff.). **Schroeder** (**Pythagoras und die Inder**), **Garbe** (**Philosophy of Ancient India**, pp. 39 ff), **Hopkins** (**Religions of India**, p. 559 and 560) and **Macdonell** (**Sanskrit Literature**, p. 422).

(source: **Eastern Religions and Western Thought - By Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** p. 143).

Ludwig von Schröder German philosopher, author of the book **Pythagoras und die Inder (Pythagoras and the Indians),** published in 1884, he argued that Pythagoras had been influenced by the Samkhya school of thought, the most prominent branch of the Indic philosophy next to Vedanta.

(source: **In Search of The Cradle of Civilization: : New Light on Ancient India - By Georg Feuerstein, Subhash Kak & David Frawley** p. 252).

" Nearly all the philosophical and mathematical doctrines attributed to Pythagoras are derived from India."

Orphic religion, Pythagorean philosophy, Neo-Platonism, Stoicism and several others not so well-known have been influenced by the Samkhya-Vedanta thought of India. In pre-Christian centuries Persia served as a middle ground between India, and Greece. It is known that Indian archers with their long bows, one

end of which was planted in the ground, fought in Darius's war against Greece. Brahmins and Buddhists were in Greece before Socrates. Later Alexandria became a great center of commerce and learning, where Buddhists and Brahmins congregated and where Neo-Platonism was born. **The great astronomical observatory at Ujjayini (now Ujjain) in central India was linked to Alexandria in Egypt.** The first Greek book about India was perhaps written by **Scylax,** a Greek sea-captain whom **Darius** commissioned to explore the course of the Indus about 510 B.C. (Herodotus, iv. 44).

Vitsaxis G. Vassilis, in his book **Plato and the Upanishads**, argues that exponents of literature, science, philosophy and religion traveled regularly between the two countries. He points to accounts by Eusebius and Aristoxenes, of the visits of Indian sages to Athens and their meetings with Greek philosophers. And reference to the visit of Indians to Athens is found in the fragment of Aristotle preserved in the writings of Diogenes Laertius who was also one of Pythagoras' biographers.



The essence of Socratic and Platonic philosophy has remained unintelligible in the West because of lack of insight into Indian thought. Plato's view of Reality is the same as that of the Upanishads. His method of attaining knowledge of the Good is that of Vedanta. In the Phaedo, Plato describes silent **meditation** as withdrawal of the senses from their objects and as stilling the processes of mind.

The Greek theoria of the Pythagoreans, of Socrates and Plato, from which the world 'theater' comes is the vision or darshana of the Upanishads. Plato mentions that philosophic wisdom can only be communicated directly from a teacher to disciple, like lighting one lamp by another. The Timaeus indicates after the manner of the Upanishads that the receiver of philosophic truth must be a fit person - fit by character and not by reason of intellect alone. Platonic thought is so un-Greek in the sense in which Greek thought is generally taken, namely, purely rationalism, that some philosopher, such as **Nietzsche**, have called it " un-Hellenic."

According to **Voltaire**, **"The Greeks, before the time of Pythagoras, traveled into India for instruction. The signs of the seven planets and of the seven metals are still almost all over the earth, such as the Indians invented: the Arabians were obliged to adopt their cyphers."**

(source: **The Philosophy of History**, p. 527).

Pythagoras was particularly influenced by Indian philosophy. **Professor R. G. Rawlinson** remarks that, **"almost all the theories, religious, philosophical, and mathematical, taught by the Pythagorians were known in India in the sixth century B.C."**

Even Aristotle, the great rationalist and empiricist, upheld so strongly by teachers of philosophy in the West, is not fully understood. Aristotle speaks of intellect in the same sense as do the Upanishads- intellect which is not thinking logically but which grasps truth immediately. The Indian term for intellect is buddhi, the purest understanding.



The thought of Plotinus is Hindu. **Eusebius** in his biography of Socrates, relates an incident recorded in the fourth century B.C. in which Socrates met a Brahmin in the agora or the market place. The Brahmin asked Socrates what he was doing. Socrates replied that he was questioning people in order to understand man. At this, the Brahmin laughed and asked how one could understand man without knowing God.

The Socrates conception of freedom and virtue is that of the Upanishads. Socrates defined virtue as knowledge. Virtue is character, the realization of the essence of man. Know thyself, which is exactly the same as the Upanisadic command, Atmanam biddhi. In the Gita, knowledge or wisdom is defined as character. Virtue, comes from the Vedic word vira (hero, man).

Greek philosophy began in Asia Minor and Greek writers refer to the travels of Pythagoras, and others, to the East to gain wisdom. According to his biographer **Iamblichus,**

"Pythagoras traveled widely, studying the esoteric teachings of the Egyptians, Assyrians, and even Brahmins." According to Gomprez, "It is not too much to assume that the curious Greek who was a contemporary of Buddha, and it may be of Zoraster, too, would have acquired a more or less exact knowledge of the East, in the age of intellectual fermentation, through the medium of Persia."

Pythagoras's theorem discovered in India in 800 BC according to renowned historian **Dick Teresi.** author and coauthor of several books about science and technology, including **The God Particle**. He is cofounder of **Omni** magazine and has written for Discover, The New York Times Magazine, and The Atlantic Monthly.

"Two thousand years before Pythagoras, **philosophers** in northern **India had understood that gravitation held the solar system together, and that therefore the sun, the most massive object, had to be at its center."**

"Our Western mathematical heritage and pride are critically dependent on the triumphs of ancient Greece. These accomplishments have been so greatly exaggerated that it often becomes difficult to sort out how much of modern math is derived from Greece and how much from...the Indians and so on.

"Our modern numerals 0 through 9 were developed in India. Mathematics existed long before the Greeks constructed their first right angle. On the other hand **George Cheverghese Joseph** (author of **The Crest of the Peacock: Non-European Roots of Mathematics**) points out that the **early Indian mathematics contained in the Sulbasutras (The Rules of the Cord) contain their own version of the Pythagorean theorem as well as procedure for obtaining the square root of 2 correct to five decimal places. The Sulbasutras reveal a rich geometric knowledge that preceded the Greeks."**

(source: **Lost Discoveries: The Ancient Roots of Modern Science - By Dick Teresi** p. 32). For more on Dick Teresi refer to chapter on **Quotes301_320**).



Vivekananda said that Samhkya was the basis of the philosophy of the whole world. " There is no philosophy in the world that was not indebted to Kapila. (Kapila is the founder of the Sankhya philosophy). Krishna says in the Gita that, among the perfected sages, he is Kapila. Pythagoras came to India and studied his philosophy and that was the beginning of the philosophy of the Greeks. Later it formed the Alexandrian school, and still later the Gnostic."

Panini, who speaks of the Greek script as **yavanani lipi.** The Prakrit equivalent of yavana, viz. yona, is used in the inscriptions of Ashoka to describe the Hellenic princes of Egypt, Cyrene, Macedonia, Epirus, and Syria.

"It is believed that the Dravidians from India went to Egypt and laid the foundation of its civilization there. the Egyptians themselves had the tradition that they originally came from the South, from a land called **Punt**, which an historian of the West, **Dr. H.R. Hall,** thought referred to some part of India.

The Indus Valley civilization is, according to Sir John Marshall who was in charge of the excavations, the oldest of all civilizations unearthed (c. 4000 B.C.) It is older than the Sumerian and it is believed by many that the latter was a branch of the former.

Some people called the Brahui who dwell in Baluchistan which is at present a part of Pakistan, still speak the Dravidian language. It is likely that their ancestors were the people who sailed across the narrow waters at the entrance of the Persian Gulf to Oman and then to Aden along the southern littoral of Arabia, crossing over to Africa at the narrow strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, near Somaliland and proceeding north along the Nile Valley."

(Source: **The Bhagvad Gita: A Scripture for the Future** - Translation and Commentary by Sachindra K. Majumdar p. 28).



"We hear of Arabian trade with Egypt as far back as 2743 B.C. probably as ancient as was the trade with India."

(source: **The Story of civilizations - Our Oriental Heritage** ISBN: 1567310125 1937 vol. 4 p. 157).

Klaus K. Klostermaier, in his book **A Survey of Hinduism** pg 18 says:

"For several centuries a lively commerce developed between the ancient Mediterranean world and India, particularly the ports on the Western coast. The most famous of these ports was Sopara, not far from modern Bombay, which was recently renamed Mumbai. **Present day Cranganore in Kerala, identified with the ancient Muziris, claims to have had trade contacts with Ancient Egypt under Queen Hatsheput, who sent five ships to obtain spices, as well as with ancient Israel during King Soloman's reign.** Apparently, the contact did not break off after Egypt was conquered by Greece and later by Rome.

According to **I .K. K. Menon**:

"there is evidence of a temple of Augustus near Muziris (Cranganore, Kerala) and a force of 1200 Roman soldiers stationed in the town for the protection of Roman commerce." Large hoards of Roman traders, who must have rounded the southern tip of India to reach that place."

(Note: The ancient Alexandrian port of Muziris, now Cranganore, Kerala is where the Romans built a temple to Augustus in the first century.)

Thus, both upon archaeological and historical grounds, India is the mother of civilizations. Material skill and spiritual ideas spread from the Indus valley to Nineveh and Babylon, to the entire Middle East, to the Nile Valley and thence to Greece and Rome.

Other Indic Influences:

American mathematician, **A. Seindenberg** has demonstrated that the **Sulbhasutras,** the ancient Vedic mathematics, have inspired all the mathematic sciences of the antique world from Babylonia to Egypt and Greece". "Arithmetic equations from the Sulbhasutras were used in the observation of the triangle by the Babylonians and the theory of contraries and of inexactitude in arithmetic methods, discovered by Hindus, inspired Pythagorean mathematics." writes Abraham Seidenberg.

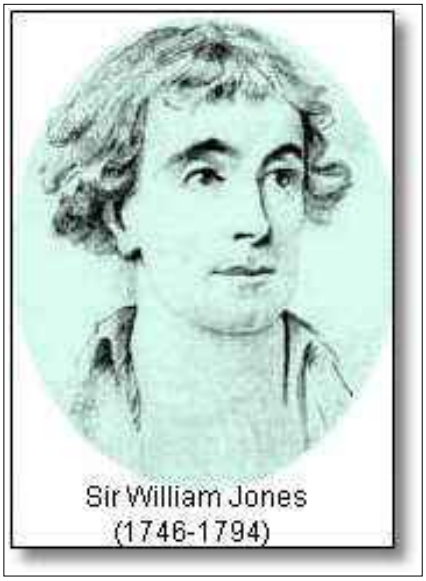
In astronomy, too, Indus were precursors: **Jean-Claude Bailly** (1736–93) 18th century French astronomer and politician. His works on astronomy and on the history of science (notably the *Essai sur la théorie des satellites de Jupiter*) were distinguished both for scientific interest and literary elegance and earned him membership in the French Academy, the Academy of Sciences, and the Academy of Inscriptions. **Bailly** had already noticed that:

"the Hindu astronomic systems were much more ancient than those of the Greeks or even the Egyptians the movement of stars which was calculated by Hindus 4,500 years ago, does not differ even by a minute from the tables which we are using today." And he concludes: "The Hindu systems of astronomy are much more ancient than those of the Egyptians - even the Jews derived from the Hindus their knowledge." **There is also no doubt that the Greeks heavily borrowed from the "Indus."**

Alain Danileou (1907-1994), son of French aristocracy, author of numerous books on philosophy, religion, history and arts of India, including **Virtue, Success, Pleasure, & Liberation : The Four Aims of Life in the Tradition of Ancient India.** He was perhaps the first European to boldly proclaim his Hinduness. He settled in India for fifteen years in the study of Sanskrit. He had a wide effect upon Europe's understanding of Hinduism. He has remarks that:

"the Greeks were always speaking of India as the sacred territory of Dionysus and historians working under Alexander the Great clearly mention chronicles of the Puranas as sources of the myth of Dionysus." Alain Danielou quotes **Clement of Alexandria** who admitted that **"we the Greeks have stolen from the Barbarians their philosophy."**

We know that the Greeks had translated the Bhagvad-gita and French philosopher and historian **Roger-Pol Droit** writes in his classic **"L'oubli de l'Inde (India forgotten)** "that there is absolutely not a shadow of a doubt that Greeks knew all about Indian philosophy."



William Jones (1746-1794) came to India as a judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta. He pioneered Sanskrit studies. A linguist of British India, his admiration for Indian thought and culture was almost limitless. He noted that **"the analogies between Greek Pythagorean philosophy and the Sankhya school, are very obvious."**

(source: **Arise O' India - By Francois Gautier** ISBN 81-241-0518-9 Har-Anand Publications 2000. p. 21-22).

Jean-Paul Droit, French philosopher, and Le Monde journalist, recently wrote in his book "**The Forgetfulness of India,** that:

"The Greeks loved so much Indian philosophy that **Demetrios Galianos** had even translated the Bhagavad-Gita"

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The Roman Empire - A Gangster State?

According to **Peter Beckman**, author of '**A History of Pi**: " While Alexandria had become the world capital of thinkers, Rome was becoming the capital of thugs. Rome was not the first state of organized gangsterdom nor was it the last; but it was the only one that managed to bamboozle posterity into an almost universal admiration. Few rational men admire the Huns, the Nazis or the Soviets; **but for centuries, schoolboys have been expected to read Julius Caesar's militaristic drivel.** They have been led to believe that the Romans had attained an advanced level in the sciences, the arts, law, architecture, engineering and everything else.



It is my opinion that the alleged Roman achievements are largely a myth; and I feel it is time for this myth to be debunked a little. **What the Romans excelled in was bullying, bludgeoning, butchering and blood bath.** They enslaved peoples whose cultural level was far above their own. They not only ruthlessly vandalized their countries, but they also looted them, stealing their art treasures, abducting their scientists and copying their technical know-how, which the Romans' barren society was rarely able to improve on.

Then there is Roman engineering: The Roman roads, acquaducts, the Coliseums. Warfare, alas, has always been beneficial to engineering. In a healthy society, engineering design gets smarter and smarter; in gangster states, it gets bigger and bigger.

The architecture of the Coliseums and other places of Roman entertainment are difficult to judge without recalling what purpose they served. It was here that gladiators fought to the death; that prisoners of war, convicts and Christians were devoured by a many as 5,000 wild beasts at a time; and that victims were crucified or burned alive for the entertainment of Roman civilization. **When the Roman screamed for ever more blood, artificial lakes were dug and naval battles as many as 19,000 gladiators were staged until the water turned red with blood. The only Roman emperors who did not throw Christians to the lions were the Christian emperors. They (Christians) threw the pagans to the lions with the same gusto and for the same crime - having a different religion.**

Romans were not primitive savages, but were sophisticated killers. The Roman contribution to sciences was mostly limited to butchering antiquity's greatest mathematicians, burning the Library of Alexandria. and it demonstrates an abysmal ignorance of sciences. **Pliny tells us that in India there is a species of men without mouths who subsist by smelling flowers.**

Yet most historians extol the achievements of Rome. "it accustomed the Western races to the idea of a world-state, and by pax romana....."

(source: **A History of Pi - by Peter Beckan** St. Martin's Press; ; 19th edition (August 1976) 0312381859 p. 55-59).

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Did You Know

Iron with Mettle



Ancient India developed advanced metallurgical technology that made it possible to cast a remarkable iron pillar, dating to about 300 B.C.E. Still standing today in Delhi. This solid shaft of wrought iron is about 24 feet high and 16 inches in diameter. It has been exposed to weather and pollution since its erection, yet shows minimal corrosion, a technology lost to current ironmakers. Even with today's advances, only four foundries in the world could make this piece and none were able to keep it rust-free.

The earliest known metal expert (some 2,200 years ago) **Rishi Pantanjali**. His book **Loha Shastra,** "metal manual" describes in detail metal preparation.

The pillar is a solid shaft of iron sixteen inches in diameter and 23 feet high. What is most astounding about it is that it has never rusted even though it has been exposed to wind and rain for centuries! The pillar defies explanation, not only for not having rusted, but because it is apparently made of pure iron, which can only be produced today in tiny quantities by electrolysis! The technique used to cast such a gigantic, solid pillar is also a mystery, as it would be difficult to construct another of this size even today. The pillar stands as mute testimony to the highly advanced scientific knowledge that was known in antiquity, and not duplicated until recent times. Yet still, there is no satisfactory explanation as to why the pillar has never rusted!

(source: **Technology of the Gods: The Incredible Sciences of the Ancients - By David Hatcher Childress** p. 80)

The iron pillar near Qutub Minar at New Delhi is in the news, thanks to the research by Prof. R. Balasubramaniam of IIT, Kanpur and his team of metallurgists. **The pillar is said to be 1,600 years old.** A protective layer of `misawite' — a compound made up of iron, oxygen and hydrogen on the steel pillar, which is said to contain phosphorus -
is claimed as the reason for the non-corrosive existence.

(source: **Iron pillar and nano powder -**
http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/seta/stories/2002082900020200.htm

For more information refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture**).

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Baffling Links to Ancient India: History is full of misnomers; one such term is the New World, as applied to the Americas. The landing of Columbus in 1492 undoubtedly created a new life on the continents, but it neither created nor discovered a new world. Many centuries ago Asian migrants had come to the western shore in substantial numbers.
What if the popular idea that Tibetans and American Indians have much in common in terms of their spiritual culture is largely a result of another historical scenario?

What if Hindus and Hopis, Advantins and Aztecs, Tibetan Monks and Mayans were part of one world culture - a spiritual one?

Baron Alexander von Humbolt (1769-1859), an eminent European scholar and anthropologist, was one of the first to postulate the Asiatic origin of the Indian civilizations of the Americas.

Dr. Robert Heine Geldern anthropologist, has written that: "Those who believe the ancient peoples of Asia were incapable of crossing the ocean have completely lost sight of what the literary sources tell us concerning their ships and their navigation. Many of the peoples of Southeastern Asia had adopted Indian Hindu-Buddhist civilizations. The influences of the Hindu-Buddhist culture of southeast Asia in Mexico and particularly, among the Maya, are incredibly strong, and they have already disturbed some Americanists who don't like to see them but cannot deny them." "Ships that could cross the Indian Ocean were able to cross the Pacific too. Moreover, these ships were really larger and probably more sea-worthy than those of Columbus and Magellan."

Swami B. V. Tripurari asks, "What mysterious psychological law would have caused Asians, and Americans to both use the umbrella as a sign of royalty, to invent the same games, imagine similar cosmologies, and attribute the same colors to the different directions?"

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1.**Maya Civilization of Mexico.**
2.**Master Builder Uncovers Striking similarities in Indian and Incan/Mayan Sacred Structures**

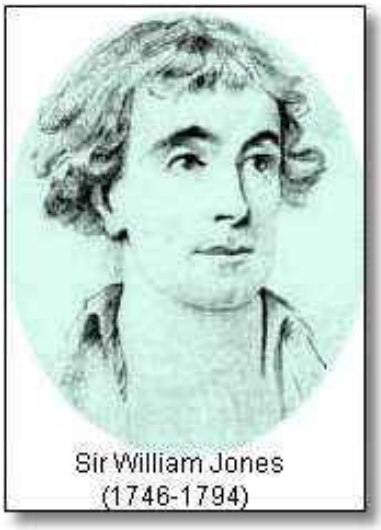


Introduction

World's leading anthropologists, **Robert Heine Geldern and Gordon F. Ekholm** have said:

"Ships of size that carried Fahien from India to China (through stormy China water) were certainly capable of proceeding all the way to Mexico and Peru by crossing the Pacific. One thousand years before the birth of Columbus Indian ships were far superior to any made in Europe up to the 18th century."

(source: **The Civilizations of Ancient America:** The Selected Papers of the XXIXth International Congress of Americanists - edited Sol Tax 1951).



Sir William Jones (1746-1794) judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta and was one who pioneered Sanskrit studies. His admiration for Indian thought and culture was almost limitless. He has remarked:

"Rama is represented as a descendant from the sun, as the husband of Sita, and the son of a princess named Causelya. It is very remarkable that Peruvians, whose Incas boasted of the same descent, styled their greatest festival Rama-Sitva; whence we may take it that South America was peopled by the same race who imported into the farthest of parts of Asia the rites and the fabulous history of Rama."

(source: **Asiatic Researches** Volume I. p. 426).

"Those who arrived first on the subcontinent, later to be known as America, were groups of men driven by that mighty current that set out from India towards the East."

(source: **India: Mother of Us All - Edited by Chaman Lal - Official History of Mexico** p. 90).

Colonel James Tod has said: "It is ridiculous with all the knowledge now in our possession, to suppose that the Hindus always confined themselves within their gigantic barriers, the limits of modern India."

(source: **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India - By James Tod** ISBN 8120612892 Volume II p. 218).

Ephraim George Squier (1821-1888) was United States Charge d'affaires to Central America in 1849 and author of **Peru; Incidents of Travel and Exploration in the Land of the Incas** and **The Serpent Symbol, and the Worship of the Reciprocal Principles of Nature in America**. Comparing the temples of India, Java and Mexico, he wrote nearly a hundred years ago:

"a proper examination of these monuments would disclose the fact that in their interior as well as their exterior form and obvious purposes, these buildings (temples in Palanque, Mexico) correspond with great exactness to those of Hindustan..."

Sir Stamford Raffles the British historian, and founder of Singapore as a British colony, expressed a similar view when he wrote:

"**the great temple of Borobudur in Java might readily be mistaken for a Central American temple**."

(source: **India: Mother of Us All - Edited by Chaman Lal** p. 91).



Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767- 1835) Prussian minister of education, a brilliant linguist and the founder of the science of general linguistics.

A century and half ago an eminent a scholar as Alexander Von Humboldt was convinced of the Asiatic origin of the American Indian high civilization. However, when, in the second half of the 19th century, evolutionist (or rather, pseudo-evolutionist) ideas captured the imagination of anthropologists, it seemed no longer necessary to have recourse to the supposition of real contacts in order to explain the similarities between New and Old world civilization.

These "evolutionist" ideas have long since been abandoned, but, curiously enough, the belief in the independent origin of American Indian civilizations was nevertheless retained. This lack of logic results in a truly paradoxical situation. No archaeologist today would attribute to prehistoric Europeans the independent invention of bronze casting, iron work, the wheel, weaving, pottery, writing and so many other cultural elements derived from the Near East. Thus what is not conceded to the inhabitants of the British Isles is willingly conceded to the American Indians.

Isn't our credulity being taxed too much when we are asked to believe that a whole series of complicated techniques, like casting by the lost wax method, the extraction of tin from cassiterite, the alloying copper and tin, the coloring of gold by chemical processes, weaving, tie-dying and batik were by a real miracle invented twice, once in the Old World and once in America?

And what mysterious law of psychology would have caused the peoples of America, as well as those of Asia, to invent the parasol and to use it as an emblem of rank and royalty, to invent the same game with rather complicated rules (pachisi in India and Southeast Asia, patolli in Mexico), to imagine similar cosmological systems, and to attribute certain colors to the different directions? After all, the south is not really red, the east not blue, etc, and the idea is singular enough to make us doubt that it was conceived more than once.

He remarks on the Mexican diety: "It presents some remarkable and apparently not accidental resemblances with the Hindu Ganesh."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 188).

Edward Pococke (1604–1691) English Orientalist has written:

"The Peruvians and their ancestors, the Indians, are in this point of view at once seen to be the same people."

(source: **India in Greece - By Edward Pococke** p. 174).

Robert Spence Hardy (1803-1868) says in his book, **Eastern Monachism**: "The ancient edifices of Chichen in Central America bear a striking resemblance to the topes of India."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 187).

Ephraim George Squier (1821-1888) wrote: "The Buddhist temples of Southern India, and of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, as described to us by the learned members of the Asiatic Society and the numerous writers on the religious and antiquities of the Hindus, correspond with great exactness in all their essential and in many of their minor features with those of Central America."

(source: **The serpent symbol, and the worship of the reciprocal principles of nature in America - By Ephraim George Squier**)

Robert Heine-Geldern and Gordon F. Ekholm have written:

"Many of the peoples of Southeastern Asia had adopted Indian Hindu-Buddhist civilizations. And they seem to have continued these voyages to America....The influences of the Hindu-Buddhist culture of Southeast Asia in Mexico, and particularly, among the Maya, are incredibly strong, and they have already disturbed also some Americanists who don't like to see them but cannot deny them."

"The large number of highly specific correspondence in so many fields preclude any possibility of mere accidental coincidence. Nor would it help us to take refuge in any kind of explanation based on some alleged psychological laws...There is no explanation other that the assumption of cultural relationship. We must bow to the evidence of facts, even though this may mean a completely new start."

Prichard James Cowles "Aryavarta was the holy land of the Brahmans, the country lying between the Himalayas and Vindhya mountains, which was the ancient abode of the Hindoos...There the Hindoos had the seat of their early existence five and twenty centuries before the Christian era, and thence they appear gradually to have spread...."

(source: **The natural history of man; comprising inquiries into the modifying influence of - By Prichard James Cowles** p. 164).

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The first Maya Empire had been founded in Guatemala at about the beginning of the Christian era. Before the fall of Rome the Mayas were charting accurately the synodical revolutions of Venus, and whilst Europe was still lingering in the Dark Ages the Maya civilization had reached a peak of greatness.

It is significant that the zenith of Maya civilization was reached at a time when **India had also attained an unparalleled cultural peak during the Gupta period,** and Indian cultural intercourse with Southeast Asia, the **Gupta period had begun more than a century before** the Mayan classical age in 320 and Buddhism and Hinduism had been well known in neighboring countries for centuries. **If there was contact between Mayan America and Indianized Southeast Asia, the simultaneous cultural advance would not appear surprising.** In marked contrast, this was the darkest period in Europe's history between the sack of Rome and the rise of Charlemagne.

The most important development of the ancient American or Asiomerican culture took place in the south of the United States, in Mexico, in Central America, and in Peru. The early history of Asiomericans is shrouded in mystery and controversy due to the absence of definitive documentary evidence, which was **destroyed by the European conquerors in their misguided religious zeal.**

(For holocaust inflicted against the Indians, please refer to a well written and thought provoking book **Conquest of Paradise: : Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy - Kirkpatrick Sale** for more on Spanish greed and their lust for gold).

However, it appears that after the discovery of introduction of maize into Mexico, Asiomericans no longer had to wander about in search of food. Men in America, as in other parts of the world, settled down to cultivate food and culture, a by-product of agricultural life, inevitably followed.

Of the Asiomerican civilizations, the best known are the **Maya, the Toltec, the Aztec, and the Inca.** The Mayas were possibly the earliest people to found a civilization there; they moved form the Mexican plateau into Guatemala. They were later pushed out, presumably by the Toltecs, who, in turn were dislodged by the Aztecs.

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Imprint of Hindu Culture



Ambassador Miles Poindexter states in his book, **The Ayar-Incas**:

"Aryan words and people came to America by the island chains of Polynesia. The very name of the boat in Mexico is a **South Indian (Tamil) word: Catamaran.**

(source: **The Ayar-Incas - By Miles Poindexter** published by Horace Liveright New York volume 1-2. 1930).

Hindu were mighty navigators and pioneers of cultures centuries before Columbus was born. **They established their cultural empires in Java, Balim Sumatra, Borneo, Philippines, Cambodia, Champa, Burma, Thailand and ruled there till the fourteenth century.** (please refer to chapter on Greater India or **Suvarnabhumi**).

The emigrant races of India took with them, wherever they went, (Southeast Asia or America) their system of measurement of time, their local gods, their customs, including games, dances and ceremonials. The belief in the four Hindu Yugas (epochs), the existence in America of the Hindu Gurukala scheme of education, the Hindu Panchayat System, the bazaar economy, the Soma Yagna (sacrifice), the worship of Indra, Trinity and Hindu gods and others.

Both the Hindus and Americans used similar items in their worship rituals. They both maintained the concept of **four Yuga cycles, or cosmological seasons,** extending over thousands of years, and conceived of twelve constellations with reference to the sun as indicated by the Incan sun calendar. Royal insignias, systems of government, and practice of religious dance and temple worship all showed remarkable similarities, pointing strongly to the idea that the Americas were strongly influenced by the Aryans. The theory is found in the Vedic literature of India. The ancient Puranas (literally, histories) and the Mahabharata make mention of the Americas as lands rich with gold and silver. Argentina, which means "related to silver", is thought to have been named after Arjuna (of silver hue).

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Ancient Indians called the Other Hemisphere Pataladesa

Dr. B. Chakravarti author of **The Indians And The Amerindians** has written:

It will be evident from a close study of the texts of Indian Astronomy that Latin America was known to ancient Indians, who called it **Pataladesa.** The **Surya Siddhanta, a textbook of Astronomy**, composed before 500 A.D. identifies and describes Pataldesa in very clear and definite terms in the chapter of geography (chapter xii).

The Surya Siddhanta categorically says that the Devas and Asuras live on the earth. The Devas live in the northern hemisphere while the Asuras live in the Southern hemisphere and have a tradition of enmity against each other. It further says that the ocean which surrounds the poles of the earth has divided the planet into two great continents, viz. the continent of the Devas and the continent of the Asuras. The Brahmanas of India write the epithet Deva-Serman after their names thus describing themselves as the Devas.

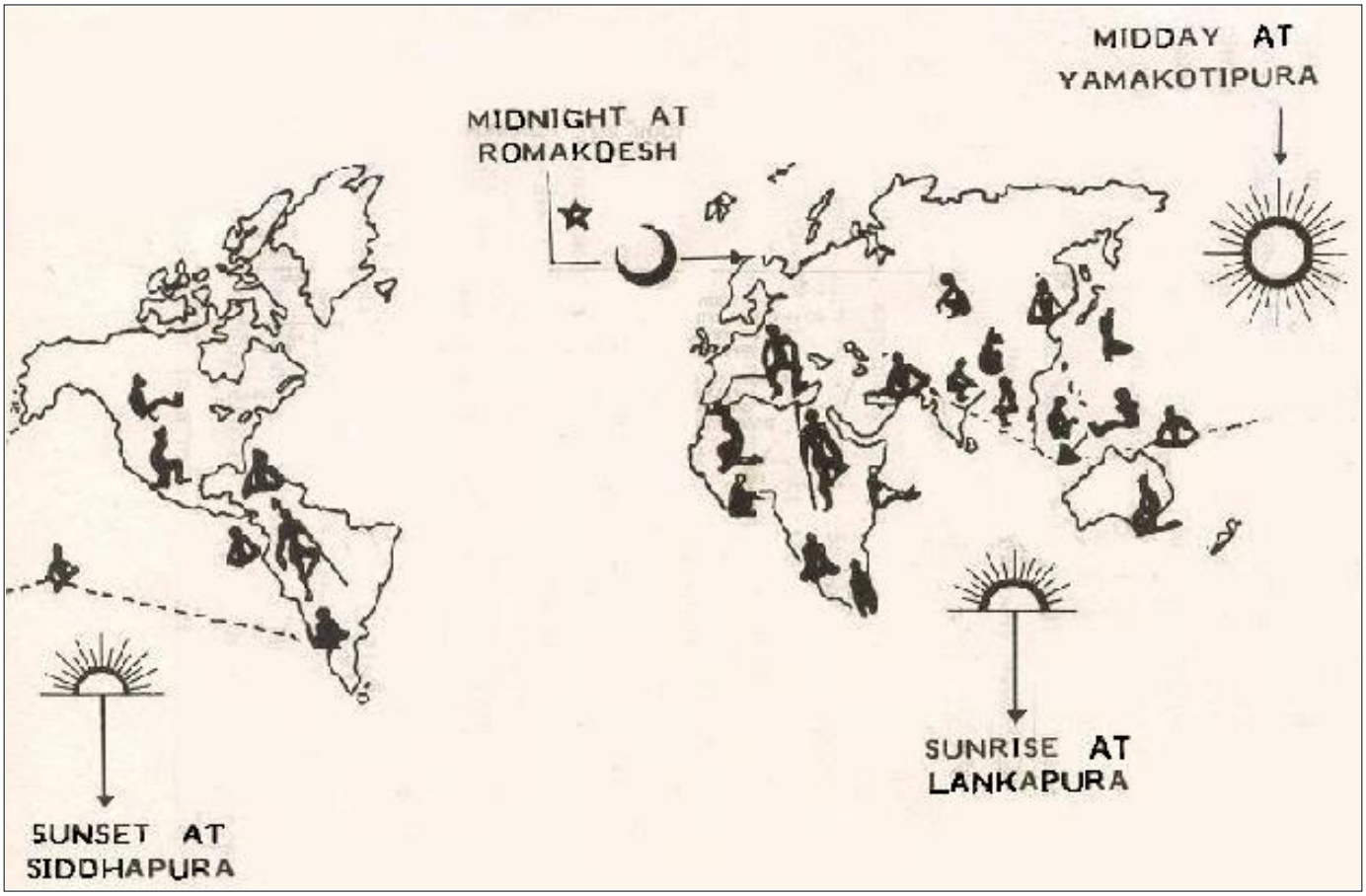
When the Sun is in the northern hemisphere eg. in Aries, he appears first to the Devas, and again when the Sun is in the southern hemisphere, he appears first to the Asuras. When the Sun is on the Equator both the Devas and the Asuras find the Sun in the middle and the days and nights are equal. As the Sun proceeds to the northern hemisphere, the Devas experience summer because of the directness and intensity of the solar rays, the Asuras do not get the rays so directly then and its intensity is also less, the sun being in the northern hemisphere. Hence they experience winter during this time. This obviously indicates that Pataldesa was South America.

The Surya Siddhanta explains how the people living on opposite ends of the globe consider themselves, wrongly, as living on the upper and lower part of the globe, though there cannot really be an upper or lower part, of the globe, which moves in vaccuum.

Maya, the author of Surya Siddhanta, also mentions the four great cities situated on the opposite ends of the world, equidistant from one another. 1. Yamakotipura in Bhadrasvavarsa (Indonesia?) in the east, Lanka in Bharatvarsa (India) in the south and 3. Rome in Ketumalavarsa (Europe) in the west and Siddhapura in Kuruvarsa (America?) in the north.

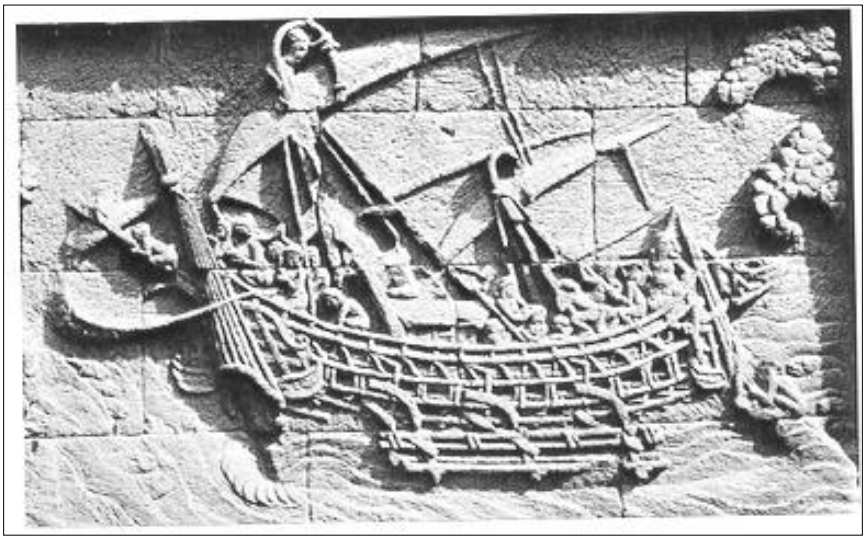
The celebrated astronomer **Bhaskaracarya** mentions the time difference between the important cities situated in different parts of the world in his **Siddhanta Siromani** (Goladhyaya) thus:

" When the sun rises at Lanka, the time as at Yakakotipura to the east of Lanka, will be midday. Below the earth at Siddhapura, it will be twilight then, and at Romakadesa in Europe, the time will be midnight."



Accurate time difference of places around the world found in ancient Sanskrit texts (source: The Indians And The Amerindians - By Dr. B. Chakravarti p. 34-110).

From such location of places round the globe and the movement towards the east, it appears that many Indian merchants used to sail frequently and some even settled down in Indonesia and Indochina, who used to relay on to Polynesia and then further on to South or Middle America, may be not a single ship and in a single effort, but after stopovers at the important ports on the other islands-chain of which seems to have existed then and some of which submerged later because of tectonic movements. It seems that some contact with the cities mentioned by Bhaskaracharya might have existed till his time.



Ancient Indian ocean-going ship arriving at Java, from a frieze of the Borobodur stupa.

Dr. Robert Heine Geldern anthropologist, has written that:

"Those who believe the ancient peoples of Asia were incapable of crossing the ocean have completely lost sight of what the literary sources tell us concerning their ships and their navigation. Many of the peoples of Southeastern Asia had adopted Indian Hindu-Buddhist civilizations. The influences of the Hindu-Buddhist culture of southeast Asia in Mexico and particularly, among the Maya, are incredibly strong, and they have already disturbed some Americanists who don't like to see them but cannot deny them."

"Ships that could cross the Indian Ocean were able to cross the Pacific too. Moreover, these ships were really large. The Periplus of the Erythraean sea mentions the large ships of Southern India which engaged in trade with the countries of the East. A Chinese source of the third century A.D. describes vessels from Southern Asia which were 150 feet in length, and had four masts and were able to carry six to seven hundred men and one thousand metric tons of merchandise when the Buddhist Pilgrim Fahien returned from Sri Lanka to China, in 414 A.D."

Alexander von Humboldt, who spent fifty years doing research on Ancient America, said:

"It is surprising to find, toward the end of the fifteenth century, in a world that we call "New" the ancient institutions, the religious ideas, the forms of edifices which, in Asia appear to belong to the first dawn of civilization." -

Those Indian ships that carried Fahien the Chinese historian and scholar through stormy China waters could without difficulty proceed all the way to Mexico and other countries. A thousand years before the birth of Columbus Indian ships could carry hundreds of passengers.

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Similarities

Hindu-Mexican Trinity



Scholars were also greatly impressed by the similarity between the Hindu Trinity - **Brahma-Visnu-Shiva** and the Mexican Trinity - **Ho-Huizilopochtli-Tlaloc** as well as the likeness between Indian temples and American pyramids.
The parallels between the Hindu Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva Trinity and the Mexican Ho-Huitzilopochtli-Tlaloc Trinity, and the resemblances between the attributes of certain Hindu deities and those of the Mayan pantheon are impressive.

According to **Donald A. Mackenzie** writes in his book, **Myths of Pre-Columbian America**:

"Tezcatlipoca, was like Hindu god Kubera, was a god of the north. The story of Yappan appears to be of Indian origin. The story of the temptation and fall of Yappan is too like that of the temptation and fall of his Indian prototype to be of spontaneous origin in the New World. The conclusion drawn from the evidence of the Yappan myth that Hindu cultural influences reached America is greatly strengthened when we find Acosta informing us that certain Mexican ascetics, who assisted the priests, "dressed in white robes and lived by begging." The wandering Brahmin and Buddhist pilgrims in India similarly begged their food."

Same Aryan name of God: When Cortes invaded the valley of Mexico he found that the Mexicans - through the chief motive of his great adventure was to destroy their religion and to substitute his own, had the same word for God that he himself had. His own (Spanish) was Dios, from Greek Theos, the Mexican, as Cortes converted it to writing, was Teotl (Devata or Deo in Sanskrit).

(source: **The Ayar-Incas - By Miles Poindexter** published by Horace Liveright New York volume 1-2. 1930).).

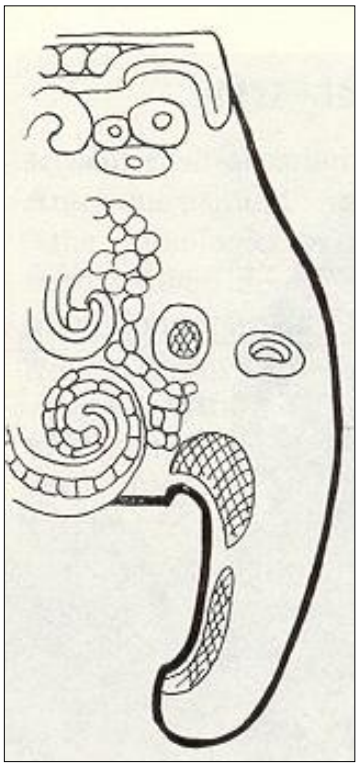
Churning of the Milky Ocean

The Indian myth of the **Churning of the Milky Ocean** reached America. In **Codex Cortes** there is a grotesque but recognizable Maya representation of the ocean churning. The tortoise, however, is on the summit of the mountain-pestle instead of being beneath it, and the other form of the serpent god appears above his avatar. Round the mountain-pestle is twisted a snake, called "a rope" by Seler. Two dark gods, like the Indian Asuras, hold one end of the snake-rope while the other end is grasped by the elephant headed god. To the rope is attached a symbol of the sun (Kin).'

(source: **Myths of Pre-Columbian America** - **By Donald A. Mackenzie** p. 191- 229).

The Indian Elephant in American Art

The American writer and explorer, Mr. John L. Stephens, who, accompanied Mr. Catherwood, an accomplished artist, visited the ruins of Maya civilization in Central America in the middle of last century, detected the elephant on a sculptural pillar at Copan, which he referred to as an "idol." A reproduction of one of the ornaments in question should leave no doubt as to the identity of the animal depicted by the ancient American sculptor. It is not only an elephant, but an **Indian elephant** (Elephas Indicus), a species found in India, Ceylon, Borneo and Sumatra. In India the elephant was tamed during the Vedic period. It was called at first by the Aryo-Indians "the beast having a hand". and ultimately simply Hastin "having a hand". An elephant keeper was called Hastipa. The Maya long nosed god is regarded by those who favor the hypothesis of direct or indirect Indian cultural influence in America as a form of the Indian elephant-headed god, Ganesha.





The Indian elephant in America
(source: Myths of Pre-Columbian America - By Donald A. Mackenzie)

Professor **Elliot Smith** comments: "If it has been possible for complicated games (like Pachissi) to make their way to the other side of the Pacific, the much simpler design of an elephant's head could also have been transferred from India or to the Far East to America."

(source: **Myths of Pre-Columbian America** - **By Donald A. Mackenzie** p. 28-35).

Discussing the diffusion of Indian religions to Mexico, a recent scholar, **Paul Kirchhoff** from the University of Frankfurt, had even suggested that it is not simply a question of miscellaneous influences wandering from one country to the other, but that China, India, Java, and Mexico actually share a common system."

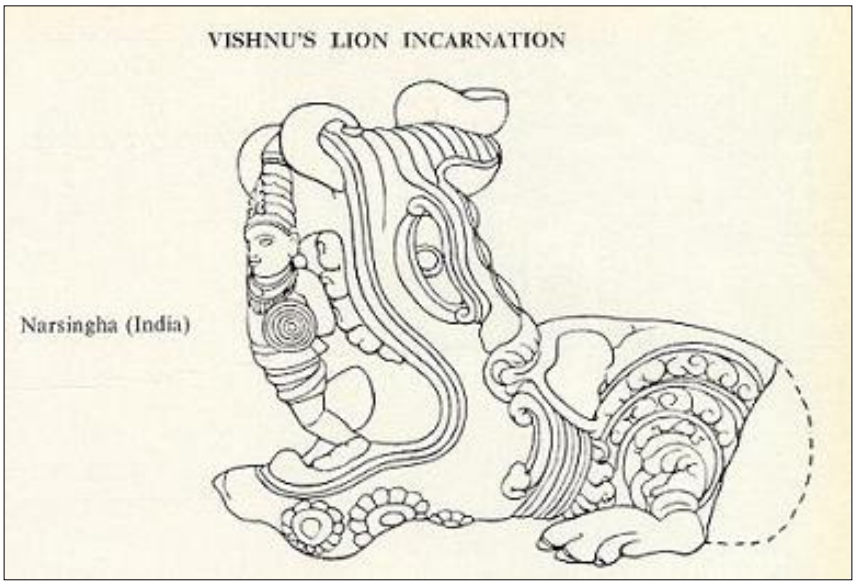
Kirchhoff has sought "to demonstrate that a calendaric classification of 28 Hindu gods and their animals into twelve groups, subdivided into four blocks, within each of which we find a sequence of gods and animals representing Creation, Destruction and Renovation, and which can be shown to have existed both in India and Java, must have been carried from the Old World to the New, since in Mexico we find calendaric lists of gods and animals that follow each other without interruption in the same order and with attributes and functions or meanings strikingly similar to those of the 12 Indian and Javanese groups of gods, showing the same four subdivisions."

Trilokinath, the Hindu ruler of the three worlds, was known to the Mexicans by the name, until the Spanish conquerors mistakenly changed the name into **Tloque Nahuaque**.

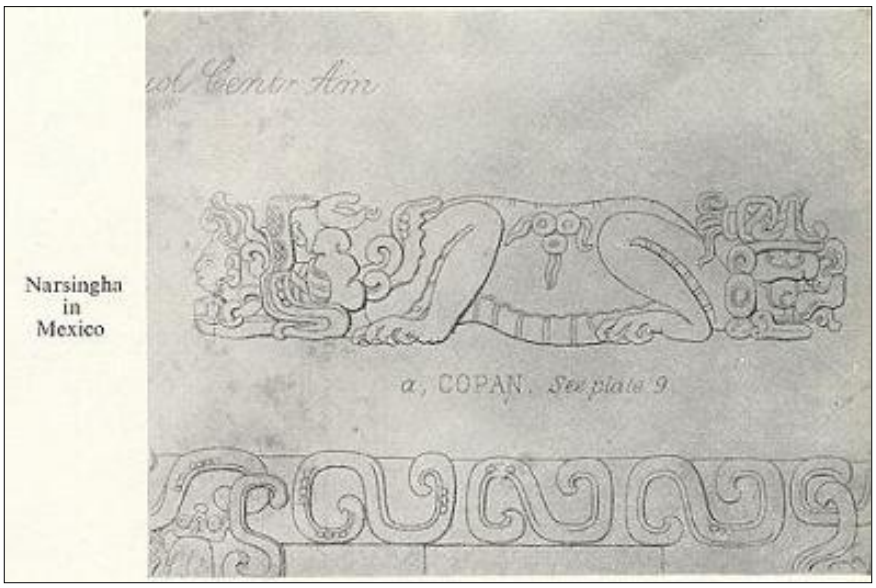
The God born from Lotus

Brahma, the supreme deity of the Hindus, was "born from a lotus which grew out of the navel of the god Vishnu whilst floating on the primordial waters." The Tibetan repeat "Om Mani Padme Hum" (O, Jewel in the heart of the Lotus, Have mercy on me). The lotus as the emblem of God was sacred in India. The Hindu goddess Maya, - "the cosmic illusion" the female energy, "mother of gods and men" - is sometimes represented as the sakti. This same "mother of the gods" was carried to America and appeared in the Maya theogony of Yucatan under the same name, - May, - in the same functions she performed in India. In Mexico, Maya was also called "the mother of the gods". Other names for her were "nourisher of the human race" "type of earth mother."

(source: **The Ayar-Incas - By Miles Poindexter** published by Horace Liveright New York volume 1-2. 1930 p. 133-135).



Narsingha - India



Narsingha - Mexico

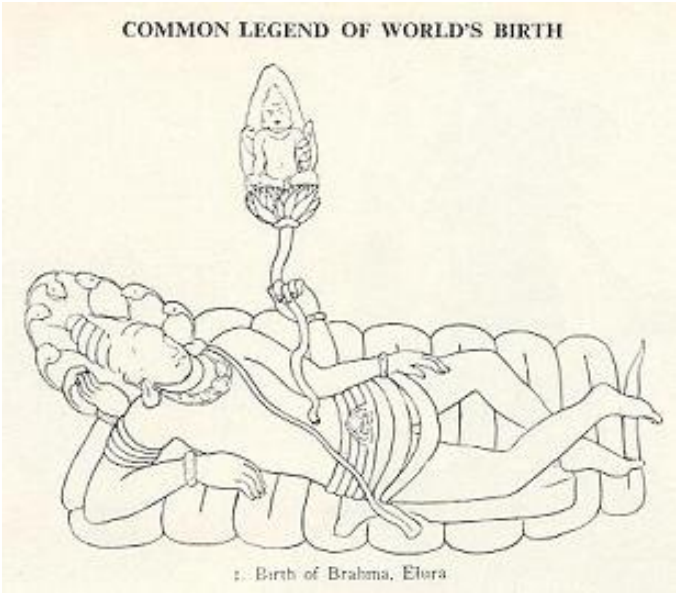
In a temple in Guatemala is a statue of an incarnation of Vishnu as Kurma, the tortoise. The sculpture is richly detailed and strongly suggests that it might have been wrought by Hindu hands. In Palenque Temple of the Sun in Mexico Surya occupies the place of honor.

Even Yama, the god of death of Hindu mythology, has found his way to Mexico and Peru, while typically Hindu lotus and chakras motifs adorn the temples. Maya and Aztec architectural styles are remarkably similar to those in India and South east Asia. In both areas the chief structures were pyramid shaped, with serpent balustrades and surmounted

It is not without reason that the Spanish author Lopez says in his book **Le Races Aryans de Peru**: **"Every page of Peruvian poetry bears the imprint of Ramayana and Mahabharata."**

Sir Edward B. Taylor also found the counterparts of the tortoise myth of India in ancient America. "The striking analogy between the tortoise myth of North America and India is by no means a matter of new observation; it was indeed noticed by Father Lafitan nearly a century and half ago. Three greatest features of the Asiatic stories are found among the North American Indians in their fullest and clearest development..."

(source: **Early History of Mankind - By E. B. Taylor**)



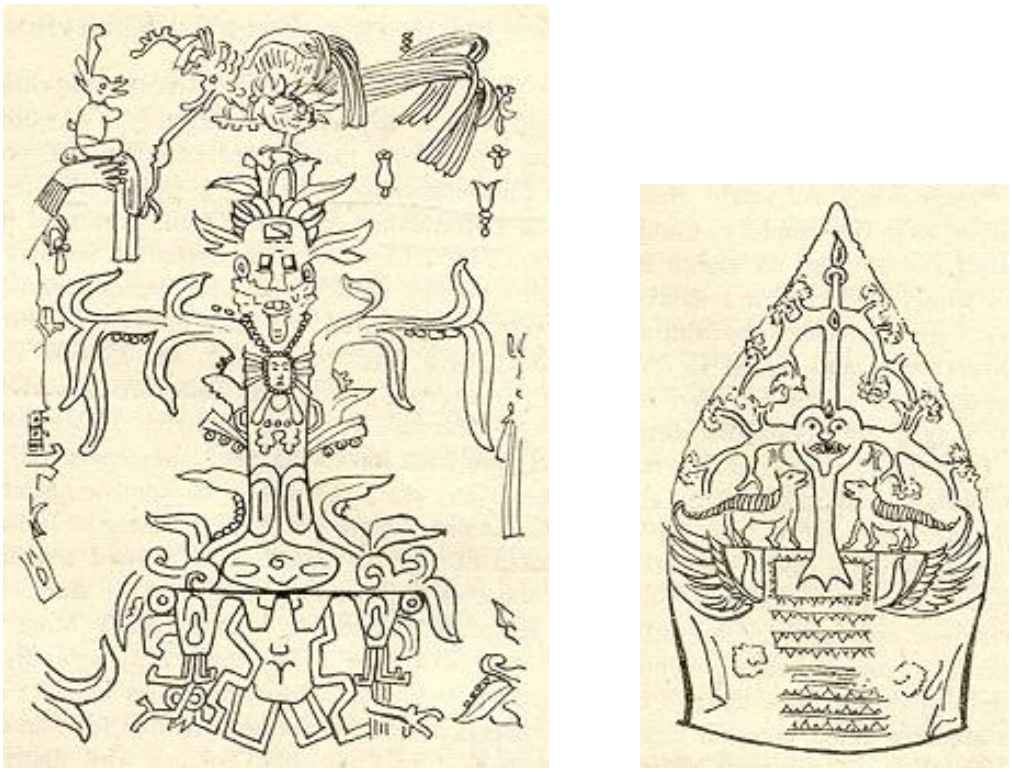


The Brahmananda or Egg of Brahma in India and The Egg and Serpent Legend in Mexico.

The Mexican doctrine of the World's Ages - the universe was destroyed four consecutive times - is reminiscent of the **Indian Yugas.** Even the reputed colors of these **Mythical four ages, white, yellow, red and black are identical** with and in the same order as one of the two versions of the Indian Yugas. In both myths the duration of the First Age is exactly the same, 4,800 divine years. The Mexican Trinity is associated with this doctrine as in the Hindu Trinity with the Yugas in India.

Donald A. Mackenzie writes in his book, **Myths of Pre-Columbian America**

"The doctrine of the World's Ages (from Hindu Yugas) was imported into Pre-Columbian America...the Mexican sequence is identical with the Hindus....The essential fact remains that they were derived from a common source...It would be ridiculous to assert that such a strange doctrine was of spontaneous origin in different parts of the Old and New Worlds." According to the Mayan calendar, which is extant, the time record of the mayas began on 6 August 613 B.C. It is an exact date based upon intricated astronomical calculations, and prolonged observations. To work out this kind of elaborate calendar must have taken well over two thousand years of studying stars, and the Asiomericans must have been remarkably shrewd observers.



The Tree of Heaven in shadow play figures from Java and so called "cross" from Palenque, Mexico.

Donald A. Mackenzie and other scholars, however, are of definite opinion that the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians were familiar with Indian mythology and cite in support close parallels in details. For instance, the history of the Mayan **elephant** symbol cannot be traced in the local tradition, whereas it was a prominent religious symbol in India. The African elephant has larger ears. It is the profile of the Indian elephant, its tusk and lower lip, the form of its ear, as well as its turbaned rider with his *ankus*, which is found in Meso-American models. Whilst the African elephant was of little religious significance, it had been tamed in India and associated with religious practices since the early days.

In Indian, Chinese and Japanese stories the Naga or dragon dwells in a pool beneath a tree. The tree grows on an island in a lake, or in the ocean. A lake island was associated with the American jewel goddess Chalchiuhtlicue.

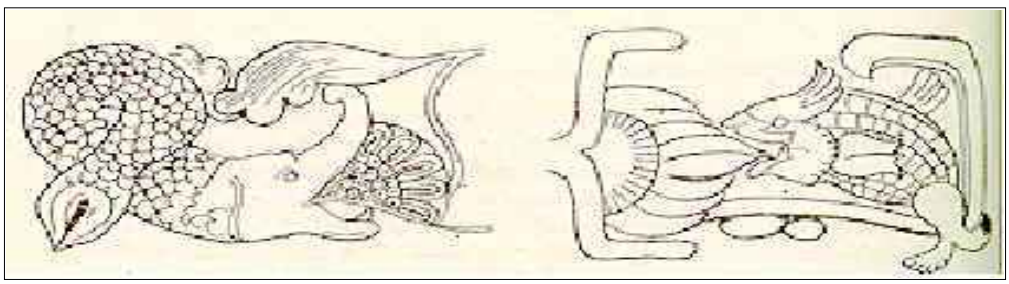
Later, two English scholars **Channing Arnold and Fredrick J. Tabor Frost**, in their **The American Egypt,** made a detailed examination of the transpacific contacts, reinforcing the view of Buddhist influences on Central America. The most recent and by far the most systematic well-reasoned, and effective case has been advanced by the eminent archaeologist, **R. Heine-Geldern and Gordon Ekholm**, **who favor Indian and Southeast Asian cultural influences on ancient America through migration across the Pacific.**

Astrology

Baron Alexander Von Humboldt, whilst visiting Mexico, found similarities between Asian and Mexican astrology. He found that the systematic study of ancient American cultures and was convinced of the Asian origin of the American-Indian high civilization. He said:

"if languages supply but feeble evidence of ancient communication between the two worlds, their communication is fully proved by the cosmogonies, the monuments, the hieroglyphical characters and the institutions of the people of America and Asia."

The lotus motif



(fig. **Makara from Amaravati and makara from Chichen Itza (Heine-Geldern and G.F. Ekholm**)
source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal.** pg 58-59).

The **Makara motif**, a serpent head with upturned snout and with a human face in its mouth, from India, Java, Bali and Sumatra, is comparable to the Mexican Xiuhcoatl, the fire serpent on the Aztec Sun Stone.

All sorts of architectural elements are common to Mexico, Gautemala, India, Java and Indo-China, the most striking of which are the pyramids with receding stages, faced with cut stone, and with stairways leading to a sanctuary on top, also of stone; in many there are surprising common traits such as serpent columns and banisters, vaulted galleries and corbeled arches, attached columns, stone cut-out lattices, and Atlantean figures, which are typical of Punuc style of Yucatan. **The most striking and highly specialized of these traits is the lotus motif interpersed with seated human figures common to Chichen-Itza and Amaravati, southern India.** Amaravati is dated about the second century of our era, but it exercised a powerful influence over the Hindu-Buddhist art of Cambodia, Champa, and even modern Bali. It is significant that temple pyramids in Cambodia do not antedate the eighth century, and only become important in the ninth and tenth centuries, a time coinciding with the beginning of the Puncu period of Yucatan according to Heine-Geldern and Ekholm, 1951).

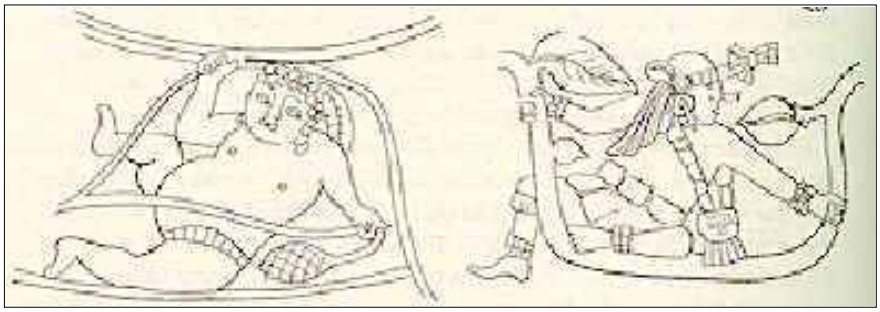
The buildings of Chichen Itza show certain influences from Southeast Asia; for example, the lotus motif occurs in the Mercado (covered market). The Mercado is strikingly reminiscent of the galleries so typical of the **Cambodian architecture** that eventually blossomed into the galleries of **Angkor Vat**. The lotus motif, interspersed with seated human figures, which has a deep symbolic meaning in **Hindu and Buddhist** mythologies and as such is an integral part of early Indian art, especially of **Amaravati**, is found at Chichen Itza as a border in the reliefs of the lower room of the Temple of Tigers. The similarity between the art of Amaravati and that of Chichen Itza is particularly noticeable in reclining figures holding on to the rhizome of the lotus.



(fig. **God on the lion throne from India, and Mayan jaguar throne -Heine-Geldern and G.F. Ekholm**)
source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** pg 58-59).

The Mexican Lion-throne and Lotus-throne remind one of Indian **Simhasana and Padmasana**. The parasol, a mark of royalty amongst the Mayas, the Aztecs, and the Incas, may be an adaptation of the royal Chatra in us in India and Indianized Asia from the earliest times.

A kind of caste system prevailed amongst the Incas of Peru. Peruvians worshipped an omnipotent and invisible Supreme being, Viracocha, creator and preserver of the world. Imprints of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata have been noticed on the poetry of Peru. The official history of Mexico officially admits that “those who arrived first on the continent later to be known as America were groups of men driven by the mighty current that set out from India”. **Lopez,** Spanish author of **The Aryan Races in Peru** writes : “Every page of Peruvian poetry bears the imprint of **Ramayana and Mahabharata**.”



(fig. **The Lotus-motif from Amaravati and lotus-motif from Chichen Itza - Heine-Geldern and G.F. Ekholm**)
source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal.** pg 58-59).

In Indian art the lotus rhizome frequently protrudes from the mouths of makaras, sea monsterswith fish-like bodies and elephants-like trunks. At Chichen Itza, stylized figures of fish are found at both ends of the lotus plant, in the same position as the makaras in India.

"Such a combination of highly specific details cannot be accidental. It suggests the existence of some kind of relationship between Maya art and not only Buddhist art in general, but the school of Amaravati of the second century A.D. in particular."

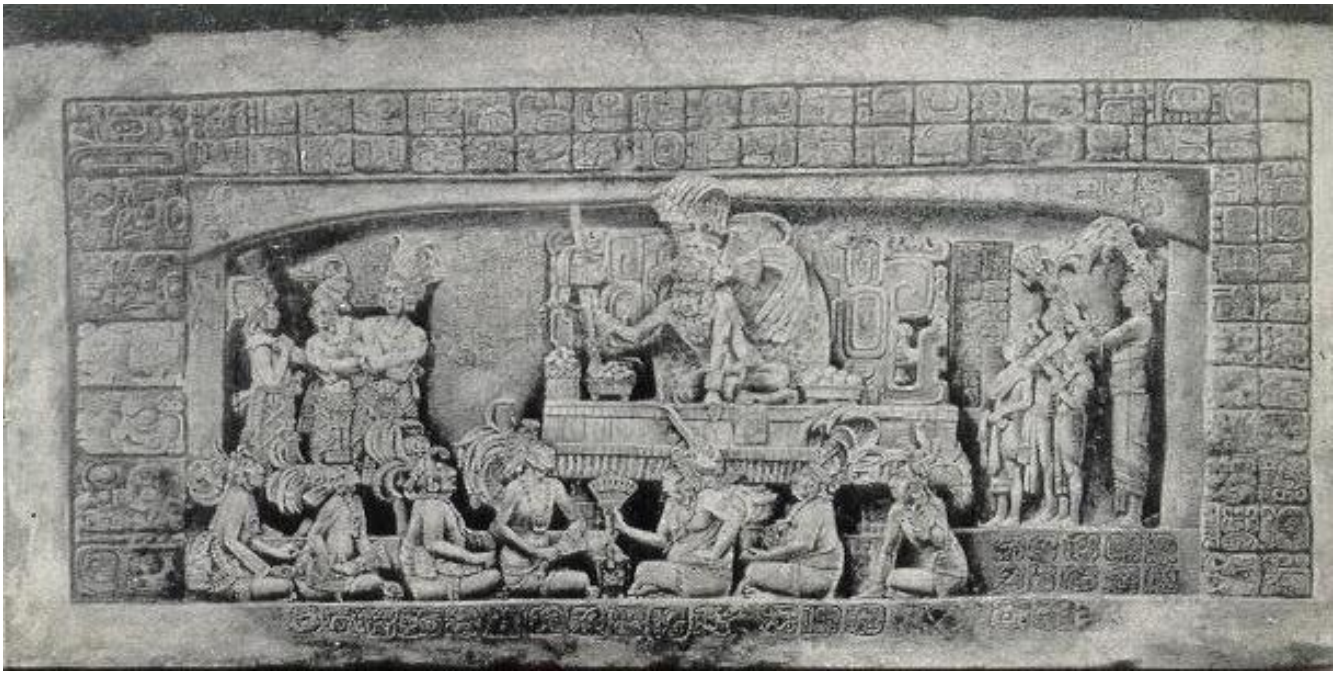
Ancient America was as rich in gods and temples as was India. The Asiomerican term for god, "teo," is close to the Sanskrit 'deva". **Ephraim George Squier** (1821-1888) was United States Charge d'affaires to Central America in 1849 also noted similarities in both major and minor features of Buddhist temples of South India and Mexico they were round and different colors were used on each of the four quarters.

In 1866, the French architect, **Eugene Viollet-le-Duc,** also noted striking resemblances between ancient Mexican architectural structures and those of South India.





From Borobudur - Suvarnabhumi (top two images)



From America - Gautemala

Use of Zero

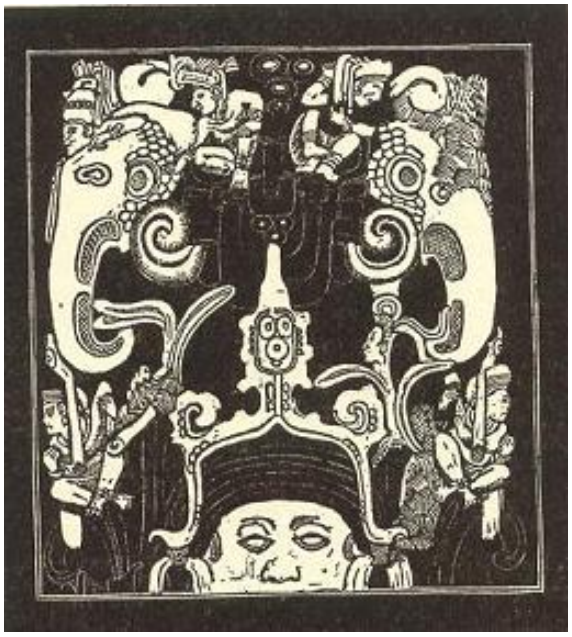
The Mayas of Yucatan were the first people besides the Indians to use a zero sign and represent number values by the position of basic symbols. The similarity between the Indian zero and the Mayan zero is indeed striking. So far as the logical principle is concerned, the two are identical, but the expressions of the principle are dissimilar. Again, whilst the Indian system of notation was decimal, as was the European, the Mayan was vigesimal. Consequently, their 100 stood for 400, 1000 stood for 8000, 1234 for 8864. While the place of zero in the respective systems of the Indians and Mayans is different, the underlying principle and method are the same, and the common origin of the Mayan and Indian zeros appears to be undoubted. Disputes continue amongst scholars in the absence of conclusive evidence. As chronological evidence stands today, the Mayan zero appears to be anterior by several centuries to its Hindu counterpart.

Gene Matlock, author of **India Once Ruled the Americas!** states:

"The people of India have long known that their ancestors once sailed to and settled in the Americas. They called America 'Patala,' The Underworld,' not because they believed it to be underground, but because the other side of the globe appeared to be straight down."

According to **Mrs. Zelia Nuttal**: "No country in the world can compare with India for the exposition of the pyramidal cross. the body of the great temple of Bidh Madhu (formerly the boast of the ancient city of Benares...demolished in the 7th century) was constructed in the figure of a colossal cross, with a lofty dome at the center, above which rose a massive structure of a pyramidal form. At the four extremities of the cross there were four other pyramids...A similar building existed at Mathura. By pyramidal towers placed crosswise, the Hindu also displayed the all-pervading sign of the cross. At the famous temple of Chidambaram, on the Coromandel coast, there were seven lofty walls, one within the other, round a central quadrangle, and as many pyramidal gateways in the midst of each side which forms the limbs of a vast cross."

(source: **Peabody Museum Papers**. volume II p. 161-162).



The top of Stella B at Copan
Dr. G. Elliot Smith says: the design is of an Indian elephant with its turbaned mahout, modeled by a sculptor who had never seen the animal but was copying from an imported design.
(source: The Ayar-Incas - Miles Poindexter)

Skilled Seafaring Men



The only plausible argument against cultural diffusion from southern Pacific is the distance involved. It is asserted that it would have been unlikely for a large number of people to have crossed the vast expanse of the Pacific without well-equipped boats and skillful voyagers. The argument, however, falls, upon close scrutiny. It would not be at all difficult for a large canoe or catarmaran to cross from Polynesia to South America even at the present time, and the ancient Asians were skilled and enterprising seafaring men.

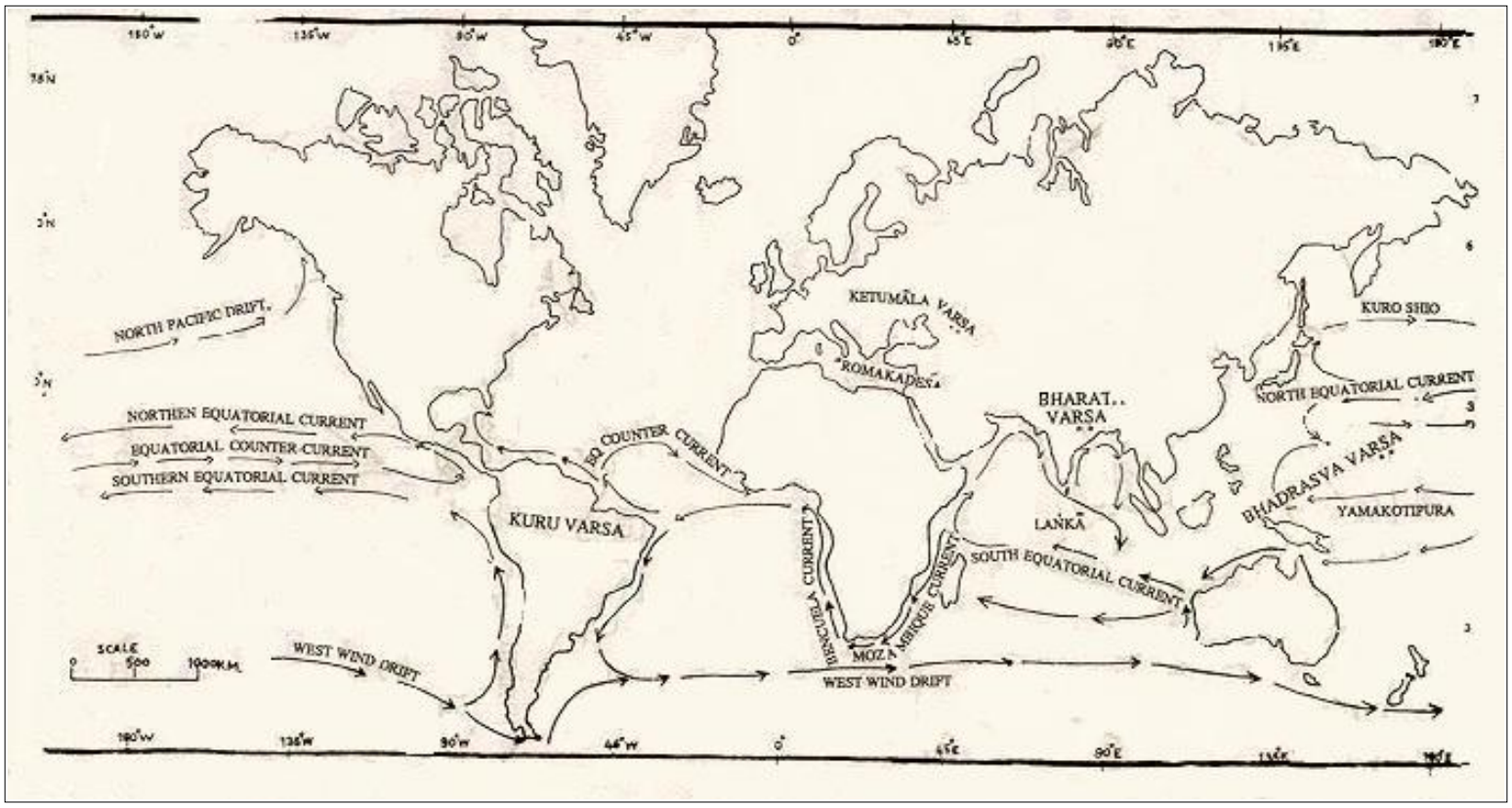
However, Asian ability to cross the seas during this period is undoubted. The art of shipbuilding and navigation in India and China at the time was sufficiently advanced for oceanic crossings. Indian ships operating between Indian and South-east Asian ports were large and well equipped to sail cross the Bay of Bengal. When the **Chinese Buddhist scholar, Fa-hsien,** returned from India, his ship carried a crew of more than two hundred persons and did not sail along the coasts but directly across the ocean. Such ships were larger than those Columbus used to negotiate the Atlantic a thousand years later. According to the work of mediaeval times, **Yukti Kalpataru,** which gives a fund of information about shipbuilding, India built large vessels from 200 B.C. to the close of the sixteenth century. A Chinese chronicler mentions ships of Southern Asia that could carry as many as one thousand persons, and were manned mainly by Malayan crews. They used western winds and currents in the North Pacific to reach California, sailed south along the coast, and then returned to Asia with the help of the trade winds, taking a more southerly route, without however, touching the Polynesian islands. (Please refer to chapters on **Suvarnabhumi** and **War in Ancient India**).

In ancient times the Indians excelled in shipbuilding and even the English, who were attentive to everything which related to naval architecture, found early Indian models worth copying. The Indian vessels united elegance and utility, and were models of fine workmanship.

Sir John Malcolm wrote :

"Indian vessels "are so admirably adapted to the purpose for which they are required that, not withstanding their superior science, Europeans were unable, during an intercourse with India for two centuries, to suggest or at least to bring into successful practice one improvement. "

It was also known that in the third century a transport of horses, which would require large ships, reached Malaya and Indo-China.



The ancient sea routes from India to South America following the ocean current.
(source: The Indians And The Amerindians - By Dr. B. Chakravarti p. 82).

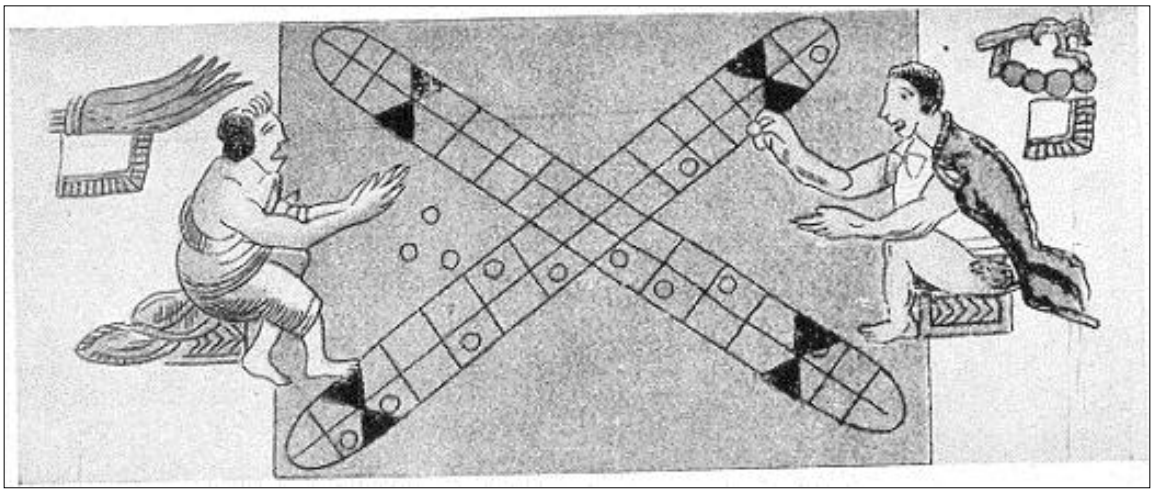
Games

Pachisi and Patolli

Games such as the pachisi of India and the Mexican patolli, the valador game, mirror of pyrite, betel and coco-chewing, with lime and tobacco, as well as gourd containers for the lime; shell money; birchbark shelters and canoes; and the identical containers of birchbark with curvilinear scraped design from Siberia; string crosses as prayers from Tibet, India, Assam, Mexico, and Peru; the custom of fishing with poison; shell fishooks; the use of agricultural terraces in Southeast Asia, Peru and Bolivia; and last, but not the least - the cultivation of cotton, practiced since early times in Asia. It has been claimed that even maize, that most typical of American cultivated plants, was in use in Asia before Columbus came to this continent.



The close relationship between the pachisi game of India and the patolli game of Mexico is illustrated here.



(source: Hindu America - By Chaman Lal)

(for interesting book please refer to **Hindu America: revealing the story of the romance of the Surya Vanshi Hindus and depicting the imprints of Hindu culture on the two Americas - By Chaman Lal** with foreword by **Dr. S. Radhakrishnan**. 3d ed. (LC History-America-E) 1966).

William MacLeod has called attention to the similarity between the **Mexican volador ritual and the Indian rite of hook-swinging.** In the volador, the performers usually, although not invariably, hang by their feet, and in India by their shoulders. We have found, however, an old description and illustration of hook-swinging in India in which the voluntary performers are attached by their feet as in the volador.

Another scholar, **Ramon Mena**, author of **Mexican Archaeology**, called the Nahuatl, Zapoteca, and Mayan languages "**of Hindu origin**." He went to say, "A deep mystery enfolds the tribes that inhabited the state of chiapas in the district named Palenque....their writing, and the anthropological type, as well as their personal adornments...their system and style of construction clearly indicate the remotest antiquity...(they) all speak of India and the Orient."

Still another scholar, **Ambassador Miles Poindexter**, a former ambassador of the United States to Mexico, in his two-volume 1930s treatise **The Ayar-Incas** called the Mayan civilization **"unquestionably Hindu."** He proposed that primitive Aryan words and people came to America by the island chains of Polynesia. The Mexican name for boat is a **South Indian Tamil word**, **Catamaran**, and Poindexter gives a long list of words of the Quichua languages and their analogous forms in Sanskrit. Similarities between the hymns of the Inca rulers of Peru and Vedic hymns have been pointed out. **A. L. Krober** has also found striking similarities between the structure of Indo-European and the Penutian language of some of the tribes along the northwestern coast of California. Recently, an Indian scholar, **B. C. Chhabra**,in his **Vestiges of Indian Culture in Hawaii** has noticed certain resemblances between the symbols found in the petroglyohs from the Hawaiian Islands and those on the Harappan seals. Some of the symbols in the petroglyphs are described as akin to early Brahmi script.

Indeed, the parallels between the arts and culture of India and those of ancient America are too numerous and close to be attributed to independent growth. A variety of art forms are common to Mexico, India, Java, and Indochina, the most striking of which are the Teocallis, the pyramids, with receding stages, faced with cut stone, and with stairways leading to a stone sanctuary on top. Many share surprisingly common features such as serpent columns and bannisters, vaulted galleries and corbeled arches, attached columns, stone cut-out lattices, and Atlantean figures; these are typical of the Puuc style of Yucatan. Heine-Geldern and Ekholm point out that temple pyramids in Cambodia did not become important until the ninth and tenth centuries, a time coinciding with the beginning of the Puuc period.

Language

Similarity between Quichua and Sankrit language:

Quichua	Sanskrit
akapana(clouds colored by sun)	aka (painting)
chani (price)	jani (produce)
chinkat (jaguar)	sinha (lion)
chirau (resplendent)	sura (to shine)
huakra (horn)	vakra (curved)
kakarpa (tent)	k'arpara (parasol)
mita (time)	mita (step passage of time)

muti (pounded corn)	mut (to pound)
nana (sister)	nanda (sister)
pakkni (to break)	pike (to break)
paksa (the moon)	paksa (the full moon)
pisi (small)	pis (to break into small piece)
pitata (bedroom)	pita (house, cottage)
simpa (cord)	samb (to tie)
soro (spiritual liqour)	sura (spiritual liquor)
sokta (six)	s'as (six)

(source: **The Ayar-Incas - By Miles Poindexter** p. 211-215).

Other similarities

Professor Raman Mena, Curator of the National Museum of Mexico:

"The (Maya) human types are like those of India. The irreproachable technique of their reliefs, the sumptuous head-dress and ostentatious on high, the system of construction, all speak of India and the Orient."



Note: The symbol of divinity - the sacred lotus on the scepter and the turban.

Hewitt author of **Primitive Traditional History**

"Hindu merchants brought to Mexico the eighteen months year of the Pandavas and the customs of trade guild and Indian bazaar."

In 1949, two scholars, **Gordon Ekholm** and **Chaman Lal,** systematically compared the Mayan, Aztec, Incan, and the North American Indian civilizations with the Hindu-oriented countries of Southeast Asia and with India herself. According to them, the emigrant culutes of India took with them India's system of time measurement, local gods, and customs. Ekholm and Lal found signs of Aryan civilization throughout the Americas in **art (lotus flowers with knotted stems and half-dragon/half fish motifs found commonly in paintings and carvings), architecture, calendars, astronomy, religious symbols,** and even **games** such as our **Parchessi and Mexican Patilli**, which have their origins in India's pachisi.

Similar routines of everyday life of Indians and Asiomericans have also been noted. For instance, betel-chewing with lime and coca-whew and tobacco, as well as the gourd-container for the lime are common to both people. The Peruvian substitute for tobacco, which was used for medicinal purposes, was a shrub, called cuca (coca). The leaves are first dried in the sun and then mixed with a little lime to constitute "a preparation for chewing much like the betel-leaf of the East." Vegetarianism is popular both in

India and Mexico. The Indian **roti or chappati** and the Mexican **tortilla,** similar in size and shape, are made in the same way. Both people have an unusual respect for corn, and share the custom of offering bits of food, before eating, to God in expression of their gratitude for the meal provided.

Cotton

It is certain that cotton was first used in the Indus Valley. But when South American cotton is studied scholars and scientist are thoroughly baffled. American cotton are tetraploid in chromosome constitution, and their chromosome complement is made up of the one set homologous with the complement of the diploid Asian cottons and one set homologous with the complement of the diploid species of America. After a series of painstaking experiments, experts have agreed that one parent of the American cotton undoubtedly came from Asia: **in other words, from the Indus Valley area.**

(source: **India and World Civilization** - **By D. P. Singhal** p. 70).

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Links Proposed Between Ancient India and Central America's Mayans NEW

Hyderabad, INDIA, April 29, 2002: Recent studies suggests a link between Indus Valley and Mayans of Central America. The studies focused on the calendars of the two advanced civilizations. The Indus Valley inhabitants followed a calender based on the movements of Jupiter, and the Mayans followed one based on the Venus. In the Puranas, a secondary Hindu scripture, Jupiter, Brihaspati, was acknowledged to be the leader of the gods, while Venus, Shukra, was the leader of the asuras. **The texts further state that the devas and asuras lived on opposite sides of the Earth. Mexico and India are at opposite sides in longitude.** The correspondences were pointed out by **B. G. Siddarth**, director of the B. M. Birla Science Centre in Hyderabad. He also said the Hindu story of the churning of the ocean has been found in carvings in Mexico, as well Mayan representations of a tortoise carrying twelve pillars similar to Indian illustrations. Dr. Ganapati Sthapati of Chennai, a foremost expert on Vastu shatra, the ancient Hindu architecture, has visited the Mayan structures in Central America and found many similarities between the design and construction methods of the Mayans and that of the ancient Hindus.

(source: **Deccan Chronicle** and **Hinduism Today**).

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Conclusion

D. A. Mackenzie, in his book **Myths of Pre-Columbian America** pg 70. says:

"It would be ridiculous to assert that such a strange doctrine was of spontaneous origin in different parts of the Old and New worlds."

Scholars who insist that pre-Columbian American religion and civilization was of independent origin are obliged to explain why the myths, beliefs, and practices of ancient America assumed such complex features at the very beginning, whilst in Asia they resulted from the fusions and movements of numerous peoples after a period of time much greater than that covered by American civilizations from beginning to the end.

Swami B. V. Tripurari states in his book, **Ancient Wisdom for Modern Ignorance -** "Who discovered America" pg 27.

Broadly speaking, cultural historians of Asiomerica are divided into two camps, "diffusionists" and "Isolationists". Diffusionists maintained that after this occurred civilized Asiatic people distributed themselves via the Pacific, thereby bringing civilization to the Americas. Isolationists insisted that after the nomadic tribes crossed the Bering Strait, a homogenous race of "Indians of the Americas' was formed, and the American tribes-people went about reinventing all culture, duplicating in two thousand years what originally took about six millenniums in the Old World!

By the same token, no archaeologist today would attribute to prehistory Europeans the independent invention of bronze casting, iron work, the wheel, weaving, pottery, writing, and so many other cultural elements that were derived from the Middle East.

What then would cause one to insist that what was not possible for the Europeans (duplicating culture independently) was possible for the American Indians??? Especially when at the same time we are taught that the Europeans were of superior stock?

The isolationist must also explain why the American race should have been the last to emerge from an uncivilized state and why, once they emerged, their progress should have been so phenomenally rapid.



Will Durant, eminent American historian, in his book **Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage**, described **India as the most ancient civilization on earth** and he offered many examples of Indian culture throughout the world. He demonstrated that as early as the ninth century B.C. E. Indians were exploring the sea routes, reaching out and extending their cultural influences to Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Egypt.

Although modern-day historians and anthropologists might prefer to accept Egypt or Babylon as the most ancient civilization, due to various archaeological findings, their theories are by no means conclusive. The popular theory in the academic community that the Aryans invaded India has also been disproved. (refer to the chapter on **Aryan Invasion Theory**). Perhaps it is easier for modern people to accept ancient Egypt and Babylon, whose ancient civilizations have no living representation and thereby pose no threat or challenge to the status quo.

But India is alive and kicking. If we recognize with ancient India as the spiritual giant, we would have to reckon with her modern-day representations. No wonder the Vedic literature and spiritual ideology loomed as the greatest threat to the British Raj in India in their imperialistic conquest of India.

Emilio Estrada, Clifford Evans, and Betty J. Meggers, who have pointed out many striking similarities between Ecuadorian archaeological remains of the early Bahia and early Jama-Coaque cultures with relics of approximately the same period of Japan, India and SoutEast Asia, also support the feasibility of trans-pacific voyage.

The New Zealand pre historian, **S. Percy Smith**, tries to show in his **Hawaiki - the Original home of the Maori** that the ancient Polynesian wanderers left **India** as far back as the fourth century B.C. and were daring mariners who made, more often than not, adventurous voyages with the definite object of new settlements. A people who reached as far east as Easter Island could not have missed the great continent ahead of them.



From America - Gautemala



Panataran relief - Java

What was the motive that urged Indians and Asians to undertake long journeys to America?

It was probably **gold,** which initially attracted Indian adventurers and merchants to Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia was a region broadly referred to by ancient Indians as **Suvarnabhumi (Land of Gold) or Suvarnadvipa (the Island of Gold).** Arab writer **Al Biruni** testify that Indians called the whole Southeast region Suwarndib. Hellenistic geographers knew the area as the Golden Chersonese. The Chinese called it Kin-Lin; kin means gold. The mariners were probably looking for gold or were prospecting for precious metals, stones and pearls to cope with the demand in the centers of ancient civilizations.

This view is substantially reinforced by **W. J Perry** who was the first scholar to point out that the distribution of the pearling beds of the world and why, wherever pearls are found similar complex religious beliefs, myths, beliefs, and practices are also found. It is therefore significant that the mythology of the pre-Columbian American civilizations "was deeply impregnated by the religious beliefs and practices and habits of life that obtained amongst the treasure-seekers of the Old World. " Equally significant is the fact that the Mayas preferred to settle in that part of Central America which was unhealthy but rich in precious stones and gold. Like Indians Asiomericans accumulated stones and gold and made symbolic ornaments from them. Mexican temples and idols, as in India, were lavishly decorated with gold and precious stones.

That cultural influences reached pre-Columbian America from Asia there can now be very little doubt. The theory of American isolation breaks down completely when these facts are established.

According to **Professor Elliot Smith**:

"Monroe Doctrine' which demands that everything American belongs to America, and must have been wholly invented there."

(source: **Myths of Pre-Columbian America** - **By Donald A. Mackenzie** p.33).

Mons Leon Delbos has noted:

"The influence of the civilization worked out thousands of years ago in India is around and about us every day of our lives. It pervades every corner of the civilized world. Go to America and you find there, as in Europe, the influence of that civilization which come originally from the banks of the Ganges."

(source: **Hindu raj in the World - By Krishan Lal Jain** p.132).

In Conclusion, it may be said, that whatever the motive, transpacific traffic would seem to have gone on regularly for about two thousand years, from about the eighth century B.C. to the twelfth century.

In view of so many parallels in fundamental conceptions and detail, in mythology, ritual, iconography, architecture, religious beliefs, crowns, thrones, plants, together with the evidence of migration, it appears incredible that isolationists should continue to insist on the independent evolution of Asiomerican civilization.

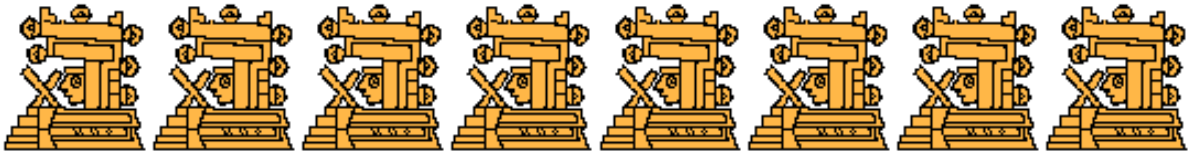
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Source of Information for this chapter:

1. **India and World Civilization** - **By D. P. Singhal**
2. **Myths of Pre-Columbian America** - **By Donald A. Mackenzie**
3. **Ancient Wisdom for Modern Ignorance** - **By Swami B. V. Tripurari**
4. **Hindu America: revealing the story of the romance of the Surya Vanshi Hindus and depicting the imprints of Hindu culture on the two Americas - By Chaman Lal** with foreword by **Dr. S. Radhakrishnan**. 3d ed. (LC History-America-E) 1966).
5.**The Ayar-Incas - By Miles Poindexter** published by Horace Liveright New York volume 1-2. 1930).
6. **The Indians And The Amerindians - By Dr. B. Chakravarti**

For more information visit **Did the Hindus Help Write the Bible and Give the Ancient Mexicans Their Religious Traditions?**

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European Conquest and Atrocities

The Mayans were the earliest people to have found a civilization there, they moved from the Mexican plateau into Gauatemala. They were later pushed out, by the Toltecs, who, in turn, dislodged by the Aztecs.



This was an era that saw the blossoming of a unified Central American civilization. The Toltecs were very prosperous. They were accomplished architects, carpenters and mechanics. The Aztecs also made some striking cultural advances. They developed a lake civilization based on the island in Lake Texcoco, where they built their remarkable city. Mexico-Tenochtitlan, which was surrounded by the colorful Chinampas, or floating gardens. The city was described by **Bernal de Diaz,** the companion of the Spanish commander Cortes, as a dreamland which inspired the Spanish invaders to lyrical adulation and **murderous plunder**. Diaz wrote that the Mexicans were like the Romans, and that there was nothing in Spain to match the royal palace of Montezuma.

Hernando Cortes is said to have **slaughtered,** in less than two hours, six thousand people who had gathered in a temple patio. Destruction of Aztec cities was so complete that almost everything lay in ruins.

The elite of the Asiomericans were put to death almost to the last man. After his entry into the conquered capital Tenochtitlan, *Cortes wrote that "you could not put down your foot without stepping on an Indian corpse."* In addition, his soldiery, a few years later in the Inca Empire, driven by lust for gold, melted down irreplaceable works of art by the ton to get the precious metal. Thus, the Aztecs civilization came to violent end.

Burning of Libraries and records:



If the history of pre-Columbian America, is obscure, it is because after the Spanish conquest, the first **Bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumarraga,** *burned all the records of the Library of Texcoco in Tlateloco market square as "the work of the Devil," and religious fanatics destroyed temples and statues.* Zumarraga, gloating over his success, wrote to his superiors in 1531 that he alone had five hundred temples razed to the ground and twenty thousand idols destroyed.

Fray Diego de Landa, the second Bishop of Yucatan, following the pattern, reduced the Maya Library in Yucatan to ashes in 1562. Post-Columbus history of America for 300 years was the story of ruthless destruction and fanatics like Bishop Diego da Landa burnt a huge bonfire of valuable documents and nothing but the three codices of **'Chilam Balam'** could survive the holocaust....

He wrote **Relación de las cosas de Yucatán, A Narrative of the Things of Yucatan** in 1566, Therein the states,

"We found a large number of their books of these letters, and because they did not have anything in which there was not superstition and falsehoods of the devil, we burned them all, which they felt very sorry for and which caused them grief."

(source: **Proof Vedic Culture's Global Existence** - **By Stephen Knapp** p. 259).

Landa, in his religious zeal, ordered all their idols destroyed and all Mayan books to be burned; he was surprised at the distress this caused the Indians. His orders to destroy all icons and hieroglyphics obliterated the Mayan language forever, helping to undermine and destroy the civilization he so vividly described.



It was Landa that gave the orders for all the Mayans to bring all manuscripts to the public squares in Mani to be burned. All these books contained what would now be priceless information on astronomy, medicine, religion, and philosophy. **What Emperor Theodosious of Constantinople did to the library at Alexandria to save Christianity from the Greek and Oriental pagan knowledge deposited there, these priests did in Central America with similar motives but larger success.**

The burning of manuscripts continued for decades. Soldiers were encouraged to ransack palaces, public buildings, and private houses to find manuscripts. **Pablo Jose de Arriaga, the head of the Jesuit College in Peru,** in almost **unparalleled fanaticism**, caused the systematic and wholesale destruction of all state archives, customs records, royal and imperial archives, codes of laws, temple archives, and historical records. Less than a score of manuscripts escaped annihilation. These libraries contained records of ancient history, medicine, astronomy, science, religion, and philosophy.

The Spaniards destroyed whatever they could, but they could not, for instance, burn the great **Pyramid of the sun** and the remains of **Teotihuacan**, which speak of the splendid bygone civilization. This is one of the great crimes of world cultural history

No matter how much historians stretch their imagination, it will never be possible to reconstruct a picture of these advanced civilizations which would do them justice, and yet be held historically acceptable.

Beyond Mexico, the **ancient Andean or Peruvian civilization** also suffered an even worse fate at the hands of the Spainard's than did their neighbors in Central America. The Spanish assault on the **Incas, the Spanish avarice of gold, and barbarities perpetrated in the wake of victory, including the inhuman tortures publicly inflicted on the Inca King, Atahuallpa, are illustrations of savagery seldom surpassed in history.**

The Story of Betrayal

The Spaniards were mistaken by Asiomericans for their legendary white gods, who were to be made welcome and it they inflicted suffering it was to be accepted as a divine judgment. And by a tragic coincidence, the Spanish conquerors invaded Mexico at about the time, in 1519, as the Aztec priests and tradition had predicted the return of the white gods. The Aztecs even offered the Spanish conquistadores the vestments of Quetzalcoatl and other gods and considered performing human sacrifice to them in case they were fatigued after such a long journey. Through out the Incas Empire, the Spainiards were greeted as *Viracocha,* the Inca name of the great White God they had been waiting for. It is only when the Asiomericans were completely horrified and disillusioned by the brutalities and merciless killings, that they recognized their mistake.

The realization that the Spainard's were not gods, but *popolocas* (**barbarians**), however, came too late.



The European conquerors of South and Central America not only destroyed practically all the records and literature of Asiomerica, but created an utterly distorted images of the American past by taking some of its ugly features out of context and magnifying them out of proportion. For instance, the human sacrifice practiced by the Aztecs was repeatedly stressed without explaining its extenuating features, and without pointing out that human sacrifice had not been unknown to other peoples, such as in Europe and Rome. Taking their technique a step further they contrasted this picture with that of their own deeds in Asiomerica in which European misdemeanor, caprice, and criminality were soft-pedaled and civilized and human behavior emphasized.

Most people believe that Asiomericans were uncivilized hordes with an occasional freak of knowledge, who had contributed nothing of permanent value to civilization by 1492. Despite a good deal of information to the contrary, there is resistance to accepting a change in this image. Misconceptions multiply fast but die slowly.

The Mexican Indians and the Incas of Peru were primarily vegetarians. They were of high moral character and hospitable and generous as a habit. They practiced astrology, and mental telepathy was common among them. It was perhaps their peace-loving disposition that, like the Hindus, allowed them to be ruled by Europeans.

The Europeans, through book burning and bayonet, successfully, "converted" them, leaving very little trace of their noble civilization.

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The Devastation of the Indies – by Bartholome de Las Casas - excerpts



"The Devastation of the Indies is an eyewitness account of the first modern genocide, a story of greed, hypocrisy, and cruelties so grotesque as to rival the worst of our own century. **Las Casas writes of men, women and children burned alive "thirteen at a time in memory of Our Redemeer and his twelve apostles."** He describes butcher shops that sold human flesh for dog food ("Give me a quarter of that rascal there," one customer says, "until I can kill some more of my own"). Slave ship captains navigate "without need of compass or charts," following instead the trail of floating corpses tossed overboard by the ship before them. Native kings are promised peace, then slaughtered. Whole families hang themselves in despair. Once fertile islands are tuned desert, the wealth of nations plundered, millions killed outright, whole people annihilated.

The papacy empowered the two crowns (Spanish and Portuguese) to conquer and even enslave pagans "inimical to the name of Christ."

The Spaniards killed more Indians here in twelve years by the sword, by fire, and enslavement than anywhere in the Indies. ....."

(source: **The Devastation of the Indies – by Bartholome de Las Casas**).



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Articles:

Maya Civilization of Mexico.
Baffling Links with Ancient India
By Anand Sharma
http://www.indiagov.org/perspec/mar99/maya.htm



The archaeological remains of ancient Maya civilization of Mexico are lying scattered in the parts of Yucatan, Campeche, Tabasco and eastern half of Chiapas as well as in the territory of Quintana Roo of the republic of Mexico. Covering an area of about 125,000 square miles, its traces are to be found in the western section of Honduras Republic, Peten and adjacent highlands of Guatemala and practically in the whole of Honduras.

Admiral Christopher Columbus mistakenly called the New World inhabitants as Indians. Although he corrected himself subsequently, the natives of Americas continued to be called 'Indians'. During the course of his third journey, Columbus came into contact with 'Maya' people.

Many theories have been advanced by scholars to explain the origins of these American Indians and if there were any links between the ancient civilizations of the Old World and the New World. There are historians who believe that the American civilizations were purely native in origin and also those who maintain the theory of Asians crossing over through Bering Strait via Alaska and reaching the American continent some 12,000 - 15,000 years ago. However, the antiquity of American Indians remains shrouded in the veil of mystery. In spite of a great deal of investigations, explorations and deep study by scholars and innumerable historians during the last many centuries, what we know about pre-Columbus Americas is very little in comparison to what we do not know. To quote Glyn Daniel from his book 'The First Civilizations', "within 15 years, between 1519 to 1533, the Western world discovered and brutally destroyed three civilizations - the Aztecs of Mexico, Maya of Yuacatan and Guatemala and Inca of Peru."

The unique elaboration of the Mayan civilization has been a challenge to the imagination of explorers and students of history. The Mayans had attained the highest maturity in art, craft, sculpture and hieroglyphs. Innumerable theories exist about these ancient people. Their magnificent achievements in social, economic, political and religious fields, their calendar and hieroglyphic writings, reasons of the sudden collapse of their classic culture everywhere in Mesoamerica, the reality of 'Kulkulkan Quetzal-Coatl' myth are some of the riddles of Mexican history challenging modern research. The 'Maya' Indians spent thousands of years in building their

magnificent monuments and Mayapan, Palenque, Copan, Tikal, Kaminalijuyu and Piedras Negras were the centres where Mayan culture flourished in splendour. How and why these places were deserted in the past is still a mystery. Although modern scientists have achieved significant success in deciphering Maya calendar system, none has been able to decipher their hieroglyphic system of writing.

The possibility of links of these people with Old World civilizations and particularly with ancient India is not acceptable to many historians. However, there are those who hold a different view. **Eminent scholar-writers like Mackenzie, Hewitt, Tod, Pococke and Mrs. Nuttal have collected plenty of data to show that ancient American civilizations were influenced by Old World civilizations.** We have to remember that the post-Columbus history of America for 300 years was the story of ruthless destruction and fanatics like Bishop Diego da Landa burnt a huge bonfire of valuable documents and nothing but the three codices of 'Chilam Balam' could survive the holocaust.



There are two specific archaeological discoveries pertaining to 761 AD, about which most Mexican historians are silent, that attract our attention as possible links of Maya civilization to ancient India. The first one is a wall panel (Panel No. 3 of Temple 0-13, at Piedras Negras, Guatemala; reproduced as Plate 69, page 343 of 'The Ancient Maya' by S.G. Morley) belonging to the Later Classic Stage of Mexican history, associated with the peaking of Maya architecture and sculpture. Mexican historians have not given any interpretation of this panel. It appears that the scene depicted in the panel relates to the great Indian epic 'Ramayana'. It shows a king sitting on the throne and one maidservant with two children standing on the right side of the throne. A guard stands behind the three. On the other side of the king, three important personages are standing whereas the vassal chiefs and important feudatories are sitting in front of the throne. The king on the throne is believed to be Suryavanshi Ram with his three illustrious brothers standing by his side. The two little children are his two sons with a maid and a guard behind them. Amongst the three persons on the right, two are engaged in a discussion whereas the third one, apparently Lakshman, is standing with a bold, brave and confident demeanour which was characteristic of him. The above panel is a beautiful piece of sculpture and an evidence of great Mayan heritage, their artistic taste and superior creative ability and, above all, an archaeological evidence to prove India's link with Mexico in the 8th century at least. The artistic design and postures of the figures carved can be compared to those found at Ajanta and Ellora caves in India. This interpretation, however, remains only a plausible one till the hieroglyphics and frescoes surrounding the wall panel are deciphered.

Another archaeological discovery at the same place i.e. Piedras Negras, Guatemala, is a stone stela (No. 12, Plate No. 18, page 61 of 'The Ancient Maya' by S.G. Morley). A mythological scene has been carved in this stela, depicting the architectural and artistic maturity of the Maya people of the Classic Stage (594 - 889 AD). There is a beautiful image of a deity with eight hands (ashtabhuja). The art style is discernibly Indian as in no other religion of the world deities of this type were worshipped. It may be mentioned that the ruling dynasty of Mexico at the time of the conquest by Spaniards was 'Aztec' or Ashtak (Eight). The evidence in the form of such images leaves little doubt about the presence of Indian culture amongst the ancient Mexicans. The stela pertains to the period of more than eight centuries before Columbus set foot on the soil of the so-called New World.

The place where these pieces have been discovered - Piedras Negras - appears to be a distorted form of 'Priyadarsh Nagraj' in Sanskrit, as has been the case with so many words distorted by European pronunciation. These stone sculptures are adornments of a Mayan temple and depict some popular mythology prevalent amongst the people of the time. Both human sacrifice and idolatry were much in practice amongst Maya people. Morley has given a detailed and vivid account of Maya culture and society in his book 'The Ancient Maya', profusely quoting Bishop Diego de Landa.

Bishop Landa states that Maya people "…had a very great number of idols and temples which were magnificent in their own fashion and besides the community temples, the lords, priests and leading men also had oratories and idols in their houses where they made their prayers and offerings in private". Not only of gods but idols of even animals and insects were prepared by Maya people, who believed in immortality of soul and afterlife. This definitely smacks of an Indian connection.

More serious efforts to connect the ancient American civilizations with those of ancient India have to be made. The Trans-Pacific contacts of the people of south-east Asia with the people of ancient America have been established beyond doubt. It is also a well-proven fact of history that Indians of ancient times were great sea-farers. In pre-Mahabharata era as well as in the subsequent period, the kings of southern India possessed large fleets used for trade with the Arabian and European countries where Indian merchandise was much in demand. India's links with south-east Asia and other far-off islands of the Pacific Ocean are an established fact of history. The conquest of Malaya by Rajendra Chola, the story of Buddhagupta the Great Sailor (Mahanavik), the religious expeditions of Indians to preach the gospel of Buddhism in the distant lands of Cambodia, Annam, Bali, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Japan, Korea, Mongolia and China are proofs of the impact of Indian culture.

A remarkable feature of the Indian culture has been that colonial domination was never identified with economic exploitation. The Buddhist Jatakas (folk tales) narrate many stories relating to maritime adventures and daring sea journeys which establish that such activities were an essential part of Indian life at that time.

The author is a historian settled in Vienna.

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Master Builder Uncovers Striking similarities in Indian and Incan/Mayan Sacred Structures

Hinduism Today - June 1995
http://www.hinduismtoday.kauai.hi.us/htoday.html

Ancient Architects Employed Analogous Design Doctrines and Masonry Methods

"Sri V. Ganapati Sthapati," read Deva Rajan's fax to our Hawaii editorial office from Machu Picchu high in the rugged Andes Mountains of Peru, South America, "has just measured with tape, compass and a lay-out story pole, two ancient Incan structures at Machu Picchu: a temple and a residence. He has confirmed that the layout of these structures, locations for doors, windows, proportions of width to length, roof styles, degree of slopes for roofs, column sizes, wall thicknesses, etc., all conform completely to the principles and guidelines as prescribed in the Vastu Shastras of India. Residential layouts are identical to those found in Mohenjodaro. The temple layouts are identical to those that he is building today and that can be found all over India."



These startling discoveries came during a March, 1995, visit of the master builder to the ancient Incan and Mayan sites of South and Central America. Ganapati Sthapati is India's foremost traditional temple architect and perhaps the first true expert in sculpture and stone construction to personally examine these ancient buildings. To do so has been his dream since the 1960's.

Sthapati is the architect of the San Marga Iraivan Temple [see page 28] being built at Kauai Aadheenam, Hawaii, home of Hinduism Today. To fulfill this life-long ambition to visit the Mayan and Incan sites, our publisher, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, arranged for California builders and architects Deva Rajan and Thamby Kumaran to accompany Sthapati on a three-week trip through South and Central America. "Like boys on holiday," they described their exciting trek of discovery which began 11,000 feet high in central Peru at the famed Incan site of Machu Picchu which remained hidden until 1911.

It is Sthapati's theory that Mayan, the creator of Indian architecture, originated from the Mayan people of Central America. In Indian history, Mayan appears several times, most significantly as the author of Mayamatam, "Concept of Mayan" which is a Vastu Shastra, a text on art, architecture and town planning. The traditional date for this work is 8,000bce. Mayan appears in the Ramayana (2000bce) and again in the Mahabharata (1400bce)-in the latter he designs a magnificent palace for the Pandava brothers. Mayan is also mentioned in Silappathikaram, an ancient Tamil scripture, and is author of Surya Siddhanta, one of the most ancient Hindu treatises on astronomy.

The fundamental principle of Mayan's architecture and town planning is the "module." Buildings and towns are to be laid out according to certain multiples of a standard unit. Floor plans, door locations and sizes, wall heights and roofs, all are determined by the modular plan. More specifically, Mayan advocated the use of an eight-by-eight square, for a total of 64 units, which is known as the Vastu Purusha Mandala. The on-site inspection by Sthapati was to determine if the Incan and Mayan structures did follow a modular plan and reflect the Vastu Purusha Mandala. He also intended to examine the stone working technology-his particular field of expertise.



Sthapati was born in 1927 into a family whose ancestors, members of the aboriginal tribe of Viswakarmas, built the great temple at Tanjore in the 10th century ce at the request of Raja Raja Chola. He learned the craft from his father, Sri M. Vaiydyanatha Sthapati and his uncle, Sri M. Sellakkannu Sthapati. He spent 27 years as head of the Government College of Architecture and Sculpture in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, and is responsible for India's significant resurgence in the ancient art of stone carving. After his retirement in 1988, he continued building temples and founded the Vastu Vedic Research Foundation to explore the ancient origins of the temple craftsmen. He is responsible for the construction of dozens of temples in India, plus others in Chicago, Washington D.C., Kentucky, Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco, and Hawaii in the USA as well as in the UK, Singapore, Fiji, Malaysia, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

Machu Picchu

The moment Sthapati approached an ancient Incan residential building at Machu Picchu on March 15th, he pointed at the wall and said, "That is a thickness of one kishku hasta"-33 inches, a standard measure in South India first promulgated by Mayan. He proceeded to measure the buildings in detail and discovered each was indeed built on a module-based plan [see photos and drawings to right], following the system of Mayan's eight-by-eight squares. The module method was followed within small fractions of an inch, according to Thamby Kumaran, who was taking the measurements. The buildings were oriented toward certain points of the compass, also a principle of Mayan, rather than randomly placed. Also the lengths of buildings were never more than twice their width, as Mayan stipulated.

From Machu Picchu the three adventurers traveled to Saqsayhuman, an Incan site dated from 400 bce to 1400 ce. Here are the famous stone walls made of rocks weighing up to 160 tons and fitted together so expertly that a knife blade cannot be put in any joint. "Nobody knows how these stones were put in place," offered their guide when they first arrived on the site. Sthapati politely differed, and pointed out the insets chiseled into the base of many stones, as well as small knobs left on their faces. "These are for the use of levers, the exact same system we continue to use in India to move large stones. Thirty to forty men can move these very large rocks with this method," he explained to the guide's astonishment.



He could see other details of the stone working were identical to what is practiced in India, such as the method of quarrying stones by splitting off slabs [photo page 14]. So too was the jointing and fitting of stones, the use of lime mortar, leveling with a plumb line and triangle, and the corbeling for the roofs. Corbeling is the method by which stones are drawn in layer by layer until they meet or nearly meet to allow a roof slab to be placed on top. Sthapati considers the similarity of this technology to that used in India to be very significant. The use of the horizontal lintel and the absence of the arch are additional noteworthy points of correspondence between the two traditions.

Land of the Mayans

From the high Andes the threesome flew to Mexico's Yucatan peninsula. They and forty-five thousand other Mayan aficionados arrived at Chichén Itzá in time for the summer equinox on March 21st. At the moment of sunset on the equinox, a shadow is cast by the steps of the Pyramid of the Castle [photo right and on page one, where the shadow can be seen] upon the side of the staircase to the top. The shadow creates the image of a serpent's body which joins a stone carving of a serpent's head at the bottom of the stair case. It is a stunning demonstration of Mayan astronomical and architectural precision.

Archeologists, tourists and New Agers all gathered for the event, each with their own agenda. Since the publication of The Mayan Factor-A Path Beyond Technology by José Arguëlles, the Mayans and their advanced calendar, astronomy, philosophy and architecture have enjoyed a wide following in the West. Sthapati too has found much of interest in Arguëlles' book.

Standard academia archeologists consider the New Age interest as bordering on superstition and refuse to even talk to anyone partial to Mayan mysticism. A recent book, Copan and Tikal, the Secrets of Two Cities, by Honduran author Ricardo Agurcia Fasquelle and archaeologist Juan Antonio Valdes of Guatemala, claim that the Mayan pyramids were actually castles for the wealthy and that what were once thought to be monuments to the Gods were in fact tributes to the dynasties of various kings. Not likely.

Native Mayan teachers such as Hunbatz Men, whom Sthapati met while in the Yucatan, are taking advantage of the interest to spark a revival of the original Mayan religion among the Mayans themselves. Since their brutal conquest and forced conversion to Catholicism by the Spaniards in the 16th century, Mayans have lived an oppressed and impoverished existence.

Amidst the crowds, Sthapati, Deva and Thamby again unsheathed their tape measures and closely examined the Pyramid of the Castle [see diagram right]. It too conformed to the Vastu Vedic principles of Mayan. The temple structure at the top was exactly 1/4th of the base. And the stepped pyramid design derived from a three-dimensional extension of the basic eight-by-eight grid system. The temple room at the top was also modular in design, with the wall thickness determining the size of doorways, location of columns, thickness of columns and the width and length of the structure.

Most interesting was the name of this structure-chilambalam, meaning a sacred space. It is Sthapati's theory that the Mayans worshiped the very concept of space, specifically a space made according to the modular system. This same idea is found in Hinduism in the sacred room in the center of the Chidambaram Siva Temple in South India, where space or akasha is worshiped-there is no idol. Chidambaram, Sthapati finds suspiciously like chilambalam, means "hall of consciousness." The concept of sacred space is at the center of the mystical shilpi tradition of India

The richly decorated Mayan buildings provided a feast for a sculptor's eye. There is a very common feature called a "mask" by the archeologists, but known to the Mayans as "Big Nose." A nearly identical face is a common feature of Hindu iconography, seen, for example, at the top of the arch placed behind a deity. "It is the very same thing in India," chuckled Sthapati, "we call it `Maha Nyasa'-Big Nose!" Several other details of the sculptures were similar or identical to India, such as the earrings, ear plugs, teeth, head dresses, even buckles around the waist. There are bas reliefs of priests sitting in lotus posture meditating.

From Chichén Itzá, they traveled on to Uxmal where they observed the snake and "bindu" designs on the wall faces [picture right]. They were astounded by the thousands of pyramids at Tikal and Uxacturn in Guatemala, all laid out to conform to a grid pattern and oriented in astronomically significant directions.

As in Mayan buildings, Indians have been using lime mortar for all of their stone and brick buildings. This can been seen in the monumental creations in Mahabalipuram and also in the stone temples of Tanjor and Gangai Konda Choleasuram in Tamil Nadu. The outer surfaces were plastered, embellishments worked out in lime mortar, then painted. This method was strongest among the Mayas at Tikal and Uaxactún, where all of the structures once had a plaster coating painted with many colors.

What is the Connection?

Sri Ganapati Sthapati postulates, after deep thought from his journey to the land of the Mayans and a lifetime study of South Indian architecture, that Mayan, the divine architect of Indian tradition, came from Central America. Ancient Tamil literature speaks of lands to the south of India 30,000 years ago, at the time of the first Tamil Sangam. According to scientists 160 million years ago India did lie physically close to Africa, South and Central America, but has since moved away as a result of continental drift. At that date, it would have been dinosaurs and not Mayans who wandered from the Americas to India, but perhaps the time frame for the continental drift is not correct. Architecture aside, there are significant similarities between Hinduism and the native religions of both Africa and the Americas.

There are other explanations. The simplest is boats. In 1970 the Norwegian Thor Hyerdal sailed a reed boat from Africa to the

Americas in 57 days using no modern equipment. The boat, Ra II, was built for him by the Aymaro Indians of Lake Titicaca, Peru, neighbors of the ancient Incans. The double-hulled catamarans of India are also capable of long sea voyages. Historians discount contact between ancient people, but many cultures, such as the ancient Hawaiians, had remarkable sea-faring skills.



Perhaps the coincidences of stone working are just that, coincidence -a favorite "explanation" of archeologists. Stone workers will discover the same techniques naturally, without need for outside help, they say, and can point to historical incidents of simultaneous discovery. But this explanation hardly accounts for the similarities in motifs and modular design.

Another explanation is mystical-that Mayan, who is a divine being in Indian histories, appeared to both peoples. He could have conveyed the knowledge through visions and dreams.

Sri Ganapati Sthapati is vigorously continuing his research and is open to suggestions from Hinduism Today readers. Any information you may have on the similarities of the two cultures may be shared with him by writing to:

Vastu Vedic Research Foundation, Plot A-1, H.I.G. Colony, 1st Main Road (New Beach Road), Thiruvalluvar Nagar, Thiruvanmiyur, Madras 600 041, India.

Sidebar: The Vastu Vedic Tradition
Text: V. Ganapati Sthapati spoke eloquently during our interviews of the deep mysticism of his tradition. Here is an excerpt from his paper, "Synthesis of Science and Spirituality in the Vastu Vedic Tradition of Art and Architecture."

The Vastu Shilpa tradition of Indian origin has made a scientific approach to the problems of spirit and spiritual realization. This scientific tradition of Va-stu perceives Shakti [energy] as all-pervasive and as the casual substance for all the manifestations of visual and aural phenomena in the universe. They have named their Shakti as Paravastu in Sanskrit and the universal objects as Vastu. The word Paravastu means the quintessence or the ultimate substance. This phenomenon of Vastu and Va-stu can be equated to gold turned into gold ornaments, the shilpi acting as the agent for the transformation. Further, this Vastu is recognized by the Vastu tradition as one dwelling in the inner space of individual beings as well as in the outside space, the universal being. The science says that it is space, because of its self-propelled vibration, that turns into forms-the vibration force acting as the working agency. To do this is its unquestionable nature. This agency is designated as Absolute Time, emerging out of space. This is analogous to the vibration of the instrument of the vina developing into sound space. Here, sound space turns into sound form, and this when set to rhythmic vibration turns into musical form.

There is also another space responsible for the sound space. It is called luminous space. This pervades the entire universe (cosmos). This is the ultimate space wherein lie the Absolute Time and Absolute Energy. This is filled with luminous substance (Vastu) consisting of Paramanus, the minute particles of space. This luminous space is supersensitive, capable of becoming conscious of itself and vibrating into objects that it becomes conscious of. This action is its intrinsic nature and responsible for the forms that occur in the inner space of individuals as well as in the outer space of the universe. The experience of this form, in terms of space, is Spiritual Vision. This phenomenon is nothing but abstract science held by the Vastu tradition.

The Vastu tradition designates the inner being as Shilpi and the inner manifest subtle form as Shilpa, and as such the whole inner and outer universes are filled with shilpas. The gross visual forms are projected outside from the inside, by the inner being. This is the transformation of the subtle inner form into the gross visual, through the fingers exactly in tune with the subtle in terms of time and space. That "the sculptor becomes the sculpture and the poet becomes the poem" is therefore a powerful Vaignanic statement of the Vastu Vedins, and it is of pure advaitic tone. The projected visual form has the touch of a lyric, depending upon the individual inner culture.

Sidebar: The Linguistic Similarities
Text: Chacla in Mayan refers to force centers of the body similar to the chakras of Hinduism. K'ultanlilni in Mayan refers to the power of God within man which is controlled by the breath, similar in meaning to kundalini. Mayan chilambalam refers to a sacred space, as does Tamil Chidambaram. Yok'hah in Mayan means "on top of truth," similar to yoga in Sanskrit.

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Did You Know?

Chess originated in India



Sir William Jones wrote that chess had been known to Indians in antiquity as **Caturanga**, meaning the four wings of the army, which are described in the *Amarakosa* as elephants, horses, chariots, and infantry. One of the early Sanskrit texts, the **Bhavishya Purana,** contains a tale of a prince who lost all his possessions in a game of chess played with dice. Chess must indeed go deep into early Indian history, because it was associated with astronomical symbolism though out its growth.

According to **H. J. R. Murray**, who published his monumental study **A History of Chess** (Benjamin Prublisher. December 1985 ASIN 0936317019) in 1913, chess descended from an earlier Indian game called **Astapada**, played on a board containing 8 x 8 cells.

Chaturnaga was taken to Persia in the sixth century during the reign of Anushirvan (531-579) where it came to be known as *Chatrang,* whcih according to the Arabic phonetic system became *Shatranj.*
The earliest reference to chess in Persia is found in the Karnamak-i-Artakh Shatr-i-Papakan, written about 600. In the tenth century, the *poet Firdusi* related a traditional story in his epic poem, Shahnama of how chess came to Persia through an envoy of the King of Hind (India).

For more on Chess please refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture** and **War in Ancient India**).

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Western scholars have underestimated India's achievement with regard to commerce, ship-building and navigation, and sea travel. The colonist bias against Indian culture is fully matched by the Indian 'Marxist historian' bias against culture.

India, situated at the central point of the ocean that washes on its coast on three sides, seemed destined very early for a maritime future. In the Rig Veda, a passage (I. 25.7) represents Varuna having a full knowledge of the sea routes, and another (L. 56.2) speaks of merchants going everywhere and frequenting every part of the sea for gain. The Ramayana refers to the Yavan Dvipa and Suvarna Dvipa (Java and Sumatra) and to the Lohta Sayara or the Red Sea. The drama Sakuntala, Ratnavali of King Harsha, Sisupalvadha of Magha, relates stories of sea voyages of merchants and others, and the fabulous literature of India is replete with stories of sea voyages by Hindus. Historian R. C. Majumdar states: "The representation of ship on a seal indicates maritime activity, and there is enough evidence to show that the peoples of the Sindhu valley carried on trade not only with other parts of India but also with Sumer and the centers of culture in Western Asia, and with Egypt and Crete."

There was a time in the past, when Indians were the masters of the sea borne trade of Europe, Asia and Africa. They built ships, navigated the sea, and held in their hands all the threads of international commerce, whether carried on overland or sea. In Sanskrit books we constantly read of merchants, traders and men engrossed in commercial pursuits. Manu Smriti, the oldest law book in the world, lays down laws to govern commercial disputes having references to sea borne traffic as well as inland and overland commerce. India, according to Chamber's Encyclopedia, "has been celebrated during many ages for its valuable natural productions, its beautiful manufactures and costly merchandise," was, says the Encyclopedia Britannica, "once the seat of commerce." Sir William Jones was of opinion that the Hindus must have been navigators in the age of Manu. Lord Elphinstone has written that "The Hindus navigated the ocean as early as the age of Manu's Code because we read in it of men well acquainted with sea voyages." Ms. Manning, author of Ancient and Mediaeval India writes: "The indirect evidence afforded by the presence of Indian products in other countries coincides with the direct testimony of Sanskrit literature to establish the fact that the ancient Hindus were a commercial people."

Indian traders would set sail from the port of Mahabalipuram, carrying with them cinnamon, pepper and their civilization to the shores of Java, Cambodia and Bali. Like the Western world, the Indian world stretches far beyond its border, though India has never used any violence to spread her influence. Noted historian, R. C. Majumdar observed: "The Indian colonies in the Far East must ever remain as the high watermark of maritime and colonial enterprise of the ancient Indians." It has been proved beyond doubt that the Indians of the past were not, stay-at-home people, but went out of their country for exploration, trade and conquest. Sir Aurel Stein (1862-1943) a Hungarian, whose valuable researches have added greatly to our knowledge of Greater India, remarks: "The vast extent of Indian cultural influences, from Central Asia in the North to tropical Indonesia in the South, and from the Borderlands of Persia to China and Japan, has shown that ancient India was a radiating center of a civilization, which by its religious thought, its art and literature, was destined to leave its deep mark on the races wholly diverse and scattered over the greater part of Asia."

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Introduction

"Do Thou, Whose countenance is turned to all sides, send off our adversaries as if in a ship, to the opposite shore: do Thou convey us in a ship across the sea for our welfare."

- **Rig Veda**. 1., 97, 7 and 8

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Professor A. L. Basham, who reduced India along with her culture to a Wonder land wrote in his book **Wonder That Was India** has observed that: "certain over-enthusiastic Indian scholars have perhaps made too much of the achievements of ancient Indian seafarers, which cannot compare with those of the Vikings or of some others early maritime peoples." **A careful examination indicates that Prof. Basham's assessment is a characteristic example of colonialist bias in Indian historiography.** What was the Viking achievement? It is clear that the Vikings, during the period A.D. 800 to A.D. 1200, migrated to all the corners of Europe, they did not influence the people they came in contact with. On the contrary, they lost their identity under the influence of the superior cultures of the lands they visited.

In comparison to this, both from the qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, what was the Indian achievement? With regard to their contact with Southeast Asia Professor **D. P. Singhal** remarks: "Indians came into contact with the countries of Southeast Asia principally for commercial reasons. But whatever they settled they introduced their culture and civilization. In turn, they were influenced by the indigenous culture, laying thus the foundation of a new culture in the region. Indian cultural contact with Southeast Asia covers a period of **more than thirteen hundred years**, and segments of Indian culture even reached eastwards of this region."

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p.25).



Goddess Tara: Rescued sailors who were at risk of Shipwreck. She could change color according to her moods. When

she was calm, she was green or white in color, when angry, she could be blue, red or yellow.

Sir Aurel Stein (1862-1943) a Hungarian and author of several books including **Ra`jatarangini: a chronicle of the kings of Kashmir** and **Innermost Asia : detailed report of explorations in Central Asia, Kan-su, and Eastern Iran** carried out and described under the orders of H.M. Indian Government, whose valuable researches have added greatly to our knowledge of Greater India, remarks:

"The vast extent of Indian cultural influences, from Central Asia in the North to tropical Indonesia in the South, and from the Borderlands of Persia to China and Japan, has shown that ancient India was a radiating center of a civilization, which by its religious thought, its art and literature, was destined to leave its deep mark on the races wholly diverse and scattered over the greater part of Asia."

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisir Kumar Mitra** p. 178 and **Main Currents of Indian Culture - By S. Natarajan** p. 50).

Indians of old were keenly alive to the expansion of dominions, acquisition of wealth, and the development of trade, industry and commerce. **The material prosperity they gained in these various ways was reflected in the luxury and elegance that characterized the society.** Some find allusion in the Old Testament to Indian trade with Syrian coast as far back as 1400 B.C. Archaeological evidence shows that as early as the eighth century B.C., there was a regular trade relation, both by land and sea, between India on the one hand and Mesopotamia, Arabia, Phoenica, and Egypt on the other. (For more information refer to chapter on **India and Egypt**). The Chinese literary texts refer to maritime and trade activity between India and China as far back as the seventh century B. C. Recent excavations in Philippines, Malay Peninsula, and Indonesia confirm of early and extensive trade which continued down to the historical period. **It was this naval supremacy that enabled Indians to colonize the islands in the Indian Archipelago.** Shortly, after, there grew up a regular traffic between India and China, both by land and sea. India also came in close contact with the Hellenic world. We learn from ancient authority that in the processions of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.) were to be found Indian women, Indian hunting dogs, Indian cows, also Indian spices carried on camels, and that the yachts of the ruler of Egypt had a saloon lined with Indian stones. Everything indicates that there was a large volume of sea-trade between India and the western countries as far as African coast. From the coast the goods were carried by land to the Nile, and then down the river to Alexandria which was a great emporium in those days.

There was a mercantile colony of Indians in an island off the African coast in the first century A.D. The adventurous spirit of the Indians carried them even as far as the North Sea, while their caravans traveled from one end of Asia to the other.

(source: **Ancient India - By R. C. Majumdar** p. 210-216).

On journeys by sea there were **jalaniryamakas – guides who could predict the behavior of waters.** In the sea coast town of Shurparak, there was an arrangement to train persons with the help of Niryamak Sutras. According to these, those person who traveled together in a ship were called sanyatrika. In the Mahajanaka Jatak, there is a dialogue between a person swimming in the ocean and **Goddess Mani Mekhala** who was the presiding deity of sea-journeys.

“Who is this person, who in an ocean which knows no bound is trying to swim with his hands? On whose reliance are you doing this exercise?
“O Goddess, I believe that one should do the exercise as long as it is possible. So I am doing this exercise though I do not see the shore.”

In this way the dialogue continues with the swimmer continuing to gather courage hoping against hope. Mani Mekhala was the Goddess whose influence obtained from Kanya Kumari to the island of Katah. There was a huge temple dedicated to her in Puhara where the Kaveri joined the sea.

(source: **Hinduism: Its Contribution to Science and Civilization - By Prabhakar Balvant Machwe** Vikas Publishing House 1979 ISBN 0 7069 0805 8 p. 129).



The Greater India with Islands
(source: The Indians And The Amerindians - By Dr. S. Chakravarti)

Comparing the achievements of the Indians and the Chinese in Southeast Asia. **T. V. Mahalingam** observes: "Though China also exercised a considerable influence over countries of Southeast Asia, Indian influence was more effective and durable for the Chinese always remained colonies of foreigners with little inclination to mix with the local population and in contrast to what the Hindus achieved, there is nowhere any trace of the taking-over of Chinese culture by the children of the soil."

His views have been upheld by **John F. Cady** who concluded that: "Indian cultural patterns in particular became widely disseminated during the early centuries A.D., while Chinese influence, although culturally less contagious, virtually dominated from Sung times (960 and later) the trade and politics of the eastern seas."

(source: **History of post-war Southeast Asia - By John F. Cady** 1964. p. VI).

Amaury de Riencourt wrote: "The brightest sun shining over Southeast Asia in the first centuries A.D. was Indian Civilization. Waves of Indian colonists, traders, soldiers, Brahmins and Buddhist beat upon one Southeast shore after another. Great military power based on superior technical knowledge, flourishing trade fostered by the remarkable increase in maritime exchanges between India and these areas, the vast cultural superiority of the Indians, everything conspired to heighten the impact of the Indian Civilization on the Southeast Asian. **Passenger ships plied regularly between the Ganges, Ceylon and Malaya in the middle of the first millennium A.D. Indian settlers from Gujarat and Kalinga colonized Java, for instance, while others set out for Burma or Cambodia.** Old Indian books – the Kathasagara, the Jatakas and others – refer to these wondorous regions that set the imagination of civilized Indians on fire, to Suvarnabhumi, the fabulous “Land of Gold.” On the whole, the Indianization of Southeast Asia proceeded peacefully. Local chiefs and petty chieftains were admitted into the caste structure as Ksatriyas through a ritual known as vratyastoma, performed by an Indian Brahmin. All over Southeast Asia tremendous ruins are strewn, testifying to the immense influence of Indian Civilization."

(source: **The Soul of India - By Amaury de Riencourt** p.158-162. For more on Greater India, refer to chapter on **Suvarnabhumi**).

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Allusions to Maritime Activity in Sanskrit Literature

All the universe rests within your nature, in the ocean,
in the heart, in all life. - Rig Veda IV. 58. 11

There are a number of terms in the Rig Veda that mean ocean or sea. **"Samudra" the main term in classical Sanskrit for the ocean,** is very common in the Rig Veda and this meaning for it makes sense in all passages. The symbolism of ships is as pervasive in the Vedas as that of the sea, which it tends to reinforce. The saving action of Agni, the sacred fire, is frequently compared to a ship that carries us across the river or sea.

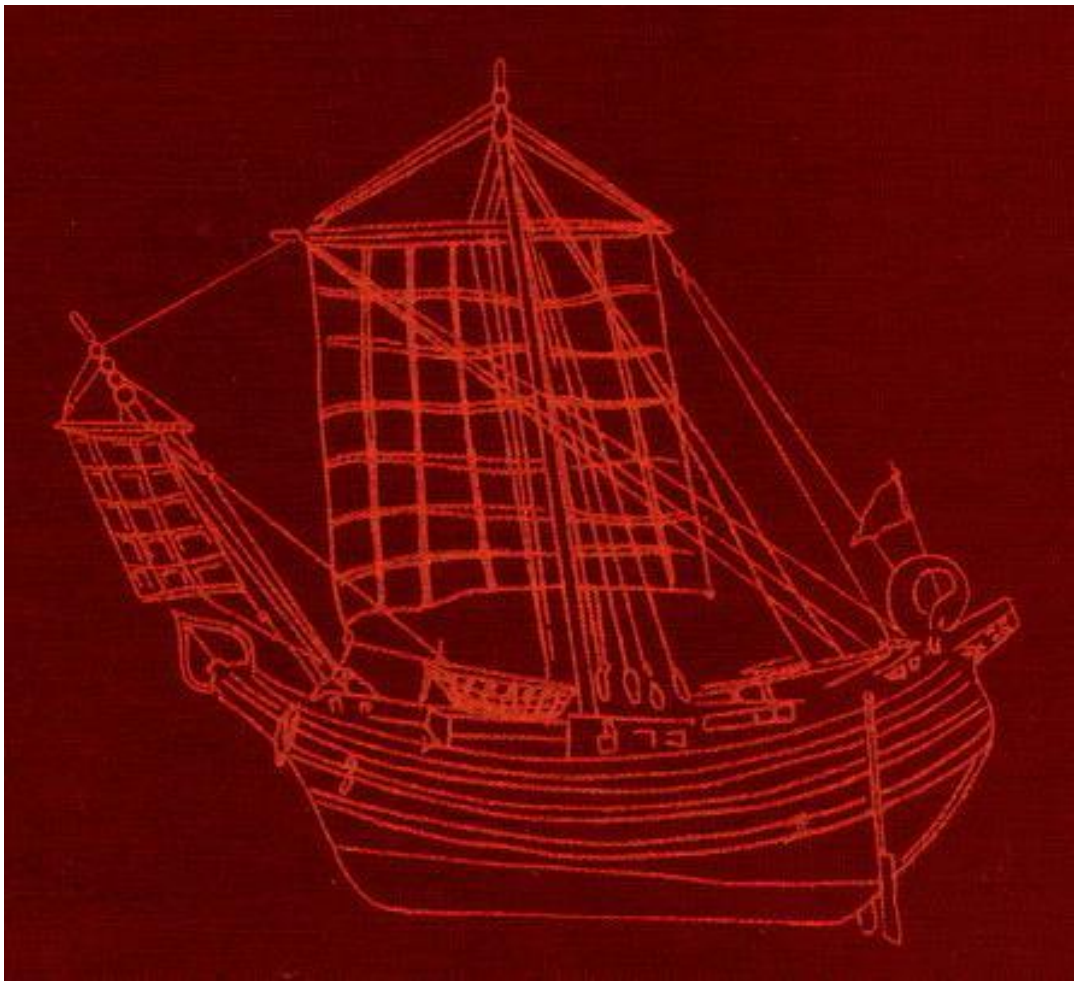
As a ship across the river (or sea), Agni takes us across to safety (I. 97.8). Vedic culture was a maritime culture, the Vedic people lived by the sea for some time before the hymns of the Rig Veda were composed.

(source: **Gods, Sages, and Kings - By David Frawley** p. 43-64).

The Indians built ships, navigated the sea and monopolized the international trade both by sea route and land route. Indian literature furnishes evidence with innumerable references to sea voyages and sea-borne trade and the constant use of the ocean as the great highway of international intercourse and commerce.

Rig Veda

The oldest evidence on record is supplied by the Rig Veda, which contains several references to sea voyages undertaken for commercial purposes. One passage (I. 25.7) represents Varuna having a full knowledge of the sea routes, and another (I. 56.2) speaks of merchants, under the influence of greed, going sending ships to foreign countries. A third passage (I. 56.2)mentions merchants whose field of activity known no bounds, w ho go everywhere in pursuit of gain, and frequent every part of the sea. The fourth passage (VII. 88.3 and 4) alludes to a voyage undertaken by Vasishtha and Varuna in a ship skillfully fitted out, and their "undulating happily in the prosperous swing." The fifth, which is the most interesting passage (I. 116. 3), mentions a naval expedition on which Tugra the Rishi king sent his son Bhujyu against some of his enemies in the distant islands; Bhujyu, however, is ship wrecked by a storm, with all his followers, on the ocean, "where there is no support, no rest for the foot or the hand," from which he is rescued by the twin brethren, the Asvins, in their hundred-oared galley. The Panis in the Vedas and later classical literature were the merchant class who were the pioneers and who dared to set their course from unknown lands and succeeded in throwing bridges between many and diverse nations. The Phoenicians were no other than the Panis of the Rig Veda. They were called Phoeni in Latin which is very similar to the Sanskrit Pani.



Ships of 3rd century B.C. E.
(source: Foreign trade and Commerce in Ancient India - By Prakash Charan Prasad)

Among other passages may be mentioned that which invokes Agni thus: "do thou whose countenance is turned to all sides send off our adversaries as if in a ship to the opposite shores; do thou convey us in a ship across the sea for our welfare"; or that in which Agni is prayed to bestow a boat with oars."

The **Ramayana** also contains passages which indicate the intercourse between India and distant lands by the way of the sea. In the Kishkindha Kandam, Sugriva, the Lord of the Monkeys, in giving directions to monkey leaders for the quest of Sita, mentions, all possible places where Ravana could have concealed her. In one passage he asks them to go to the cities and mountains in the islands of the sea, in another the land of the Koshakarsa, is mentioned as the likely place of Sita's concealment, which is generally interpreted to be no other country than China (or the land where grows the worm which yields the threads of silken clothes); a third passage refers to the Yava and Dvipa and Suvarna Dvipa, which are usually identified with the islands of Java and Sumatra of the Malaya Archipelago; while the fourth passage alludes to the Lohita Sagara or the red sea. In Ayodhya Kandam there is even a passage which hints at preparation for a naval fight, thus indirectly indicating thorough knowledge and universal use of waterway. The Ramayana also mentions merchants who trafficked beyond the sea and were in the habit of bringing presents to the king.



In The **Mahabharata** the accounts of the Rajasuya sacrifice and the Digvijaya of Arjuna and Nakula mention various countries outside India with which she had intercourse. There is a passage in its Sabha Parva which states how Sahadeva, the youngest brother of the five Pandavas, went to the several islands in the sea and conquered the Mlechchha inhabitants thereof. the well known story of the churning of the ocean, in the Mahabharata, in the boldness of its conception is not without significance. In the Drona Parva there is a passage alluding to shipwrecked sailors who "are safe if they get to an island." In the same Parva there is another passage in which there is a reference to a "tempest-tossed and damaged vessel in a wide ocean." In the Karna Parva we find the soldiers of the Kauravas bewildered like the merchants "whose ships have come to grief in the midst of the unfathomable deep." There is another sholka in the same Parva which describes how the sons of Draupadi rescued their maternal uncles by supplying them with chariots, "as the shipwrecked merchants are rescued by means of boats." In the Santi Parva the salvation attained by means of Karna and true knowledge is compared to the gain which a merchant derives from sea-borne trade. But the most interesting passage in the Mahabharata is that which refers to the escape of the Pandava brothers from the destruction planned for them in a ship that was secretly and especially constructed for the purpose under the orders of the kind-hearted Vidura. The ship was a large size, provided with machinery and all kinds of weapons of war, and able to defy storms and waves.

But besides the epics, the vast mass of Sutra literature also is not without evidence pointing to the commercial connection of India with foreign countries by way of the sea. That these evidences are sufficiently convincing will probably be apparent from the following remarks of the well-known German authority, the late **Professor Buhler**: "References to sea voyages are also found in two of the most ancient Dharam Sutras.

Manu Smriti

In Sanskrit books we constantly read of merchants, traders and men engrossed in commercial pursuits. Manu Smriti, the oldest law book in the world, lays down laws to govern commercial disputes having references to sea borne traffic as well as inland and overland commerce. Manu (iii. 158) declares a Brahmin who has gone to sea to be unworthy of entertainment at a Shraddha. In chapter viii again of Manu's Code there is an interesting sloka laying down the law that the rate of interest on the money lent on bottomry (The lender of money for marine insurance) is to be fixed by men well acquainted with sea voyages or journeys by land. In the same chapter there is another passage which lays down the rule of fixing boat-hire in the case of a river journey and a sea voyage. But perhaps the most interesting passages in that important chapter are those which are found to lay down the rules regarding what may be called marine insurance. One them holds the sailors collectively responsible for the damage caused by their faults to the goods of passengers, and other absolves them from all responsibility if the damage is caused by an accident beyond human control.

Sir William Jones is of opinion that the Hindus **"must have been navigators in the age of Manu, because bottomry (The lender of money for marine insurance) is mentioned in it. In the Ramayana, the practice of bottomry is distinctly noticed. "**

(source: **The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society for 1901**).

Lord Mountstuart Elphinstone has written: "The Hindus navigated the ocean as early as the sage of **Manu's Code**, because we read in it of men well acquainted with sea voyages."

(source: **History of India - By Mountstuart Elphinstone** London: John Murray Date of Publication: 1849 p. 166).

In **Yajnavalkya Samhita** there is a passage which indicates that the Hindus were in the habit of making adventurous sea voyages in pursuit of gain. The astronomical works also are full of passages that hint at the flourishing condition of

Indian shipping and shipbuilding and the development of sea-borne trade. Thus the **Brihat Samhita** has several passages of this kind having an indirect bearing on shipping and maritime commerce. One of these indicate the existence of shippers and sailors as a class whose health is said to be influenced by the moon. Another mentions the stellar influences affecting the fortunes of traders, physicians, shippers, and the like. The third, also, mentions a particular conjunction of stars similarly affecting merchants and sailors. The last one is that which recommends as the place for an auspicious sea-bath the seaport where there is a great flow of gold due to multitudes of merchantmen arriving in safety, after disposing of exports abroad, laden with treasure.



Puranas

The Puranas also furnish references to merchants engaged in sea-borne trade. The **Varaha Purana** mentions a childless merchant named Gokarna who embarked on a voyage for trading purposes but was overtaken by a storm on the sea and nearly shipwrecked. The same Purana contains a passage which relates how a merchant embarked on a voyage in a sea-going vessel in quest of pearls with people who knew all about them.

But besides the religious works like the Vedas, the Epics, and the Sutras and Puranas, the secular works of Sanskrit poets and writers are also full of references to the use of the sea as the highway of commerce, to voyages, and naval fights. Thus in **Kalidasa** **Raghuvamsa** (canto 4, sloka 36) we find the defeat by Raghu of a strong naval force with which the kings of Bengal attacked him, and his planting the pillars of victory on the isles formed in the midst of the river Ganges. The **Shakuntala** also relates the story of a merchant named Dhanavriddhi whose immense wealth devolved to the king of the former's perishing at sea and leaving no heirs behind him. In Sakuntala, we learn of the importance attached to commerce, where it is stated: "that a a merchant named Dhanvriddhi, who had extensive commerce had been lost at sea and had left a fortune of many millions." In Nala and Damyanti, too, we meet with similar incidents.

The **Sisupalavadha** of the poet Magha contains an interesting passage which mentions how Sri Krishna, while going from Dvaraka to Hastinapura, beholds merchants coming from foreign countries in ships laden with merchandise and again exporting abroad Indian goods.

The expansion of Indian culture and influence both towards Central Asia and the south-east towards the countries and islands of the Pacific is one of the momentous factors of the period immediately preceding the Christian era. From the first century A.D. a systematic policy of expansion led to the establishment of Hindu kingdoms in Annam, Cochin-China, and the islands of the Pacific. The Ramayana knew of Java and Sumatra. Communication by sea between the ports of south India and the islands of the Pacific was well established many centuries before the Christian era. The discovery and colonization of Sumatra, Java and Borneo were the results of oceanic navigation. **The allusions in the Ramayana to Java and Ptolemy's mention of Yava-dwipa in the first century A.D. clearly establish the fact that Java had come under Indian influence at least by the beginning of the Christian era.**

The reaction of this overseas activity on India was very considerable. An explanation of the immense wealth of the merchants who made such munificent endowments as witnessed by the inscriptions in the temples of the Satvahana

period lies in the great overseas trade. **Tamil literature of the first centuries, especially Silappadikaram and Manimekhalai also testify to this great overseas trade while in Kalidasa we have the allusion to ships laden with spices from distant lands lying in Kalinga ports.**

(source: **India Through The Ages - By K. M. Panikkar** Discovery Publishing House. Delhi 1985. p.84- 93).

Some passages in Rig Veda

"May Usha dawn today, the excitress of chariots which are harnessed at her coming, as those who are desirous of wealth send ships to sea."

"Do thou, Agni, whose countenance is turned to all sides, send off our adversaries, as if in a ship to the opposite shore. Do thou convey us in a ship across the sea for our welfare." (A remarkable prayer for safe conduct at sea).

The Hitopadesha describes a ship as a necessary requisite for a man to traverse the ocean, and a story is given of a certain merchant, "who, after having been twelve years on his voyage, at last returned home with a cargo of precious stones."

The Institutes of Manu include rules for the guidance of maritime commerce. Thus, the passage quoted above indicate a well developed and not a primitive trade.

Significant also is the fact that **Lieutenant Speake**, when planning his **discovery of the source of the Nile**, secured his best information from a map reconstructed out of **Puranas**. (Journal, pp. 27, 77, 216; Wilford, in Asiatic Researches, III). It traced the course of the river, the "Great Krishna," through Cusha-dvipa, from a great lake in Chandristhan, "Country of the Moon," which it gave the correct position in relation to the Zanzibar islands. The name was from the native Unya-muezi, having the same meaning; and the map correctly mentioned another native name, Amara, applied to the district bordering Lake Victoria Nyanza.

"All our previous information," says Speake, "concerning the hydrography of these regions, originated with the ancient Hindus, who told it to the priests of the Nile; and all these busy Egyptian geographers, who disseminated their knowledge with a view to be famous for their long-sightedness, in solving the mystery which enshrouded the source of their holy river, were so many hypothetical humbugs. The Hindu traders had a firm basis to stand upon through their intercourse with the Abyssinians."

(source: **Periplus of the Erythrean Sea - W.H. Schoff** p. 229-230. For more information refer to chapter on **India and Egypt**)

The Jatakas

Some very definite and convincing allusions to sea voyages and sea-borne trade are also contained in the vast body of Buddhist literature known as the Jatakas, which are generally taken to relate themselves to a period of one thousand years beginning from 500 B.C. E. The **Baveru Jataka** without doubt points to the existence of commercial intercourse between India and Babylon in pre-Ashokan days. The full significance of this important is thus expressed by the late **Professor Buhler**: "The now well-known Baveru-Jataka, to which Professor Minayef first drew attention, narrates that Hindu merchants exported peacocks to Baveru. The identification of Baveru with Babiru or Babylon is not doubtful," and considering the "age of the materials of the Jatakas, the story indicates that the Vanias of Western India undertook trading voyages to the shores of the Persian Gulf and its rivers in the 5th, perhaps even in the 6th century B.C. just as in our days. This trade very probably existed already in much earlier times, for the Jatakas contain several other stories, describing voyages to distant lands and perilous adventures by sea, in which the names of the very ancient Western ports of Surparaka-Supara and Bharukachcha-Broach are occasionally mentioned."

(source: source: **Indian Shipping: A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Maritime Activity of the Indians From the Earliest Times - By R. K. Mookerjee** p. 437-54).



THE ROYAL PLEASURE-BOAT

From the Ajantā Painting.

Ms. Manning, author of Ancient and Mediaeval India Volume II, p. 353, writes: "The indirect evidence afforded by the presence of Indian products in other countries coincides with the direct testimony of Sanskrit literature to establish the fact that the ancient Hindus were a commercial people."

(source: **Ancient and Medieval India - By Mrs. Manning** Volume II p. 353).

Sudas is stated in the **Aitteriya Brahmana** to have completely conquered the whole world. This conquest was not political; it means exploration of the whole earth. Puruvara navigated the ocean and explored 13 islands.

(source: **Historical Researches - Heeran** Volume II p. 266.

Colonel James Tod says that one of the ancestors of Rama was Sagara also called the Sea-King whose sixty thousand sons were so many mariners.

(source: **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India** ISBN 8120612892 Vol. II p. 602).

Sir William Jones wrote: " of this cursory observation on the Hindus which it would require volumes to expand and illustrate this is the result that they had an immemorial affinity with old Persians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks and Tuscans, the Scythians or Goth and Cilts, the Chinese, Japanese and Peruvians."

(source: **Asiatic Researches** Volume I p. 426). For more information refer to chapter on **India and Egypt**)

There are references in Buddhist Jataka tales to ships sailing from Bhrigukachcha to Baveru (Babylon); in the Pali book **Questions of Milinda**, a merchant is described as having sailed to Alexandria, Burma, Malaya and China. Another story of the 6th and 7th century tells of a merchant having sailed to the **"Island of Black Yavanas"** maybe Zanzibar.

(source: **Hinduism: Its Contribution to Science and Civilization - By Prabhakar Balvant Machwe** p. 129 - 130).

Professor **Max Duncker**, author of **History of Antiquity**, says, that ship-building was known in ancient India about 2000 B.C. It is thus clear that the Hindus navigated the ocean from the earliest times, and that they carried on trade on an extensive scale with all the important nations of the whole world.

A. M. T. Jackson writes: "The Buddhist Jatakas and some of the Sanskrit law books tell us that ships from Bhroach and Supara traded with Babylon (Baveru) from the 8th to the 6th century B.C."

(source: **Bombay City Gazetteer**, Vol. II, chapter IV, p.3).

Rev. J. Foulkes says: "The fact is now scarcely to be doubted that the rich Oriental merchandise of the days of King Hiram and King Soloman had its starting place in the seaports of the Deccan, and that with a very high degree of probability some of the most esteemed of the spices which was carried into Egypt by the Midianitish merchants of Genesis."

(source: **The Indian Antiquary**, Vol. VIII).

Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren (1760-1842) writes: **"The Hindus in their most ancient works of poetry are represented as a commercial people."**

Dr. Caldwell says: "It appears certain from notices contained in the Vedas that Aryans of the age of Solomon practiced foreign trade in ocean-going vessels."

In **G. Buhler's** opinion, **"prove the early existence of a complete navigation of the Indian Ocean, and of the trading voyages of Indians."**

(source: **Origin of the Indian Brahma Alphabet - By G. Buhler** 1898 p. 84).

Thus, Sanskrit literature in all its form - such as the Vedas, the Epics, the Sutras, the Puranas, poetry epic and dramatic romance etc. is replete with references to the maritime trade of India, which prove that the ocean was freely used by the Indians in ancient times as the great highway of international commerce. Further, the evidence from Sanskrit literature receive their confirmation again from the evidence furnished by the Buddhistic literature - the canonical books, and the Jatakas.

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Sea Trade

Sir Charles Eliot (1862-1931), British diplomat and colonial administrator, in his book, **Hinduism and Buddhism** vol. I, p.12. says:

In Eastern Asia the influence of India has been notable in extent, strength and duration. **"Scant justice is done to India's position in the world by those European histories which recount the exploits of her invaders and leave the impression that her own people were a feeble dreamy folk, surrendered from the rest of mankind by their seas and mountain frontiers.** Such a picture takes no account of the intellectual conquests of the Hindus. Even their political conquests were not contemptible and were remarkable for the distance if not for the extent of the territory occupied. For there were Hindu kingdoms in Java and Camboja and settlements in Sumatra and even in Borneo, an island about as far from India as is Persia from Rome."

The West

Gordon Childe says: "The most startling feature of pre-historic Indian trade is that manufactured goods made in India were exported to Mesopotamia. At Eshunna, near Baghdad, typically Indian shell inlays and even pottery probably of the Indus manufacture have been found along with seals. After c. 1700 B. C. C. E. the traders of India lost commercial contact with the traders of Mesopotamia."



S. R. Rao says that the Indian traders first settled in Bahrein and used the circular seal. Later on the different sections of the Indian merchants colonized the different cities of Mesopotamia after the name of their race. The Chola colonized the land where the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, approach most nearly and the banks touch the so called Median wall. They called their colony Cholades which later came to be known as Chaldea (i.e. the land of the Cholas) as a result of corrupt pronunciation. Similarly the Asuras of Vedic India colonized the city Asura after their name and later they established the Assyrian empire.

Archaeological evidence of the use of indigo in the cloths of the Egyptians mummies, Indian cedar in the palace of Nebuchandnzzar and Indian teak in the temple of the moon god at Ur shows the continuity of Indian commercial relations with the West. Rassam found a beam of Indian cedar in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar (604-562 B.C) at Birs Nimrud. In the second storey of the Temple of the Moon-God at ur rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus (555- 538 B.C.) Taylor found "two rough logs of wood apparently teak".

The ancient Egyptian traders sailed there boats not only on the Nile but also ventured into the Mediterranean and the Red Sea and even into the Indian Ocean, for they are said to have reached "God's land" or the land of **Punt (India)**. Similarly the Indian traders sailed their ships not only on the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, they also ventured into the Red Sea and even into the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea. From the very beginning Indian traders had a very fair knowledge of all the ancient oceans and seas of the populated world. the Egyptians called India as "God's land" because India was in those days culturally very much developed. The priest of ancient Egypt required vast quantities of aromatic plants for burning as incense; frankincense, myrrh and lavender were also used for embalmment purpose. Herodotus has left us a sickening description of the great number of spices and scented ointments of which India was the center. Beauty products from India also attracted the women of Egypt. The cosmetic trade was entirely dependent on imports chiefly from India. The Pharaohs of the fifth and sixth dynasties made great efforts to develop trade relations with the land of Punt. Knemphotep made voyages to Punt eleven times under the captainship of Koui. This expedition was organized and financed by the celebrated Queen Halshepsut.

(source: **Foreign Trade and Commerce in Ancient India - By Prakash Charan Prasad** p. 36-43. For more information refer to chapter on **India and Egypt**)

Before trade with the Roman Empire, India carried on her trade chiefly with Egypt; whose king, Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.) with whom Ashoka the Great had intercourse, founded the city of Alexandria, that afterwards became the principal emporium of trade between the East and West.

M. A. Murray, the Egyptlogist says in his book, " The splendor that was Egypt" that the type of men of Punt as depicted by Halshepsut's artists suggests an Asiatic rather than an African race and the sweet smelling woods point to India as the land of their origin.

(source: **Art Culture of India and Egypt - By S. M. El Mansouri** p. 14).

This expedition really appears to have been a great commercial success. The queen proudly recorded on the walls of the temple of Deir-el-Bahri: "Our ships were filled with all marvelous things from **Punt (India)**; the scented wood of God's land, piles of resin, myrrh, green balsan trees, ebony, ivory, gold, cinnamon, incense, eye-coloring, monkeys, grey dogs and panther-skins." These objects indicate Indian goods exported to Egypt.

Alexander's passage of the Indus was effected by means of boats supplied by Indian craftsmen. A flotilla of boast was used in bridging the difficult river of Hydaspses. For purpose of the voyage of Nearchus down the rivers and to the Persian Gulf, all available country boats were impressed for the service, and a stupendous fleet was formed, numbering around 800 vessels, according to Arrian, and to the more reliable estimate of Ptolemy nearly 2,000 vessels which

accommodated 8,000 troops, several thousand horses, and vast quantities of supplies. It was indeed an extraordinary huge fleet, **built entirely of Indian wood and by the hands of Indian craftsmen. All this indicates that in the age of the Mauryas shipbuilding in India was a regular and flourishing industry of which the output was quite large.**

A book, called the **Periplus of the Erythraean Sea**, written by a Graceo-Egyptian sailor in the first century A.D., gives a very detailed and interesting account of Indian trade from the author's personal knowledge. He came to India and found the Indian coast studded with ports and harbors, carrying on brisk trade with foreign countries. The chief articles of export from India were spices, perfumes, medicinal herbs, pigments, pearls, precious stones like diamond, sapphire, turquoise and lapis lazuli, animal skins, cotton cloth, silk yarn, muslin, indigo, ivory, porcelain and tortoise shell; the chief imports were cloth, linen, perfume, medicinal herbs, glass vessels, silver, gold, copper, tin, lead, pigment, precious stones and coral.



Indian figurine buried in the Mount Vesuvius in Italy - eruption of 79 A.D. Ivory
(source: Indian Art - By Vidya Dehejia)

The value of Indian trade may be estimated from the well-known passage of Pliny, in which he recorded that India drained the Roman empire of fifty million sesterces every year. The wealth of early India is confirmed by the lament of Pliny the Elder in Historica Naturalis (Natural History), completed in 77 AD that all of Rome's coffers were being emptied into India to satisfy Roman demand for transulent Indian muslins. Pliny's statement is corroborated by the discovery, in India, of innumerable gold coins of the Roman emperors, which must have come here in course of trade. Most of the coins have been found. Most of these coins have been found in South India, and their evidence is corroborated by many passages in classic Tamil literature. We read of **'Yavanas of harsh speech'** with many wares; of foreign merchants thronging sea-port towns like Mamallapuram, Puhar, and Korkai; or busy customs officials, and those engaged in loading and unloading vessels in the harbor. The wealth of the Roman Empire reached India through the ports of Kalyan, Chaul, Broach, and Cambay in Western India. Tamralipti was an important port in Bengal. It carried on trade

with China, Lanka, Java and Sumatra. In the Andhra region, the ports were Kadura and Ghantasala, Kaveripattanam (Puhar) and Tondail were the ports of the Pandya region. The ports of Kottayam and Muziris were on the Malabar coast. There was a great maritime trade between India and Southeast Asia and China. **The rulers of India facilitated trade by building and maintaining lighthouses at the necessary points and by keeping sea routes free and safe from pirates.**

According to **Surjit Mansingh**: "India's trade with Europe, both by land and sea, was a constant fact of history from ancient times"

(source: **India: A Country Study** 1985).

The close connection between the early civilization of Ninevah and Babylon and the West Coast of India is borne out by indisputable evidence and this was possible only through the navigation of the Arabian sea. There is ample evidence of a flourishing trade between the Levant and the West Coast of India, as may be inferred from allusion in the Old Testament.

As stated by **Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri** in Indian Antiquary, 1938 p. 27: "the evidence of South Indian connections with the West drawn from references in his (Solomna's) reign to Ophir and Thar Shih to ivory, apes and peacocks is seen to be only a link in a more or less continuous chain of data suggesting such connections for long ages before and after. The earliest Indian literature, the Vedas speak of sea voyage. One well-known mantra (Rig Veda 1, 97, 8) prays: "Do thou convey us in a ship across the sea for our welfare." Besides this, there are numerous allusions in the Rig Veda to sea voyages and to ships with a hundred oars.

(source: **India and the Indian Ocean - K. M. Panikkar** The MacMillan Company, 1945 p.23-24).



Indian seafarers did not absent themselves from the Middle East or the European mainland. From the Sanskrit name of Socotra (Island abode of bliss) and from certain Hindu-like divisions and customs among the people of East Arabia. **C. Lassen** suggested that the first sailors and colonizers on the Indian Ocean came from India. According to **Jeannie Auboyer** "merchant shipping was very active in India and had, even since Roman times, linked the Mediterranean world to China with great vessels (nava) of which the Indian king owned a fleet, though most of them belonged to wealthy individuals."

(source: **Daily Life in Ancient India - By Jeannie Auboyer** ISBN 8121506328 p. 75).

The achievements of Indian seafarers in the Far East and Southeast Asia have been acknowledged by a host of scholars. The late Professor **Buhler** says: "References to voyages are also found in two of the most ancient **Dharma Sutras**."

There was also an active trade between India and Greece. The mention of ivory by Homer and of several other Indian articles assign the trade a very ancient date. In addition to ivory, India also supplied indigo to Greece, whence the inhabitants derived their knowledge of its use. Homer knew tin by its Sanskrit name. Professor **Max Duncker** says that the Greeks used to wear silken garments which were imported from India, and which were called "Sindones, or "Tyrian robes." "Trade existed between the Indians and Sabaens on the coast of South Arabia before the 10th century B.C. the time when, according to the Europeans, Manu lived.

Of the producer of loom, silk was more largely imported from India into ancient Rome than either in Egypt or in Greece. "It so allured the Roman ladies, " says a writer, that it

sold its weight in gold."

(source: **Encyclopedia Britannica** Vol. XI p. 459). For more information refer to chapter on **India and Egypt**).

Testimony to the flourishing condition of the ship-building industry in India is available in the description of the return journey of Alexander from India via the sea route. According to estimates of Ptolemy nearly 2000 vessels which between them accommodated 8000 troops, several thousand horses, and vast quantities of supplies. This vivid description speaks not only of the ready resources and expertise of the Indian craftsmen but also of the tonnage of the seaworthy ships estimated at about 75 tons (or 3000 amphorea) by Pliny.

The most valuable of the exports of India was silk, which was under the Persian Empire is said to have exchanged by weight of gold.

(source: **Indian Shipping - By R. K. Mookerji** p. 83).

It is evident that "there was a very large consumption of Indian manufactures in Rome. This is confirmed by the elder Pliny, who complained that there was "no year in which India did not drain the Roman Empire of a hundred million sesterces (1,000,000 pounds)....so dearly do we pay for our luxury and our women." The annual drainage of gold from Rome and its provinces to India was estimated by him at 500 steria, equal to about Rs. 4,000,000. We are assured on undisputed authority that the Romans remitted annually to India a sum equivalent to 4,000,000 pounds to pay for their investments, and that in the reign of Ptolmeies, 125 sails of Indian shipping were at one time lying in the ports whence Egypt, Syria, and Rome itself were supplied with the products of India."

(Life in Western India (Guthrie), from **Colonel James Tod - Western India** p. 221. **Hindu Raj in the World - By K. L. Jain** p. 37).

Roman coins in large quantities are found in places in Southern India, whence beryl, pepper, pearls and minerals were exported to Rome. Some of these are described by Mr. Sewell. "These hoards," he says, "are the product of 55 separate discoveries, mostly in the Coimbatore and Madura districts."

(source: **Journal of Royal Asiatic Society for 1904**, Roman Coins).

There is extant, a Prakrit text on ship-building named Angavijja written in the Kushana period and edited in the Gupta period. This text enlists about a dozen names of different types of ships, such as Nava, Pota, Kotimba, Salika, Sarghad, Plava, Tappaka, Pindika, Kanda, Katha, Velu, Tumba, Kumba and Dati. Some of these varieties of ships such as Tappaka (Trappaga), Kotimba and Sarghad have also been mentioned in the **Periplus of the Erythrean Sea**. They are considered to be very large ships capable of sailing along the coast as well as in deep sea.



Mr. Momensen in his **Provinces of the Roman Empire** (Volume II p. 301), says: "Somewhat further to the south at Kananor numerous Roman gold coins of the Julio Claudian epochs have been found, formerly exchanged against the spices destined for the Roman kitchens."

Arabia being the nearest of the countries situated to the west of India, was the first to which the Indian commercial enterprises by sea were directed. The long-continued trade with Arabia dates from a very remote antiquity. "The labors of **Von Bohlen** (**Das Alte Indian**, Volume I, p. 42), confirming those of Heeran and in their turn confirmed by those of Lassen (Ind Alt. Vol II. p. 580), have established the existence of a maritime commerce between India and Arabia from the very earliest period of humanity. Lassen also says that the Egyptians wrapped their mummies in Indian Muslin.

Agarthchides of Cnidus, Ptolemaic Dynasty, President of the Alexandrain Library, who is mentioned with respect by Strabo, Pliny and Diodorus, and who lived upwards of 300 years before the time of Periplus, noticed the active commercial intercourse kept up between Yemen and Pattala - a seaport in Western India. Pattala in Sanskrit means a "commercial town" which circumstance if it is true, says Prof. Heeran, "would prove the extreme antiquity of the navigation carried on by the Indus. Agatharchides saw large ships coming from the Indus and Pattala.

The importance of trade was highly appreciated by the people of **Kalinga** - a kingdom on the Eastern seaboard of India. Inscriptions **"speak of navigation and ship commerce as forming part of the education of the princes of Kalinga."**

J. Takakusu writes: "That there was a communication or trade between India and China from 400 A.D. down to 800 A.D. is a proven fact. Not to speak of any doubtful records we read in the Chinese and Japanese books, Buddhist or otherwise, of Indian merchant ships appearing in the China Sea; we know definitely that Fahien (399-415 A.D) returned to China via Java by an Indian boat...at further in the Tang dynasty an eyewitness tells us that there were in 750 A.D. many Brahmin ships in the Canton River."

(source: **Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, Great Britain and Ireland**. October 1905 p. 872).

Historian **Vincent Smith** in his book Early History of India, writes" "Ancient Tamil literature and the Greek and Roman authors prove that in the first two centuries of the Christian era the ports on the Coromandel or Cholamandal coast enjoyed the benefits of active commerce with both East and West. The Chola fleets.....uncrossed the Indian ocean to the islands of the Malaya Archipelago."

(source: **Early History of India - By Vincent Smith** p. 415).

"The Hindus themselves were in the habit of constructing the vessels in which they navigated the coast of Coromandel, and also made voyages to the Ganges and the peninsula beyond it. These vessels bore different names according to the size." writes Prof. **Heeran**. There were commercial towns and ports on the Coromandel coast. Masulipatam, with its cloth manufactures, as well as the mercantile towns situated on the mouth of the Ganges, have already been noticed as existing in the time of **Periplus**. Even as late as the 17th century, French traveler **Tavernier** in 1666 A.D. said: "Masulipatam is the only place in the Bay of Bengal from which vessels sailed eastwards for Bengal, Arrakan, Pegu Siam, Sumatra, Cochin China and the Manilla and West to Hormuz, Makha and Madagascar."

(source: **Hindu Raj in the World - By K. L. Jain** p. 42).

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The East

Southeast Asia has always been an integral part of the Indian consciousness is borne out by the fact that the countries of Southeast Asia so comprehensively embraced Hinduism and Buddhism in all its aspects. This spiritual and cultural affinity became an inseparable part of their ethos and way of life. Successive Indian kings and kingdoms from the first century AD and even before to the beginning of the 15th century, had regarded Southeast Asia

and the lands lying beyond as vital for their own strength, security and sustained development. This intricate and abiding web of relationships in turn contributed significantly to India's sense of security in an extended neighborhood in which India is neither seen as an alien power nor as a country with a colonial past.



Panel no. 4. Siva temple bas-relief. Prambanan, Indonesia
Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi.

The advent of the British in India and the struggle for influence between European powers that ensued all over Southeast Asia, suspended the continuous interaction that had existed between India and the region. Southeast Asia itself was carved up into areas of influence by the major colonial powers, viz., the British, French, Dutch and Portuguese. India's cultural and commercial interaction with this region was therefore subordinated to the political and strategic considerations of the great powers. The relationship spanning nearly 2500 years was founded and nurtured on mutual interest and security in which both partners constantly enriched and reinforced each other.

In the opinion of Professor **Kakasu Okakura** author of **The Ideals of the East, with Special Reference to the Art of Japan:**

"Down to the days of the Mohammedan conquest went, by the ancient highways of the sea, **the intrepid mariners of the Bengal coast, founding their colonies in Ceylon, Java and Sumatra, and binding Cathay (China) and India fast in mutual intercourse."**



George Coedes, French historian and author of **Indianized State of South East Asia** considered that Indian colonization, intensive in the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. came to full fruition in 4th and 5th centuries. "I am convinced that such research will reveal numerous facts which will indicate a much deeper Indianization of the mass of the population than the sociologists will at present admit."

Indianization of Southeast Asia continued even during the early mediaeval times which is explained by French scholar, Orientalist who wrote on Eastern religion, literature, and history **Sylvain Levi** (1863-1935) who proposed that:

"India has produced its true masterpieces in foreign lands under foreign inspiration and that in architecture it is in distant Cambodia and Java that one must seek the two marvelous products of Indian genius, Angkor Wat and Borobudar."

T. W. Rhys Davids author of **Pali-English Dictionary** has observed that "Sea going merchants, availing themselves of the monsoons, were in the habit at beginning of the 7th century B.C. of trading from ports of the Southwest Coast of India to Babylon, then a great mercantile emporium."

(source: **Buddhist India - By T. W. Rhys- Davids** p. 116).

Reginald S. Le May (1885 -) author of **The culture of South-East Asia; the heritage of India** has observed:

"India, indeed, began to exercise a profound cultural influence on her neighbors to the eastward - Burma, Siam, Malaya, Cambodia, Java and Sri Lanka all falling beneath her sway. And this, as far as one can may judge, almost entirely as a result of trading and peaceful penetration by missionaries, merchants and others, and not by force of arms." "The beginnings of Indian colonization overseas eastward go back a very long way in time and it is almost certain that the results seen today were, in the main, **not achieved by military expedition, but by peaceful trading and religious teaching - and thereby all the more permanent."**

Contrasting the Indian method with the Chinese he remarked:

"**Indian religious art and culture seem naturally to have exercised an extraordinary fascination over the indigenous peoples of all these territories**, no doubt, owing to the attractions offered by Hinduism and Buddhism, while Chinese art, not bearing any particular religious message, apparently made little impression, in spite of the fact that the Chinese, too, sailed to southern seas..."

(source: **India and The World - By Buddha Prakash** p. 7-8 Institute of Indic Studies Kurukshetra University 1964).

George Coedes (1886 -1969) author of **Ancient Hinduized states of the Far East**, has pointed out the enduring value of Hindu culture in Outer or Greater India:

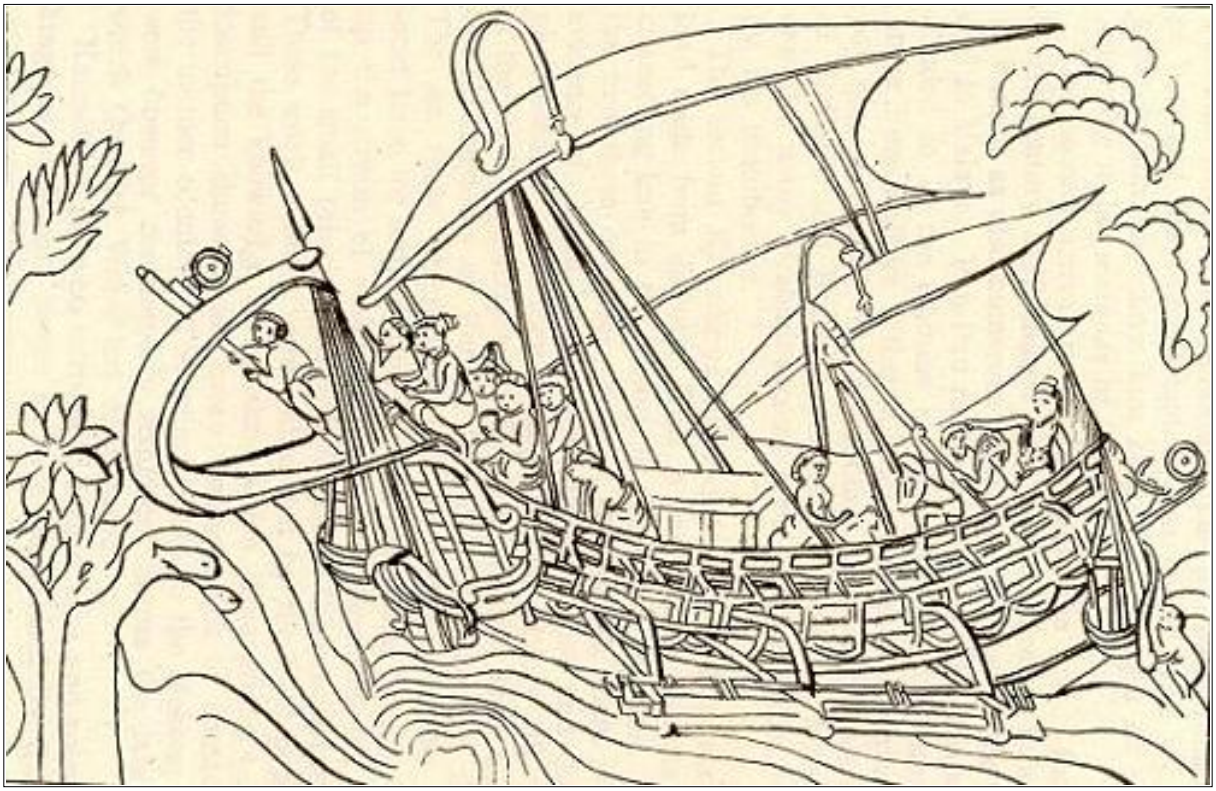
"One is struck by the fundamental difference in the results achieved in the countries of the Far East, by the civilizing action of China and that of India. The reason of it lies in the radical difference in the methods of colonization, employed by the Chinese and by the Hindus. The Chinese proceeded with conquest and by annexation: the armies occupied the lands and the officials spread the Chinese civilization. **The Hindu penetration and infiltration seem to have almost always been peaceful and unaccompanied by those destructions, which disgrace the Mongol cavalcade or the Spanish conquest of America.** Far from being destroyed by the conquerors, the indigenous people have found in the Hindu society, transplanted and made supple, a frame, in which their own societies have been able to integrate and develop themselves." "The exchange of ambassadors between the two shores of the Bay of Bengal was done on a **footing of equality**, whereas China always required of the " barbarians of the south" the recognition of her suzerainty, which was expressed by the regular payment of tribute."

"The lands, militarily conquered by China, had to adopt or imitate her institutions, customs, religions, language and script. On the contrary, those, whom **India peacefully conquered, by the prestige of her culture,** have preserved the essence of their individual characters and have developed them, each according to its own genius."

(source: **Les états Hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie - By George Coedes** p. 64-66).

The control of the Indian seas belong predominantly to India till the thirteenth century A.D. In respect of the Arabian Sea this control meant only the freedom of navigation. There was no colonizing activity in that area, though Socotra, or Sukhadhara dwipa (the island of the blest) was discovered long before the Christian era and was probably

under the Indian occupation at that time. Indian communities existed in Alexandria and other Egyptian towns and there were also settlements on the coasts of the Persian Gulf. But generally speaking, the navigation of the Arabian Sea was only for the purpose of trade. In case of Bay of Bengal, it was different. The supremacy in that sea was naval and political, based on an extensive colonization of the islands and this supremacy ceased only with the breakdown of Chola power in the thirteenth century. The naval activity of the Hindus was controlled by organized corporations of which the most important were the **Manigramam Chetties** and the **Nanadesis**. Of the Manigramam Chetties who traded all over the world we have authentic records in grants and inscriptions. The Bhaskara Ravi Varman plate of the Kerala King grants certain special privileges to the Manigramam guild. This body was given charter...including "the sword of sovereign merchantship" and monopoly rights of trading. Other "merchant adventurers" known from records are the Nanadesis, the Valangai and the Elangai who are described in the inscription at Baligami in Mysore as bodies of **"brave men born to wander over many countries since beginning of the Krta Age** (the first of the Indian Cycle of Yugas) penetrating regions of the six continents by land and water routes, and dealing in various articles, such as horses and elephants, precious stones, perfumes and drugs either wholesale or in retail."



Indian adventurers sailing out to Colonize Java
(source: India Through the ages - By K. M. Panikkar)

The ships built by Hindu navigators at that time are described thus by **J. Hornell** stated to be an authority on Indian boat designs. They were "square rigged, two masted vessels, with raked stem and stern, both sharp, without bowsprit and rudder and steered by two quarter paddles." (Quoted in **Towards Angkor - By Q. Wales** p. 26). First the Mauryas and then the Andhras were the lords of the Eastern Seas. The Ambassador of the **Prince of Wu** reported that while he was in Khamboja (Cambodia) in about A.D. 250 he saw ships with seven sails which could stay at sea for four weeks at a time. Other reports mention ships mention ships which carried over 600 men and more than 1,000 tons of merchandise. From the Andhras the sovereignty of the eastern Seas passed to the Pallavas as may be inferred from the great influence which this dynasty exercised on the colonial kingdoms of Further India.

The Hindus had already in use a **magnetic compass** known as **Matsya Yantra** for determining direction. The work "Merchants Treasure" written at Cairo by Baylak al Kiljaki mentions the magnetic needle as being in use in the Indian Ocean. The route that **Fa-hien**, the celebrated Chinese monk, took to return home after his stay in India (412-413) is fully described by him. Leaving Tramralipti, the Orissa port, he took fourteen days to reach Sri Lanka. From there he embarked for Java and called at Nicobars (Nakka-varam), the island of the naked. From Nicobar the ship passed through the Straits of Malacca into the Pacific. **Oceanic travel was therefore well advanced in the fifth century and Indian mariners not merely crossed the Bay of Bengal at its widest point, but sailed far out into the Pacific.**

Further, the Hindus had developed great skill in building ocean-going ships of great strength and durability. The participation of Hindus in the navigational activities of the Red Sea is also borne out by the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, a second century farce in the Greek language in which the conversation between certain characters is in a language which some scholars have identified as being South Indian. Besides, there are extensive allusions to maritime affairs and to long voyages in early Tamil literature. **Tamil scholars have counted no less than 1,800 nautical words in that language.**

The numerous ports of India from Broach to Quilon became great markets of trade. A first century Tamil classic describes the port of Muziris. (Cragnore in Cochin) as being filled with ships. The ruins of a Roman temple have also been discovered in that area.

(source: **India and the Indian Ocean - K. M. Panikkar** The MacMillan Company, copyright 1945 p. 26-27).



Sir Stamford Raffles (1781-1826) the British Governor of Java, in his book, **History of Java**, II, p. 87, wrote:

"In the year 525 Saka era – 603 A.D., it being foretold to a king of Gujarat that his country would decay and go to ruin, he resolved to send his son to Java. **He embarked with about 5000 followers in 6 large and about 100 small vessels, and after a voyage of four months reached an island they supposed to be Java;** but finding themselves mistaken, re-embarked, and finally settled at Matarem, in the center of the island they were seeking….The prince then found that men alone were wanting to make a great and flourishing state. He accordingly applied to Gujarat for assistance, when his father, delighted at his success, sent him reinforcement of 2000 people…From this period Java was known and celebrated as a kingdom; an extensive commerce was carried on with Gujarat and other countries, and the bay of Matarem was filled with adventurers from all parts."

(source: **Periplus of the Erythrean Sea - W.H. Schoff** p. 245).

Yuktikalpataru gives a detailed classification of ships: They were two kinds: ordinary (Samanya) ships comprising those used in inland waters and special (visesa) meant for sea journeys. The largest of these called Manthara measured 120 cubits in length, 60 in breadth and 60 cubits in height. During the days of the composition of Yuktikalpataru, it appears that ship-building was highly advanced. **Bhoja has advised the builders of the sea-faring ships not to join the plants with iron, as, in the case, the magnetic iron in sea water could expose the ship to danger.** To avoid this risk, he suggests that planks of the bottoms should be held together with the help of substances other than iron.

According to **Marco Polo** an Indian ship could carry crews between 100 to 300. Out of regard for passenger convenience and comfort, the ships were well furnished and decorated. Gold, silver, copper and compound of all these substances were generally used for ornamentation and decoration.

(source: **India Through The Ages: History, Art Culture and Religion - By G. Kuppuram** p. 527-531).

The comparatively large size of the shipping on the Coromandel coast is indicated also by the Andhra coinage, on which a frequent symbol is a ship with two masts, apparently of considerable tonnage.

E. J. Rapson in his book, **Coins of the Andhra Dynasty** "Their maritime traffic, to which the ship type bears witness, is also attested by the large number of Roman coins which are found on the Cholamandalum coast."

The shipping of the Andhra and Pallava coins doubtless survives in the modern "masula boats" at Madras:

J H Furneaux wrote in his book, **Glimpses of India**, p. 254:

"These masula boats are flat-bottomed barges constructed of planks sewn together with rope of cocoanut fiber, caulked with oakum, are able to withstand better than far more solidly built craft the shock of being landed on the sandy beach from the crest of a something breaker."

Similar in a general way to the Andhra coin-symbol is the Gujarati ship carved in a bas-relief on the frieze on the Borobodor temple in Java. While dating from about 600 A.D. this vessel was probably not different from those of the 1st

century, while the short broad sail with double yards is identical with those of the Egyptian Punt Expedition of the 15th century B.C.

Kalidasa, in the Raghuvamsa, tells of a tour of conquest of India, made by Raghy, the great-great-grandfather of Rama; starting from Ayodhya he went eastward to the ocean, having conquered the Bangalis, who trusted in their ships."

The textile industry of both Trichinopoly and Tanjore has been famous from early times. There can be little doubt that some of the finest fabrics that reached the Roman world came from this kingdom of Chola. From this part of India, in the middle ages, came those gold-threaded embroideries which were to such demand in the Saracen markets.

Marco Polo called Chola "the kingdom of Maalabar called Soli, which is the best and noblest province in India, and where the best pearls are found."

(source: **Periplus of the Erythrean Sea - W.H. Schoff** p. 242- 250).

Reports **Auguste Toussaint** in his book, 'History of the Indian Ocean',

"The Mauryan emperor Chandragupta, who ruled from 321 to 297 B.C had even at that time, an actual Board of Admiralty, with a Superintendent of Ships at its head." References to it can be found in **Kautilya's Arthasastra**. From their voyages of conquest and trade, we can infer that although much later, the Pallavas, Pandyas and Cholas of South India must also have had an efficient naval organization. The merchants of Surat, who relied upon ships built by the Wadias of Bombay (who had not taken long to copy prevailing European designs) were particularly rich - one of them Virji Vora (who died in the beginning of the 18th century) left a fortune of 22 million gold francs. "According to certain travelers, Surat was then the most beautiful city of India. **One small detail will give an idea of the unparalleled luxury that prevailed there: certain streets were paved with porcelain.** Francois Martin in his Memoires calls it 'a real Babylon'.

(source: **History of the Indian Ocean- By Auguste Toussaint**).


Harihara (Simping, Java)

The waves of Indian migration before breaking on the shore of America submerged the islands of the Indian Archipelago or Suvarnabhumi.

Colonel James Tod wrote: "The isles of the Archipelago were colonized by the Suryas (Surya-Vamsa Kshatriyas), whole mythological and heroic history is sculptured in their edifices and maintained in their writings."

(source: **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India** ISBN 8120612892 Vol. II p. 218).

Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone says: "The histories of Java give a distinct account of a numerous body of Hindus from Kalinga who landed on their island, civilized the inhabitants and established an era still subsisting, the first year of which fell in the seventh year before Christ."

"These pilgrims sailed from the Ganges to Ceylon, from Ceylon to Java and from Java to China in ships manned by crews professing the Brahmmanical religion."

(source: **History of India - By Mountstuart Elphinstone** London: John Murray Date of Publication: 1849 p. 168-185).

Most of the sculptures show in splendid relief ships in full sail and scenes recalling the history of the colonization in Java by Indians in the earlier centuries of the Christian era. Of one of them **E. B. Havell** thus speaks in appreciation:

"The ship, magnificent in design and movement, is a masterpiece in itself. It tells more plainly than words the perils which the Prince of Gujarat and his companions encountered on the long and his companions encountered on the long and difficult voyages from the west coast of India. But these are over now. The sailors are hastening to furl the sails and bring the ship to anchor."

Big ships were built. They could carry anywhere upwards from 500 men on the high seas. The **Yuktialpataru** classifies ships according to their sizes and shapes. The **Rajavalliya** says that the ship in which King Sinhaba of Bengal sent Prince Vijaya, accommodated full 700 passengers, and the ship in which Vijaya's Pandyan bride was brought over to Lanka carried 800 passengers on board. The ship in which Buddha in the Supparaka Bodhisat incarnation made his voyages from Bharukachha (Broach) to the "sea of the seven gems," carried 700 merchants besides himself. The **Samuddha Vanija Jataka** mentions a ship which accommodated one thousand carpenters.

(source: **Manual of Buddhism - By Robert Spencer Hardy** p. 13 and **Hindu Raj in the World - By K. L. Lal** p. 28).

Oldest Hindu Temple in Siam

One of the most remarkable site in the center of Siam, is **Srideb (Crip-tep),** where statues of Hindu deities bearing Sanskrit inscriptions of the 5th to 6th century have been discovered. The art of Srideb is of excellent quality and provides a link between Indian art and the art of Indo-China. **Quaritch Wales** considered Srideb the oldest temple in Indo-China.

The author **R. K. Mookerji** of **Indian Shipping** says:

"For full thirty centuries India stood out as the very heart of the old world and maintained her position as one of the foremost maritime countries. She had colonies in Pegu, in Cambodia, in Java in Sumatra, in Borneo and even in the countries of the Farther East as far as Japan. She had trading settlements in Southern China, in the Malayan Peninsula, in Arabia and in all the chief cities of Persia and all over the East Coast of Africa. She cultivated trade relations not only with the countries of Asia, but with the whole of the then known world, including the countries under the dominion of the Roman Empire, and both the East and West became the theatre of Indian commercial activity and gave scope of her naval energy and throbbing international life." According to **R. Sewell**, "There was trade both by sea and overland with Western Asia, Greece, Rome and Egypt as well as China and the East."

(source: **Indian Shipping: A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Maritime Activity of the Indians From the Earliest Times - By R. K. Mookerjee** p. 4 and **Hindu Raj in the World - By K. L. Jain** p. 25). For more information refer to chapter on **India and Egypt**).

Anthony Christie remarks that: **"although attempts have been made from time to time to minimize the extent of Indian influence upon Southeast Asia, the evidence for their importance is there for all to see and cannot be controverted."**

Alastair Lamb observes that "by the opening of the Christian era the civilization of India had begun to spread across the bay of Bengal into both island and mainland Southeast Asia; and by the fifth century A.D. Indianized states, that is to say, states organized along the traditional lines of Indian political theory and following the Hindu religion, had established themselves in many regions of Burma, Thailand, Indo-China, Malaysia, and Indonesia...The Indianization of Southeast Asia was a slow and gradual process. With a few exceptions, it was carried out by peaceful means and in consequence, as it developed, it did not build up a resistance to its further progress. Indian influence had no difficulty merging with indigenous cultures to create a series of distinct amalgams in which it is now virtually impossible to disentangle all the Indian from the non-Indian....it has now without a doubt guaranteed the Indian heritage a place in Southeast Asian civilization from which it cannot possibly be dislodged without the total destruction of the civilization."

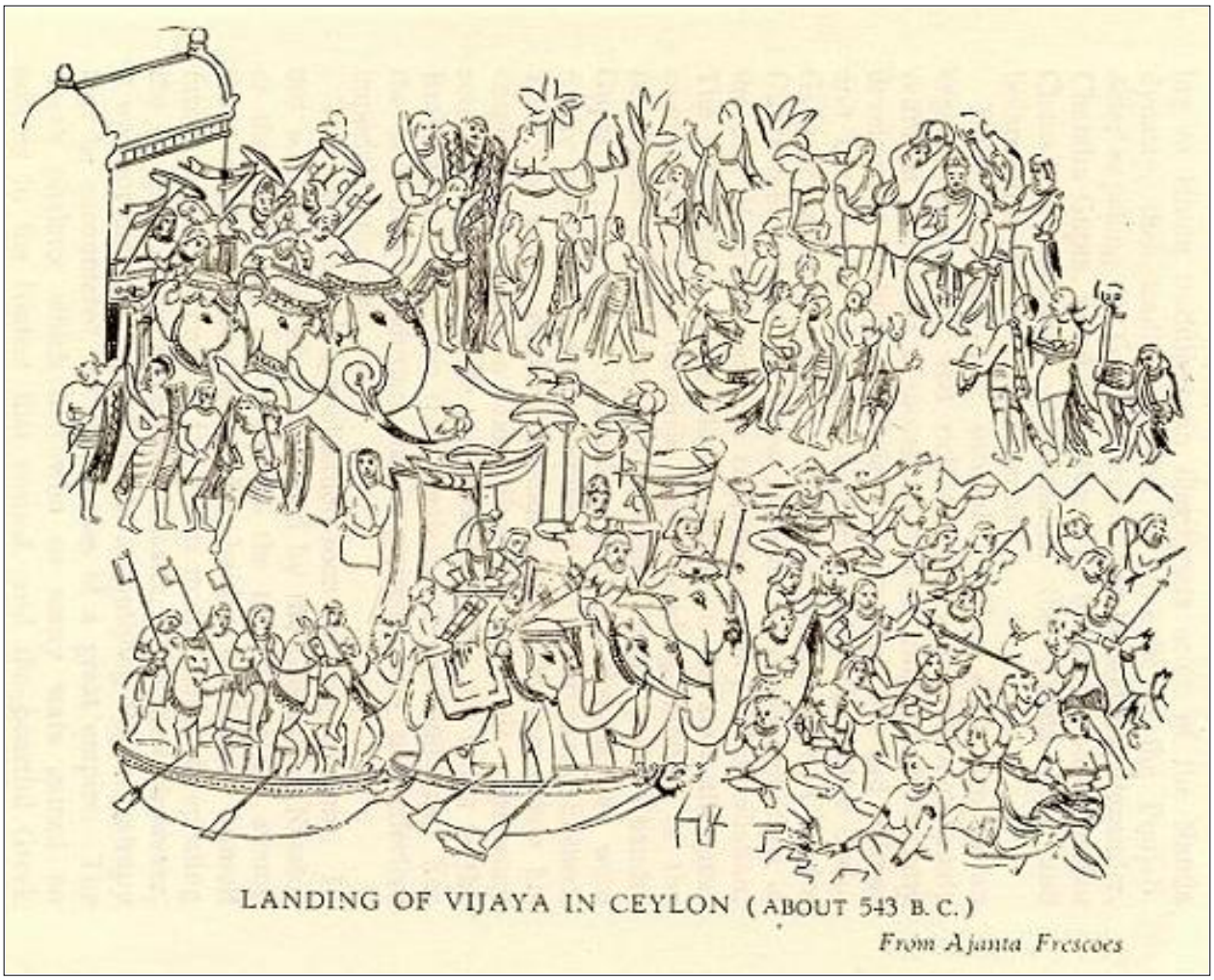
(source: **Bias in Indian Historiogarphy - Edited By Devahuti** D. K. Publishers' Distribution. New Delhi. 1980. p. 93).

In the middle of the 18th century, **John Grose** noted that at Surat the Indian ship-building industry was very well established, indeed, “They built incomparably the best ships in the world for duration”, and of all sizes with a capacity of over a thousand tons. Their design appeared to him to be a “a bit clumsy” but their durability soundly impressed him. **They lasted “for a century”.**

Lord Grenville mentions, in this connection, a ship built in Surat which continued to navigate up the Red Sea from 1702 when it was first mentioned in Dutch letters as “the old ships” up to the year 1700.” Grenville also noted that ships of war and merchandise “not exceeding 500 tons” were being built” with facility, convenience and cheapness” at the ports of Coringa and Narsapore.

Dr. H. Scott sent samples of **dammer** to London, as this vegetable substance was used by the Indians to line the bottom of their ships; he thought it would be a good substitute “in this country for the materials which are brought from the northern nations for our navy…There can be no doubt that you would find dammer in this way an excellent substitute for pitch and tar and for many purposes much superior to them.”

source: **Decolonizing History: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West 1492 to the Present Day - By Claude Alvares** p. 68-69).



(source: India Through the ages - By K. M. Panikkar)

The largest ships carried 10,000 talents or 250 tons. Ajanta painting of a later date depict horses and elephants aboard the ship which carried **Prince Vijaya to Sri Lanka.**

Megasthenes informs us that there was a class of ship-builders among the artisans who were salaried public servants and not permitted to work for any private persons. The ships built by them in royal shipyards were, however, let out on hire both to those who undertook voyages and to professional merchants. The fact that shipping and sea-trade received adequate attention under the Mauryas is made clear by the reference to the Superintendent of Ships in the Arthasastras. The **Periplus of the Erythraean Sea**, a marine guidebook of 1st century A.D. by an anonymous Graeco-Egyptian takes note of several ports on the Indian coast. Beginning from the mouth of the Sindh, notice is taken of Barbaricum. Then follows Barygaza, ie. modern Broach. In Dachinabades two sea ports are mentioned namely, Supara and Calliena, both situated near Bombay (Mumbai). Muziris was the most important port of Kerala. It gained prominence after the discovery of the monsoons and was always crowded with a large number of Greek and Arab ships. Nelceynda was another port of Kerala located 500 stadia or 50 miles south of Muzaris. Near Kanya Kumari also there were two ports named Paralia and Balita. All these ports were well looked after either by the local or the imperial rulers of India. The ports served as the chief source of state revenue. (For more information refer to chapter on **India and Egypt**)

Chinese travelers like **Fa-hsien, Hsuang-tsang** and **I-tsing** invariably speak of Tamralipti, the main outlet for north Indians who wanted to travel to Southeast Asia via Lanka or by a more direct route. From the volume of exports and imports and the variety of goods exchanged it appears that considerable facilities were available at all the ports. **Light houses were provided, remains of some are extant. Late Sinhalese sources speak of an artificial harbor made during the time of Karikal Chola (1st century A. D)**.

According to the Divyavadana the desire to amass wealth without making a sea voyage is like an effort to fill a pitcher with a few drops.

The work also records that the captain of a ship reminded the passengers that there were more perils than pleasure in

seafaring. Many went out but few came back and that it was rare to sail six times successfully across the ocean. This narration points out the hazards of deep sea sailing but there is no scope for suggesting that the Indians hated the sea. The Jatakas, the Manimekhalai, Raghuvamsa, Tilakamanjari, Kathasaritsagara, etc. abound in tales of the sea as exciting as they are terrifying and point to the Indians familiarity with, and lure of the sea. The **Yuktikalapataru of Bhoja** (11 the century A.D.) affirms that the king who has boats, wins war, and the king who through ignorance does not keep boats, loses his prestige, vigor and treasury. This text also supplies details regarding the construction of ships. (For more please refer to chapter on **War in Ancient India**). The Jaina texts like the Gyatadharma Avasyaka-chou-ko-ta'an (1122 A.D.) mentions large ships from Kalinga that carried several hundred men and smaller ones which carried hundred or more men.



Marco Polo found Socotra a prey to multitudes of Hindu pirates who encamped there and sold off their booty. He speaks of Aden as a "port to which many ships of India come with their cargo." He also gives details regarding the size, form fittings and mode of repairing of Indian ships. **He remarks about the strength of Indian ships and says that they were built to last a hundred years.** Marco Polo saw ships so large as to require a crew of 300 men, and other ships that were manned by crews of 200 and 150 men. **Friar Odoric** (A.D. 1321) traveled in a ship owned by a Gujarati Rajput that carried a load of 700 people.

Historian **Vincent Smith** remarks: "This is a confirmation of the account we have of those large ships from the time of Agatharcides down to the 16th century, the ships of Gujarat which traversed the Indian ocean in all ages."

There is an even earlier mention of Rajput ships sailing between Sumena (Somnath) and China in Yule's Cathay. Abd-er-Razzak (A.D. 1442) informs us that "from Calicut vessels continually sailing for Mecca, which are for the most part laden with pepper. The inhabitants of Calicut are adventurous sailors, and pirates do not dare to attack the vessels of Calicut." **Nicolo Conti** (15th century) acknowledged that the "natives of India build some ships larger than ours." In 1510 Albuquerque met Hindu sailors and traders in Java and Malacca.

Indian land-lubbery was not synchronous with the coming of Islam, nor with the Middle Ages. The Bay of Bengal was a Chola lake in the 11th century. A ship built at an Indian dockyard is said to have been used in the Napoleonic wars. **In fact Indian navigational expertise and enthusiasm seems to have suffered in direct proportion to the British economic policies reducing India to the position of a mere supplier of raw materials.** People whose ships had trades with the Mediterranean world in the west, and with the lands of gold in the east now considered themselves heroic if they made it to England to land at Lincoln's Inn!

(source: **Bias in Indian Historiogarphy - Edited By Devahuti** D. K. Publishers' Distribution. New Delhi. 1980. p. 90-100).

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Historian **Radha Kumud Mookerji**

"We now know that many ports on both Eastern and Western Coast had navigational and trade links with almost all Continents of the world. There are many natural and technological reasons for this. **Apart from Mathematics and Astronomy, India had excellent manufacturing skills in textile, metal works and paints. India had abundant supply of Timber. Indian - built ships were superior as they were built of Teak which resists the effect of salt water and weather for a very long time.** Lieut. Col. A Walker's paper "Considerations of the affairs of India" written in 1811 had excellent remarks on Bombay-built ships. He notes, "situated as she is between the forests of Malabar and Gujarat, she receives supplies of timber with every wind that blows." Further he says, "it is calculated that every ship in the Navy of Great Britain is renewed every twelve years. It is well known that teakwood built ships last fifty years and upwards. Many ships Bombay-built after running fourteen or fifteen years have been brought into the Navy and were considered as stronger as ever. The Sir Edward Hughes performed, I believe, eight voyages as an Indiaman before she was purchased for the Navy. No Europe-built Indiaman is capable of going more than six voyages with safety." He has also further noted that Bombay-built ships are at least one-fourth cheaper than those built in the docks of England.

(source: **Indian Shipping** - **A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Marine Activity of The Indians From The Earliest Times** 1912).

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Products Traded

Indian Exports

Food: Rice, Wheat, Sugar,
Spices: Turmeric, Pepper, Cinnamon, Nard, Spikenard, Costus, Bdellium, Aloes, Indigo, Lycioum, Sesame oil, Cotton, Silk
Animals: Lion, Tiger, Parrot, Hides and furs, skins, Horns and tails, wool, Ivory, Tortoise shells, Pearls, Lac, Log of Ebony, Teakwood, Blackwood, Sandalwood, Bhurja Leaves, Bamboo
Mineral: Diamond, Agate and Carnelian, Sapphire, Quartz, Crystal, Beryls, Lapislazuli, Garnet, Asbestos, Turquoise, Copper.

Indian Imports

Sesame, Flax and Linen, Parchment wine, gold, Horse, Peach and apricot, sweet clover, silver, tin, copper, lead, ruby, topaz, glass, corals, amber,

Teakwood

It is the best building timber as it can resist the action of water. Theophrastos mentions that ship builders built ships of this wood of India in the Persian Gulf. Town of Siraf on the Persian Gulf was entirely built of this wood and in 1811 teak was found in the walls of a Persian palace near Baghdad (7th century B.C.E.) The Susa inscription of Darius clearly mentions the import of teakwood in Persia. The Periplus states that large vessels were regularly sent from Barygaza loaded with timbers of teakwood to Oman. Realizing the export importance of teakwood Kautilya made provision for the Superintendent for forest produce.

(source: **Foreign Trade and Commerce in Ancient India - By Prakash Charan Prasad** p.203-212).

State patronage with the strength of the organized guilds greatly increased the prosperity of the country. Megasthenes records how prices were regulated by state-trading. The idea was that staple commodities were bought when they were cheap and released when the prices were high, just to bring the prices down. This was really a measure far ahead of its time. As historian **A. L. Basham** points out:

"It is striking that ancient Indian political theorists anticipated by over 2000 years the plans put forward by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for maintaining a stable level of prices of staple commodities on a world-wide scale.

(source: **Ancient Indian History and Culture - By Chidambara Kulkarni** Orient Longman Ltd. 1974. p. 104).

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Land Trade

The land trade of India extended to China, Turkistan, Persia, Babylon and sometimes also to Egypt, Greece and Rome. Historian **Vincent Smith** writes:

"The country in the north with which India traded was China." "The name China is of Hindu origin and comes to us from India."

(source: **Early History of India - By Vincent Smith** Vol. II, p. 574-575).

The author of Periplus, after describing the geographical position of China, says: "Silk was imported from that country, but the persons engaged in this trade were the Indians themselves." It may, however, be added, in the words of an English critic: "It is not improbable that silk was also indigenous in India even at a remote epoch."

(source: **Asiatic Researches** Volume II. p. 286. Also refer to Schlegel, Berlin Calendar p. 9 1829).

E. B. Havell (1861-1934) principal to the Madras College of Art in the 1890s, says: "From the sea ports of western and

eastern coasts India at this time also sent streams of colonists, priests and craftsman all over Southern Asia, Ceylon, Siam and far distant Cambodia. Through China and Korea Indian art entered Japan about the middle of the sixth century. About 603 A.D. Indian colonists from Gujarat brought Indian art in Java and at Borobudur in the 8th and 9th centuries. Indian sculpture achieved its greatest triumphs."

(source: **Ancient Indian Culture At A Glance - By Swami Tattwananda** p. 214).



Vishnu Belahan, Java

As regards the trade with central and northern Asia, we are told that "the Indians make expeditions for commercial purposes into the golden desert Ideste, desert of Cobi (Gobi) in armed companies of a thousand or two thousand men. But according to report, they do not return home for three or four years. The Takhti, Suleman, or the stone tower mentioned by Ptolemy and Ctesias was the starting point for Hindu merchants who went to China.

India traded with Europe by sea as well as by land. Foreign trade of a nation presupposes development of its internal trade. Specially is this true of a large country like India, with varied products, vast population and high civilization.

Professor Lassen of Paris considers it "remarkable that the Hindus themselves discovered the rich, luxurious character of India's products; many of them are produced in other countries, but remained unnoticed until sought for by foreigners, whereas the most ancient Hindus had a keen enjoyment in articles of state and luxury. Rajas and other rich people delighted in sagacious elephants, swift horses, splendid peacocks, golden decorations, exquisite perfumes, Pungent peppers, ivory, pearls, games etc. and consequently caravans were in continued requisition to carry down these innumerable other matters between the north and the south and the west and east of their vast and varied country. These caravans, it is conjectured, were met at border stations and about ports by western caravans or ships bound to or from Tyre and Egypt, or to or from the Persian Gulf and Red Sea."

(source: **Ancient and Mediaeval India - By** Vol. II. p. 348). Ind. Alterthumskunde. For more information refer to chapter on **India and Egypt**).



Professor Heeran remarks, "The internal trade of India could not have been inconsiderable, as it was in a certain degree prescribed by nature herself." Royal roads were constructed all over the country from east to west and from north to south, in addition to the numerable rivers, along the banks of which considerable commerce was carried on.

The Encyclopedia Britannica says:

"It (India) exported its most valuable produce, its diamonds, its silks, and its costly manufactures. The country which abounded in those expensive luxuries, was naturally reputed to be the seat of immense riches, and every romantic tale of its felicity and glory was readily believed. In the Middle Ages, an extensive commerce with India was still maintained through the ports of Egypt and the Red Sea; and its precious produce imported into Europe by the merchants of Venice, confirmed the popular opinion of its high refinement and its vast wealth."

Foreign commerce on such a gigantic scale was one of the principle causes of the immense riches of ancient India.

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The Hindu Period in The Indian Ocean: A Naval Power

The spread of Hindu thought was an intellectual conquest, not an exchange of ideas. The Far East counted for nothing in her internal history, doubtless because China was too distant and the other countries had no special culture of their own. **Still it is remarkable that whereas many Hindu missionaries preached Buddhism in China, the idea of making Confucianism known to India seems never to have entered the head of any Chinese.** There was never any question of colonizing or civilizing rude races.

Manu, the great lawgiver, provides in his Code, for shipping and port dues, while **Kautalya's Arthasastra**, an authoritative work on administration which was written in the fourth century B.C. lays down the functions of the Port Commissioner and Harbor Master. The Board of Shipping was one of the six departments of the Mauryan Emperors. At the head of it was a Minister who dealt with all matters relating to shipping, including the navigation of the oceans. There under him a staff of commissioners, harbor masters, etc. whose duty it was to look after ships in distress. As the Mauryan ports were mainly on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, this is conclusive evidence of the growth of trade and shipping in that sea as early as the fourth century B.C.

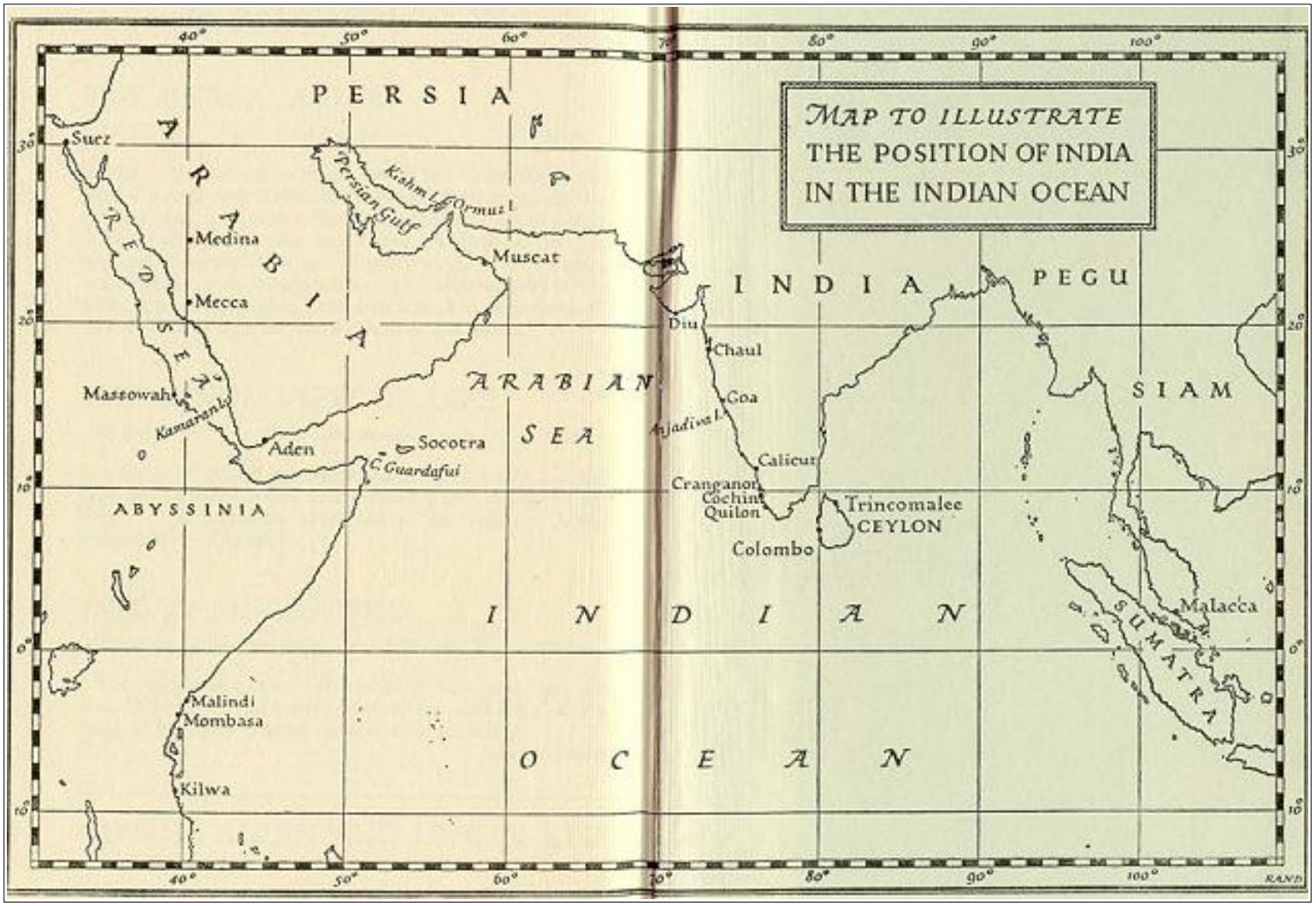
We have also evidence of regular maritime traffic by the Hindus in the South China seas before the Christian era. At the beginning of that period both Chinese records and the Greek geographer Ptolemy record the existence of Indian colonies in the present territory of South east Asia.

Sir Charles Elliot (1862-1931), British diplomat and colonial administrator, a famous scholar and linguist of Oxford, observed on his book **Hinduism and Buddhism** observes:

"This outgrowing of Indian influence, so long continued and so wide in extent, was naturally not the result of any one impulse. At no time can we see in India any passion of discovery, any fever of conquest such as possessed Europe when the New world and the route to the East round the Cape were discovered. India's expansion was slow, generally peaceful and attracted little attention at home. **The Hindus produced no Tamerlanes or Babers, but a series of expeditions, spread over long ages, but still not few in number, carried them to such distant goals as Java and**

Camboja.

We have also historical evidence of some of the continental powers using their naval power for purposes of conquest. Pulikesin II the Chalukya king who reigned in the first half of the seventh century led a naval expedition of considerable size. The Zamorin of Calicut gloried in the title of the Lord of the Mountain and the Ocean, and one of the first writs he issued after coronation was to permit the usual navigation of the sea. The Pandyas, Cholas and others also maintained powerful navies, while the Rulers of Malabar exercised naval sway over the seas of the Western coast.



The Hindu Period in The Indian Ocean
(source: India and the Indian Ocean - By K. M. Panikkar)

From the fifth century to the tenth the command of the Malacca Straits was in the hands of a great Indian naval power, based on Sumatra known to history as the Sri Vijaya Empire. This State included much of Peninsular Malaya, Sumatra and the Western half of Java besides numerous island principalities. **I'Tsing** who resided for some years in that Kingdom says that the King possessed numerous ships which sailed regularly between India and Sri Vijaya as also between Sumatra and China.

The Sri Vijaya Kings maintained a powerful navy which swept the sea of pirates and corsairs. Their naval power, well attested by their continuous raids on the coasts of Champa and Annam, is recorded both in local inscriptions and in Chinese annals, (e.g Po Nagar Stelae inscription of King Satya Varman 784 A.D. and in Yang Tikuh inscription of Indra Varman I, dated 787). With the Straits of Malacca firmly under their control and with their authority extending over the far flung group of islands, the Sri Vijaya Kings were in a position to enforce their rule over the Indian waves. Further, they were also closely connected with the Indian Kingdoms of the Eastern side of the Bay of Bengal especially with the Kalinga monarchs of Orissa.

Till the end of the tenth century, that is, for a period of nearly 500 years, the Sri Vijaya Kings were the Lords of the Ocean. But in 1007 the Chola Emperor Rajendra fitted out a powerful navy and challenged the might of Sri Vijaya. he not only defeated the opposing navy, but captured Kedah and established the Chola power on the Malaya Peninsula.

This hundred year war was of great importance for it weakened the Sri Vijaya power. **Chau Ju Kua**, the Imperial Chinese Inspector of Foreign Trade, in his work entitled **Chu Fau Chi** written in 1225 states that Sri Vijaya was not merely a great emporium of trade, but controlled the Straits of Malacca and thus was able to dominate the sea trade to China with the west. All ships passing through the Straits had to call at the capital and the maritime administration kept a close watch on traffic through the lane.

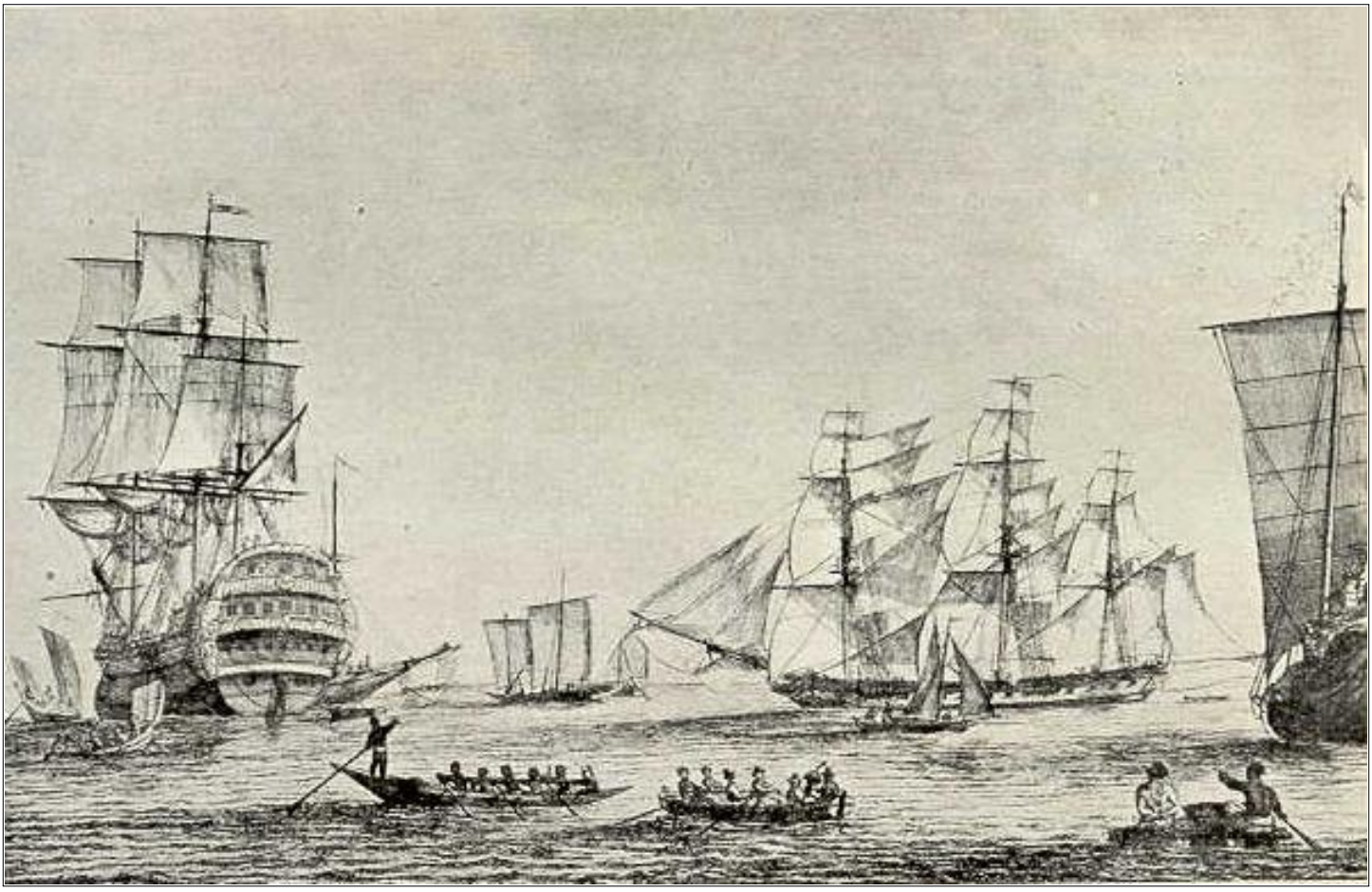
As regards to Sumatra, the Bombay Gazateer says: "The Hindu settlements of Sumatra was almost entirely from the east coast of India, and that Bengal, Orissa and Masulipatam had a large share in colonizing both Java and Cambodia cannot be doubted."

Charles Coleman wrote: "Mr. Anderson, in his account of his mission to the coast of that island (Sumatra) has, however, stated that he discovered at Jambi the remains of an ancient Hindu temple of considerable dimensions, and near the spot various mutilated figures, which would appear to clearly indicate the former existence of the worship of the Vedantic philosophy."

(source: **The Mythology of the Hindus** - with Notices of Various Mountain and Island Tribes, Inhabiting the Two Peninsulas of India and the Neighbouring Islands - **By Charles Coleman** p. 861).

Francois Balazar Solvyns (1760-1824) a French maritime painter, wrote a book titled "**Les Hindous**" (tome troisieme) in 1811. He lived in Calcutta from 1791-1803 and he remarked:

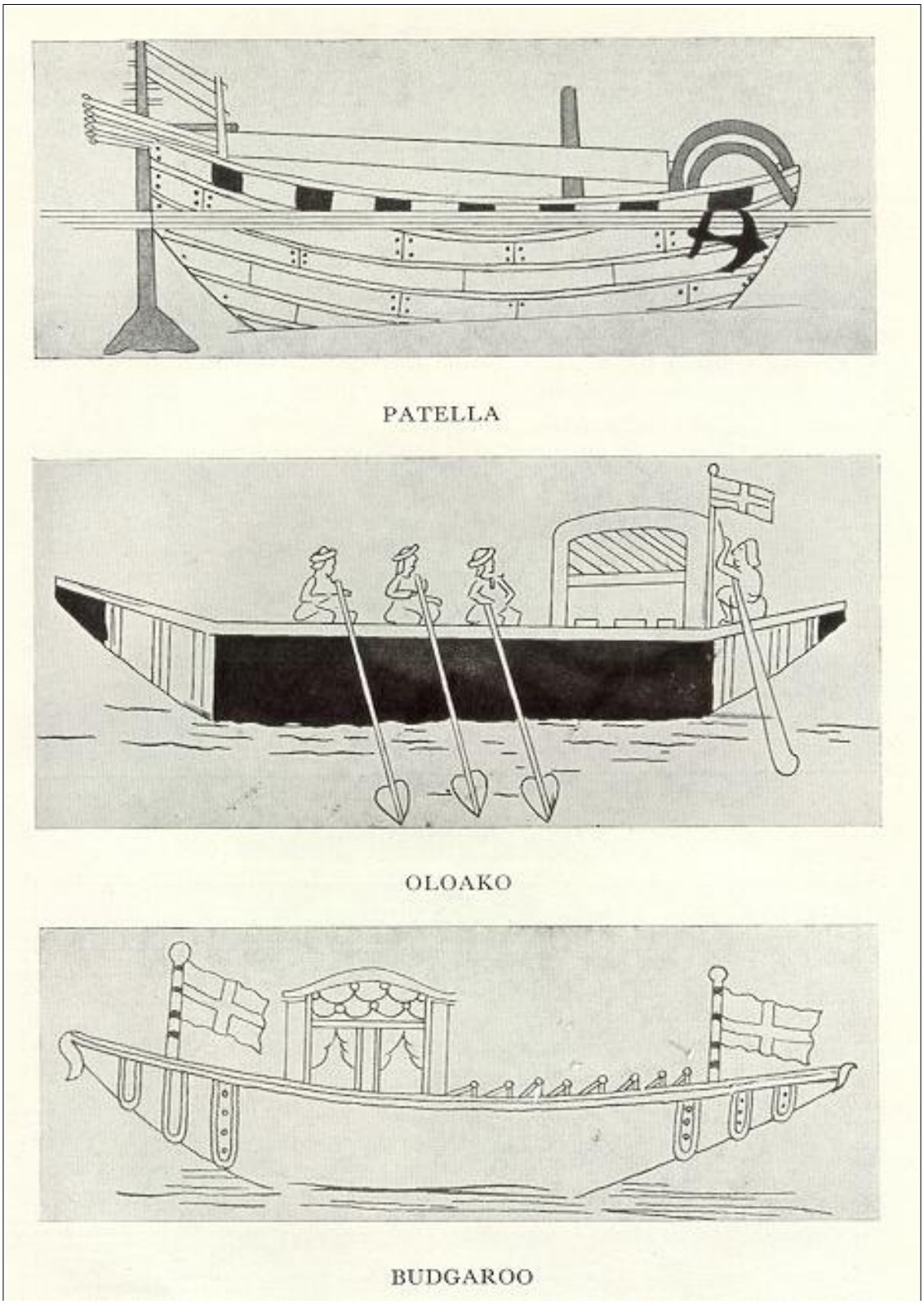
"In ancient times, the Indians excelled in the art of constructing vessels, and the present Hindus can in this respect still offer models to Europe-so much so that the English, attentive to everything which relates to naval architecture, have borrowed from the Hindus many improvement which they have adopted with success to their own shipping.... The Indian vessels unite elegance and utility and are models of patience and fine workmanship."



Indian Shipping: High Vessels - Pearl, fishers' Grabs and Catamarans - From "Les Hindous" French early 19th century work.

He has described some of the typical Indian vessels. A Pinnace or Yacht was a strongly masted ship, divided into two or three apartments, one for company, another for the beds, and a third as a cabinet, besides a place called varandah

forwards for the servants. Balesore, the principal entrance of the Hugli, is described as being frequented by different sort of vessels, and particularly by large ships from Bombay, Surat, and other parts of the western coast. The vessels from the Ganges were called Schooners, which were very well fitted out and "able to make a voyage to Europe." their pilots being very skilful. The Grab was a ship with three masts, a pointed prow, and a bowsprit, its crew consisting of a Nakhoda or captain and a few khelasses or sailors. The grabs were built at Bombay, their pointed prow signifying **Hindu construction**. The Bangles were the largest Indian boats, some of them carrying four thousand or five thousand maunds of rice. Brigs were ships that came from the coast of Coromandel and Malabar, bringing to Calcutta the produce of those countries. To the coast of Coromandel (Cholamandel) also belonged the Dhoni, with one mast, resembling a sloop. Its deck consisted of a few planks fastened on each side. It was badly rigged. Pattooas, lastly, were those ships that differed from other vessels by their being clincher-built; "the boards are one upon the other, fastened by little pieces of iron in the form of cramps. The yard is always without sail, and the sails are hoisted and lowered by blocks."



PATELLA

OLOAKO

BUDGAROO

Some 17th century ships

Surprisingly, many earlier western traders and travelers have expressed the same views. Madapollum was a flourishing shipping center. **Thomas Bowrey**, an English traveler who visited India during 1669-79, observes, "many English merchants and others have their ships and vessels yearly built (at Madapollum). Here is the best and well grown timber in sufficient plenty, the best iron upon the coast, any sort of ironwork is ingeniously performed by the natives, as spikes, bolts, anchors, and the like. Very expert master-builders there are several here, they build very well, and launch with as much discretion as I have seen in any part of the world. They have an excellent way of making shrouds, stays, or any other rigging for ships".

Alain Danielou (1907- 1994) son of French aristocracy, author of numerous books on philosophy, religion, history and arts of India has written:

"India's naval dockyards, which belonged to the state, were famous throughout history. The sailors were paid by the state, and the admiral of the fleet hired the ships and crew to tradesmen for transporting goods and passengers. When the British annexed the country much later on, they utilized the Indian dockyards - which were much better organized then those in the West - to build most of the ships for the British navy, for as long as ships were made of wood."

(source: **A Brief History of India - By Alain Danielou** p. 106).

During the same period a great impetus was given to Indian shipping and maritime enterprise by the great **Shivaji, the great Maratha leader**. Shivaji, who liberally patronized the shipbuilding industry but the beginnings of the Maratha navy were laid a little earlier. In 1640 Shahji Bhonsle was able to achieve a naval victory over the Portuguese off Reradanda. Shahji was helped in his expedition by **Tukoji,** whose son, the famous **Kanhoji Angray**, occupied such an important position in the Maratha navy of the times. Under Shivaji the growth of the Maratha was accompanied by the formation of a formidable fleet. Sivaji believed in the doctrine Jalaim jasya, valaim tasya and so proceeded to organize the Maratha navy on sound lines. In 1698 Kanhoji Angray succeeded to the command of the Maratha navy with the title of Dariya Saranga. Angray soon became a menace to the European traders along the west coast and in 1707 his ship attacked the frigate Bombay, which was blown up after a brief engagement. The career of Angray was one long series of naval exploits and achievements rare in the annals of Indian maritime activity but unfortunately **"dismissed in a few words by our Indian historians."**

(source: **Indian Shipping** - **A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Marine Activity of The Indians From The Earliest Times** 1912 p. 183 -184).

The following account of **Orme**, describing the features of the Maratha ships and Angrey:

" The piracy which Angray exercised upon ships of all nations indifferently who did not purchase his passes, rendered him every day more and more powerful. His fleet consists of **grabs and gallivats**, vessels peculiar to the Malabar coast..."

(source: **Bombay Gazetteer**, Volume I part ii p. 89).

In the days of the sailing ships and oaken vessels, the naval engineering of the Hindus was efficient and advanced enough to be drawn upon with confidence for European shipping. At Madapollum, for example, on the Madras coast, many English merchants used to have their vessels yearly built. The Hindu ship architects could ingeniously perform all sorts of iron works, e. g., spikes, bolts, anchors, etc. "Very expert master-builders there are several here," says the English traveler, **Thomas Bowrey** in his **Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal** (1669-1675); "they build very well, and launch with as much discretion as I have seen in any part of the world. They have an excellent way of making shrouds, stays, or any other riggings for ship."

Writing even as late as 1789, on the eve of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, Solvyns, the French traveler, could still recommend, in his Les Hindous (Vol. III, 1811), the Hindu method of uniting the planks are "not unworthy of the imitation of Europeans." He says, **"In ancient times the Hindus excelled in the art of constructing vessels, and the present Hindus can in this respect still offer models to Europe."**

In the building of the boat the Hindus began by choosing a large piece of timber which they bent as they pleased. To the two ends of this they attached another piece thicker than it, and covered this simple frame with planks; "but they have a particular manner of joining these plants to each other, by flat cramps with two points which enter the boards to be joined, and use common nails only to join the plants to the knee. For the sides of the boat they have pieces of wood which out pass the planks. This method is as solid as it is simple."

The Portuguese "imitated" the pointed prow in their Indian ships. This was a characteristic feature of the grab, a Hindu ship with three masts. The industrial and material culture of Old India was thus sufficiently vital to influence contemporary Europe at the threshold of the 19th century civilization. The tradition is reported also by old American sea-captains that fishing boats like the sloop, yawl, cutter, etc. so common in the United States waters were modeled in the '"colonial period" on Hindu patterns.

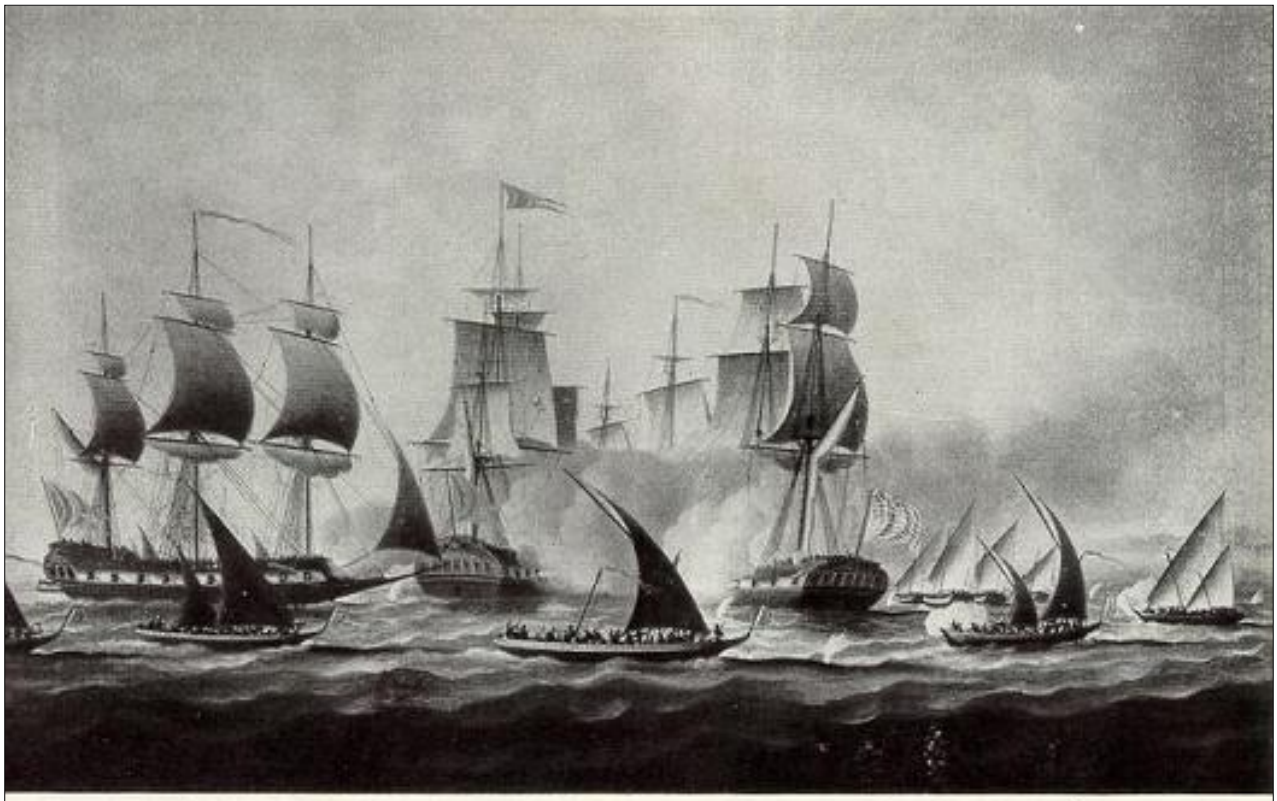
(source: **Creative India - By Benoy Kumar Sarkar** p. 105).

Francois Balazar Solvyns (1760-1824) a French maritime painter, has made the following observation in his book, **"Les Hindous"**

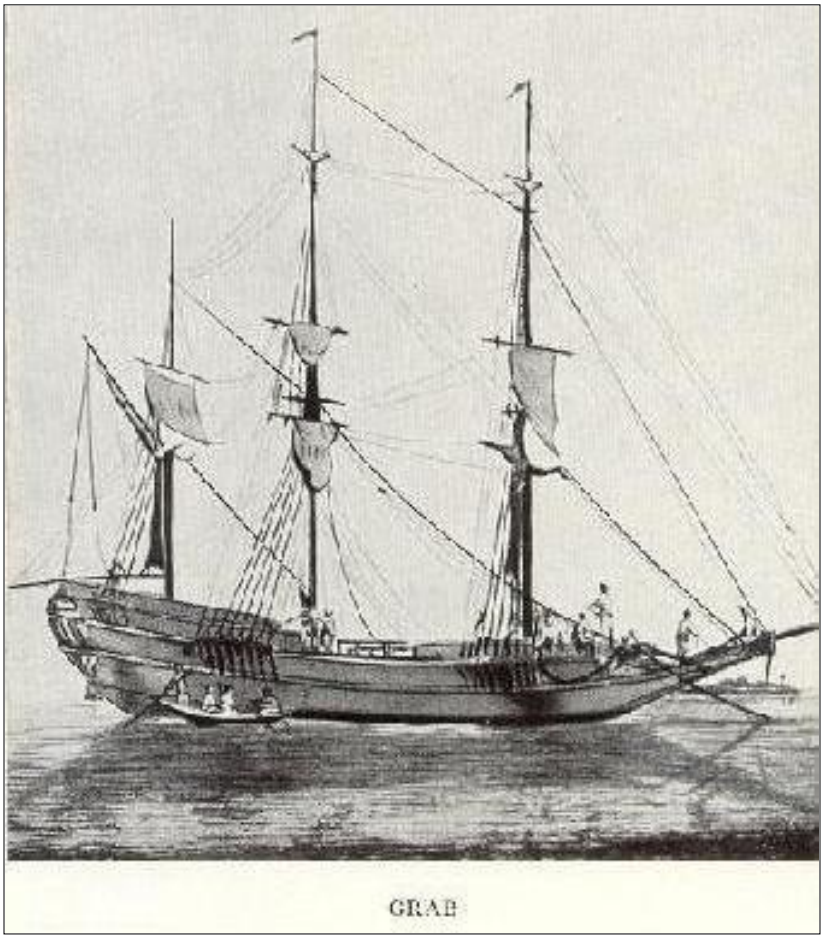
Introducing the 40 or so sketches of boats and river vessels in use in Northern India in the 1790s, he observes, **"the English, attentive to everything which relates to naval architecture, have borrowed from the Hindoos many improvements which they have adapted with success to their own shipping."**

Commenting on Indian rowing an early eighteenth century observer remarked: "Their water-men row after a different manner from ours. They move the oar with their feet, and their hands serve instead of the hypomochlion, or roller on which it turns."

(source: **Indian Science and Technology in the Eighteenth Century: Some Contemporary European Accounts - By Dharampal** Impex India. p.LVII).



'MAHRATTA GRABS AND GALLIVATS ATTACKING AN ENGLISH SHIP'
From the picture in the possession of Major J.B. Paget



Mahartha Grab and Gallivat ships attacking an English ship
(source: History of Indian Shipping - By Radha Kumud Mukerjee).

Har Bilas Sarda author of **Hindu Superiority** (1906) wrote:

"They built ships, navigated the sea, and held in their hands all the threads of international commerce, whether carried on over land or by sea."

Colonel James Tod author of author of **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India** ISBN 8120612892 says:

"The Hindus of remote ages possessed great naval power."

(source: **Hindu Culture and The Modern Age - By Dewan Bahadur K.S. Ramaswami Shastri** - Annamalai University 1956 p. 74-75).

From the teak forests, which were numerous along the western coasts, the Indians built their ships. **Bishop Reginald Heber** wrote in 1824, ships built by native artisans are notoriously as good as any which sail from London or Liverpool.

(source: **Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India - Bishop Reginald Heber** Vol. I and II p. 176).

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Retrospect

Dynasty after dynasty succeeded to the position of paramount power in the land, but the course of commerce ran smooth through all these changes. This is shown on the one hand, unmistakably by the books of Roman writers with their remarkably accurate details regarding Indian exports and imports, and harbors, and on the other hand, by the unimpeachable testimony of many finds of Roman coins both in Northern and Southern India.

A consideration of the kind of things which India sent abroad in exchange for the things she imported and a glance at the list of Indian exports and imports such as that given in that most interesting work on oriental commerce, the Periplus

of the Erythraean Sea, will reveal certain peculiar features regarding the economic system of ancient India, to which has been traced the proverbial **"wealth of Ind"** by many scholars. As remarked by Major J. B. Keith, in an article in the Asiatic Quarterly Review (July, 1910), "the old prosperity of India was based on the sound principle which is, that after clothing and feeding your own people, then of your surplus abundance give to to the stranger." The result was the development of an external trade to which we owe, on the one hand, the great cities like Baalbek and Palmyra in the desert, and, on the other hand, "those great monuments of art, which India was enabled to erect after clothing and feeding her own people." And of the many satrapies of Darius, India was the only one, which could afford to pay her to tribute in gold to him. Finally, we should not miss the point of Pliny's famous complaint about allowing India to find a market for her superfluous manufactured luxuries in Rome, and thereby suck out her wealth and drain her of gold.

It may be noted that it was India's wonderful achievement in applied chemistry more than her skill in handicraft that enabled India to command for more than a thousand years (from Pliny to Tavernier) the markets of the East as well as the West, and secured to her an easy and universally recognized pre-eminence among the nations of the world in exports and manufactures. Some of the Indian discoveries in chemical arts and manufactures are indicated as early as the 6th century A.D. by Varahamihira in the Brihat-Samhita.

Besides the trade with the West generally, there was also developed along with it a trade with the East. The West alone could not absorb the entire maritime activity of India, which found another vent in a regular traffic in the Eastern waters between Bengal and Ceylon, Kalinga, and China and Suvarnabhumi, and a complete navigation, in fact, of the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean and laid the foundation of a Greater India.

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"Almost from the dawn of her history, it has been the privilege of India to carry the torch of her unique ideals to distant lands and inspire them to noble adventures, both in the inner and outer fields of human activity. The culture of India has been like a sky-high tower of light shedding its lustre on the surrounding countries, even on those at the far ends of the earth, illuminating the mind of man, exalting his heart, ennobling his life and above all beckoning him on the realization of the highest spiritual destiny."

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisir Kumar Mitra** ASIN 8124200068 p. 161).

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Conclusion

Indian shipping has thus had a long and brilliant history covering a period of about five millennia from the very dawn of India's civilization in the Indus Valley. Both Hindu and Buddhistic texts are thus replete with references to the sea-borne trade of India that directly and indirectly demonstrate the existence of a national shipping and shipbuilding. It was one of the great national key industry of India. Indeed, all the evidence available clearly shows that for full thirty centuries India stood at the very heart of the commercial world, cultivating trade relations successively with the Phoenicians, Jews, Assyrians, Greeks, Egyptians, and Romans in ancient times, and Turks, Venetians, Portuguese, Dutch and English in modern times.

Professor Basham is not the only scholar to have underplayed India's achievements with regard to ship-building, navigation, and sea travel. The colonialist bias against Indian culture is fully matched by the Indian 'Marxist' bias against culture.

For example, **Marxist** historian, **B.S. Sharma's** oversimplification of facts for children plays havoc with the subject matter of history. He writes: "In early times the ancient Indians obtained some knowledge of navigation, and they contributed to the craft of ship-building. But since political powers had their seats of power far away from the coast and since there was no danger from the sea-side, the ancient Indian princes did *not* pay *any particular* attention to navigation." The italics clearly manifest Sharma's **negative treatment of India's accomplishments** whereas the obliteration of Pallavas and Cholas from his memory - important political power which were not far away from the coast - divulges his northern, perhaps Aryan and Brahmin bias.

There is enough evidence to prove that Indians maintained their maritime activity through out the ancient and mediaeval periods, naturally with variations in its extent and excellence, over such a long period of time. Both Basham and Marxist historians of India have presented untruth, and half truth as truth.



Non-Indian scholars, especially modern writers of secondary works, tend to play down India's importance in the evolution of South east Asian civilization. The eastward expansion of Hindu civilization has not yet been fully traced.

George Coedes French historian and author of **Indianized State of South East Asia** has said: "I am convinced that such research will reveal numerous facts which will indicate a much deeper Indianization of the mass of the population than the sociologists will at present admit."

Sylvain Levi French art Historian has shown how references in the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Mahaniddesa and Brihat-Katha that the products of Burma and Malaya Peninsula were known to Indian merchants and sailors and also some of its ports such as Suvarnakudya, Suvarnabhumi, Takkolam, Tamlin and Javam from at least first century A.D.

(source: **Ancient India - By V. D. Mahajan** p. 752-753).

That Indian traders and settlers repeatedly undertook journeys to Southeast Asia, despite the hazards and perils involved, speaks well for their physical prowess, courage, and determination, even if allowance for the pull of profit is made.

Historian **K. M. Panikkar**, who in his brilliant exposition, **India and the Indian Ocean**, speaks about the 'influence of the Indian Ocean on the shaping of Indian history.' For Panikkar, the geographical 'imperative' of the Indian Ocean – and indeed the Himalaya in the North – has conditioned and shaped the history and civilization of this subcontinent. 'The importance of geographical path on the development of history is only now receiving wide and general recognition,' he says.

Nand Kishore Kumar wonders:

"It will be hard to find a secondary source from any part of the world which will endorse Professor Basham's view. Indeed it is difficult to understand, how in view of incontrovertible primary evidence proving Indian maritime activity, extensive respect of space and time-span, intensive in terms of variety, tonnage and value, and altogether of far reaching consequences in material as well as ideational spheres, Professor Basham could have belittled that is when he found it worth a mention at all - this aspect of Indian civilization. **Is it because it is hurtful to the pride of a native of the British Isles which conquered the world through military strength but cannot compare with its erstwhile colony which for over a millennium dominated the world through civilized means?"**

(source: **Bias in Indian Historiogarphy - Edited By Devahuti** D. K. Publishers' Distribution. New Delhi. 1980. p. 90-100).

Dr. Vincent Smith has remarked, "India suffers today, in the estimation of the world, more through the world's ignorance of the achievements of the heroes of Indian history than through the absence or insignificance of such achievement."

(source: **Eminent Orientalists: Indian European American** - Asian Educational Services. p.314).

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U.S. adopts Indian Catamaran technology

Washington May 28 2003: The United States adopted **ancient Indian catamaran-making technology to construct fast ships** which were used with dramatic effect in the Iraq war, says a media report.

Among the equipment the Americans used to win the Iraq war were 100-feet catamaran ships to ferry tanks and ammunition from Qatar to Kuwait.

The ships, built with technology adapted from ancient Tamil methods to make catamarans, can travel over

2,500 kms in less than 48 hours, twice the speed of the regular cargo ships, and carry enough equipment to support about 5,000 soldiers, the Wall Street Journal reported yesterday.

Having a shallow draft, the boats can unload in rudimentary ports, allowing troops to land closer to the fight. — PTI

(source: **U.S. adopts Indian Catamaran technology** - hindu.com and **tribune.com**).

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Sailing down the seas of history

Charting the coastline from Mumbai to the very end of Gujarat, where India ends and Pakistan begins, the 1,000 nautical mile voyage that will end on February 11 is in preparation for another, more ambitious voyage. The sailors, calling themselves the Maritime Exploration and Research Group, is getting ready to follow the path of ancient Indian mariners from south India all the way to Indonesia.

Inspired by the Chola kings of the 11th century, who discovered the present-day Indonesian islands of Sumatra and Bali, the group is preparing to replicate the feat using traditional instruments and a boat resembling the vessels of yore.

Called the Simulation of Chola Navigation Techniques, the forthcoming expedition will attempt to cover the distance between Nagapatnam in southern India and the Indonesian islands."The expedition will aim to show that our ancient seafarers were in no way inferior to their Western counterparts," said B. Arunachalam, a researcher who is the moving spirit behind the expedition. The expedition has cost the team members nearly Rs.100,000 but they have received substantial assistance from the Indian Navy.

(source: **Sailing down the seas of history -** newindpress.com).

Books used for this chapter:

1. Bias in Indian Historiogarphy - Edited By Devahuti
2. Indian Shipping: A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Maritime Activity of the Indians From the Earliest Times - By R. K. Mookerjee
3. Foreign Trade and Commerce in Ancient India - By Prakash Charan Prasad

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Did You Know?

Close resemblance of Easter Island and Indus Valley Script

The Hindu and Buddhist cultures in Indonesia gradually extended to Polynesia through tradesmen and preachers of Indonesia some of whom might have settled down in Polynesia and were called the Arii or the Aryans. Dr. E. S. Cragihill Handy describes the story of Polynesian culture as "a mere index to Indian history."

Author of the 'Ancient Voyagers in Polynesia' is of opinion that Polynesian ancestors came from the west through the waters between Buru and Yap to eastern New Guinea and the Melanesian island and thence to Polynesia by a slow succession of West-East voyage.

The hypothesis of Indian contact with the Polynesians is strengthened by the discovery of the Easter Island scripts which closely resemble the scripts of the Indus Valley civilization.



Easter Island script and Indus Valley scripts compared
(source: The Indians And The Amerindians - By Dr. S. Chakravarti)

William Ellis, the well-known missionary and author of Polynesian Researches, has commented on the coincidences in language, mythology, etc. of the Polynesians with those of the Hindus, the natives of Madagascar, and the Americans. Bishop Heber, an authority on the Hindus stated "that many things which he saw among the inhabitants of India reminded him of the plates in Cook's Voyages" Recently, an Indian scholar, B. C. Chhabra, in his Vestiges of Indian Culture in Hawaii, has noticed certain resemblances between the symbols found in the petroglyohs from the Hawaiian Islands and those on the Harappan seals. Some of the symbols in the petroglyphs are described as akin to early Brahmi script.

The Meitei word 'Atea' of Manipur which means 'All Powerful Sky God' is found in New Zealand and some other Polynesian island with out any change in sound or meaning. In Hawaii island, 'Atea' has become 'Wakea.'

(source: **The Indians And The Amerindians - By Dr. B. Chakravarti** Self-Employment Bureau Publication Calcutta p. 125-151).

Edward Tregear, former President of the Polynesian Society, is cited by William Churchill, "Polynesian Wandering" (Carnegie Institution, 1911), p. 20 as stating the generally accepted view of Polynesian scholars to be that the Polynesians came from India, or from central Asia through India.

(source: **The Ayar-Incas - By Miles Poindexter** published by Horace Liveright New York 1930 Volume II p. 260).

Characters similar to those on the Indus seals have also been found on tablets excavated from Easter Island. This discovery has presented a difficult problem for the pre-historian. It is not known if the two belong to a common source, if one provided the model for the other, or if the similarity is purely accidental due to in accuracies of drawing. If the Indus models traveled about 13,000 miles eastward, it seems strange that the characters should have remained unaltered, because figures generally do not remain identical during prolonged transmission. And, if the seals were actually made in the Indus Valley and taken to the Easter Island, what is the explanation for the difference in arrangement between the two groups of seals?

(source: **Indian and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p. 4).

(For more on this topic, please refer to the chapter **India on Pacific Waves?**)

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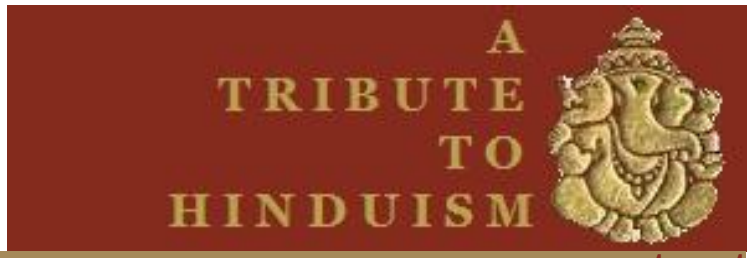



home seafaring in ancient india contents

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003



It is clear that the motives of Western scholarship in pursuing Indology were far from altruistic. Motivated western scholarship in India's religious, cultural and historical spheres has a checkered history. The pioneers in this field have been western Christian missionaries. It was Pope Honorius IV (1286-87 A.D.) who first encouraged the study of oriental languages as an aid to missionary work. Soon after, the Ecumenical Council of Vienna (1311-12 A.D.) decided that "the Holy Church should have an abundant number of Catholics well versed in the languages, especially in those of the infidels, so as to be able to instruct them in the sacred doctrine." In 1870, The First Vatican Council, Hindu beliefs were specifically selected for condemnation in the "five anathemas against pantheism" according to Jesuit John A. Hardon in the Church-authorized book, **The Catholic Catechism.**

History of Indology
The First Scholars
Thoughts of Modern Indian Scholars
Women in the Age of Imperialism
Technology and Culture in India
Conclusion
Articles

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History of Indology:

The first Westerners to investigate the Vedic literatures were the British in the last half of the eighteenth century. It was the British Sanskritists and educators in India, during the 1700 and 1800's, who **first portrayed Vedic literature and culture as something barbaric, inferior, and recent. This cultural prejudice** was the result of deliberate undermining with the disguised intention of asserting the superiority of their own Christian-based values and outlook, as well as the perpetuation of colonial rule. India was the centerpiece of Britain's imperialistic exploits. **And many of the notable professors at the time had the audacity to consider themselves to be better authorities on their questionable translations of the Vedas then the Indian scholars.** Western Indology itself, has its roots in European colonialism and Christian missionary propaganda.



Pope Honorius IV encouraged the study of oriental languages as an aid to missionary work.

It was Indologist **W.W. Hunter** who said: **"Scholarship is warmed with the holy flame of Christian zeal."**

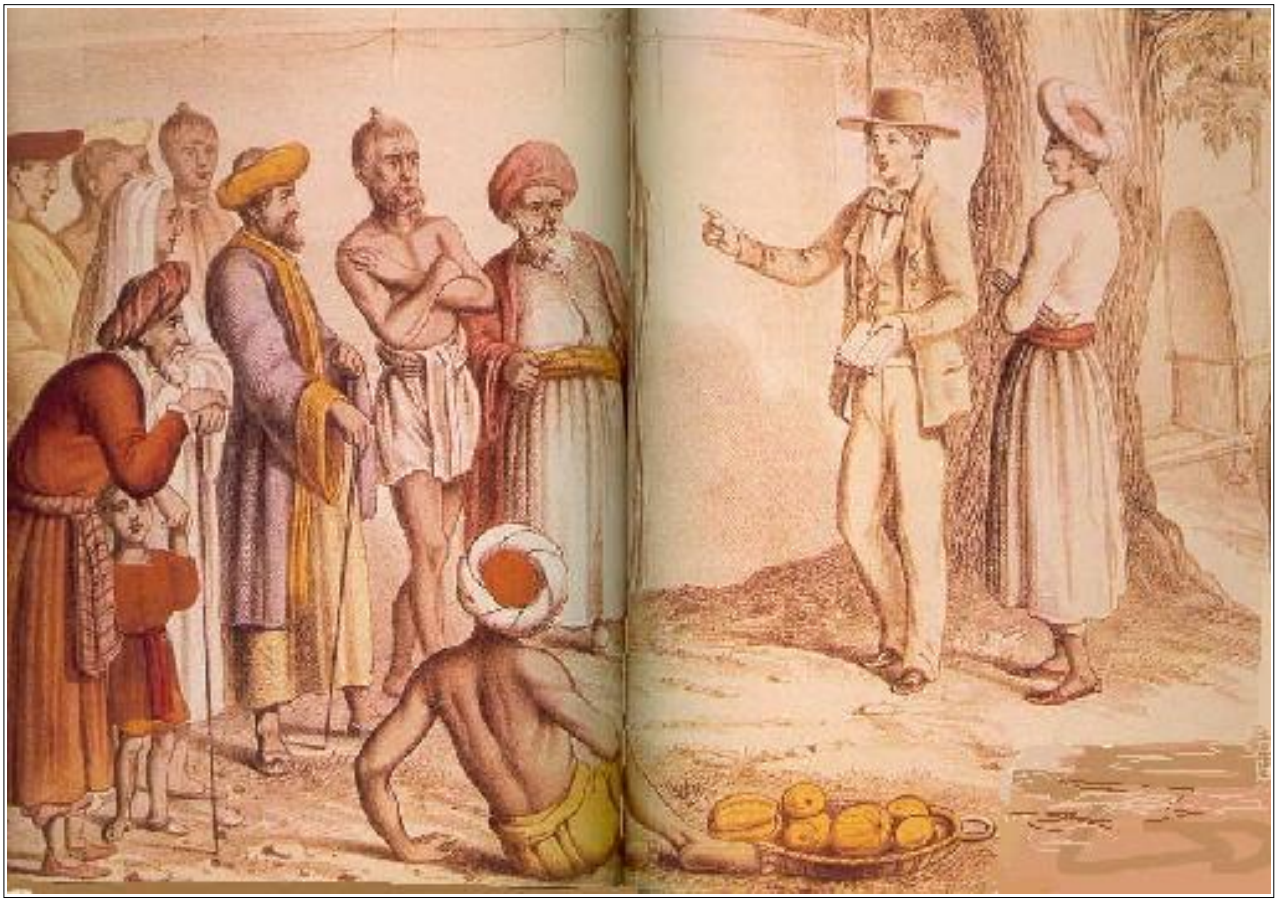
On November 7th, 1919, "The Daily Telegraph (London), wrote: "There is no Civilization known to the world except that of Christianity." All then who are not Christians are uncivilized." **Cardinal Bourne**, speaking about this time at Waterford, said:

" When you come to nations where Christianity had not penetrated, there was no civilization in our sense of the word except fragments which they had picked up from the Christian Civilized Nations."

(source: **Is India Civilized: Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p.28).

Catholic Bishop of Plymouth wrote of the books "dignified" by the Sanskritists under the name "Sacred Books of the East" as being **"gibberish".**

At first the British government was careful not to force any change in religion upon the Indian people. This policy seemed judicious for ruling the several hundred million Indian citizens without precipitating rebellion. It can be easily summed up in the words of a tea-dealer **Mr. Twinning,** "As long as we continue to govern India in the mild, tolerant spirit of Christianity, we may govern it with ease; but if ever the fatal day should arrive, when religious innovation shall set her foot in that country, indignation will spread from one end of the Hindustan to the other, and the arms of fifty millions of people will drive us from that portion of the globe, with as much ease as the sand of the desert is scattered by the wind". Another point of view in support of that policy was by Montgomery. "Christianity had nothing to teach Hinduism, and no missionary ever made a really good Christian convert in India. He was more anxious to save the 30,000 of his country-men in India than to save the souls of all the Hindu by making them Christians at so dreadful a price".



A British Protestant missionary expounds on Christian doctrine to the natives.
(source: What Life Was Like In The Jewel In The Crouwn - Time Life).

Despite facing such resistance in the beginning, missionaries won the battle in 1813 resulting in full right to visit and preach their religion in India. The Christian population in India in 1893 was around 600,000 but today it has grown up to 24 million, an increase of 4000% in 106 years!

However, soon, "the company manifested a laudable zeal for extending, as far as its means went, the knowledge of the Gospel to the pagan tribes among whom its factories were placed." The British showed very little interest in Hindu scriptures in the beginning. Doubtless this was in part a reflection of the usual British attitude to India during most of the period of the Raj: that **India as a whole was a profitable nuisance.**

Lord Cornwallis, a contemporary of William Jones, made his famous and bold announcement in "Every native of Hindostan, I verily believe, is corrupt."

The missionaries in India were always supporters of colonialism; they encouraged it and their whole structure was based on **"the good of Western civilized world being brought to the Pagans."** The Christian missionaries had no sympathy for Hinduism which, in their view, was **"at best, work of human folly and at worst the outcome of a diabolic inspiration."**

(source: **Ancient India - By V. D. Mahajan** p. 1).

Preacher, **William Archer**, wrote in his book, **India and the Future**:

"The plain truth concerning the mass of the [Indian] population — and the poorer classes alone — is that they are not civilized people."

Reverend A. H. Bowman wrote that Hinduism was a:

"…great philosophy which lives on unchanged whilst other systems are dead, which as yet unsuplanted has its stronghold in Vedanta, the last and the most subtle and powerful foe of Christianity."

In the word of **Charles Grant** (1746-1823), **Chairman of the East India Company**:



"We cannot avoid recognizing in the people of Hindustan a race of men lamentably degenerate and base...governed by malevolent and licentious passions...and sunk in misery by their vices.."

Charles Grant, who exercised a tremendous influence in the Evangelical circles, published his Observations as early as 1797 in which he attacked almost every aspect of Indian society and religion, determined the "true place" of Indians "in the moral scale" by describing them as morally depraved, "lacking in truth, honesty and good faith"and "in every way different" from the British, enriched the ideological armoury of the Christian missionaries, and provided a justification as well as an agenda for the British rule.

(source: **Aryans and British India - By Thomas R. Trautmann** p.103).

In 1792, Charles Grant who for his over zeal for the conversion of the Hindus was known as the only Christian chairman of the East India Company wrote his infamous tract, Observations on the State among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to morals and means of improving them, written chiefly in the year 1792. In its pages, **Grant had advanced the theory that all problems of India and of the English of India could be reasonably traced and satisfactorily solved if the Hindus of India were converted to Christianity.**

Grant had been an active member of the **Clapham Sect** known also in the British Parliament by the name of **Evangelical Party** which had William Wilberforce as its leader.

Grant argued: "We proceed, the, to observe, that it is perfectly in the power of the country (England) by degrees, to impart to the Hindoos our language, afterwards, through that medium, to make them acquainted with our easy literary compositions, upon a variety of subjects; and, let not the idea hastily excite derision, progressively with the simple elements of our art, philosophy and (Christian dogma and tenets) religion. These acquisitions will silently undermine, and at length subvert the fabric of error (Hinduism); and all the objections that may be apprehended against such a change, are it is confidently believed, capable of solid answer."

(source: **The Hindu - By Krishna Vallabh Paliwal and Brahm Datt Bharti** p. 1-2).

"Aryan," a word that today evokes images of racial hatred and atrocity, was first used by Europeans to suggest bonds of kinship, as Thomas Trautmann shows in his far-reaching history of British Orientalism and the ethnology of India. When the historical relationship uniting Sanskrit with the languages of Europe was discovered, it seemed clear that Indians and Britons belonged to the same family. Thus the Indo-European or Aryan idea, based on the principle of linguistic kinship, dominated British ethnological inquiry. In the nineteenth century, however, an emergent biological "race science" attacked the authority of the Orientalists. **The spectacle of a dark- skinned people who were evidently civilized challenged Victorian ideas,** and race science responded to the enigma of India by redefining the Aryan concept in narrowly "white" racial terms. By the end of the nineteenth century, race science and Orientalism reached a deep and lasting consensus in regard to India, which Trautmann calls "the racial theory of Indian civilization," and which he undermines with his powerful analysis of colonial ethnology in India.)

As Thomas Trautmann puts it, " **Evangelical influence drove British policy down a path that tended to minimize and denigrate the accomplishments of Indian civilization and to position itself as the negation of the (earlier) British Indomania" that was nourished by belief in Indian wisdom."**

(source: **The Invasion That Never Was - By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 23-24).



The Evangelicals, horrified by the idea that Christians could take the idolatry and improprieties of a pagan culture seriously, seeing in India an unlimited field for missionary activity, and insisting that it was part of a Christian government's duty to promote this.

In 1790, **Dr. Claudius Bucchanan**, a missionary attached to the East India Company, arrived in Bengal. He was convinced that God had given the Company dominion over India for the specific purpose of India's christianization. "No Christian nation," he wrote, "ever possessed such an extensive field for the propagation of the Christian faith, as that afforded to us by our influence over the hundred million natives of Hindoostan. No other nation ever possessed such facilities for the extension the faith as we have in the government of a passive people, who yield submissively to our mild sway, reverence our principles, and acknowledge our dominion to be a blessing. Why should it be thought incredible that Providence hath been pleased, in a course of years to subjugate this Eastern empire to the most civilized nation in the world, for this very purpose."

His conviction was fully shared by **William Wilberfore** who proclaimed in the British Parliament in June 1813, "Our religion is sublime, pure and beneficent. Theirs is mean, licentious, and cruel."

(source: **History of Hindu-Christian Encounters - By Sita Ram Goel** South Asia Books July 1990 ISBN 9990049173 p.33).

Not long after his arrival, Claudius Bucchanan went further:

"Neither truth, nor honesty, honor, gratitude, nor charity, is to be found in the breast of a Hindoo." What a comment to make about a nation that gave the world the Vedas and the Upanishads, at a time when Europeans were still living in their caves!

Bucchanan traveled to Puri in Orissa and witnessed the annual *Ratha-yatra* (or as Bucchanan called it, 'The horrors of Juggernaut'). His description of Jagannatha – 'The Indian Moloch', has been recorded by the historian George Gogerly as- "…a frightful visage painted black, with a distended mouth of bloody horror." Perhaps, by seeing the face of Lord Jagannatha, the British hallucinated and saw a projection of their own international destiny of bloodshed and carnage. In any case, from the time the British observed the 'terrifying' sight of the Lord on **His gigantic chariot, the word 'juggernaut' entered the English language and became synonymous with any great force that crushes everything in its path.**

Gogerly went on to write –

"The whole history of this famous god (Krsna) is one of lust, robbery, deceit and murder…the history of the whole hierarchy of Hindooism is one of shameful iniquity, too vile to be described."

To most 18th century Englishmen, religion meant Christianity. Naturally racism played its part also. This attitude of Europeans toward Indians was due to a sense of superiority - a cherished conviction which was shared by every Englishman in India, from the highest to the lowest. Upon his arrival in 1810, the **Gov. General marquis of Hastings** wrote in his diary on October 2, 1813:

"the Hindoo appears a being merely limited to mere animal functions, and even in them indifferent.....with no higher intellect than a dog or an elephant or a monkey, might be supposed capable of attaining.."

(source: **The History and Culture of Indian People - By R. C. Majumdar** volume X, 2nd edition, Bombay, 1981, p. 338).

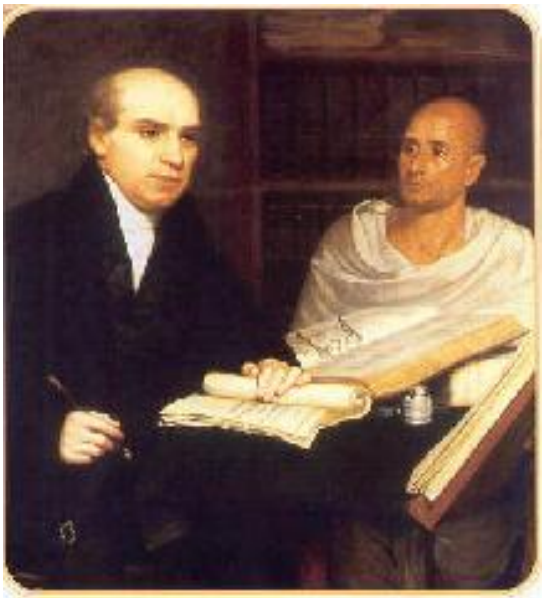
William Carey (1761-1834)



Without governmental sanction or license, the Christian evangelists came to India and proselytized to undermine the "superstitions of the country". The history of western (missionary) scholarship in Oriental Studies in India can be traced to William Carey, the pioneer of modern missionary enterprise in India. Carey was an English oriental scholar and founder of the Baptist Missionary Society. From 1801 onward, as Professor of Oriental Languages, he composed numerous philosophical works, consisting of 'grammars and dictionaries in the Mahratti, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Telugu, Bengali and Bhatanta dialects. From the Serampor press, there issued in his life time, over 200,000 Bibles and portions in nearly 40 different languages and dialects, Carey himself undertaking most of the literary work.' (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1950, Vol. 4, p. 860). Carey and his colleagues experimented with what came to be known as Church Sanskrit. **He wanted to train a group of 'Christian Pandits' who would probe "these mysterious sacred nothings" and expose them as worthless.** He was distressed that this "golden casket (of Sanskrit) exquisitely wrought" had remained "filled with nothing but pebbles and trash." He was determined to fill it with "riches - beyond all price", that is the doctrine of Christianity

(source: **Richard Fox Young, Resistant Hinduism,** Vienna, 1981, p. 34).

Carey a cobbler by profession, had published a book, **An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use means for the Conversion of the Heathens**, in 1792 while he was still in England.



Baptist William Carey learned to speak and read classical Indian languages with the help of Pandit Mrityunjay.

In the 19th century, Christian theologians were highly critical of Hinduism. **William Archer** wrote in his book, India and the Future, "The plain truth concerning the mass of the [Indian] population — and the poorer classes alone — is that they are not civilized people." However, these uncivilized people proved unenthusiastic about missionary promises that conversion would mean prosperity, wealth and education. **Reverend A.H. Bowman** wrote that Hinduism was a "great philosophy

which lives on unchanged whilst other systems are dead, which as yet un supplanted has its stronghold in Vedanta, the last and the most subtle and powerful foe of Christianity."

Alexander Duff (1806-1878) a prominent missionary, founded the Scots College, in Calcutta, which he envisioned as a "headquarters for a great campaign against Hinduism." Duff sought to convert the natives by enrolling them in English-run schools and colleges, and he placed emphasis on learning Christianity through the English language. He wrote,

" While we rejoice that true literature and science are to be substituted in place of what is demonstrably false, we cannot but lament that no provision has been made for substituting the only true religion-Christianity - in place of the false religion which our literature and science will inevitably demolish… Of all the systems of false religion ever fabricated by the perverse ingenuity of fallen man, Hinduism is surely the most stupendous."

(source: **The History and Culture of Indian People - By R. C. Majumdar** volume X, 2nd edition, Bombay, 1981, p. 155).

Duff received remarkable success in his educational and missionary activities amongst the higher classes in Calcutta. The number of students in the mission schools was four times higher than that in government schools. It is an axiomatic truth that the aim of missionaries like Duff was not so much education than conversion. They were obliged to use the excuse of education in order to meet he needs of the converted population, and more importantly, to train up Indian assistants to help them in their proselytizing. Duff remained unsatisfied with converting Indians belonging to low-castes and orphans – his chosen target was the higher castes, specifically the brahmanas, in order to accelerate the demise of Hinduism.

"India was the chief seat of Satan's earthly dominion"



John Muir (1810-1882) had come to Calcutta in 1828 as a civil servant of the East India Company. He was, for some time, a student of William Carey. He published his first draft of his **Matapariksha** in 1839. It drew three rejoinders from Hindu pandits, Somnatha, whose real name was Subaji Bapu, a Maharastrian scholar, Harachandra Tarkapanchanana and Nilakanth Gore.

In his publication, Muir asserted that miracles mentioned in Hindu scriptures were false and 'merely ornamental in that religion instead of being at its very center as in Christianity. This way of arguing is pompously called Evidential Apologetics in Christian theology. At one point, however, Muir was deliberately dishonest. **He criticized the cosmography of the Puranas as erroneous. Surely he must have known what Galileo and Copernicus had done to the cosmography of the Bible and how they had suffered persecution at the hands of the Church.**

(source: **History of Hindu-Christian Encounters - By Sita Ram Goel** p. 78 . **The Shadow of the Cross - By Sisir Kumar Das** 1974 p. 51-78).

Sir Charles Trevelyan, an officer, with the East India Company asserted in a widely circulated tract:

"The multitudes who flock to our schools ... cannot return under the dominion of the Brahmins. The spell has been for ever broken. Hinduism is not a religion that will bear examination... It gives away at once before the light of European sciences."

"Educated in the same way, interested in the same objects, engaged in the same pursuits with ourselves, they become more English than Hindus...The young men brought up in our

seminaries, turn with contempt from the barbarous despotisms, under which their ancestors groaned....Instead of regarding us with dislike, they court our society...the summit of their ambition is, to resemble us."

(source: **Christianity's Scramble for India and The Failure of the Secularist Elite - By N S Rajaram** p. 70).

The Crown of Hinduism, by the Scottish missionary, **J N Farquhar**, who worked in India in the cause of his brand of Christianity during the period 1891 to 1923. What this book tries to project is that while there may well be some good points in Hinduism, ultimately the true salvation can only be achieved through Jesus Christ, who is the crown of Hinduism.

Richard Temple, another high officer, said in a 1883 speech to a London missionary society intended to generate donations to missions: " India presents the greatest of all fields of missionary exertion... India is a country which of all others we are bound to enlighten with external truth...But what is most important to you friends of missions, is this - that there is a large population of aborigines, a people who are outside caste....If they are attached, as they rapidly may be, to Christianity, they will form a nucleus round which British power and influence may gather. He addressed a mission in New York in the most explicit terms: "Thus India is like a mighty bastion which is being battered by heavy artillery. We have given blow after blow, and thud after thud, and the effect is not at first very remarkable; but at last with a crash the mighty structure will come toppling down, and it is our hope that someday the heathen religions of India will in like manner succumb."

According to **Kate Teltscher** in her book **India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India 1600-1800.** p. 94, 22



"One **Professor McKenzie**, of Bombay found the ethics of India defective, illogical and anti-social, lacking any philosophical foundation, nullified by abhorrent ideas of asceticism and ritual and altogether inferior to the 'higher spirituality' of Europe. He devoted most of his book '**Hindu Ethics**' to upholding this thesis and came to the conclusion that Vedic philosophical ideas, 'when logically applied leave no room for ethics'; and that they prevent the development of a strenuous moral life."

All efforts were made by the missionaries to portray Hinduism as backwards, illogical, debauched and perverse. As one preacher exclaimed,

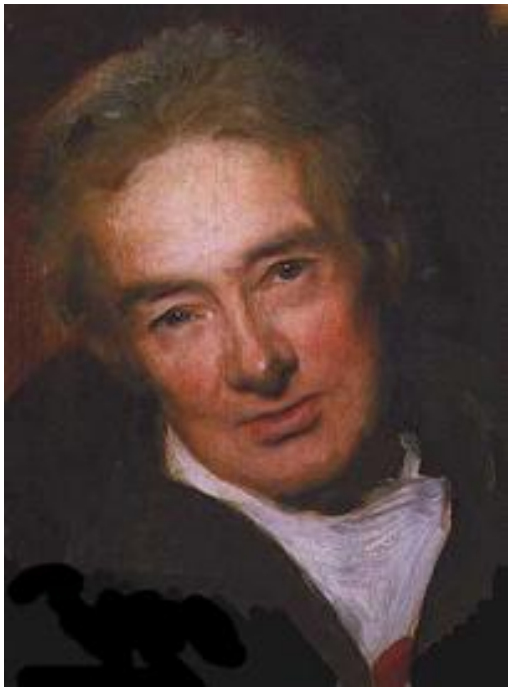
'The curse of India is the Hindoo religion. More than two hundred million people believe a monkey mixture of mythology that is strangling the nation.' 'He who yearns for God in India soon loses his head as well as his heart.'

The missionaries opposed the government's efforts to take a neutral stand towards Indian culture and worked with more zeal for the complete conversion of the natives. Thus India became an arena for religious adventure.

"Hinduism was often perceived as the enemy to be conquered by Christian forces. Efforts were made to depict Hinduism as poetry, fiction or mythology. Hinduism was a manifest work of Satan, provides Christianity with devils to destroy; an element lacking in 18th century Europe with the decline in witch-craft prosecution. The devil is defeated through conversion. Proof of God's victory is provided by the accounts of multiple baptisms that regularly appear in the Lettres edifiantes. In one day, Father Bouchet baptizes 500 hundred converts. Such scenes, where a single missionary saves huge numbers of pagan souls from damnation, emphasize the thrilling drama of conversion. They present the reader with an exciting image of heroic enterprise and a flattering representation of Western influence over Indians. **Efforts were made to show Hinduism as strangely illogical and perverted. Thus, India was turned into an**

arena for religious adventure. In the words of Edward Said's Orientalism, produces an unshakeable assumption of European superiority, with the East always functioning as the West's negative foil."

(source: **India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India 1600-1800 - By Kate Teltscher** p. 94, 22).



William Wilberforce (1759-1833) British politician declared: "The people of India are today enslaved by, they today groan under the yoke of "a monstrous and absurd superstitions of their native faith." The evils of that faith, he noted were "inveterate", not jut long-lasting but inherent. He talked of the "dark and degrading superstitions," the inhuman cruelties of Hinduism, of its "mean, licentious, and cruel" nature. On the testimony of many like-minded persons, Wilberforce said **Indians to be mean and petty, to be liars and thieves, widow-burners, and murderers of infants.**

In 1813, Wilbeforce spoke to the **House of Commons on behalf of the missionaries toiling in India**: "On the principle, we might have anticipated the moral condition of the Hindoos, by ascertaining the character of their deities....**Their divinities are absolute monsters of lust, injustice, wickedness, and cruelty. In short, their religious system is one grand abomination."**

He maintained, quoting the Directors of the East India Company, that these traits of character flowed directly from “the nature of their superstitions and the degraded character of their deities, as well as the almost entire want of moral instructions.” Further, “I scarcely need to remark that in its superstitious rites, there has commonly been found to be a natural alliance between obscenity and cruelty, and of the Hindoo superstitions it may be truly affirmed, that they are scarcely less bloody that lascivious” .

Wilberforce went on to say that “we might have anticipated the moral condition of the Hindoos, by ascertaining the character of their deities.” The perpetrator of a crime “found precedent in one of its national gods … in the adventures of the countless rabble of Hindoo deities, you may find every possible variety of every practicable crime. … Every vice has its patron … their divinities are absolute monsters of lust, injustice, wickedness and cruelty. In short, their religious system is one grand abomination.”

Some years later, in 1853, **Reverend J. Tucker** addressed the Select Committee on Indian Territories, citing **the progress made in native conversions through missionary schools,** and through “cordial support and assistance to missionary proceedings” of civil and military government individuals. He was particularly proud to present a letter written by the **Tinnevelly Congregation of Indian Protestant Christians.** It read in part:

"To Her Most Gracious Majesty Victoria,
By the Grace of God,
Queen by the Grace of God,
Queen of Great Britain and Defender of the Faith

We, **native Christians** … have embraced the Christian religion in number of 40,000 persons, presume to approach the feet of your Gracious Majesty, with all humility and reverence, presenting this humble memorial.

We desire to acknowledge in your Majesty's presence that we, your humble subjects, and all our fellow-countrymen, placed by the providence of Almighty God under the just and merciful rule of the English Government, enjoy a happiness unknown to our forefathers in the inestimable blessings of peace. … by the gratitude we feel, we humbly acknowledge it to be our delightful duty, heartily and incessantly, to beseech Almighty God, the King of Kings, to "endure our Gracious Queen plenteously with heavenly gifts, to grant her health and wealth long to live, to strengthen her … and finally, after this life, attain everlasting joy and felicity."

Incalculable are the benefits that have accrued … we who are Christians are bound to be especially grateful for having received … the privilege of ourselves learning the true religion and its sacred doctrines, and of securing it for our sons and daughters … (emphasis added).

… Our countrymen (seeing) the vast number of boys and girls, children of Christian, Heathen, Mohammedan and Roman-catholic parents, learning gratuitously both in Tamul and English, at the expense of English missions, repeat their ancient proverbs, and say, "Instruction is indeed the opening of sightless eyeballs"…

***

Another leading missionary, a Baptist, **William Carey** (1761-1834), smuggled himself into India and propagandized **against the Vedic culture** so zealously that the British government in Bengal curbed him as a political danger. The missionaries actively denounced the Vedic literatures as "absurdities" meant for the "amusement of children". How close was the nexus between the 'neutral' British rulers and Christian missionaries? "It is not only our duty," declared **Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister**, "but in our own interest to promote the diffusion of Christianity as far as possible throughout the length and breadth of India."

"Every additional Christian," declared **Lord Halifax, the Secretary of the State**, "is an additional bond of union with this country and an additional source of strength to the Empire." "They are doing for India," as **Lord Reay** introducing a deputation of Indian Christians to the Prince of Wales, said "more than all those civilians, soldiers, judges and governors whom your Highness has met;" "They are the most potent force in India," declared **Sir MacWorth Young**.

And so the effort to civilize India, to secure it for the British Empire, to gather it up as the rich harvest for the Church proceeded as a joint endeavor: the civil servants helped by many devices, including among these their "religious neutrality": :the soldiers of the Cross" reinforced each other's efforts; and the scholars helped working to "undermine" and "encircle" and thereby prepare the way for "the **soldiers of the Cross**" to finally storm" the strong fortress of Brahminism".

(source: **Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas - By Arun Shourie** ASA Publications ASIN 8190019945 p.109-132).

In fact, the façade of neutrality was a convenient strategy. As **Reverend Tucker** told the Select Committee on Indian Territories, in 1853, "I should be sorry to see the Government departing from its present position of strict neutrality. If the Government openly announces Christianity to be a part of the education it imparts, Christianity will immediately lose the high vantage point it now occupies." (*ibid, p. 120*).

Sir William Muir (1819- 1905) a representative of the mighty British Empire, wrote various articles in the **Calcutta Review**, put it bluntly: "From all the varieties of heathen religions Christianity has nothing to fear for they are but passive exhibitions of gross darkness which must vanish before the light of the Gospel."

In 1845 he said, "**the Hindu, sickened by idolatry** (Islam's and Christianity's common name for Hinduism), turns to the other two religions which surround him, and inquires into their respective claims.. we must be ready at hand to meet him with the proofs of our most holy faith...the comparison of the two religions, Christianity and Islam, cannot fail to be of essential service, under God's blessings, to lead to practical results."

(source: **Hindu View of Christianity and Islam - By Ram Swarup** Publisher: Voice of India p. 16-55).

While in India Baptist Christian missionaries used their time in collecting materials derogatory to Hinduism. **Dr. R. C. Majumdar**, author of **The History and Culture of the Indian People**, writes:

" A number of people including William Wilberforce, sought to refute these arguments by painting in black colors the horrible customs of the Hindus such as sati, infanticide, throwing the children into the Ganga, religious suicides, and above all idolatry. Vivid descriptions were given of the massacre of the innocent resulting from the car procession of Lord Jagannath at Puri, and the Baptists put down the number of annual victims at not less than 120,000. When challenged they had to admit that they did not actually count the dead bodies but arrived at the figure by an ingenious calculation."

(source: **The History and Culture of Indian People - By R. C. Majumdar** volume X, 2nd edition, Bombay, 1981, p. 152-153).

Bishop Heber's (1783- 1826) **Hymn**



From Greenland's icy mountains, from India's coral strand;
Where Afric's sunny fountains roll down their golden sand:
From many an ancient river, from many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver their land from error's chain.

What though the spicy breezes blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle;
Though every prospect pleases, and only man is vile?
In vain with lavish kindness the gifts of God are strown;
The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone.

Shall we, whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high,
Shall we to those benighted the lamp of life deny?
Salvation! O salvation! The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth's remotest nation has learned Messiah's Name.

Waft, waft, ye winds, His story, and you, ye waters, roll
Till, like a sea of glory, it spreads from pole to pole:
Till o'er our ransomed nature the Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator, in bliss returns to reign.

The hymn was published in the *Evangelical Magazine* in July 1821. It is considered one of the finest missionary hymns in the English language. It is one of the many specimens of

contempt which Christians have shown for Hindus. The hymn was included in the official hymns of the Anglican Church in England and elsewhere.

Gandhi had chided the Christian missionaries for misrepresenting Hinduism.

"You, the missionaries," he said, "come to India thinking that you come to a land of heathens, of idolators, of men who do not know God. One of the greatest Christian divines, **Bishop Reginald Heber, wrote the two lines which have always left a sting with me**: 'Where every prospect pleases, and man alone is vile.' I wish he had not written them. My own experience in my travels through out India has been to the contrary. I have gone from one end of the country to the other, without any prejudice, in a relentless search for truth, and I am not able to say that here in this fair land, watered by the great Ganga, the Brahmaputra, and the Jamuna, man is vile. He is not vile. He is as much a seeker after truth as you and I are, possibly more so...."

He further commented: "I have read several missionary publications and they are able to see only the dark side and paint it darker still. The famous hymn of Bishop Heber's - 'Greenland's icy mountains' - **is a clear libel on Indian humanity.** I was favored with some literature even in the Yervada prison by well-meaning missionaries, which seemed to be written as if merely to belittle Hinduism."

(source: **The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi** Volume 27 New Delhi 1968 p.214- 436).

Christian missionaries were attacking the Puranas for containing passages which they considered obscene. **Swami Vivekananda** had studied the Bible and knew that it contained a lot which was far worse. "The Chinese,' he wrote, "are the disciples of Confucius, and the Buddha, and their morality is quite strict and refined. The Christian missionaries translated the Bible into Chinese tongue. Now in the Bible there are some passages so obscene as to put to shame some of the Puranas of the Hindus. Reading those indecorous passages, the Chinamen were so exasperated against Christianity that they made a point of never allowing the Bible to be circulated in their country...They raised a cry, saying: "Oh, horror! This religion has come to us to ruin our young boys, by giving them the Bible to read...."

(source: **The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda** Calcutta, 1985 Volume V. p. 503).

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The First Scholars:

Such are the settings in which the first Indologists first appeared.



Sir William Jones, the first British to master Sanskrit and study the Vedas, drew fire from the eminent British historian **James Mill,** author of **History of India**, for his "hypothesis of a high state of civilization". Typically, Mill believed that the:

"The people of India were never advanced and that they had no right to a claim a glorious past. And that it was a historical fantasy...."

James Mill, father of John Stuart, had published his history of India in 1818. Though Mill spoke no Indian languages, indeed had never been to India, his damning indictment of Indian society and religion had become the standard work -



required reading for all who would serve in India.

At any rate, by translating the Vedas for the Western reader and thus evincing the ancient Vedic genius, the scholars increased India's prestige in the West.

Sir William Jones (1746-1794), **Charles Wilkins** (1749-1836) and **Thomas Colebrooke** (1765-1837) are considered the fathers of Indology. Sir Jones was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court in Calcutta. He translated a number of Sanskrit works into English and his works into the investigations into languages mark him as one of the most brilliant minds of the 18th century. Yet he was not prone to invective against another's religion, particularly the Vedas, which he admired. He described the Bhagavata Purana as “a motley story”. He speculated that the Bhagavad Gita came from the Christian Gospels, which had been brought to India and "repeated to the Hindus, who ingrafted them on the old fable of Kesava, (a name for Krishna). Of course, this theory has been discredited since records of Krishna worship predates Christ by centuries.

According to **Thomas R. Trautmann**, author of **Aryans and British India**, **"neither Jones nor any of the British Orientalists had any doubt as to the present superiority of European civilization to that of India".**

" The Aryan idea was a unifying idea in the initial phase of British expansion it ceased to be so later when the British stranglehold on India tended to be strong and the emphasis on affinities between Britons and Indians would more hinder than facilitate the consolidation of the British power in India. The heart of the matter, therefore, remains that British imperialism spoke in different voices at different times, though its goal was always the same, i.e., to devise new mechanisms of control and administration of the Indian colony in consonance with the policies of the home government. In 1861 John Crawfurd went to the extent of saying : "I am not prepared to admit the claim of a common descent between Hindu, Greek, and Teuton, for that would amount to allowing that there was no difference in the faculties of the people that produced Homer and Shakespeare and those that have produced nothing better than the authors of the Mahabharat and Ramayana; no difference between the home-keeping **Hindus who never made a foreign conquest of any kind, and the nations who discovered, conquered, and peopled a new world"(p.181). His contempt for Indians and their civilisation was accompanied by his belief in "the dangers of intermarriage between races widely apart on the scale of civilization"(p.181). For him, Trautmann points out, "philology is bad for racial hygiene"(p.181)."**

(source: **Aryans and British India - By Thomas R. Trautmann** http://www.indolink.com/Book/aryans.html).

H. H. Wilson (1786-1860), described as the greatest Sanskrit scholar of his time", became the Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford in 1833. Wilson felt that the Christian culture should simply replace the Vedic culture, and he believed that full knowledge of the Indian tradition would help effect that conversion. He felt hopeful that by inspired, diligent effort the "specious" system of Vedic thought would be "shown to be fallacious and false by the Ithuriel spear of Christian truth. He also was ready to award a prize of two hundred pounds.. "for the best refutation of the Hindu religious system."



The famous French Missionary, **Abbé Dubois,** wrote a whole chapter on Hindu temples in his book, "Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies." Coming to Hindu idols he says "Hindu imagination is such that it cannot be excited except by what is monstrous and extravagant" (p.607). Abbé Dubois' book has run through a dozen of reprints in England and remains the best primer for the average western traveler to India to this day.

Abbé Dubois influenced **James Stuart Mill's** malicious **History of British India** which was written in six volumes in 1818. The volumes were compulsory reading for candidates wishing to



appear for the I.C.S. exams. Mill's history has in fact mesmerized the best Hindu minds.

To illustrate, James Mill's tripartite periodization of Indian history into 'Hindu', 'Muslim' and 'British' epitomized in his infamous **The History of British India** **was not an innocent exercise.** It is well known that throughout Indian history the frontiers of the religion(s) of ruler(s) did not overlap with those of the people. If at all the defining criterion of Mill was the ruler's religion, the logic of such a formulation demanded that the third period should have been designated as 'Christian'. It is now recognized that **Mill's periodization stemmed from the imperialist objective of fomenting a religious divide in India** (no wonder Mill's History was one of the prescribed texts at the Haileybury College, where the prospective English officers received their training before coming to India).

(source: **Aesthetic deceptions - By K. M. Shrimali - hindustantimes.com** The writer is Professor of History, Delhi University).

Mill comments on the Hindu's pretensions to a remote antiquity as an example of the boastful and turgid vanity of the oriental nations...

He has nothing positive to comment on the Hindu manners. 'the vices of falsehood, indeed, they carry to a height almost unexampled among the other races of men. "the languid and slothful habits of the Hindus."

The level of Hindu fine arts was lower than " the height of even of the Egyptians, much less of the Greeks and Romans. " This is the first major racist elaboration of the ancient Indian history and culture in Western Indology, and all that we note here is that Mill's contempt for ancient India extends to the other Asian civilizations as well as that much of Mill's framework has survived in the colonial and post-colonial Indology.

(source: **Colonial Indology: Sociopolitics of the Ancient Indian Past - By Dilip K. Chakrabarti** p. 92-94).

Another renowned pioneer Indologist was **Fredrich Max Muller** (1823-1900). He is best known for his series Sacred Books of the East. Muller speaking at the Christians Missions in **Westminster Abbey in 1873** he **declared that Hinduism was dying or dead** because it belonged to a stratum of thought which was long buried beneath the foot of modern man. He continued: " The worship of Shiva, Vishnu, and other popular deities was of the same and in many cases of a more degraded and savage character than the worship of Jupiter, Apollo or Minerva. 'A religion', he said ' may linger on for a long time, it may be accepted my large masses of the people, because it is there, and there is nothing better. But when a religion has ceased to produce defenders of the faith, prophets, champions, martyrs, it has ceased to live, in the true sense of the word; and in that sense the old orthodox Brahmanism has ceased to live for more than a thousand years."

(source: **Hinduism: a religion to live by** **- Nirad C. Chaudhari** Oxford University Press February 1997 ISBN 0195640136 p. 116 -117).

In 1876, Muller wrote to a friend, **" India is much riper for Christianity than Rome or Greece were at the time of Saint Paul."**

(source: **Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself - By Satsvarupa dasa Goswami** Bhaktivedanta Book Trust ISBN 0912776889 June 1985 p. 178).



" The rotten tree for some time had artificial supports ...but if the English man comes to see that the tree must fall...he will mind no sacrifice either of blood or of land...I would like to lay down my life, or at least lend my hand to bring about this struggle"

(source: **Life and letters of the Rt. Hon. Fredrich Max Muller,** Vol. I, pp. 190-92.).



" I do not claim for the ancient Indian literature any more that I should willingly concede to the fables and traditions and songs of savage nations . I simply say that in the Veda we have a nearer approach to a beginning, and an intelligent beginning, than in the wild invocations of the Hottentotes and Bushmen, "

(source: **The Hindu world, an encyclopedic survey of Hinduism' - By George Benjamin Walker**, New York: Praeger, 1968. 2v.)

Max Muller wrote: **"This edition of mine and the translation of the Veda will hereafter tell to a great extent... the fate of India, and on the growth of millions of souls in that country. It is the root of their religion, and to show them what the root is, I feel sure, the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last 3000 years."**

(source: **The Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Fredrich Max Muller,** edited by his wife. Longmans, London, 1902, Volume I, p. 328) **Vedic Aryans and the Origins of Civilization - By N. S. Rajaram & David Frawley** p. 10).

" The rotten tree for some time had artificial supports...but if the English man comes to see that the tree must fall...he will mind no sacrifice either of blood or of land...I would like to lay down my life, or at least lend my hand to bring about this struggle"

(source: **The Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Fredrich Max Muller,** edited by his wife. Longmans, London, 1902, Volume I, pp. 190-92).

In another letter, Mueller wrote to his son:

"Would you say that any one sacred book is superior to all others in the world?...I say the New Testament, after that, I should place the Koran, which in its moral teachings, is hardly more than a later edition of the New Testament. Then would follow according to my opinion the Old Testament, the Southern Buddhist Tripitaka, the Tao-te-king of Lao-tze, the Kings of Confucius, the Veda and the Avesta."

(source: **Life and letters of Max Mueller** Vol. II, Ch. XXXII., page 339).

In an audacious letter to **N. K. Majumdar**, Mueller wrote:

'Tell me some of your chief difficulties that prevent you and your countrymen from openly following Christ, and when I write to you I shall do my best to explain how I and many who agree with me have met them and solved them...From my point of view, India, at least the best part of it, is already converted to Christianity. You want no persuasion to become a follower of Christ. Then make up your mind to work for yourself. Unite your flock - to hold them together and prevent them from straying. The bridge has been built for you by those who came before you. STEP BOLDLY FORWARD, it will break under you, and you will find many friends to welcome you on the other shore and among them none more delighted that you old friend and fellow labourer."

(source: **Western Indologists: A Study in Motives - P B Dutt** http://www.philosophy.ru/library/asiatica/indica/authors/motives.html).

Mueller harshly criticised the view of the German scholar, **Dr. Spiegel**, who claimed that the Biblical theory of the creation of the world is borrowed from the ancient religion of the Persians or Iranians. Stung by this statement Max Mueller writes:



'A writer like Dr. Spiegel should know that he can expect no money; nay, he should himself wish for no mercy, but invite the heaviest artillery against the floating battery which he has launched in the troubled waters of Biblical criticism.'

Dr. Spiegel was not the only target of Mueller's bigotry. In 1926 the French scholar **Louis Jacolliot**, Chief Judge in Chandranagar, wrote a book called **La Bible dans l'Inde**. **Within that book, Jacolliot theorized that all the main philosophies of the western world originated from India, which he glorified thus:**

'Land of ancient India! Cradle of Humanity. hail! Hail revered motherland whom centuries of brutal invasions have not yet buried under the dust of oblivion. Hail, Fatherland of faith, of love, of poetry and of science, may we hail a revival of thy past in our Western future.'

Mueller said while reviewing Louis Jacolliot's book that, 'The author seems to have been taken in by the Brahmins of India.'

Another revealing incident of Mueller's glaring ignorance was when a *brahmana* came from India to meet the famous Sanskrit scholar. When he came face to face with Mueller and spoke to him in chaste Sanskrit, Mueller admitted that he couldn't understand what the gentleman was saying!

No wonder **Arthur Schopenhauer** acerbically said, **"I cannot resist a certain suspicion that our Sanskrit scholars do not understand their texts any better than the higher class of school boys their Greek and Latin."**

Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaja, was so disgusted with the level of Mueller's knowledge of Sanskrit that he likened him to a "toddler learning to walk". He wrote:

"Prof. Max Mueller has been able to scribble out something by the help of the so called 'tikas' or paraphrases of the Vedas current in India."

(source: **Satyartha Prakash** Third Edition p. 278). Note: Swami Dayanand Saraswati commented very negatively on Max Mueller's knowledge of Sanskrit by saying that his depth of understanding is like a Aak plant among the trees (Indian Sanskrit scholars).

It was Max Mueller who said: "I do not shrink from saying that their religion (Hinduism) is dying or dead. And why? Because it cannot stand the light of day. The worship of Siva, Vishnu and other popular deities is of the same, nay, in many cases of a more degraded and savage character than the worship of Jupiter, Apollo and Minerva. It belongs to a stratum of thought which is long buried beneath our feet…"

(source: **In the matter of conversions…- By M V Kamath indiainfo.com**).

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All this from the man (Max Muller) who has Bhavans named after him all over India. Muller's purpose was to uproot Hinduism!!

Muller concluded : "But the ancient religion of India is doomed,"

"and if Christianity does not step in, whose fault will it be?"

(source: **Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas - By Arun Shourie** ASA Publications ASIN 8190019945 p. 139).

Exposing the roots of another culture so as to support everything that has flowed from it for 3,000 years, and this seen as God's work. Not quite the motive and belief we would associate with an objective scholar like Max Muller!

The credit of consolidating of the Aryan concept in the second half of the 19th century goes more to Max Mullller than to anybody else. It was he who sold the idea quite aggressively to the Western audience of his time. It was also something which was eagerly lapped up by his 'native' audience, although he himself was never ready for the rough and tumble of the Indian dust. In Max Muller's parlance " a native writer" exclaimed in **Indian Mirror**, Calcutta, of 20 September, 1874: "we were niggers at one time. We now become brethren."

(source: **Colonial Indology: Sociopolitics of the Ancient Indian Past - By Dilip K. Chakrabarti** p. 92-94).

Theordore Goldstucker (1821-1872) born in Germany, professor of Sanskrit at London's University College wrote the Dictionary of Indian Biography. He regarded the people of India as being burdened by Vedic religion, which had only brought them worldwide "contempt and ridicule." Thus, he proposed to reeducated them with European values. In his book, **Inspired Writings of Hinduism,** Goldstucker assailed the validity of Vedic literature. His aim was to demonstrate to the new generation of Vedic followers that he had scholastically annihilated their scripture and that they should show their appreciation by adopting European values and improving their character.



Successor to Wilson in **Oxford's Boden Chair** was **Sir Monier-Williams**(1819-1899) **who was a Christian of warm Evangelical convictions.** He said:

"For what purpose then has this enormous territory been committed to England? Not to be the 'corpus vile' of political, social, or military experiments; not for benefit of our commerce, or the increase of our wealth - but that every man, woman and child, from Cape Comorin to the Himalaya mountains, may be elevated, enlightened Christianized."

(source: **Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas - By Arun Shourie** ASA Publications ASIN 8190019945 p. 152)

In 1869 **Dr. Franz Lorinser** published a new translation and commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, **Die Bhagavad-Gita: Uebersetzt und erlautert**.

Lorinser believed that the Gita, which the world already regarded as **'one of the fairest flowers of heathen world', actually owed its ' purest and most greatly praised teachings' to the New Testament!**

Historian **Arthur D.Innes** writes:

"The educators had hardly concealed their expectations that with Western knowledge the sacred fairy tales of the East would be dissolved and the basis of popularly cherished creeds would be swept away.

Richard Temple said:

"Hinduism is gradually breaking up, like the clouds before the rising sun…. it is being dissipated like the mist, before the science of the 19th century."

W. J Wilkins in his **Daily Life and Work in India** p. 252 was another Christian missionary who worked in India to gather harvest of converts for Christ. He said: "If this faith in the Divine origin of these books (the Vedas) could be destroyed, they could then reasonably hope the people would

listen with unprejudiced minds to their statements respecting Christianity…"

Rev. J Fr. Stacker another Christian zealot in his book, **Arsenal for the Christian Soldier in India** p. 493 had this to say: "The Hindu religion resembles the Christian just as a counterfeit coin resembles a true one."

(source: **The Hindu - By Krishna Vallabh Paliwal and Brahm Datt Bharti** p. 98-99).

Sir W. M. Williams, a Sanskritist with great missionary sympathies, prophesied, "When the walls of the mighty fortress of Brahminism are encircled, undermined and finally stormed by the soldiers of the Cross, the victory of Christianity must be signal and complete."

Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan (1807- 1886) was the brother-in-law of Thomas Macaulay and author of **Christianity and Hinduism Contrasted**. 1882. He addressed the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-on-Tyne. He states:

"...as the Christian religion is the only one capable of correcting the disorder caused by the passions of mankind, and of gradually leading on the world to a state of perfection, it must be of divine origin, and we are bound to promote its universal diffusion in obedience to its founder, Jesus Christ. It this is true as a general proposition, we are under a special obligation to **our magnificent Indian Empire,** and the facilities for the task are in proportion to the obligation;" their special loathing in this context for Hinduism; their premise, their hope, indeed their expectation that Christianity would soon prevail; their calculation that it was enough for Government to spread western lore and learning for Hinduism to be destroyed - The grammar and spelling books suffice to destroy the Hindu religion."



"Although India has yet to become Christian, a higher standard of morality has been established, and the spirit of Christianity is becoming diffused throughout the society. Christian knowledge is spreading in every direction in advance of openly professed conversions, and it has become a common thing to meet with natives who know more of the Bible than most Christians.

He wrote in 1838: "Familiarly acquainted with us by means of our literature, the Indian youth almost ceases to regard us as foreigners. **They speak of our great men as we do. Educated in the same way, interested in the same objects, engaged in the same pursuits with ourselves, they become more English than Hindus..."**

He delivered this to the Baptist Missionary Society in London in April 1888:

"..That every British is spreading the truth of Christianity that Providence has placed the Empire at the disposal of Britain; that Buddhism and Hinduism are dying and dead; that the tribals ought to be made the special focus of the exertions of the missionaries."

(source: **Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas - By Arun Shourie** ASA Publications ASIN 8190019945 p 80-92).

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Lord Thomas Babbington Macaulay (1800-59) is best known for introducing English education in India. Macaulay was the first Law Member of the Governor-General's Legislature.

He wrote in his **notorious 1835 Minute** that Hinduism was based on **" a literature admitted to be of small intrinsic value ...(one) that inculcates the most serious errors on the most important subjects ... hardly reconcilable with reason, with morality...fruitful of monstrous superstitions. " Hindus had therefore been fed for millennia with a "false history, false astronomy, false medicine ...in company of a false religion."**

"A war of Bengalees against English men was like a war of sheep against wolves, of men against demons."

Dismissing with incredible arrogance the profound



Baron Macaulay (1800-1859): The life-long bachelor was a skilled politician and author

speculation and beautiful language of the Sanskrit classics, he said, " I doubt whether the Sanskrit literature be as valuable as that of our Saxon and Norman progenitors."

(source: **India: A World in Transition - By Beatrice Pitney Lamb** p. 194)).

Macaulay advised in 1835 the creation of an Indian elite through Western style education, making them **`Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, in intellect.'**

The policy was frankly one of Westernizing India.

Though not a missionary himself, he sincerely believed that Christianity held the key to the problems of administering India. In a letter to his father in 1836, **Macaulay** exulted, "...It is my belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be effected without any efforts to proselytize, without the smallest interference with religious liberty, by natural operation of knowledge and reflection. I heartily rejoice in the project."

" I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is, indeed, fully admitted by those members of the Committee who support the Oriental plan of education." The superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable." The question now before us is simply whether, when it is in our power to teach this language, we shall teach languages in which, by universal confession, there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared to our own; whether, when we can teach European science, we shall teach systems which, by universal confession, whenever they differ from those of Europe, differ for the worse; and whether, when we can patronize sound Philosophy and true History, we shall countenance, at the public expense, medical doctrines, which would disgrace an English farrier,--Astronomy, which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school,--History, abounding with kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long,--and Geography, made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter." " I would at once stop the printing of Arabic and Sanscrit books, I would abolish the Madrassa and the Sanscrit college at Calcutta. Benares is the great seat of Brahmanical learning."

(source: **http://www.tc.umn.edu/~raley/research/english/macaulay.html**)
Please read the following article: **Haunted by Macaulay's ghost - By Francois Gautier**)

***"*To the literature of Britain . . . which has exercised an influence wider than that of our commerce and mightier than that of our arms . . .before the light of which impious and cruel superstitions are fast taking flight on the Banks of the Ganges!"**

(source: http://members.tripod.com/~INDIA_RESOURCE/britishedu.htm).

He remarked that Indians were: "lesser breeds without the law" and summed up the opinion of many. In 1885 he wrote of the "monstrous superstitions" of India and summarily condemned ancient Sanskrit texts as "less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England."

(source: **Oriental Enlightenment: The encounter between Asian and Western thought - By J. J. Clarke** p.73)

He wrote to his father in 1836:

"It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal, thirty years hence."

Macaulay's object was to undermine the social and religious institutions of India. **The Indian Daily News**, for instance, wrote in its leader on March 29, 1909: "Lord Macaulay's triumph over the Oriental School, headed by Dr. Wilson, was really the triumph of a deliberate intention to undermine the religious and social life of India."

Macaulay looked upon India much in the same way as a landlord looks upon his serfs. He wrote: **"We know that India cannot have a free government. But she may have the next best thing - a firm and impartial despotism."**

He had no heart, no sympathy for the longings and ambitions of educated India, nor had he ever tried to understand them. His idea was to bind India with the fetters of legislation, albeit the chain might be gilded. In his famous speech of the 10th July, 1838, Macaulay said: "I believe that no country ever stood so much in need of a code of laws as India; and I believe also there never was a country in which the want might so easily be supplied...It is a work which especially belongs to a Government like that of India, to an enlightened and paternal despotism."

(source: **Rise Of The Christian Power In India - By Major Baman Das Basu** (1867-1930) Calcutta R. Chatterjee 1931 p. 802-807).

The question in Macaulay's mind was not just of perpetuating British imperial control over India: his aim was to rescue Indians from Hinduism, he was certain about the superiority of Christianity and about the boons that would follow as it spread in India. For he declared four years later in his essay, "Gladstone on Church and State," the heathenism of India is "more cruel, more licentious, more fruitful of absurd right, and pernicious laws" than that of any other part of the world. The people of India, he declared in "The Gates of Somnath", are idolators, blindly attached to doctrines and rites which, considered meekly with reference to the temporal interests of mankind, are in the highest degree pernicious."...Hence to condone Brahminical idolatry and to discountenance Christianity is to "commit high treason against humanity and civilization."

(source: **Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas - By Arun Shourie** ASA Publications ASIN 8190019945 p.64).

Bishop James M. Thoburn (1836-1922) wrote in his book, The Christian Conquest of India in 1906, about the Millions Waiting to be converted in the British Empire:

"In her most palmy days Rome ruled over only one hundred and twenty million people, while in India today nearly three hundred million souls are subject, more or less directly, to the rule

of the King-Emperor. China alone among the great kingdoms and empires of the world can compare with India in population at the beginning of this new century, and this splendid realm has opened all her gates and doors to the Christian missionary. Instead of the wretched little vessels in which Paul coasted around the Mediterranean ports, the Indian missionary has floating palaces to convey him at sea, while palatial cars await him when he wished to travel by land. God has opened his pathway to even the most remote tribes, while a sympathetic and enlightened government protects him from hostile persecution, or even the menace of danger. The original commission to evangelize the nations still stands, while God, who rules over all nations, sets an open door before his servants who are willing to enter and evangelize the waiting millions."

"The time is auspicious, and the missionaries of India should not lose a day or an hour in sounding the trumpet for a great forward movement. As Paul, the ideal missionary for all lands and all times, aimed first at Greece and next for Rome, so should the missionaries of our modern day aim for all the great centers of population, commerce, and political rule in the empire. This does not mean that outlying and distant places are to be negated, but only that the great centers of power and influence should be quickly seized and strongly held. A wide and firm grasp is needed. **The word should be passed all along the line that India is to be won for Christ, and that the greatest movement ever attempted in the history of Christianity is now at hand. Nothing in all modern history, nothing since the day of Pentecost, has been equal to the present opportunity.**

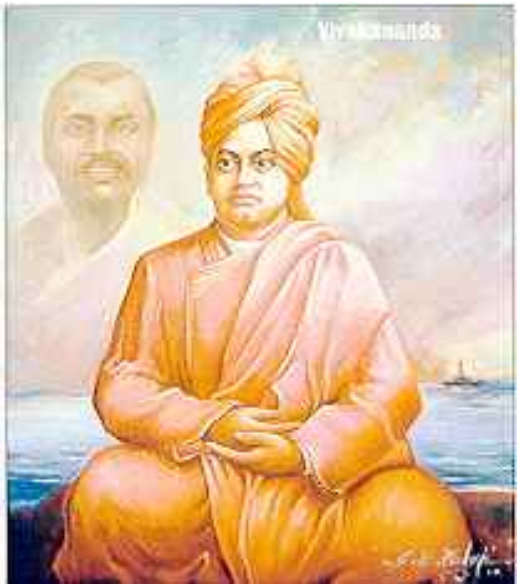
The old may rejoice that they have lived to see this day, but the young may rejoice still more in the hope of seeing a day when a million souls will be found inquiring the way to Zion in North India, a million in West India, a million more in Burma, and still a million more in South India. A million? Why not ten million? **Why not the Christian Conquest of India?**

(source: **The Christian Conquest of India - By Bishop James M. Thoburn** Publisher: Jennings And Graham Date of Publication: 1906 p. 244-245).

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As the British became more sure of their position in India and developed a sense of mission, there grew up a contempt for Indian culture. This was partly due to cultural arrogance on the part of the British, who dismissed Indian literature as pagan rubbish and Indian science as primitive nonsense. Macaulay disposed of 'the whole native literature of India' as 'medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier – Astronomy, which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school – History, abounding with kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long – and Geography, made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter.'

(source: **British India - By Michael Edwardes** p. 305-306).



Swami Vivekananda was to shatter Macaulay's dream and hope. The key point here is Macaulay's belief that 'that knowledge and reflection' on the part of the Hindus would cause them to turn to Christianity. His plan was to turn the strength of the educated Hindus against them, to use their commitment to scholarship to uproot their own tradition. To this end, he wanted someone willing and able to interpret Hindu Scriptures in such a way that the newly educated Hindu elite would see for itself the difference between their scriptures and the New Testament and choose the latter. It is a measure of Macaulay's seriousness that he persisted with his hare-brained scheme until he found just the man for it. The man was Friedrich Maximillian Mueller (1823-1900) who was to be touted as the foremost Indologist, Scholar Extraordinaire (by Nirad Chaudhury) and Vedemaharishi Mokshamula Bhatta (of Oxford).

Swami Vivekananda pointed out more than a century ago: **" The histories of our country written by English [and other Western] writers cannot but be weakening to our minds, for they talk only of our downfall. How can foreigners, who understand very little of our manners and customs, or religion and philosophy, write faithful and unbiased histories of India? Naturally, many false notions and wrong inferences have found their way into them. It is for Indians to write Indian history."**

As Swami Vivekananda pointed out, the goal of the British was to weaken the Indian spirit, particularly the Hindu spirit, because the nationalist movement in India was mainly a Hindu movement. Most of the distortion in Indian history had already been done for them by the British, and then by their successors during the Congress rule.

(Please refer to **Eminent Historians - By Arun Shourie** Harper-Collins, New Delhi ISBN 8190019988).

Swami Vivekanada responded to a concerted attack on Hinduism:

"We who had come from the east have sat here day after day and have been told in a patronizing way that we ought to accept Christianity because Christian nations are the most prosperous. **We look about us and we see England the most prosperous Christian nation in the world, with her foot upon the neck of 250,000,000 Asiatics.** We look back into history and see that the prosperity of Christian Europe begin with Spain. Spain's prosperity began with the invasion of Mexico. Christianity wins its prosperity by cutting the throats of its fellow men. At such a price the Hindoo will not have prosperity."

"When someone suggested to him that Christianity was a saving power, he opened his great dark eyes upon him and said: **"If Christianity is a saving power in itself, why has it not saved the Ethiopians, the Abyssinians?"**

(source: **Hinduism for Our Times - By Arvind Sharma** Oxford Univ Pr June 1996 ISBN 0195637496 p. 72-73).

"On metaphysical lines, he wrote "no nation on earth can hold a candle to the Hindus' and curiously all the fellows that come over here from Christian lands have that one antiquated foolishness of an argument that because the Christians are powerful and rich and Hindus are not, so Christianity must be better than Hinduism. To which the Hindus very aptly retort that, that is the very reason why Hinduism is a religion and Christianity is not..."

(source: **The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda** Calcutta, 1985 Volume VI. p. 390-391 and **History of Hindu-Christian Encounters - By Sita Ram Goel** South Asia Books July 1990 ISBN 9990049173 p. 90).

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No Hindu Culture

So far as Europeans were concerned, it was fashionable for a time to deny the mere existence of such a thing as an Indian culture. Here are two representative quotations to illustrate this point:

Says **Sir Henry Norman**, in his book on the Far East: "Asia - always excepting Japan - has never been civilized and never will be unless a great change comes which this age is not likely to see otherwise than at the **mouth of the cannon and the point of the bayonet."**

William Archer, who in his day was considered a dramatic critic of some standing, author of gave expression to the following judgment on India:

"Barbarian, barbarism, barbarious, I am sorry to harp on these words. But they express the essence of the situation...The plain truth concerning the mass of Indian population - and not the poor classes alone - is that they are not civilized people."

Naturally they could have no culture. Of minor poets like Robert Nicholls, or **imperialist propagandists like Katherine Mayo**, or the general run of Christian missionaries who could see nothing good in India. I need not say anything; for their views do not deserve consideration.

(source: **Essential Features of Indian Culture - By K. M. Panikkar** Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Mumbai.1964 p. 23-24).

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Bishop Caldwell on Dravidian Grammar:

' The idea of the Dravidian migrations from the north was first put forth by Bishop (who else). Caldwell, insisted that the Dravidians had 'invaded' India long before the Aryans. As this theory had no basis in tradition, history or even archeology, it has tried to draw linguistic support from 'Dravidian-speaking Brahuis in Baluchistan and in Central and East India'.



"It is not only our duty," declared **Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister**, " but in our own interest to promote the diffusion of Christianity as far as possible throughout the length and breadth of India"; " Every additional Christian," declared **Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State**," is an additional bond of union with this country and an additional source of strength to the Empire."

Rev William Ward, an English missionary who wrote a four-volume polemic which characterized Hindu faith as "a fabric of superstition" concocted by Brahmins, and as "the most complete system of absolute oppression that perhaps ever existed". (How would Christians feel if the compliment is returned by saying that nothing could excel superstition and oppression as the concepts of *virgin birth, resurrection and slavery in the Bible,* the pillars of faith that are central to Christianity?).

Barthelemy de Saint Hilare, the Education Minister of the French Government of 1883, declared that:

"**the Hindu system of thought is hideous, without any intellectual rigor and coherence and cannot be compared with those of ancient Greece or modern Europe."**

(source: **Arise O' India - By Francois Gautier** Har Anand publisher ISBN: 81-241-0518-9 p. 26).

John P. Jones in 1915 said:

"Schools for Non-Christians are especially established with a view to reaching and affecting the non-Christian community. They represent the leaven of Christianity in India. They are pre-eminently an evangelistic agency. ... I fearlessly maintain that more conversions take place, and more accessions are made, through these schools than through any other agency..."

Moriz Winternitz



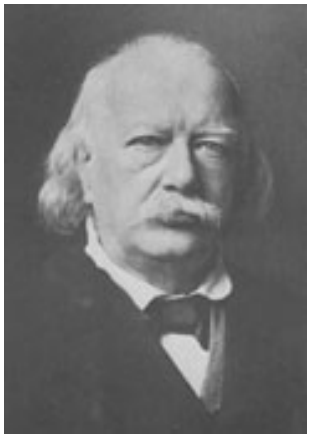
Unfortunately, not all scholars appreciated the timeless wisdom of the Vedas and Upanisads. **Some scholars were so convinced of the superiority of Christianity and western philosophy that they had no qualms in shamelessly expressing their feelings publicly.**

In 1925 The Professor of Indian Studies at the German University of Prague, **Moriz Winternitz** (1863-1937), denounced Schopenhauer for his admiration of the **Upanisads** with the following words -

'Yet I believe, it is a wild exaggeration when Schopenhauer says that the teaching of the Upanishads represents 'the fruit of the highest human knowledge and wisdom' and contains 'almost superhuman conceptions the originators of which can hardly be regarded as mere mortals...'

On the subject of the *Vedas*, Winternitz had this to say -**'It is true, the authors of these hymns rise but extremely seldom to the exalted flights and deep fervor of, say, religious poetry of the Hebrews.'**

Weber, Boehtlingk, Kuhn and Goldstucker:



1. The famous German indologist **Albrecht Weber** (1825-1901) was a notorious racist whose German nationalistic tendencies were thinly veiled as works on Indian philosophy and culture.

When **Humbolt** lauded praise upon the **Bhagavad-gita**, Weber became disgusted. His immediate response was to speculate that the *Mahabharata* and *Gita* were influenced by Christian theology -

'The peculiar colouring of the Krishna sect, which pervades the whole book, is noteworthy: Christian legendry matter and other Western influences are unmistakably present...'

Two Sanskrit scholars, Franz Lorinser and E. Washburn Hopkin, were quick to support Weber's postulation. However, their theory lacked any hard evidence and was considered so ludicrous that most scholars in European universities rejected it, despite their Christian leanings. Nevertheless, the propagation of this eroneous hypothesis played its mischief and was mainly responsible for the hesitation of the Western scholars to assign to the *Mahabharata* a date, earlier than that of the Christian era.

In Chapter 4 of his book **Krishnacharita**, the famous Bengali writer, **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya**, spoke about Weber as follows –



'The celebrated Weber was no doubt a scholar but I am inclined to think that it was an unfortunate moment for India when he began the study of Sanskrit. The descendants of the German savages of yesterday could not reconcile themselves to the ancient glory of India. It was therefore, their earnest effort to prove that the civilization of India was comparatively of recent origin. They could not persuade themselves to believe that the Mahabharata was composed centuries before Christ was born'.

2. Weber and his collegue **Otto Boehtlingk** prepared the famous Sanskrit dictionary called the **'Sanskrit Worterbuch'**. Prof. Ernst Kuhn was also one of their assistants. Being mainly based on speculative and incorrect principles of philology, the work was unreliable and misleading. The dictionary was subject to severe criticism by **Theodore Goldstucker** (1821-1872), who was professor of Sanskrit at the University College in London. Weber was so disturbed by Goldstucker's criticism that he resorted to abusing the Professor with the coarsest words possible. He added that the views of Goldstucker on his *Worterbuch* showed 'a perfect derangement of his mental faculties', since he was not willing to dismiss the authority of the Vedic scholars so easily. Replying to their undignified attacks, Goldstucker exposed the 'scholarship' of the likes of Roth, Boehtlingk, Weber and Kuhn and wrote:

'It will, of course, be my duty to show, at the earliest opportunity, that Dr. Boehtlingk is incapable of understanding even easy rules of Panini, much less those of Katyayana and still less is he capable of making use of them in the understanding of Classical texts. The errors in his department of the Dictionary are so numerous... that it will fill every serious Sanskritist with dismay, when he calculates the mischievous influence which they must exercise on the study of Sanskrit philology'.

He further remarked: '....that questions which ought to have been decided with the very utmost circumspection and which could not be decided without very laborious research have been trifled with in the Worterbuch in the most unwarranted manner…When I see that the most distinguished and most learned Hindu scholars and divines - the most valuable and sometimes the only source of all our knowledge of ancient India - are scorned in theory, mutilated in print, and, as a consequence, set aside in the interpretation of Vaidik texts; ...when a clique of Sanskritists of this description vapours about giving us the sense of the Veda as it existed at the commencement of Hindu antiquity; ...when I consider that those whose words apparently derive weight and influence from the professional position they hold...then I hold that it would be a want of courage and a dereliction of duty, if I did not make a stand against these Saturnalia of Sanskrit Philology.'



3. Referring to **Prof. Kuhn, Goldstucker** was positively venomous –'(Professor Kuhn) was 'an individual whose sole connection with Sanskrit studies consisted in handing Sanskrit books to those who could read them, a literary naught, wholly unknown, but assuming the airs of a quantity, because it had figures before it that prompted it on, a personage who, according to his own friends, was perfectly ignorant of Sanskrit'.

However, we should not make the mistake that Herr Goldstucker was championing the cause of the Vedic literatures. **Goldstucker's skirmish with his fellow indologists was purely on an academic basis. Goldstucker was of the opinion that the people of India were burdened by Vedic religion which had simply brought them world-wide 'contempt and ridicule'. He thus proposed to re-educate the Indians with Western values.** He wrote:

'The means for combating that enemy is as simple as it is irresitable: a proper instruction of the growing generation of its ancient literature.'

In his book, **'Inspired Writings of Hinduism'** Goldstucker a**ttacked the validity of the Vedas, stating that his aim was to inspire the new generation of Indians that their religious superstitions were backwards. This could only be achieved by scholastically destroying their sastras. The only recourse for the new generation would be to adopt European values in order to improve their character.**

(source: **Inspired Writings of Hinduism - By Theodore Goldstucker** p.115).

British historians - like Stirling, Hunter, Beams and Toynbee were in the British administrative services. They were eager to give the impression that foreign rule was a blessing for India. They present a dark picture of the Maratha administration. They depict the feudatory rajas as barbarians. There were many dark sides to British administration. There were corrupt and inefficient officers. There were judges who were deeply involved in unjust dealings. These facts have been kept hidden from the public eye.

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According to author **Paul William Roberts**, "Conversion has largely failed in India because Christianity offers nothing that is not already available somewhere in the many forms of Hinduism. Hinduism never rejected the teachings of Jesus. Those who have converted either agreed with a gun pressed at their skulls as in Goa, or because it provided an escape from caste tyranny, as well as a guaranteed professional advancement. Through its Vedic legacy, Hinduism respects all faiths. It clearly states that God is one, but has many forms. The Christian message must sound preposterous: that God is indeed one, but has only one recognized form, his son. The "savages" of India were sophisticated - so sophisticated that the imperialist mixture of church and state in Europe could not grasp such sophistication.

"The sheer power of Hinduism terrified the Christian soldiers."

The British were more cunning at the game than the Portuguese, careful to show respect for Indian religions. Yet they sneered at the pagans behind their back, educated the Indian elite in British-run schools, or at Eton and Cambridge - which, if it did not guarantee conversion to Christianity, resulted in lapsed Hinduism, agnosticism, or an intellectual humanism.
In India, Anglo indoctrination produced a generation of "brown sahibs" who looked down on the religion of the masses, the opium of the people. Such is the power of colonization that a whole generation must pass before the paralyzing spell wears off."

(source: **Empire of the Soul: Some journeys in India - By Paul William Roberts** p. 323-325).

Many Christian researchers have documented the cause of the antipathy of the missionaries towards the Brahmins. **Elizabeth Susan Alexander** wrote,

"For the missionaries Brahmans (sic) had been in the forefront of the staunch Hindu opposition to missionary endeavours in Madras Presidency. They had also been the vanguard of the Indian nationalist movement that had taken alarmingly extremist turns."

(source: **The Attitudes of British Protestant Missionaries Towards Nationalism in India,** Konark Publishers, Delhi, 1994, p 67.)

As the great **Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy,** late curator at Boston Museum of Fine Arts, a distinguished student of Indian history and culture, and author of several books, and unmatched in his understanding of Indian culture, language, religion and philosophy. Ananda Coomaraswamy, had this to say regarding the Macaulayite higher education:

"A single generation of English education suffices to break the threads of tradition and create a nondescript and superficial being deprived of all roots — an intellectual pariah who does not belong to the East or the West, to the past or the future. Of all Indian problems the educational is the most difficult and the most tragic."

(source: **The Dance of Shiva - By Dr. Ananda K Coomaraswamy** p. 127).

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(**Note**: The tragic consequences was that the convert now found himself cut off from his ancient roots, attached to a foreign godhead and a foreign culture, and taught to despise and revile everything that for millennia had been an object of worship for his ancestors - including his own country. **This proves how the so called "just and merciful rule" of the British was indeed barbaric tyranny.** The burning of ancient books on Ayurveda in Kerala, so as to impose the European system of medicine on the natives, the cutting of weavers' thumbs in Bengal with a view of crippling the production of superior Indian cloth and ensuring the sale of British products, the ruthless, often bloody, extortion of revenue from the peasants for decades on end, even in the midst of the worst famines, the whipping, hangings and tortures that awaited those who opposed the Empire - these are only a few among the unending examples of the "providential character" of the British rule. But they took place too far from the "civilized" world to attract any notice. The Britons like the relief of high-sounding speeches in London's salons, adorned with a few pagan objects d'art purloined from India.

(Source: **Readings in Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself - By Satsvarupa dasa Goswami** p. 173-181).

Since Independence, there has been a growing conviction that education should teach Indian values. One of India' leading experts on education, **Dr. Humayun Kabir,** former Minister of Science and Cultural Relations of the centrall government, had warned:

" The divorce of modern education from the Indian context is still a fact which threatens danger to the country's life....danger in ....the weaning away of the literate classes from the culture of the country....**The new literates no longer derive their strength from the age-long traditions of the land. Their outlook is Western or more frequently pseudo-Western. Cut off from their moorings, they are unstable, loud and factional."**

(source: **India: A World in Transition - By Beatrice Pitney Lamb** p. 191-192).

Prof. **Perceival Spear** of Cambridge University has said: “It was possible for a man to admire the West and to revere the East and to have European authority for both opinions.” **What arrogance!** The “unique” has to be replaced by “Universals” in the plural. We have to be the children of the horizons, or as the Atharvaveda (16.3.6) says, *Samudro Asmi Vidharmana,* “the Unbounded Ocean am I.”

(source: **Theo-Diversity and Humane Values - By Prof. Lokesh Chandra**).

The Indological scholars of the present day have inherited the pioneer's bias and thought; today's bias is not "evangelist" but "empiricist," it slants just the same.

Dilip K. Chakrabarti in his book, **Colonial Indology: Sociopolitics of the Ancient Indian Past - By Dilip K. Chakrabarty** thus summarized the situation:

"The model of the Indian past...was foisted on Indians by the hegemonic books written by Western Indologists concerned with language, literature and philosophy who were and perhaps have always been paternalistic at their best and racists at their worst.."

(source: http://members.tripod.com/~INDIA_RESOURCE/britishedu.htm).

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Thoughts of Modern Indian Scholars

But truth can never remain hidden for long. Now some modern Indian scholars of have also begun to see to some extent, though not thoroughly, through the thin veneer of European scholarship.

Prof. Rangacharya writes:

" Incalculable mischief has been done by almost all the English and American scholars in assuming arbitrarily the earliest dates for Egypt or Mesopotamia - dates going back to B.C. 5000 at least - and the latest possible dates for Ancient India on the ground that India borrowed from them."

(source: **History of Pre-Musulman India**, Vol. II, Vedic India, Part I. 1937 A.D., p. 145.)



Nilakantha Shastri, the Head of History Department of Madras University, although a supporter of many untenable Western theories, had to write:

'What is this but a critique of Indian society and Indian history in the light of the nineteenth century prepossessions of Europe? This criticism was started by the English administration and European missionaries and has been nearly focused by the vast erudition of Lassen; the unfulfilled aspirations of Germany in the early nineteenth century, doubtless had their share in shaping the line of Lassen's thought."

(source: **All India Oriental Conference**, December 1941, Part II., p. 64, printed in 1946.)

C. R. Krishnamacharlu, Ex-Epigraphist to the Government of India, having realised the ulterior motives of European writers, has expressed his views more strongly. He writes: '

"These authors, coming as they do from nations of recent growth, and writing this history with motives other than cultural, which in some cases are apparently racial and prejudicial to the correct elucidation of the past history of India, cannot acquire testimony for historic veracity of cultural sympathy."

(source: '**The Cradle of Indian History**', p. 3, Adyar Library, Madras, 19).

Prof. R. Subba Rao, M.A., L. T., in his Presidential Address, (Sectional), Sixteenth Session of Indian History Congress, Waltair, (29th December, 1953.) writes:

"Unfortunately, the historicity of Puranas and their testimony has been perverted by certain Western scholars who stated rather dogmatically that the historical age cannot go back beyond 2000 B.C., and that there is no need for fixing the Mahabharata war earlier than 1400 B.C. They accused the Brahmins of having raised their antiquity and questioned the authenticity of the Hindu astronomical works."

(source: **J.A.H.R.S.**, Vol. XX, p. 187). (source: **Vedic Knowledge Online**).

For those who came from the West to convert India into Christianity or to rule over India, the British in particular, saw India with a different eye. They saw nothing good in this country. Why? Because they wanted to justify conversions or British rule over India. Thus, **they did the greatest damage to the image of this country.**

A word on missionaries: they claim they brought "light" to this country. **Rabindranath Tagore** says: **they started fires.**

(source: **Image & image-makers of MEA - M. S. N. Menon** TribuneIndia 12/22/2001).

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Women in the Age of Imperialism NEW

"Until the females are raised by education as to hold their proper rank in society and until their hearts are brought under the influence of Christianity, there is little hope that the people of India will rise from idolatry and sin to the dignity and happiness of a Christian people."

– **American Mission Report**, Jaffna (1839-9-10).

Women believed, according to Hunter, that "Christianity was responsible for the elevated status of Western women" and that "in preaching the gospel they were only sharing what they had received in such bounty." This means that American women missionaries were moved to action by both **"the heinousness of heathen womanhood and gratitude for their own Christian womanhood."** Many had noted that such attitude were a kind of **"Imperial feminism"**

In both America and Britain, there, was a whole cult of missionary work, highlighting the "romance of missions." Women who were "doers" could fight oppressive conditions at home and boldly venture abroad to expose the "wrongs of women." Magazines, popular novels and poetry on women's work among "heathen" women abounded; there were journals like "The Heathen Women's Friend," "Helping Hand" and books such as Life and Light for Heathen Women were published by the Women's Board of Missions. Popular novelists also latched on to the theme of missionary adventure, introducing a new genre of daring missionary heroines in exotic settings fraught with dangers of various kinds. Emma Southworth (in Fair Play, 1868) created a character, Britomarte Conyers, whose main desire is to leave America and save other women. "Oh my sisters! My sisters!" she exclaims, "as Christ died to save the whole human race, so I would die for you."

In Britain, Priscilla Chapman wrote a book, Hindoo Female Education (1839), alerting her readers to **"the poor idolatrous females in bondage"** and wrote of "the necessity of an avowed Christian direction to the efforts which may affect the elevation of the Hindoo females from their present degradation to the proper level." And in 1878, Isabel Hart (of the

Baltimore Women's Foreign Missionary Society) described heathen women as "degraded, secluded and helpless" and reminded American women of their "responsibility and duty" to support missionary work.

Helen Montgomery writing of Western Women in Eastern Lands (1910) said: "Christianity was the most tremendous engine of democracy ever forged" and was "destined to break in pieces all castes, privileges, and oppression."

But missionaries had to also face the realities of rising nationalism in India and Sri Lanka. But the **tradition of the white man's and white woman's Christian burden** continued the belief, among many, that "premature independence for India would be….an abdication of the ordained exercise of Christian rule." A conservative member of parliament who opposed political reforms for India, which were being discussed in the early 1930s, wrote:

"…the whole ideal of British laws, justice, and administration….exactly interpret the Ten Commandements…our idea of government is the nearest approach to Christianity, and to exchange it for government which may lean towards…the worship of Shiva or Kali is…a "spiritual abdication."

"The holy church – now alas steering its malignant way through the Indian Ocean." - **W. B. Yeats** (around 1905), letter to Florence Farr.

(source: **The White Women's Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Rule - By Kumari Jayawardena** p. 24-32).

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Technology and Culture in India NEW

The reversal of the European image of Asia seems to have occurred, however, in a gradual period between 1780 and 1830, by which time the foundations of the industrial revolution in England had already been laid. **Voltaire** noticed a bit of it. **Having once considered India as "famous for its laws and sciences",** he felt it necessary to denounce the increasing preoccupations of Europeans in India with the amassing of "immense fortunes", and this led him to remark that "if the Indians had remained unknown to the Tartars and to us, they would have been the happiest people in the world."

By 1830, the British had acquired, in what was to become a completely European century, a flattering notion of the nature of their own civilization, and a thoroughgoing contempt for every other.

In India, itself, this new attitude found expression in the famous Minute of **Lord Macaulay** (1800-59) on the 2nd of February, 1835:

I have never found one amongst them (the Orientalists) who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia….It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgement used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same.

The next influential person on our list, **Karl Marx** (1818 - 1883), had his own theories about the role of the British industrial civilization in India. “England” he wrote, “has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating – the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia. He went on to emphasize how the British were breaking up the village community, uprooting handicraft industry, and establishing private property in land, which he termed “the great desideratum of Indian society”. Industrial life would wreck the caste system: “Modern industry, resulting from the railway system, will dissolve the hereditary divisions of labor, upon which rest the Indian castes, those decisive, impediments to Indian progress and Indian power.”

Here again, the remarkable fact is that a hundred years later, **Peter F Drucker** (1909 -) (the godfather of the global corporation) would still be theorizing along similar lines. In one of his not so well known books, **The Landmarks of Tomorrow**, he urged his readers to face “the new reality of the collapse of the East, that is, of non-Western culture and civilization, to the point where no viable society anywhere can be built except on Western foundations”. He based his pontification on the perception that: Every single one of the new countries in the world today – including those that have not yet shaken off colonial status – sees its goal in its transformation into a Western state, economy and society, and sees the means to achieve this goal in the theories, institutions, sciences, technologies and tools the West has developed.

And certainly no accurate description of non-Western human experience could ever have been possible with minds convinced, for example, that Western philosophy was the nearest approach to metaphysical truth ever attained by mankind, that the Christian religion contained truth incumbent upon all men everywhere to believe.

As **Dr. Joseph Needham** (1900-1995) put it, even European painting and sculpture had become “absolute” painting and sculpture, that “which artists of all cultures must have been trying unsuccessfully to attain”. European music was music, all other music, anthropology. **The study of white men, even, was a separate science called sociology: anthropology was for the rest.**

If Macaulay was one of the first to set out to prescribe how best, in his case Indians, might save their withered souls, he was also the virtual founder of a movement that would carry on his tradition to the present day.

(source: **Homo Faber: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West - By Claude Alphonso Alvares** p. 4 –6). For more on culture, refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture**).

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Conclusion

Macaulayism

Indian Marxism is only a passing phase in a much larger trend known as Macaulayism, named after the British administrator designed to create a class of people in Indian in skin color but British in every other respect. **"Macaulayites" are those Indians who have interiorized the colonial ideology of the "White Man's Burden" (as Rudyard Kipling called it in a famous poem): the Europeans had to come and liberate the natives, "half devil and half child", from their native culture, which consisted only of ignorance, superstition and the concomitant social evils;**

and after this liberation from themselves, these Indians became a kind of honorary Whites.

Macaulay's policy was implemented and became a resounding success. The pre-Macaulayan vernacular system of education was destroyed, even though British surveys had found it more effective and more democratic than the then-existing education system in Britain. The rivalling educationist party, the so-called Orientalists, had proposed a Sanskrit-based system of education, in which Indian graduates would not have been estranged from their mother civilization as they became through an English education....."

This is the continuance of, in a series the culmination of the Macaulay-Missionary technique. **The British calculated that to subjugate India and hold it, they must undermine the essence of the people: this was Hinduism, and everything which flowed from it. Hence the doggedness with which they set about to undermine the faith and regard of the people for five entities:**

- the gods and goddesses the Hindus revered;
- the temples and idols in which they were enshrined;
- the texts they held sacred;
- the language in which those texts and everything sacred in that tradition was enshrined and which was even in mid-19th century the lingua franca - that is, Sanskrit;
- and the group way of life - the Brahmins. The other component of the same exercise was to prop up the parts - the non-Hindus, the regional languages, the castes and groups which they calculated would be the most accessible to Missionaries and the Empire.



As **Ashish Nandy**, a Christian critic of old and new forms of colonialism, has observed: **"Schooling is the chosen instrument of alienation. The brightest children are snatched away from familiar surroundings to be introduced in schools based on Western model. When they leave, they speak the language of the colonizer and can no longer communicate with their own people."**

Persons no less than **Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekanada, Rabindranath Tagore** etc have called for a change in the teaching of history.

Mahatma Gandhi said “I find daily proof of the increasing and continuing wrong being done to the millions by our false **deindianising of education**. These graduates who are my valued associates flounder when they have to give expression to their innermost thoughts. They are strangers in their own homes. What is worse, even the swaraj for which we are struggling may become foreign in character when we finally get it.” His words were indeed prophetic

In spite of Islamic Onslaught and British Imperialism, our children should read what the **West Bengal's leftist government** is teaching kids. Refer to an extract from the, textbook for Class V**. “Islam and Christianity are the only religions which treated man with honor and equality..."**

Today the **Marxists** are in the same business of conversion. For their outlandish dreams to be realized it was just as essential that the people lose faith in, and regard for, that they cut themselves off from their roots. While our eminent historians try to belittle the achievements of Indian art and architecture in the ancient period - by insinuating that it was derived from other countries, by seeing in it only reflection of the life of the privileged classes - **Soviet historians** talk of the high standards the Indians attained in these spheres. They talk of high originality..."

(please refer to **Hindu Culture** for more on Soviet historians)

(source: **Eminent Historians - By Arun Shourie** Harper-Collins, New Delhi ISBN 8190019988 p. 193 -243 and **Decolonising The Hindu Mind - Ideological Development of Hindu Revivalism -**

By Koenraad Elst Publisher: Rupa ISBN: 81-7167-519-0 p. 25-26).

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Articles

The Early American Indologists

source:
http://www.gosai.com/chaitanya/saranagati/html/nmj_articles/east_west/east_west_5.html

The American Oriental Society, founded in 1842 though the study of Sanskrit itself, did not start in American universities until some years later. The first American Sanskrit scholar of any repute was Edward Elbridge Salisbury (1814-1901) who taught at Yale (Elihu Yale was himself ultimately connected with India and had profound respect for Vedic philosophy). Another early Sanskritist, Fitzedward Hall (1825-1901) was in the Harvard class of 1846 but left college to search for a runaway brother in-of all places-India, where he continued his studies of Indian languages and even became tutor and professor of Sanskrit at Banaras. He was the first American scholar to edit a Sanskrit text-the Vishnu Purana.

One of Salisbury's students at Yale, William Dwight Whitney (1827-1901) went on to become a distinguished Sanskritist in his own right having studied in Berlin under such distinguished German scholars as Bopp and Weber. Whitney became a full professor of Sanskrit language and literature at Yale in 1854, wrote his classic Sanskrit Grammar (1879) and was the doyen of Indologists of his period. Whitney was succeeded in the Chair of Sanskrit Studies of Yale by Edward Washburn Hopkins (1857-1932). Hopkins was an excellent scholar but made his name principally as an exponent of India's religions. His book The Religions of India (1895) was for many years one of the principal works on the subject available in America and his Origins and Evolution of Religion published in 1923, sold well.

With Yale leading the way, Harvard caught up and beginning with James Bradstreet Greenough (1833-1900), had a succession of great Sanskrit teachers, the most distinguished among them was Charles Rockwell Lanman who taught for over forty years, publishing such works as Sanskrit Reader and Beginnings of Hindu Pantheism. But his greatest contribution was planning and editing of the Harvard Oriental Series. In his time he was responsible for influencing such students of his who were later to achieve literary renown as T. S. Eliot, Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt. The tradition of American Indologists has been nobly kept up by those who followed: to mention only a few names, A. V. William Jackson, Franklin Edgerton, W. Norman Brown, and Joseph Campbell.

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Articles

1. **Western Response to Modern India** - **By D. P. Singhal**
2. **Indian Response to Modern Europe** - **By D. P. Singhal**
3. **Haunted by Macaulay's ghost** - **By Francois Gautier**



1.Western Response to Modern India

Excerpts from **India and World Civilization- By D. P. Singhal** pp- 268.

The growing influence of Indian thought in recent years has indeed frightened some Western religious writers, such as Hendrick Kraemmer (World Cultures and World Religions), who have designated it as the "Eastern invasion of the West". Perhaps excessive anxiety to defend the Western Christian traditions may have led Kraemer to over-rate Indian influence. But there are many European scholars who have denounced Indian thought in unmistakable terms. Whether response or resistance, admiration or denunciation, all are equally indicative of impact and stimulus.

In a limited way the migration of Indian labor to other countries provided yet another link between India and the outside world. Indian settlers began to move to other countries in 1830, mainly to work on British plantations. This made abolition of slavery commercially possible a few years later, when the notorious indenture system was introduced in the British Empire. According to estimate, twenty-eight million Indians migrated to various countries between 1834 and 1932.

An important social survey, carried out in Britain about some years ago, produced some surprising results. A quarter of all those who professed belief in an after-life- an eighth of the population-did not believe that this after-life would be eternal; eleven percent of the believers actually declared their faith in transmigration. This was "perhaps the most surprising single piece of information to be derived from this research". Belief in transmigration is a typically Indian doctrine and is contrary to the creeds of Europe and Western Asia.

Politically and intellectually it was inevitable that there should have been some reaction in Europe against an invasion of Indian learning. Reaction against alien ideas appears to be a common human irrationality. Certainly, the nature of political relationships and nationalistic pride understandably played a significant role. European nations generally were more receptive to Indian ideas during the early period of their relationship which was based on relative equality. But as European political, technological and economic supremacy over Asia came to be recognized, an attitude of superiority crept into the European – and particularly the British- outlook. The influence of political relationships on cultural intercourse is further illustrated by the fact that, once the British became overlords of India, Indian learning drew more sympathetic and imaginative understanding form other European countries than it did from the British.

The discovery of Indian thought by European scholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to an outburst of admiration and enthusiasm, mainly because they felt that Indian thought filled a need in their European culture. Neither Christianity nor the classical cultures of Greece and Rome were considered satisfactory any more and the European intelligentsia sought to apply the new knowledge, brought in increasingly by Indologists, to their own spiritual preoccupations.

It is significant that, with notable exceptions, India appears to have been most attractive to those Europeans who did not visit the country personally. In other words, Indian thought made a better impact on the European mind than did contemporary Indians.



Of all the European nations, **Germany**'s response to India was most enthusiastic and open hearted. Perhaps the similarity between the German and the Indian mind, in the sense that both are given to contemplation, abstract speculation, and pantheism, and both have a tendency towards formlessness, inwardness, and transcendentalism, contributed toward German understanding of Indian literature. **Leopold von Schroeder** says: "The Indians are the nation of romanticists of antiquity." The Germans are the romanticists of modern times". Sentimentality and feeling for nature are common to both German and Indian poetry, whereas they are foreign, for instance to Hebrew or Greek poetry. Another similarity is illustrated , by the Indian tendency to work scientific systems, India was the nation of scholars of antiquity, in the same way as the Germans are the nation of scholars of the modern times.


The **French** were not amongst the first Europeans to come into contact with India. But as soon, as French travelers, who are known for their literary taste, visited India and reported on their travels, French literary circles responded enthusiastically.


The British response to Indian learning was most mixed. Whilst India remained a trying political problem, she was a symbol of British power and achievement, as well as a major source of her economic wealth. Individual thinkers studied India closely and whilst some were fascinated, others were repelled. Often the political expedience-for instance the need to justify domination of India to the British public-British administrators were compelled to interpret Indian culture as degenerate and decadent.

Another barrier between Indian and British cultural co-operation was the Englishmen working in India. The early administrators were indifferent to anything except trade and profits; the later ones, after 1830, suffered from a sense of cultural inferiority, which compounded with political superiority, manifested itself in self-righteousness, prejudices, and arrogance. They often came to India for only a few years, invariably lived an exclusive life, and returned home to condemn Indian culture and traditions with gusto.

Their callous indifference to Indian art is well reflected by the fact that the liberal William Bentinck, who initiated social reforms in India, seriously considered the possibility of dismantling the Taj Mahal and selling the marble to meet the shortage of money in the Company's treasury. He was prevented because "the test auction of materials from the Agra palace proved unsatisfactory."

Fed on Macaulay, Mutiny, and Kipling, the English, no wonder, did not appreciate India.

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2. Indian Response to Modern Europe

Excerpts from **"India and World Civilization" - By D. P.Singhal** - Chapter VII pp- 273.



Whilst Europe sought ancient Indian learning, India focused her attention on modern European knowledge. In this cultural encounter, initiative remained for the most part with Europe, for she was a young developing society with an inquisitive mind and the material resources to obtain easy access to what she fancied. In contrast, Indians even if they knew what they needed, could not get at it at will.

Western tradition is a highly generalized, extremely vague, and ill-defined concept that is often stretched to include or exclude anything at will to suit the purpose in hand. It is not a unitary system of thought, nor has it an unbroken historical continuity. There are deep controversies as to its exact nature and value, and it is a complex of diverse, even contradictory, ideologies and traditions. For instance, it is equally proud of the imprints of early Greek and Christian traditions which were relentlessly opposed to each other.

Even a casual investigation reveals the inherent contradictions of Western traditions. Western tradition is often characterized as one of material progress and scientific advancement, yet Christian mystical thought is superbly well developed, and until recently science was positively denounced in the Christian West. In most

respects scientific inquiry was much more highly developed in the Hellenistic period than it was in mediaeval Europe. In fact, exactly why Hellenistic science declined needs an explanation. Again, it is repeatedly pointed out that Western tradition stems from the enlargement of individual liberties, and that individual liberty is the essence of Western civilization. Some Western scholars go even much farther and assert that the West has regarded " a denial of freedom as a denial of the value of the individual and therefore as a sin against the soul of man."



Yet it is not possible to completely ignore the Western institutions of slavery, feudalism, colonialism, and imperialism and racism. Western liberalism, of which the West can be justly proud , was born in the seventeenth century as a reaction against the violence and hatred that had prevailed during the almost unbelievably atrocious religious wars. But even since then, liberalism has not remained unchallenged in the West. Indeed, totalitarianism and suppression of freedom of thought and person appear to be the unbroken trend of a Western tradition that can claim most of the famous despots of world history, including Alexander, Julius Ceasar, Nero, Napoleon, Hitler, and Mussolini. This fact is even more startling when these dictators and conquerors are contrasted with the prophets of non-violence and peace, such as Gautama Buddha, Asoka, and Mahatma Gandhi, who were all born in Asia. Even the divine rights of kings, found far more serious advocates amongst Western monarchs- the Greek Alexander, the Roman Ceasars, Russians Czars, French Bourbons, and British Stuarts. It is true that the Western world has continuously fought for liberty, but this only serves to illustrate the existence of anti-freedom forces and a totalitarian current in Western tradition.

Again, it cannot be claimed, as it is often done, that the rise of Christianity did much to improve the position of the individual, for religious persecution has been a common feature of Western Christianity. The once persecuted Christians, having gained power, themselves became persecutors. The terrible struggles between Church and State were not fought for individual, or even religious freedom; the Church sought to compel the secular powers to serve its own purposes. Any individual who did not subscribe to the Church's belief was at once denounced as a heretic. Crusades and religious wars of extermination were often as bloody as Hitler's slaughter of the Jews and Gypsies.

The Church even persecuted the mediaeval minstrels and Gypsies because they loved freedom.



Christianity, which is in practice a unique combination of beliefs and clergy, whilst owing its religion to Jesus and his early Asian disciples, is, in strict ecclesiastical hierarchy, an essential Western movement. Whatever may have been the value of the Church in religious practice, it has inhibited freedom of thought and individual liberty by relentlessly enforcing its presuppositions as eternal truths. It is the Church which sets moral standards for the individual and prescribes his belief. The organization of the Church is unparalleled in history. No federation of states has been as comprehensive and universal in taking hold of the minds of people, and no monarch or dictator has been given the complete and willing obedience of such a wide and vast body of peoples, as has the Church.
The Islamic Caliphate and the Buddhist monasticism were, in this respect, no way comparable to the Christian Church.

Communism, with all its scientific reason, humanism, and economic equality, is essentially a totalitarian doctrine, negating individual liberty, and is a typical, almost, exclusive Western concept. Communism stresses the primary of reason, but like a missionary religion, it has a sense of its own infallibility and an obligation to world-wide expansion. Its greatest exponents have mainly been Western or Western-trained.

Even the British thought, which was more directly and closely linked with India than that of other European countries, had its own inner conflicts and contradictions in respect to India, ranging from

Edmund Burke's liberalism and John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism to John Bright's radicalism.

Burke desired India to stay Indian; in fact, he was rather anxious to reform the disreputable English trustees in India. He strongly condemned the facile and much used aspersion of "Oriental Despotism" and warned his countrymen against passing judgment upon a people, for ages civilized and cultivated, who formed their own laws and institutions prior to "our insect origins of yesterday." The Utilitarians and Evangelicals, on the contrary, saw little good in Indian society and desired to Westernize it completely by denying individual liberty to the Indian. The Utilitarians, whilst not denying the abstract right to liberty, could see no alternative to a benevolent British despotism in India, conducted from London. India exposed Utilitarianism's paradox between its principle of liberty and that of authority. The Evangelicals' viewpoint was religious; they believed that only through Christianity could temporal welfare and spiritual salvation be achieved. Hence, they looked upon the British conquest of India as a divine act to redeem themselves from their depraved system of superstition. Thus they sought the rapid conversion of the peoples of India to Christian ways, as interpreted by Western clergy. If Utilitarianism provided a justification and a practical basis for British imperial rule in India, Evangelicalism gave it a sense of urgency and intense zeal.



Whilst the 17th century marked the zenith of India's mediaeval glory, the 18th century was a spectacle of corruption, misery, and chaos. The glory of the Mughals had vanished, life had become insecure, the nobility was deceitful and oppressive, and intellectual curiosity had given way to superstitious beliefs. The country was in a state of military and political helplessness. In this atmosphere, literature, art and culture could barely survive. The malaise of India was aggravated in full measure by the East India Company with its indiscriminate exploitation, corruption and bribery.

In contrast, Europe was robust and vigorous. This was the Age of Enlightenment, and Europeans were going through a process of rebirth during which religion was detached from state, alchemy from science, theology from philosophy, and divinity from art. The impact of Western culture on India was that of a dynamic society on a static one. It is a cruel irony of history, that whilst two major revolutions – the French and the American-upholding the human rights to liberty and equality were taking place in the West, India was in the throes of losing her own freedom to Western mercantile imperialism.

" The British domination of India has been described as a "political and economic misfortune."

In 1937, a distinguished British civil servant, **G. T. Garratt, declared that the period of Indo-British civilization of the 150 years had been most disappointing, and "in some ways the most sterile in Indian history."**

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Haunted by Macaulay's ghost
By Francois Gautier -Publication: Organiser
Date: November 29, 1998
http://www.hvk.org/hvk/articles/articles/1298/0023.html

As a foreign journalist, one cannot understand all the excessive noise made about the Education Agenda of Murli Manohar Joshi: What is wrong in trying to "Indianise, nationalise and spiritualise" education in India? Joshi's critics-and there have been many-have called it "a hidden Hindu agenda". So what?



With 800 million souls, Hindus constitute the majority of this country. Why should Hindus then be ashamed of a "Hindu education"? Traditionally and historically, Hinduism has always been the most tolerant of all religions, allowing persecuted minorities from all over the world, whether the Jerusalem Jews, the Parsis from Persia, Christians from Syria, or even Arab merchants, to settle in India over the centuries and practice their religion in peace. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of India's invader, be they Muslims, who ruthlessly tried for 10 centuries to stamp out this most peaceful of all religions; or the Christians missionaries, who used every means at their disposal to convert Hindus to the “true” religion (and are still trying today).

But Hinduism, never tried to convert anybody, never sent its armies or missionaries to neighbouring countries, to impose its religion and ways of life-not even by non-violence means, as the Buddhists did all over Asia. It should also be said that Hinduism is much more than a religion, it's a way of life, a universal spiritual outlook, which has allowed numerous sects, branches, philosophies, to develop within its fold, as long as they were faithful to the central truth of Hinduism: Dharma. It even recognises the truth and validity of other creeds-and it's perfectly normal for a Hindu to have pictures of Guru Govind, Christ, Buddha and Krishna in their homes. For are they not avatars? And is that not true secularism (and not the .opportunistic secularism of India’s politicians, which has divided India along caste and religious lines)?



Then why should Hindus not be proud of Hinduism? It has not only shaped the psyches of Hindus, but also of Indian Christians, Jains, Parsis, even Muslims, who are like no other Muslims in the world. And why should Indians be ashamed of their own civilisation whose greatness was foremost Hindu? Why should they refuse to have their children read the Vedas, which constitute one of the great Mountains of spiritual wisdom, or the Bhagavad Gita, which contains all the secrets of eternal life? Or the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which teach the great values of human nature: courage, selflessness, spiritual endeavour, love of one’s wife and neighbours. ...

Are the French ashamed of their Greeco-Roman inheritance? Not at all! On the contrary they even think that civilization started with the Greeks. Would you call the Germans or the Italians “nationalists" because they have Christian Democrats Parties? Christianity is the founding stone of Western civilisation and nobody dares deny it. Clinton goes to the mass and swears on the Bible and none finds anything to say. We French are brought-up
listening to the values of Homer's Iliad, or Corneille's Le Cid. It is true that in France there has been a separation of the State and the Church; but that is because at one time the Church misused its enormous political power and grabbed enormous amounts of lands and gold. But no such thing ever happened in India. The Brahmins never interfered in politics and today they are often a neglected lot.



When they took over India, the British set about establishing an intermediary race of Indians, whom they could entrust with their work at the middle level echelons and who could one day be convenient instruments to rule by proxy or semi-proxy. The tool to shape these "British clones" was Education. In the words of Macaulay, the 'Pope' of British schooling in India: "We must at present do our best to form a class, who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions in morals and in intellects". Macaulay had very little regard for Hindu culture

and education: "All the historical information which can be collected from all the books which have been written in the Sanskrit language, is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgement used at preparatory schools in England".

It seems today that India's Marxist and Muslim intelligentsia could not agree more with Macaulay or with Charles Grant. For the dream of Macaulay has come true: Nowadays, the greatest adversaries of the "Indianised and spiritualised education" of Joshi, are the descendants of these "**Brown Sahibs'** the "secular" politicians, the journalists, the top bureaucrats, in fact the whole Westernised cream of India. And what is even more paradoxical, is that most of them are Hindus. It is they who upon getting independence, have denied India its true identity and borrowed blindly from the British education system, without trying to adapt it to the unique Indian mentality and psychology; and it is they who are refusing to accept "an Indianisation, nationalisation and spiritualisation" of India's education system, which is totally western-oriented. And what India is getting from this education is a youth which apes the West.

But then, what does makes Indian unique? Take the proposal of Joshi to make Sanskrit compulsory in school. Great idea! Sanskrit is the mother of all languages, and it could become the unifying language of India, apart from. English, which is spoken only, by a tiny minority. "Sanskrit. ought still to have a future as the language of the learned and it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongues cease entirely to be written or spoken", admonished 50 years ago Sri Aurobindo, India's great Sage and Seer.

A dead language, you say! Impossible to revive? But that's what they argued about Hebrew. And did not the Jewish people, when they got back their land in 1948, revive their "dead" language, so that it is spoken today by all Jewish people and has become alive again? The same thing ought to be done with Sanskrit. Let the scholars begin now to revive and modernize the Sanskrit language, it would be a sure sign of the dawning of the Renaissance of India. In a few years it should be taught as the second language in schools throughout the country, with the regional language as the first and English as the third. Then will India again have its own unifying language.



The Ministers walked out when the Saraswati Vandanam was played. But why should anyone object to Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning who bestowed so much grace on India. In 1939, a disciple told Sri Aurobindo that: "there are some people who object to singing of Vande Mataram as a national song; Sri Aurobindo had replied; "in that case Hindus should give up their culture". But the disciple had continued: "the argument is that the song speaks of Hindu- gods, like Durga and that it is offensive to Muslims". Said Sri Aurobindo: "but it is not a religious song, it is a national song and the Durga spoken of is India as the Mother. Why should not the Muslims accept it? In the Indian concept of nationality, the Hindu view should be naturally there. If it cannot find a place, the Hindus may as well be asked to give-up their culture. The Hindus don't object to "Allah-Ho-Akbar".

It is then obvious that Education in India has to be. totally revamped. The kind of Westernised education which is standard in India, does have its place, because India wants to be on par with the rest of the world, and Indian youth should be able to deal confidently with the West: do business, talk, and relate to a universal world culture. But nevertheless, the first thing that Indian children should be taught is the greatness of their own culture. They should learn to revere the Vedas, they should be taught the genius of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, they should be told that in this country everything has been done, that it was an unsurpassed civilisation, when the West was still mumbling its first words, that Indian civilisation reached heights, which have been since unsurpassed. But they should be taught early that India's greatness is her spirituality her world-wide wisdom. India’s new education has to be spiritualised, it has to be an inner education, which teaches to look at things from the inner prism, not through the western artificial looking glass.

India's Dharma, her eternal quest for truth, should be drilled in the child from an early age. And from this firm base, everything then can be taught - from the most modem forms of mathematics, to

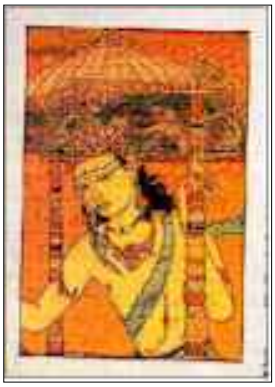
the latest scientific technologies.

(The author is correspondent in South Asia of Le Figaro, France's largest circulated newspaper)
(The Hindustan Times, 8-11-1998)

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Did You Know?

Much of Modern Medicine can be traced to the Hindu surgeon, Sushruta, circa 600 BCE.



Best known for plastic surgery, his other notable achievements include cosmetic surgery, treatises on medical ethics, definitions, for 121 surgical implements, control of infection through antiseptics, use of drugs, to control bleeding, toxicology, psychiatry, midwifery, cataract operations and classifications of burns. And if all this weren't enough, Sushruta was among the first to prescribe surgical anesthesia - which in his day was a healthy dose of strong wine!

For more on medicine, please refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture**).

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In ancient India, women occupied a very important position, in fact a superior position to, men. It is a culture whose only words for strength and power are feminine -"Shakti" means "power" and "strength." All male power comes from the feminine. Literary evidence suggests that kings and towns were destroyed because a single woman was wronged by the state. For example, Valmiki's Ramayana teaches us that Ravana and his entire clan was wiped out because he abducted Sita. Veda Vyasa's Mahabharatha teaches us that all the Kauravas were killed because they humiliated Draupadi in public. Elango Adigal's Sillapathigaram teaches us Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas was burnt because Pandyan Nedunchezhiyan mistakenly killed her husband on theft charges.

In Vedic times women and men were equal as far as education and religion was concerned. Women participated in the public sacrifices alongside men. One text mentions a female rishi Visvara. Some Vedic hymns, are attributed to women such as Apala, the daughter of Atri, Ghosa, the daughter of Kaksivant or Indrani, the wife of Indra. Apparently in early Vedic times women also received the sacred thread and could study the Vedas. The Haritasmrti mentions a class of women called brahmavadinis who remained unmarried and spent their lives in study and ritual. Panini's distinction between arcarya (a lady teacher) and acaryani (a teacher's wife), and upadhyaya (a woman preceptor) and upadhyayani (a preceptor's wife) indicates that women at that time could not only be students but also teachers of sacred lore. He mentions the names of several noteworthy women scholars of the past such as Kathi, Kalapi, and Bahvici. The Upanishads refer to several women philosophers, who disputed with their male colleagues such as Vacaknavi, who challenged Yajnavalkya. The Rig Veda also refers to women engaged in warfare. One queen Bispala is mentioned, and even as late a witness as Megasthenes (fifth century B.C. E.) mentions heavily armed women guards protecting Chandragupta's palace.

Louis Jaccoliot, the celebrated French author of the **Bible in India: Hindoo Origin of Hebrew and Christian Revelation** said: "India of the Vedas entertained a respect for women amounting to worship; a fact which we seem little to suspect in Europe when we accuse the extreme East of having denied the dignity of woman, and of having only made her an instrument of pleasure and of passive obedience." He also said: "What! here is a civilization, which you cannot deny to be older than your own, which places the woman on a level with the man and gives her an equal place in the family and in society."

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Sati, the much-highlighted face of Hinduism
Dowry Murder: The Imperial Origins of a Cultural Crime
Women as Purohita - priests
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Introduction

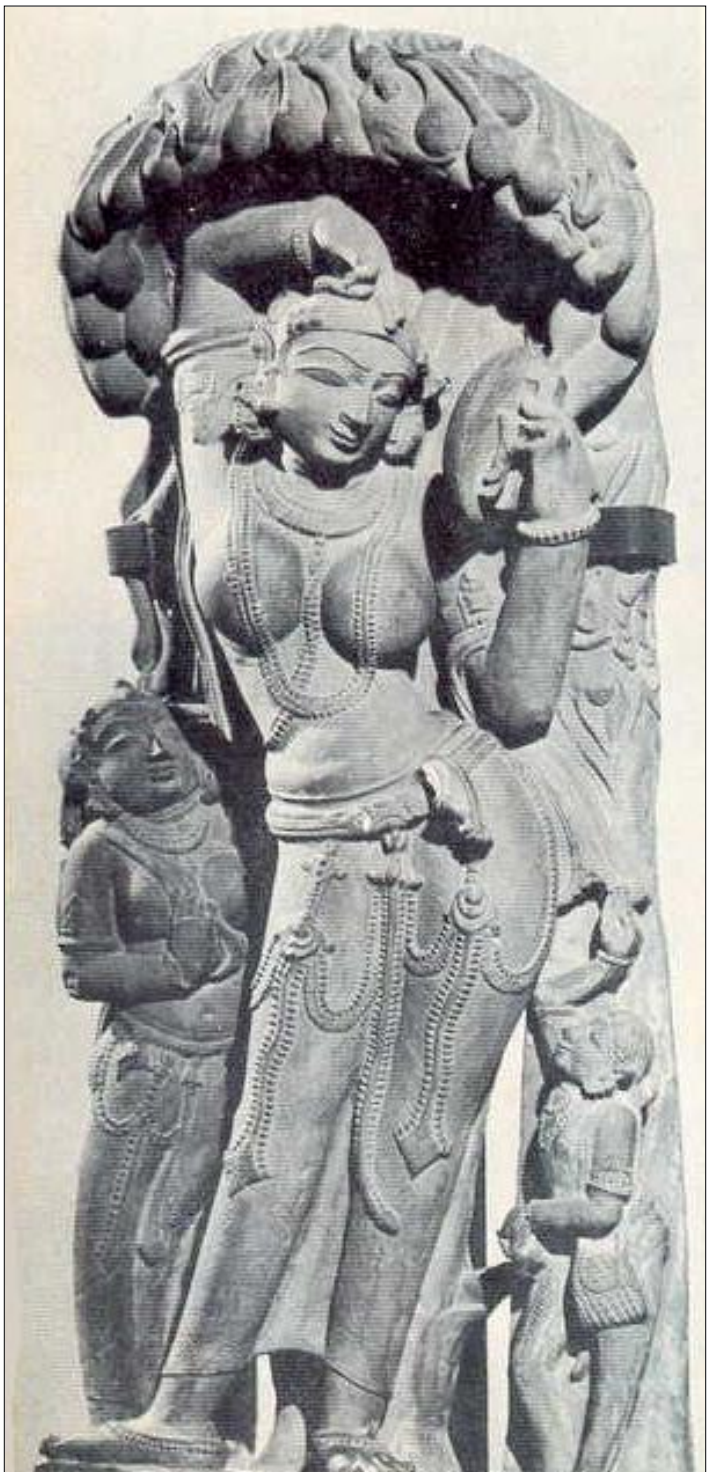
Recent incidents of sati and rash of "dowry murders" have made headlines not only in India, but all around the world, and have focused attention to women's issues in India. **In the wake of the discussion it emerged that Indian women's problems are not only problems of Hindu women or problems caused by traditional Hinduism.** Media paints India as a dangerous place. But if statistics can be trusted, a study by Hindus Against the Abuse of Women presented at the Second International Conference on Bride Burning and Dowry Deaths in India **puts USA in the lead of familial femicide. It says USA murders of women committed by "intimate relations" are 15 per year per million population.** The rate in Pakistan is 6.44 per million. India's is 6.25 per million. The study says excessive need for control and greed may be the underlying causes, not cultural or religious factors. India recently passed a law making husbands and in-laws guilty until proven otherwise if a bride dies within the first year of marriage. Since then, the rate of women killed by intimate relations dropped by more than 50%. Tiny Switzerland is home to a mere 7.2 million people. It is extremely rich, modern, industrialised and democratic with excellent health care and a 100 per cent literacy rate. So why has this proud nation with its fiercely democratic traditions failed to curb violence against women? **Which is why the statistics for wife beating are about the same in the developed and the developing world**. It is fallacious to think that there is a link between democracy, prosperity, education levels and domestic violence," counters Elizabeth Rod-Grangé, a Swiss sociologist and activist with Solidarité Femme, a women's rights

group that runs shelters for battered women in Geneva. According to the report, one in every three women suffers violence in her lifetime. The statistics in Europe are as appalling as anywhere else. In France, six women die each month at the hands of men who profess to love them. **In Britain, one woman is killed by a partner every three days, one woman in four experiences domestic violence and attacks on partners account for a quarter of all violent crime. Despite media campaigns and shocking statistics, domestic violence continues to be one of Europe's most under-reported crimes.**

(source: **Hinduism Today** http://www.hinduismtoday.com/1997/9/ and **Domestic violence in Switzerland** - **hindu.com** and **Women, a battered section of society in Europe** - **hindu.com**).

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Hindu religion has been occasionally criticized as encouraging inequality between men and women, towards the detriment of Hindu women. **This inaccurate presumption again arises when people combine social and religious issues.**





10th century Nayika standing underneath a tree attended by her companions, while she put the finishing touches to her toilet. In her left hand she holds a mirror, while adjusting her coiffure with her right.

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"India's femininity and sexual ambiguity, is the very antithesis of Western virility."

According to **Guy Sorman**, visiting scholar at Hoover Institution at Stanford and the leader of new liberalism in France, writes: **idea of feminism and ecology came from the 1968 movement, from the meeting between India and the West.** He says: **"There is hardly anything in European thought to predispose the West to reject virility, the respect for authority, the mastery over nature.** India too has a warrior (khastriya) tradition of virility as exemplified in the **Mahabharata**, only it is secondary. First, comes the veneration of thousands of goddesses - for the Indians, India is above all **Mother India.**

India's femininity and sexual ambiguity, is the very antithesis of Western virility."

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** (**'Le Genie de l'Inde**') Macmillan India Ltd. 2001. ISBN 0333 93600 0 p. 197).

Testifying to the quiet continuance of an ancient tradition, Abanindranath Tagore painted his famous watercolor Mother India in 1906, as a beautiful, ascetic goddess clad in pale saffron. This dreamy image became the artistic icon for the Indian nation during the struggle for independence. Bankim Chandra's unforgettable song Vande Mataram inspired countless patriots to their martyrdom and still stirs, in everybody's heart devotion to the motherland visualized as Devi.

(source: **Devi in Indian Arts - By Utpal K. Banerjee** Tour India April 2001).

Recently Chicago radio and TV talk-show, **Tony Brown** has made remarks like "A woman in the India is never free." (refer to **Hindu-bashing Chicago Radio and TV talk show airs**). Perhaps Mr. Brown should read 200 verses in the Bible that denigrate women **Insults to women in the Bible**. According to Ed Viswanathan author of **Am I a Hindu?**: " It is pertinent to remember that St. Paul wrote in the Bible, women cannot be leaders and cannot talk in church. That is why Catholics will never have a woman priest. This country (USA) will take very many years for a woman or a black to become president, where as India already had a women prime minister." (source: **India Tribune - By Ed Viswanathan**).

Helen Ellerbe (researcher, writer, and public speaker) has observed that: "Christian philosopher, **Boethius**, who wrote in **The Consolation of Philosophy**, "Woman is a temple built upon a sewer." The 13th century **St. Thomas Aquinas** suggested that God had made a mistake in creating woman: Lutherans at Wittenberg debated whether women were really human beings at all. Orthodox Christians held women responsible for all sin. As the Bible's Apocrypha states: "Of woman came the beginning of sin/ And thanks to her, we all must die." The witch hunts were an eruption of orthodox Christianity's vilification of women, "the weaker vessel" in St. Peter's words. The second century **St Clement of Alexandria** wrote: "Every woman should be filled with shame by the thought that she is a woman." The Church father **Tertullian** also explained why women deserve their status as despised and inferior human beings."

(source: **The Dark Side of Christian History - By Helen Ellerbe** Morningstar Books July 1995 ISBN 0964487349 p. 115).

Francois Gautier (1950 -) Paris-born has lived in India for 30 years, is a political analyst for Le Figaro, one of France's largest circulation newspaper, remarks: "Countries such as France or the United States, who are often preaching India on "women's rights" never had a woman as their top leader (President), whereas India had Indira Gandhi ruling with an iron hand for nearly twenty years; and proportionately they have less MP's than India, which is considering earmarking 33 % of seats in Parliament for women, a revolution in human history!" Thus in India - and it is true that it is often a paradox, as women, because of later Muslim influences, have often been relegated to the background - **the feminine concept is a symbol of dynamic realization.** She is the eternal Mother, who is all Wisdom, all Compassion, all Force, Beauty and Perfection. It is in this way that since the dawn of times, Hindus have venerated the feminine element under its different manifestations. Mahalaxshmi, Mahakali, Mahasaraswati, Maheshwari - and even India is feminine: **"Mother India."**

(source: **Arise O' India - By Francois Gautier** Har Anand publisher ISBN: 81-241-0518-9 p.11-13). For more on Francois Gautier refer to chapter **Quotes221_250**).

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Will Durant (1885-1981) American historian says:

"Women enjoyed far greater freedom in the Vedic period than in later India. She had more to say in the choice of her mate than the forms of marriage might suggest. She appeared freely at feasts and dances, and joined with men in religious sacrifice. She could study, and like Gargi, engage in philosophical disputation. If she was left a widow there were no restrictions upon her remarriage."

(source: **Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage - By Will Durant** MJF Books.1935 p. 401). For more on Will Durant refer to chapter **Quotes1_20** and **Hindu Art**).

In religious matters, Hindus have elevated women to the level of divinity. One of the things most misconstrued about India and Hinduism is that it's a male-dominated society and religion. It is not.

It is a culture whose only words for strength and power are feminine -- "shakti" means "power" and ``strength." All male power comes from the feminine. The Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva) are all powerless without their female counterparts.

Devi, in the words of **Romain Rolland**, French Nobel laureate, professor of the history of music at the Sorbonne and thinker, is **the Great Goddess**, the invisible, the immanent, who gathers to her golden arms the multiform, multicolored - Unity. This echoes the sixth century Devi-Mahatraya prayer to her: By you this universe is borne, by you this world is created. By you it is protected, O Devi: By you it is consumed at the end. You are the Supreme Knowledge, as well as ignorance, intellect and contemplation...

Indian Historian **Romesh C Dutt** writes:

"Women were held in higher respect in India than in other ancient countries, and the Epics and old literature of India assign a higher position to them than the epics and literature of ancient Greece. Hindu women enjoyed some rights of property from the Vedic Age, took a share in social and religious rites, and were sometimes distinguished by their learning. The absolute seclusion of women in India was unknown in ancient times."

(source: **The Civilization of India - By R. C. Dutt** p 21-22).



India of the Vedas entertained a respect for women amounting to worship

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Louis Jaccoliot (1837-1890) who worked in French India as a government official and was at one time President of the Court in Chandranagar, translated numerous Vedic hymns and the celebrated author of the **Bible in India: Hindoo Origin of Hebrew and Christian Revelation** said:

"India of the Vedas entertained a respect for women amounting to worship; a fact which we seem little to suspect in Europe when we accuse the extreme East of having denied the dignity of woman, and of having only made her an instrument of pleasure and of passive obedience." He also said: "What! here is a civilization, which you cannot deny to be older than your own, which places the woman on a level with the man and gives her an equal place in the family and in society."

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** - p. 253).

Professor H. H. Wilson says: "And it may be confidently asserted that in no nation of antiquity were women held in so much esteem as amongst the Hindus."

In Ancient India, however, they not only possessed equality of opportunities with men, but enjoyed certain rights and privileges not claimed by the male sex. The chivalrous treatment of women by Hindus is well known to all who know anything of Hindu society.

"Strike not even with a blossom a wife guilty of a hundred faults," says a Hindu sage, "a sentiment so delicate," says

Colonel James Tod "that Rignald-de-Born, the prince of troubadors, never uttered any more refined."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** Publisher: Scottish Mission Industries. 1917 p. 93).

Louis Jacolliot (1837-1890) who worked in French India as a government official and was at one time President of the Court in Chandranagar, translated numerous Vedic hymns and the celebrated author of the **Bible in India** has observed:

"Besides, what antiquity wholly overlooked, but what we cannot too much admire in India, is its respect for women, almost amounting to worship. This extract from Manu (shloka 55) will not be read without surprise:

“Women should be nurtured with every, tenderness and attention by their fathers, their brothers, their husband, and their brother-in-law, if they desire great prosperity.”

“Where women live in affliction, the family soon becomes extinct, but when they are loved and respected, and cherished with tenderness, the family grows and prospers in all circumstances.”

"This veneration of women produced in India an epoch of adventurous chivalry during which we find the heroes of Hindoo poems accomplishing high deeds, which reduce all the exploits of Amadis, knights of the Round Table, and the Paladins of the Middle Ages, to mere child’s play.”

(source: **Bible in India: Hindoo Origin of Hebrew and Christian Revelation - By Louis Jacolliot** p - 40-41 Panini Office Bahadurganj. Allahabad 1916). For more on Louis Jacolliot refer to chapter **Qutoes61_80**).



The history of the most of the known civilizations show that the further back we go into antiquity, the more unsatisfactory is found to be the general position of women. **Hindu civilization is unique in this respect,** for here we find a surprising exception to the general rule. The further back we go, the more satisfactory is found to be the position of women in more spheres than one; and the field of education is most noteworthy among them. There is ample and convincing evidence to show that women were regarded as perfectly eligible for the privilege of studying the Vedic literature and performing the sacrifices enjoined in it down to about 200 B.C. **This need not surprise us, for some of the hymns of the Rig Veda are the compositions of rishnis or poetesses.** Some twenty different hymns were composed by poetesses. Visvara, Sikaata, Nivavari, Ghosha, Romasa, Lopamudra, Apala and Urvasi are the names of some of them. Man could perform the Vedic sacrifices only if he had his wife by his side.

(source: **Education in Ancient India - By A. S. Altekar** p. 207-209 Nand Kishore & Bros. Varanasi.1965).

Knowledge, intelligence, rhythm and harmony are all essential ingredients for any creative activity. These aspects are personified in Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning, Music and Fine Arts. Without the grace of Saraswati, or **Saraswati-Kataksham**, as it is called, Brahma cannot do a worthwhile job as the Creator. Any maintenance activity needs plenty of resources, mainly fiscal resources. So Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, is an essential companion to Vishnu.

Shiva, as Destroyer, needs plenty of power and energy. This is what Parvati, or Durga or Shakthi as she is called, provides. It is only the Hindu tradition, which provides, even at the conceptual level, this picture of the male and female principles working together, hand in hand, as equal partners in the universe. This concept is carried further to its logical climax in the form of **Ardhanaareeswara**, formed by the fusion of Shiva and Shakthi in one body, each occupying one half of the body, denoting that one is incomplete without the other.

Just three shlokas which are commonly recited during daily prayers are enough to show the status of the three Goddesses. A shloka on Saraswati contains the following line: Yaa Brahma Achyuta Sankara Prabhrudibihi Devaissadaa Poojithaa, which means, 'Saraswati who is always worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and other Gods'.

And Shakti is the fundamental strength of the feminine that infuses all life and is viewed as a goddess. Shakti is the divine feminine power found in everything.

In Hinduism, all power, shakti, is female. So, the female represents the totality of the power, and the male is imaged as the agent of the female. Also, in Hinduism, the sun is female and the moon is male; he is born of her, dies into her, and is born of her again every month. Shiva, this great power, is the moon god. Parvati, his consort, is the sun power. And although the worship in the masculine-oriented action systems in India is directly to Shiva, it's to the goddess Kali, that the worship finally goes.

So that, actually, in India, Kali is the great divinity. .....the Hindu goddess Kali...is shown standing on the prostrate form of the god Shiva, her spouse. She brandishes the sword of death, i.e., spiritual discipline. The blood-dripping human head tells the devotee that "he that loseth his life for her sake shall find it." The gestures of "fear not" and "bestowing boon" teach that she protects her children, that the pairs of opposites of the universal agony are not what they seem, and that for one centered in eternity the phantasmagoria of temporal "goods" and "evil" is but a reflex of the mind-as the goddess, herself, though apparently trampling down the god, is actually his blissful dream.

The Goddess
gives birth to forms
and kills forms.



The Vedic pantheon includes a substantial number of female goddesses. There are beautiful hymns to Usha, the dawn, imagined as an alluring young woman:

Usha, the dawn, is often invoked, and is the subject of some of the most beautiful hymns that are to be found in the lyrical poetry of any ancient nation.

Beautous daughter of the sky!
Hold they ruddy light on high,
Grant us wealth and grant us day,
Bring us food and morning's ray.
White-robed goddess of the morning sky,
Bring us light, let night's deep shadows fly.

This light, most radiant of lights, has come; this gracious one who illumines all things is born. As night is removed by the rising sun, so is this the birthplace of the dawn....We behold her, daughter of the sky, youthful, robed in white, driving forth the darkness. Princess of limitless treasure, shine down upon us throughout the day." - Rig Veda I. 113.

"We gaze upon her as she comes
The shining daughter of the sky
The mighty darkness she uncovers,
And light she makes, the pleasant one that we see."

" Dawn on us with prosperity, O Usha, daughter of the sky,
Dawn with great glory, goodness, lady of the light, dawn thou with riches, bounteous one....
O Usha, graciously answer our songs of praise with bounty and
with brilliant light.....grant us a dwelling wide and free from foes....."



Usha! (Dawn) Hail, Beautous daughter of the sky!
*(source: **The Splendour That Was 'Ind' - By K T Shah**).*

Of the hymns to other deities, the hymns to those to Usha, the Dawn, are especially beautiful. Some of the loveliest nature poetry of this period is dedicated to her, depicted as a young maiden who comes to mankind in the special characteristics of the dawn. Dawn bring a feeling of hope and refreshment, of entering into the activity of the universe.

Hindus hold rivers in great reverence. The rivers are female divinities, food and life bestowing mothers. As such, they are prominent among the popular divinities represented in the works of art of the classical period. The most holy of rivers, the best known and most honored, is the Ganga or Ganges. She is personified as Goddess Ganga. The river rises from an ice bed, 13,800 feet above the sea level in the Garhwal Himalayas.

One of the most important of all Vedic hymns, the so-called Devisukta, is addressed to Vak (speech, revelation), the goddess who is described as the companion of all the other gods, as the instrument that makes ritual efficacious: "I am the queen, the gatherer-up of treasures..." It is not unimportant, that Earth (prithvi) is considered female, the goddess who bears the mountains and who brings forth vegetation.

Education for girls was regarded as quite important. While Brahmin girls were taught Vedic wisdom, girls of the Ksatriya community were taught the use of the bow and arrow. The Barhut sculptures represent skilful horsewomen in the army. Patanjali mentions the spearbearers (saktikis). Megasthenes speaks of Chandragupta's bodyguard of Amazonian women. Kautilya mentions women archers (striganaih dhanvibhih). In houses as well as in the forest Universities of India, boys and girls were educated together. Atreyi studied under Valmiki along with Lava and Kusa, the sons of Rama. Fine arts like music, dancing and painting was specially encouraged in the case of girls.

Girls had upanayana performed for them and carried out the sandhya rites. A young daughter who has observed brahmacarya should be married to a bridegroom who is learned like her." (**Yajur Veda** VIII.1). **Seclusion of women was unknown in the Vedic times. Young girls led free lives and had a decisive voice in the selection of their husbands.** On festive occasions and at tournaments (samana) girls appeared in all their gaiety. Women had a share in the property of the father, and they were sometimes allowed to remain unmarried, with their parents and brothers. The Atharva Veda refers to daughters remaining with their parents until the end of their lives. A part of the ancestral property is given to them as dowry, which becomes their own property, and is called **stridhana** in later writings. "Home is not what is made of wood and stone; but where a wife is, there is the home." (sanskrit: na grham kasthapasanair dayita yatra tad grham - **Nitimanjari,** 68)

(source: **Religion and Society – By S. Radhakrishnan** ASIN 8172231636 p. 140-149).



It is significant to note that only Hindus worship God in the form of Divine Mother. In Hinduism the deities for knowledge, learning and material wealth are female and not male. The past social inconsistencies and injustices that did not arise from Hindu scriptures, but from humans who failed to correctly incorporate the teachings of the scriptures, such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, into their social philosophy.

This concept of the spiritual equality of souls naturally influenced the status of women on an individual and social level.

"Where women are honored there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honored no sacred rite yields rewards," declares **Manu Smriti (III.56)** a text on social conduct.

"Women must be honored and adorned by their fathers**,** brothers**,** husbands and brothers-in-law**,** who desire their own welfare." **(Manu Smriti III, 55)**

" Where the female relations live in grief**,** the family soon wholly perishes**;** but that family where they are not unhappy ever prospers." **(Manu Smriti III, 57).**

"The houses on which female relations**,** not being duly honored**,** pronounce a curse**,** perish completely as if destroyed by magic." **(Manu Smriti III, 58)**

" Hence men who seek their own welfare**,** should always honor women on holidays and festivals with gifts of ornaments**,** clothes**,** and dainty food." **(Manu Smriti III, 59)**

In an old Shakta hymn it is said - **Striyah devah, Striyah pranah "Women are Devas, women are life itself."**

(source: **Bharata Shakti - By Sir John Woodroffe** p. 95).

"If a husband dies, a wife may marry another husband.

"If a husband deserts his wife, she may marry another." (Manu, chapter IX, verse 77).

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 95).

In the Vedas, she is invited into the family 'as a river enters the sea' and 'to rule there along with her husband, as a queen, over the other members of the family. (source: **Atharva Veda** xiv. i. 43-44).

Sir Monier Monier-Williams (1860-1888) Indologist and head of the Oxford's Boden Chair, wrote: "Indian wives often possess greater influence than wives of Europeans." He is not a true Hindu who does not regard a woman's body as sacred as the temple of God. He is an outcast who touches a woman's body with irreverence, hatred or anger."

"A woman's body," says Manu the law giver, "must not be struck hard, **even with a flower, because it is sacred."** It is for this reason that the Hindus do not allow capital punishment for women.

The **idea of equality** was most forcibly expressed in the **Rig Veda** (Book 5, hymn 61. verse 8). The commentator explains this passage thus: "The wife and husband, being the equal halves of one substance, are equal in every respect; therefore both should join and take equal parts in all work, religious and secular." No other Scripture of the world have ever given to the woman such equality with the man as the Vedas of the Hindus. The Old Testament, the Zend-Avesta and others, have made woman the scapegoat for all the crimes committed by man. The Old Testament, in describing the creation of woman and the fall of man, has established the idea that woman was created for man's pleasure; consequently her duty was to obey him implicitly. It makes her an instrument in the hands of Satan for the temptation and fall of the holy man with whom she was first enjoying the felicity of paradise.



The 126th hymn of the first book of the Rig Veda was revealed by a Hindu woman whose name was Romasha; the 179 hymn of the same book was by Lopamudra, another inspired Hindu



woman. There are a dozen name of woman revealers of the Vedic wisdom, such as Visvavara, Shashvati, Gargi, Maitreyi, Apala, Ghosha, and Aditi, who instructed Indra, one of the Devas, in the higher knowledge of Brahman, the Universal Spirit. Everyone of them lived the ideal life of spirituality, being untouched by the things of the world. They are called in Sanskrit Brahmavadinis, the speakers and revealers of Brahman.

When Sankaracharya, the great commentator of the Vedanta, was discussing this philosophy with another philosopher, a Hindu lady, well versed in all the Scriptures, was requested to act as umpire. It is the special injuction of the Vedas that no married man shall perform any religious rite, ceremony, or sacrifice without being joined in by his wife; the wife is considered a partaker and partner in the spiritual life of her husband; she is called, in Sanskrit, Sahadharmini, "spiritual helpmate." This idea is very old, as old as the Hindu nation.

In the whole religious history of the world a second Sita will not be found. Her life was unique. She is worshipped as an Incarnation of God. India is the only country where prevails a belief that God incarnates in the form of a woman as well as in that of a man. In the Mahabharata we read the account of Sulabha, the great woman Yogi, who came to the court of King Janaka and showed wonderful powers and wisdom, which she had acquired through the practice of Yoga. This shows that women were allowed to practice Yoga. As in religion, Hindu woman of ancient times enjoyed equal rights and privileges with men, so in secular matters she had equal share and equal power with them. From the Vedic age women in India have had the same right to possess property as men; they could go to the courts of justice, plead their own cases, and ask for the protection of the law. Those who have read the famous Hindu drama called Shakuntala, know that Shakuntala pleaded her own case and claimed her rights in the court of King Dushyanata. Similar instance are mentioned in the 10th book of the Rig Veda. As early as 2000 B.C. Hindu women were allowed to go to the battle fields to fight against enemies. Sarama, one of the most powerful women of her day, was sent by her husband in search of robbers. She discovered their hiding place and then destroyed them.

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** - p. 255-267).

Women must be honored and adorned by their father, brothers, husbands, and brother-in-law who desire great good fortune. Where women, verily are honored, there the gods rejoice; where, however, they are not honored, there all sacred rites prove fruitless. Where the female relations live in grief -- that family soon perishes completely; where, however, they do not suffer from any grievance -- that family always prospers. ..

Her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in youth, her sons protect her in old age. The father who does not give away his daughter in marriage at the proper time is censurable; censurable is the husband who does not approach his wife in due season; and after the husband is dead, the son, verily is censurable, who does not protect his mother. Even against the slightest provocations should women be particularly guarded; for unguarded they would bring grief to both the families.

Regarding this as the highest dharma of all four castes, husbands, though weak, must strive to protect their wives. His own offspring, character, family, self, and dharma does one protect when he protects his wife scrupulously. . . The husband should engage his wife in the collection and expenditure of his wealth, in cleanliness, in dharma, in cooking food for the family, and in looking after the necessities of the household. . . .



Women destined to bear children, enjoying great good fortune, deserving of worship, the resplendent lights of homes on the one hand and divinities of good luck who reside in the houses on the other -- between these there is no difference whatsoever.

Motherhood is considered the greatest glory of Hindu women. The **Taittiriya Upanishad** teaches, **"Matridevo bhava" - "Let your mother be god to you."**

Hindu tradition recognizes mother and motherhood as even superior to heaven. The epic **Mahabharata** says, "While a father is superior to ten Brahmin priests well-versed in the Vedas, a mother is superior to ten such fathers, or the entire world."

Hinduism offers some intriguing and unique examples of strong women in the form of Goddesses. Two thousand years ago **Saint Tiruvalluvar** observed: "What does a man lack if his wife is worthy? And what does he possess if she is lacking worth?" There is more respect in the East for women and for their role in society.

To instill such high ideals in humankind, Indian ancestors created a plethora of goddesses who enjoyed equal status with their husbands. The concept of *Ardhanareeshwarar*, where God is depicted as half-man and half-woman, is a concrete example to support this argument. In many philosophical texts God is referred to a *Tat*, meaning *It* and that God is beyond gender. And, one would find a comparable Goddess for each God. Further, we know for a fact that ancient India was permissive; women could have multiple husbands, **widows could remarry,** divorce was permitted for incompatibility or when estranged.

The article, Vedic Sociology by **Dr. B. G. Sudha** in the Chinmaya Mission publication **Our Vedic Heritage** throws considerable light on this aspect. To quote Dr. Sudha:

"There are a number of women who are considered as the seers of *mantras*, like Saraswati, Goshaa, Vishvavaaraa, Apaalaa, Urvashi, Indrani, and so on. It is said that Dhrutavati, the daughter of Rishi Shandilya, spent her whole life in the study of the Vedas. Likewise, another girl, Srutavati, the daughter of Sage Bharadvaja, also devoted her life to the study of the Vedas.

The names of Gargi and Maitreyi are too well known as great scholars of Vedic lore… We have statements like, "This hymn must be recited by the wife," in the *Sroutasutras*, which clearly endorse the eligibility of women to the study of the *Vedas*. The *Ramayana* describes the performance of Sandhya and Havana by Kausalya and Seetha. The wife was a regular participant in the sacrificial offerings of the husband. (**Rig Veda** I-122-2; 131-3; III-53-4-6; X-86-10 etc). **Gobhila Gruhya Sutras** state that the wife should be educated to be able to take part in sacrifices. (*Gobhila Gr. S.* I-3)."



Yagnavalkya with Gargi and Maitreyi

Woman in the role of wife occupies a position of pre-eminence in ancient Hindu tradition. The Hindus from the Vedic times believed in dual worship, Radha with Lord Krishna and Sita with Lord Rama. In this dual worship, the names of Radha and Sita get precedence over the names of their companions Krishna and Rama. This happens to be true of Goddess Saraswati and her husband Lord Brahma. Lord Shiva appears united in a single body with Shakti, his spouse; he at the right side and she at the left, in a manifestation known as *Ardhnarishwar*, the half-man, half-woman incarnation of God. Each of the three principal Gods — Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Protector and Shiva the Destroyer — in the Hindu pantheon, is accompanied by a Shakti, which is both his female double and his power of manifestation.

The **Rig Veda** too places woman on a high pedestal of sublimity: **Yatr nariyastu poojayante ramante tatr devah**, where woman is worshipped, Gods preside there.

Women, who once enjoyed an honored position and are found in the Upanishads conversing freely with men upon the highest philosophical topics, had become virtual slaves in the joint family. With the expansion of Vedic religion in Northern India and possibly also under the impacts of threats from the outside, a definition of the place of women in the Aryan society took place, which amounted to increasing restriction of their independence and a clear preponderance of patriarchal rule. What has been described so far as "Vedic law for women" was largely the tradition followed in North India, the Aryavarta, the Hindu heartland, South India, and to some extent also Bengal and Assam, preserved elements of pre-Vedic matriarchy. In certain South Indian castes the line of inheritance is from mother to (eldest) daughter, and marriage is a "visiting" relationship. Naturally, women were more independence and free in every respect.



Ladies did not lead a secluded life like that of their descendants in later times. Several hymns of the Rig Veda were composed by female Rishis (sages). Young ladies of the time had a voice in their marriage. "the woman who is of gentle birth and of graceful form," so runs a verse in the Rig Veda, "selects among many of her loved one as her husband." Numerous case of Svayamvara, that is, of ladies selecting their own husbands, are mentioned in the Mahabharata and other works. There is sufficient evidence to show, that **widow marriage was allowed**, and that the right of Sati was unknown in the Vedic period.

"Rise up woman," so runs a text of the **Rig Veda** (X, 18.8) "thou art lying by one whose life is gone, come to the world of the living, away from thy husband, and become the wife of him who holds thy hand and is willing to marry thee."

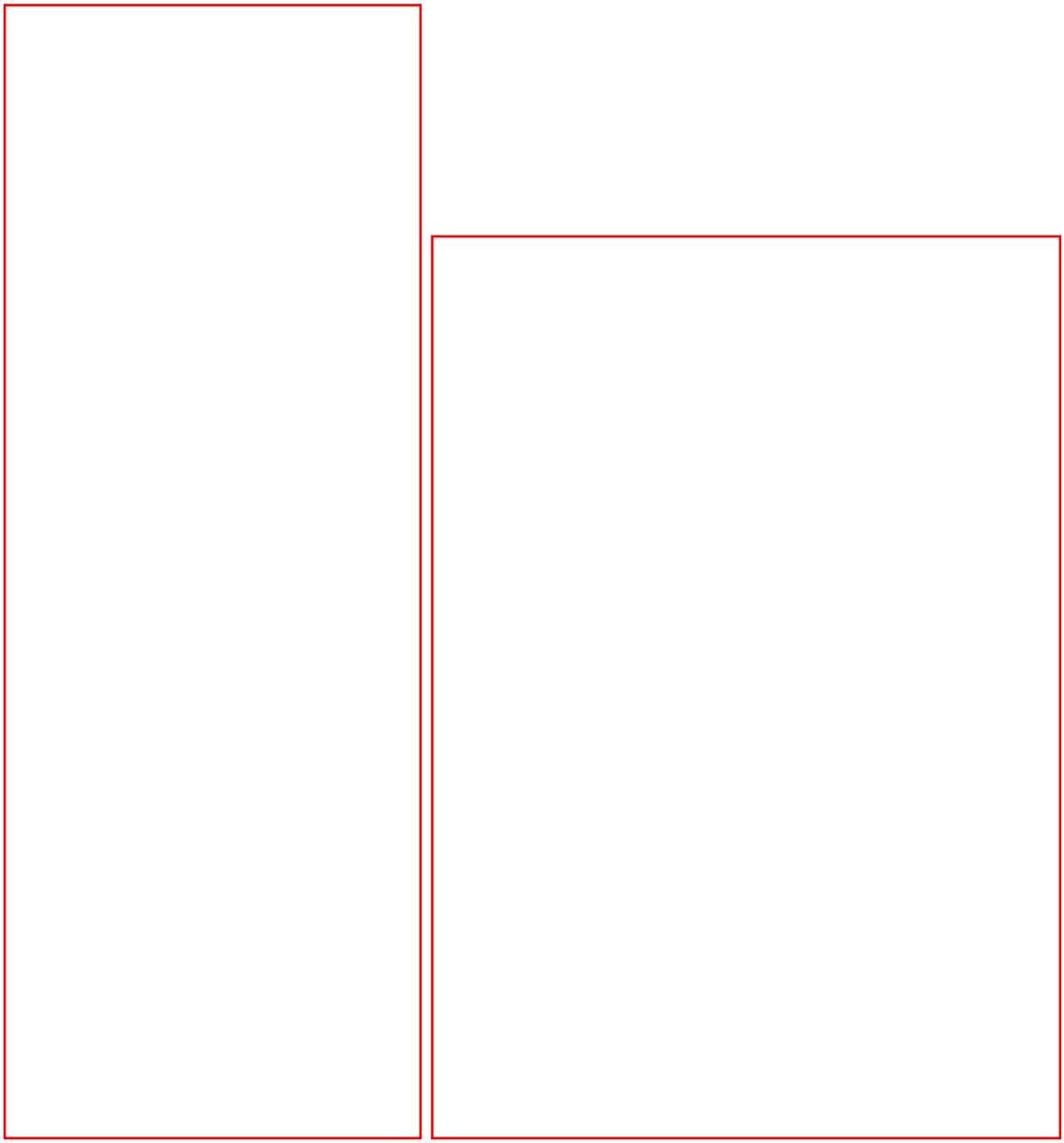
(source: **Civilization Through The Ages - By P. N. Bose** p. 126-127).

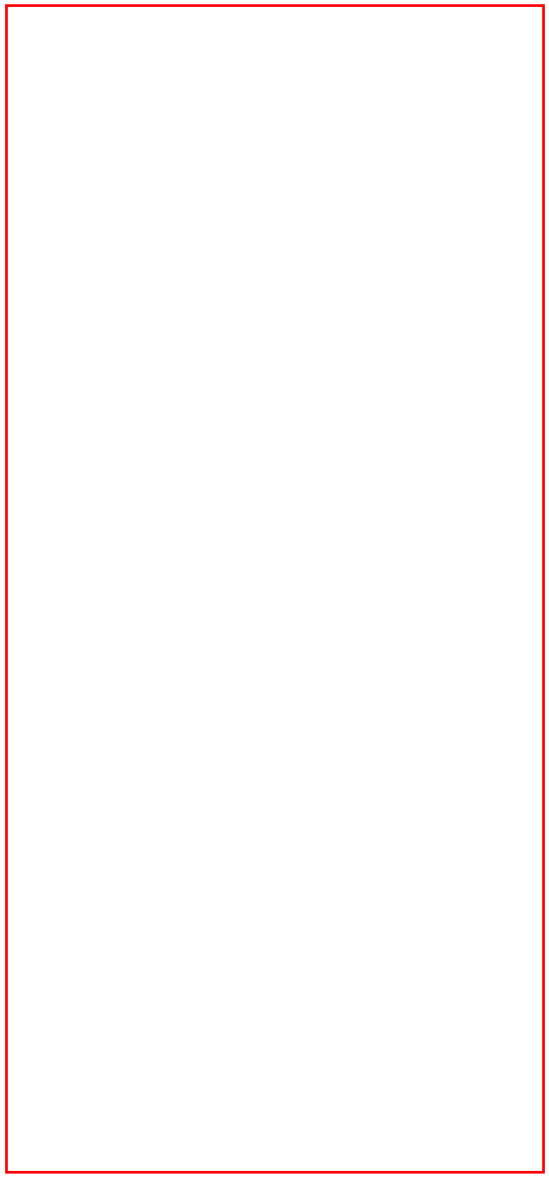
Similar views are echoed by **Radha Kumud Mukherjee** in his article **Women In Ancient India** from the book **Women Of India** (Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi-110001, 1990). He says:

"Every hymn of the **Rigveda** is attributed to a rishi. Though the majority of these hymns were the work of male rishis, the Rigveda contains hymns which were revealed by women seers also. The latter were called **rishikas and brahmavadinis...** "

The **brahmavadinis** were products of educational discipline of *brahmacharya*, for which women were also eligible. The *Rigveda* (v, 7, 9) refers to young maidens completing their education as **brahmacharinis** and then gaining husbands… Rig Veda. iii (55, 16) mentions unmarried learned and young daughters who should be married to learned bridegrooms.

(For more on women's education refer to chapter on **Education in Ancient India**).





Indian Women - Paintings by Rao Bahadur M V Dhurandhar

It is, therefore, no wonder that the wife enjoyed with her husband full religious rights and regularly participated in religious ceremonies with him. In fact, the performance of such ceremonies would be invalid without the wife joining her husband as his full partner… Some grammatical passages show that women had other careers open to them apart from a mere literary career.

The great grammarian, **Patanjali,** author of that monumental masterpiece known as **Mahabhashya**, uses the formation **sakthiki** to indicate a female bearer of a spear [iv, 1, 15(6)]. In this connection, we are reminded of the Amazonian bodyguard of armed women employed in his palace by the Emperor Chandragupta Maurya, as described by Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador to his Court. Similarly, Kautilya in his *Arthasastra*, which is also taken to be a document of Mauryan history, refers to women soldiers armed with bows and arrows… Buddhism kept up the traditions of Brahmanical religion in according to womanhood an honoured place in social life. Women were made eligible for admission to what was known as the *Bhikshuni-Sangha*, the Order of Nuns, which opened to them avenues of culture and social service and ample opportunities for public life.

(source: **Women in the Hindu Tradition By S. G. V. Mani**
http://www.sulekha.com/articledesc.asp?cid=111278).

Padmini Sengupta has written in her book, **Everyday Life in Ancient India**:

"The position of women in ancient India was free and emancipated, and women were well educated and respected members of society. A wife shared all her husband's privileges and was his companion and help-mate in his activities." The position of women was far better than in other countries of ancient times. How else could it be in a culture which placed the Mother before the Father in priority for reverence? **Matr devo bhava** - was the first Upanisadic exhortation to the young. So far as

we know, Hinduism is the only religion whose symbolism places the Feminine on a par with the Masculine in the profound concept of Siva-Sakti culminating in the image of Ardharnari-Isvara. The Hindu has honored his country as his Motherland - Bharat Mata and his nationalism has grown up from the seed Mantra - Vande Mataram.

(source: **Hindu Culture - By K. Guru Dutt** (with a Foreword by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar p. 241-242).

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Anti-native reporting in media and dowry deaths



Koenraad Elst writes: "This anti-native and pro-westernizing bias is quite systematically present in India reporting. It generally takes the form of gross misrepresentation of Indian culture. For example, time and again those correspondents write to the homefront that there are "still" many dowry deaths. Now everybody knows that dowry deaths typically occur in the westernized circles. (the dowries concerned are seldom the traditional jewels, but mostly videomachines, fridge etc). they are not a traditional phenomenon that "still" exists, but are a typical case of perverting and poisoning of a native custom by the invasion of Western consumerism"

(source: **Ayodhya and After - By Koenraad Elst** Voice of India Issues Before Hindu Society SKU: INBK2650 p. 82).

Dowry-deaths in India are of high interest in the West **whereas spousal-killings in America are not given the same emphasis**, despite that fact that statistically the percentage of American women victims of spousal killings are at least as high as the percentage of Indian women victimized by dowry-deaths. The language of 'dowry-deaths' is so India-specific, to begin with, that it precludes the equivalent American phenomenon to be within range of the radar. Once thus framed, the issue of dowry-deaths then gets measured, studied at various levels of scholarship, and gets a life of its own. America's equivalent problems get exempted from examination, especially as the scholars place themselves on a platform above the glass ceiling.

(source: **Is There an American Caste System? - Rajiv Malhotra** - sulekha.com).

Conclusion

In ancient India, Hindu women did not veil their faces and they enjoyed considerable amount of freedom in society. But repeated attacks on Hindu India by foreigners through centuries changed the situation. (For more on foreign invasions, please refer to chapter **History of Hinduism**).

During such aggressions, and also when India was under foreign occupation, the honor and chastity of women often became the casualties. There have been numerous cases when Hindu women killed themselves rather than yield to indignities inflicted by the aggressors. As a result, Hindu society, became more protective about its women. The freedom of women was curtailed. To protect themselves Hindu women started to cover their faces with veils and started to stay home. Their participation in social events was greatly restricted.

(source: **The Essentials of Hinduism: A Comprehensive Overview of the World's Oldest Religion - By Swami Bhaskarananda** p. 52-53).

"The killing of men and enslaving of women and children was standard practice in Islamic conquests. Thus when Mohammed bin Qasim conquered the lower Indus basin in AD 721, he entered Multan and, according to the Chach-Nama, "6,000 warriors were put to death, and all their relations and dependents were taken as slaves." **This is why Rajput women took to immolating themselves en masse to save their honor in the face of the imminent entry of victorious Muslim armies**, eg. 8,000 women immolated themselves during Akbar's capture of Chittorgarh in 1568 (whereas this most enlightend among Muslim rulers also killed 30,000 non-combattants).

(source: **The Saffron Swastika - By Koenraad Elst** Voice of India ISBN 8185990697 p. 824).

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Sati, the much-highlighted face of Hinduism (excerpts)

By Koenraad Elst

Secularist make the predictable allegation that Hinduism as represented by Manu is anti-woman. Actually on reading this text one would realize that neither dowry (dahe) nor self-immolation of widows (sati) figure in it. Fredrick Nietzsche praised Manu's affection for woman.

Compare study of Indo-European cultures suggests that the incidence of sati is inversely proportional to the status of women: from very common among the Celts ("massively!" says Bernard Sergent in his book - Les Indo-Europeens), where women were rather independent, to a mere epic memory among the Greeks, where women were men's property and not considered to have much 'honor' to uphold by means of heroics.



Ashish Nandy, an Indian Christian, and author of the book **Sati, The Blessing and The Curse**, recommends **Ananda Coomaraswamy** spirited defence of sati: "to shallow, pompous progressives and feminists who believe that one ought only to immolate oneself for secular causes like revolution and nationalism, not for old fashioned religious or cultural causes."

Nandy informs us: "The last "large-scale epidemic of sati" (in Westernizing Bengal of the early 19th century, where new **British inheritance laws** turned a surviving daughter-in-law into a pecuniary rival) was a "logical culmination of rational, secular cost-calculation against the background in traditional values….if anything, modern values, not traditional ones, were to blame." Indeed, "the epidemic was a feature of exactly the part of the society – the Westernizing, culturally uprooted, urban and semi-urban Indians – that was most dismissive towards the rest of society as a bastion of superstition and activism."

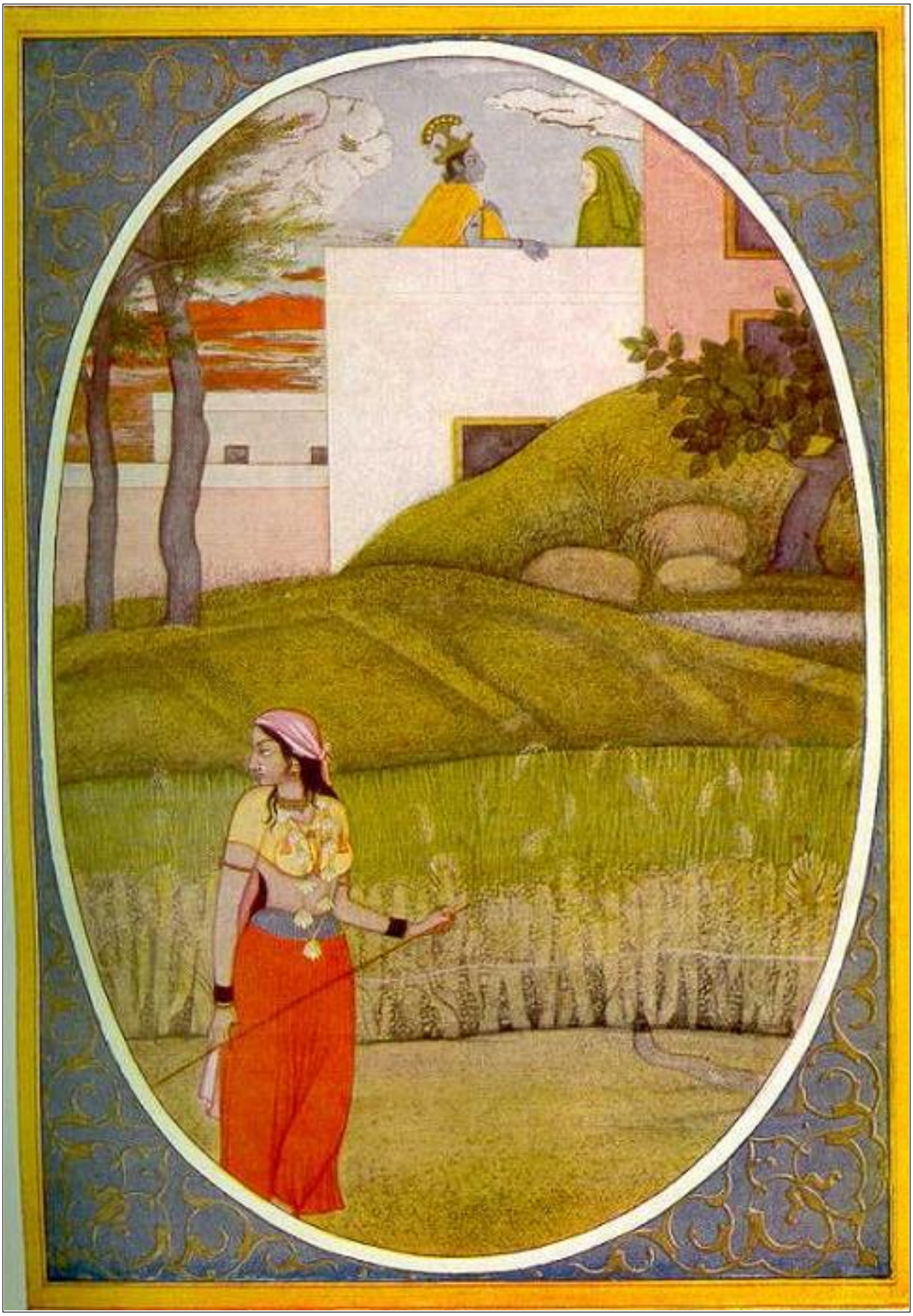
This is even more true of the dowry murder plague, a typically modern, consumerist phenomenon, historically unconnected to sati.

The Christian scholar, **J. N. Farquhar** wrote in his book **Modern Religious Movements** in 1914, that **"the evil seems to be largely a result of the progress of Western education."** He adds an example of a girl in Calcutta who committed suicide "to release her father from the impasse." The first dowry deaths in the 19th century were indeed suicides by daughters who tried to spare their fathers the huge debts, and this was in the most anglicized communities.

However, the **Indo-Anglican elite** has achieved complete success in passing on its self-interested version of the facts to the outside world, as is evident in numerous anti-Hindu allegations made in passing in articles…"

Ashish Nandy finds it "remarkable how, since the Deorala event, there has been a revival of efforts by Anglophone, psychologically uprooted Indians – exactly the sector that produced the last epidemic of sati in eastern India – to vend sati as primarily a stigma of Hinduism, not as one of the by-products of the entry of modern values in India." The commotion about the Deorala sati was just one expression of the colonial mind-set of the ruling class: "At one time,

most such efforts were closely associated with attempts to justify the British rule in India. Now, as a cultural projection of a new form of internal colonialism, these efforts are primarily **associated with the rootless, Westernized Indian haute bourgeoisie who control the media, either directly or through the state."**



Village beauty - N C Mehta's book - Studies in Indian Painting.

The abysmally negative image which Hinduism has acquired has a lot to do with Nandy's following observation:

“Colonialism has to try to discredit the cultures of the colonized to validate the colonial or quasi-colonial social relationships that it itself has created. Culture can be resistance, and those seeking hegemony in the realm of political economy cannot afford to leave that area alone. The self-declared social engineers in the Third World and their support base within the tertiary sector of that world know this fully.”

No Hindu revivalist could have said it better. ...

(source: **Decolonising The Hindu Mind - Ideological Development of Hindu Revivalism - By Koenraad Elst** Publisher: Rupa ISBN: 81-7167-519-0 p.513-518). For more on Koenraad Elst refer to chapter **Quotes201_220**).

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Asymmetric depiction of Hinduism in US academia/texts books

Madhu Kishwar (editor of **Manushi**, one of India's foremost feminist journals) writes of the practice of widow burning

“There is absolutely no evidence that any of our vast array of religious texts sanctified such murders as sati.”

(source: **Deadly Laws and Zealous Reformers: The Conflicting Interpretations and Politics of Sati - By Madhu Kishwar**,)

As **Yvette Rosser** has said: Defining Hindu practices through a discussion of sati is no more accurate than defining Christianity by delving at length into the "Burning Times" in Medieval Europe when as many as nine million women, and even children, were burned at the stake as witches through the encouragement and official approval of the Christian Church. The burning of women does not define Christianity any more than the burning of widows defines Hinduism – both are long discarded practices of the past."

(source: **The Clandestine Curriculum in the Classroom** -**By Yvette C. Rosser** - Education About Asia, Vol. 6:3 (Winter 2001).
(source: **Women and Hinduism in U.S. Textbooks - by Dave Freedholm - sulekha.com**).

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Self burning of widows was not sanctioned by the Vedic religion, but was due to other causes. Some say that, when the Mohmmadens conquered India, **they treated the widows of the soldiers so brutally that the women preferred death,** and voluntarily sought it. It is often said that the "Christian government" has suppressed Suttee; but the truth is, that the initiatives in this direction was taken by the noble Hindu, Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, who was, however, obliged to secure the aid of the British Government in enforcing the ideas, because India was a subject nation. The educated classed among the Hindus had strongly protested against this inhuman custom, but as it could not be done without the official help, appeal was made to the then Viceroy, Lord Bentincik, a law against Suttee was passed.

Sir Monier Monier-Williams (1860-1888) Indologist and head of the Oxford's Boden Chair says:



"Perhaps the most important point to which Raja Ram Mohan Roy awakened was **the absence of all Vedic sanction for the self-immolation of widows** (Suttee). It was principally his vehement denunciation of this practice, and the agitation against it set on foot by him, which ultimately led to the abolition of Sati throughout British India in 1819."

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** - p. 280).

The eighth richa (X 18.8) specifically commands a Hindu widow to return alive to her home. **H. H. Wilson** translates: "Rise woman, and go to the world of living beings; come, this man near whom you sleep is lifeless; you have enjoyed this state of being the wife of your husband, the suitor who took you by the hand." Here again, it is confirmed that X 18.8 actually commands a Hindu widow to return to the world of living beings. Also, this very richa confers upon her full right on the house of her deceased husband (apne putradi aur ghar).

Those who misinterpret the Rigveda to say that it sanctions sati do this mischief by misspelling the last word of richa X 18. 7 as "yomiagne." The last word of this richa is actually "yomiagre." Thus, there is no richa in Rigveda calling for widow burning. Veda, Ramayana and Gita are the three supreme scriptures of Hindus.

All others (like Brahmanas, Upanishads, Puranas, Dharmashastras, Sutras, etc.) are just commentaries, explanatory notes or stories written by individuals. As commentaries written on the Constitution of India cannot override the articles of the Constitution of India, similarly, commentaries or explanations on Vedas by individuals cannot supersede richas of Vedas or the Ramayana or Gita. In the Ramayana, everyone knows that after the death of King Dasharatha, his wives were never asked to step into the pyre of Dasharatha. Rather, they lived in family with full honour and Ram always bowed his head before his widowed mothers with full respect. In the Mahabharata, Kunti, mother of the Pandavas did not commit sati. Thus, there is no command in the Ramayana or in Gita to commit sati.

Over the centuries, relatives have been murdering relatives for property. This will continue in the coming centuries too. Greed is human nature. **If greedy people incite a widow to commit suicide on the pyre of her husband, let us not say or believe that widow burning is sanctified by the Rigveda or by Hinduism.** Richa X 18.3 commands a Hindu widow to separate from the dead and richa X 10.8 commands her to return alive to her children and her home. For their own empowerment, Hindu women should to remember the seven richas viz (II 17.7), (III 31.2) (X 18.3) (X l8.8) (X 40.2) and X 40.8) to assert and claim their status and rights.

(source: **The Rigveda: Widows don't have to burn - By O. P. Gupta** - The Asian Age October 23, 2002 Mr. Gupta is ambassador of India to Finland).

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Dowry Murder: The Imperial Origins of a Cultural Crime - How British colonialism created the economic and social climate in India that give rise to various social ills.

James Peggs (1739-1850) a man of cloth and a missionary, wrote:

"The doctrines of the Hindoo religion have been singularly careful to protect the female sex and infants from violence; and its is unlawful to put a woman to death for any offense whatever...."Let all the four castes of Brahmin, Khetry (Khatri, the diminutive of Kshatriya) Bys (Vaishya), and Sooder (Shudra), know that the killing of a woman is the greatest of crimes."

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The Hindu custom of dowry has long been blamed for the murder of wives and female infants in India. In this highly provocative book, Veena Oldenburg argues that these killings are neither about dowry nor reflective of an Indian culture or caste system that encourages violence against women. Rather, such killings can be traced directly to the influences of the British colonial era.



In the Pre-Colonial period, dowry was an institution managed by women, for women, to enable them to establish their status and have recourse in an emergency. As a consequence of the massive economic and societal upheaval brought on by British rule, women's entitlements to the precious resources obtained from land were erased and their control of the system diminished, ultimately resulting in a devaluing of their very lives.

Taking us on a journey into the colonial Punjab, she skillfully follows the paper trail left by British bureaucrats to indict them for interpreting these crimes against women as the inherent defects of Hindu caste culture. **The British, publicized their "civilizing mission" and blamed the caste system in order to cover up the devastation their own agrarian policies had wrought on the Indian countryside.**

An East India Company officer made the earliest causal link between the dowry system and violence against girls in 1789, when he discovered female infanticide. The finding added powerfully to the company's description of the exotic "cruel" and "barbaric" culture encountered in the process of its conquest of this strange land. On the backs of such discoveries rode the moral imperative of imperialism – its famous "civilizing mission." **This served as the most compelling justification, both to the company itself and to a critical public in England, for the conquest, pillage, and domination of Indian peoples and the destruction of their local cultures.** It was in this context too, that Hindu women's apparently degraded position in an allegedly rigid caste system became a central preoccupation of colonial rulers and the subject of endless debates, reform rhetoric, and legislation.

In 1813 the "civilizing mission" received an additional fillip when the British Parliament passed the India Act of 1813 to admit missionaries, who had hitherto been excluded from tinkering with the most exquisite brand of heathenism in the wild Indian empire because of their politically volatile denunciation of Hindu beliefs and practices. Christian missionaries added greatly to the self-righteousness bombast of this mission. **James Peggs**, a man of the cloth, made an exhaustive, **lurid, and cliche-laden** compendium on the entire gamut of "Hindoo social evils." His text was cobbled from pertinent Parliament Papers and it first appeared in 1826 as Suttee Cry to Britain, followed by a thicker version with female infanticide added on and tellingly called **India's Cries to British Humanity**. In 1832 this pamphlet was fattened from 110 pages to 518, and renamed Cries of Agony: An Historical Account of Suttee, Infanticide, Ghat Murders, and Slavery in India. The Coventry School for the Abolition of Human Sacrifice in India published an abridgement of the original pamphlet and distributed free copies. It remains in print to this day! It was a great victory for **William Wilberforce** and fellow Evangelicals in England to expand their operations to the Indian theatre. The prime target for reform was the generally hapless "Hindoo woman."

These masterly representation of a distant and dangerous world plagued with "Hindoo barbarities, as they were increasingly called (**despite the failure to find them sanctioned in any "Hindoo" texts**) rendered India the ideal site for continued and expanding colonial control.

(source: **Dowry Murder: The Imperial Origins of a Cultural Crime - By Veena Talwar Oldenburg** 42 - 46. For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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Dowry And Dowry Demands: What's And How's - By Beloo Mehra

For a while, we also goofed around with the idea of doing what the African-American feminist author **Bell Hooks** refers to as an **"oppositional gaze" by coming up with suggestions for 'informative' documentaries that Indian cable TV networks could produce on the various societal problems in the west.** One member wrote:



"Why peep into other people's lives when your own is an unmitigated mess? Is it because you feel that you can get away with it because no one will be peeping into your own house? In my opinion, there is something indecent about 60 minutes poking their nose into someone else's business when they should have been more concerned about the 100 or more date rapes that would have happened just over the duration of this one single show."

One member suggested that such "internationalization of internal debates is highly uni-dimensional and is equal to pathologizing India."

As horrible as a dowry-related crime is, it is no different from any other domestic violence against women, which is a universal social problem. So, while I do not deny the existence of dowry-related crime, I argue that a whole body of academic literature focusing on studying this problem in isolation from the issue of the universal problem of domestic violence has a very high potential of making it a problem closely linked with Indian culture, which is not only bad scholarship but also very dangerous. **One possible rationale for organizing such "international" conferences and producing such journalistic reports like the one on CBS** (**For Love Of Money - By Christiane Amanpour**) **could be that, by focusing on issues such as violence against "third world women", the western media outlets and these academics help push the issue of violence against women in the west in the background.** This only makes the situation worse for victims of violence in their own countries.

In her book **Dislocating Cultures**, **Uma Narayan** writes:

"Most Americans that I have talked to about dowry-murder know that many **US women are killed by their partners as a result of domestic violence. Given that many members of the US public know that domestic violence has fatal forms, why is it that they make no connection between the "foreign" phenomenon of dowry-murder and the "familiar" phenomenon of domestic violence?**

A friend who participated in my search for the numbers of US women annually killed by their partners commented that she was surprised at the difference between the "disappearing dead women" in US accounts of domestic violence and the "spectacular visibility" of women murdered over dowry in India" (p. 89).

Gandhiji, Vivekananda etc. reacted sharply against external criticism but both stood firmly for internal change."

(source: **Dowry And Dowry Demands: What's And How's - By Beloo Mehra** - sulekha.com).

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Women as Purohita - priests

The concept of a female priest is not a new one.

Nutan Vimal Motilal is also a practising priest and points out that women priests were written about in the sacred Vedic texts.

Hindu temples have also requisitioned women.

"They were more honest, sincere and the clarity with which they performed the ceremony was also refreshing," he says.



Both Sunitee Gadgil, who has been practising for 10 years, and Nutan Vimal Motilal, who has been practising for two, say they have never had a negative experience.

With an increasing number of men of religion taking up other more lucrative vocations, women are now stepping into the gap to actually outnumber male priests in Maharashtra.

Dr. V L. Manjul, a research scholar and chief librarian at Pune's Bhandarkar Oriental Re. search Institute, says "between 1986 and '96, about 6,000 women have been trained as purohits (priests) and today, lady purohits outnumber male ones."

In the Vedic period, says Dr. Manjul, "we come across female scholars like **Ghosha, Lopamudra, Romasha and Indrani. In the Upanishadic period, names of women philosophers like Sulabha, Maitreyi, Gargi are encountered."**

This tradition is exemplified in a verse from "Bhihadaranyakopanishad," which reads "atha ya icched duhita me pandita jayeta," (a well-to-do Political instability and successive foreign invasions further made it difficult for women to take up formal learning, which made it impossible for her to undertake Vedic studies and conduct Vedic rites.

(source: **BBC - April 26 '2001 and The Hindu February 5 1997**).

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Famous Women of Ancient and Modern India

Gargi	Mirabai	Rani Avantibai	Bhagini Nivedita
Sita	Durgavati	Jalkari Bai	Mother Mirra
Savitri	Ahilya Bai Holkar	Shakuntala Devi	
Draupadi	Kittur Rani Chennamma	Sarojini Naidu	
Akka Mahadevi	Rani of Jhansi	Sarada Devi	

1. Gargi



Gargi, the wise and learned daughter of *Rishi* (sage) *Vachaknu*, was known as *Brahmavadini* because of her having the knowledge of *Brahma-vidya*. She participated in a debate with the knower of *Brahma*, *Yajnavalkya* in the *Yajnasala* (place for sacrifices) of *King Janaka*. We get in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* a dialogue between *Gargi* and *Yajnavalkya*. Thus it is evident that in ancient India, women used to obtain knowledge of many sciences and disciplines. They also used to participate in public functions and take part in intellectual debates. There used to be no ban of any sort in the field of knowledge, this is established very clearly from the account of Gargi's life.

A wife of Yajnavalkya, plays a major role in a section of the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, is the first Indian woman philosopher. One of the most interesting discussions of this absolute principle is given in the form of a dialogue between Gargi, and her husband Yajnavalkya, a great sage. Although in the preceding dialogues Gargi has been warned not to ask too many questions, lest her head fall off, she persisted, and was rewarded with answers to her questions.

Yajnavalkya said: "Ask, Gargi"

She said: "That, O Yajnakvalkya, which is above the sky, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between these two, sky and earth, that which people call the past and the present and the future - across what is that woven, warp and woof?"

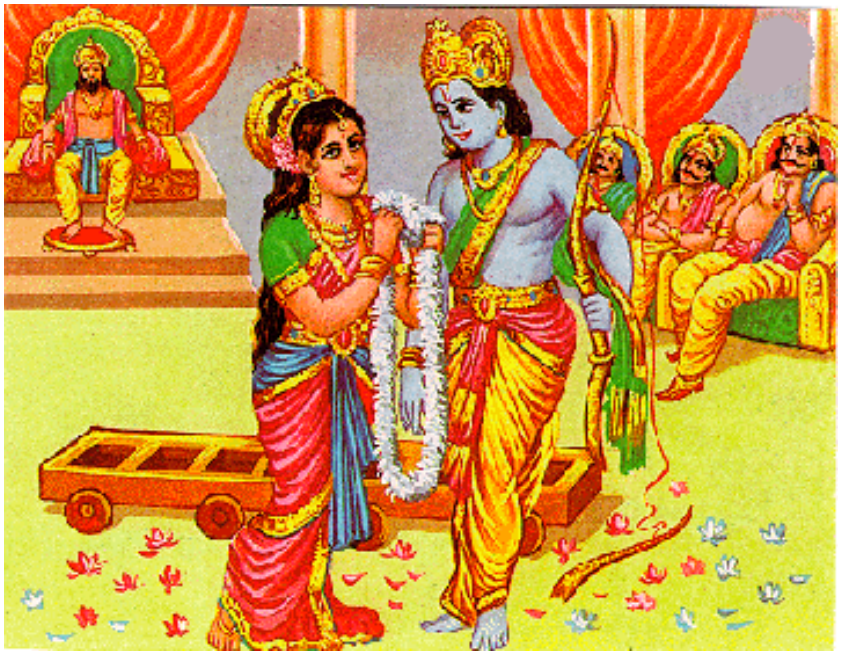
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2. Sita

Sita in the Valmiki Ramayana is not exactly representative for Vedic *stridaharma.*

To begin with, she chooses her own husband in a competitive *svayamvara,* only the strongest and the smartest prince will do.



Again, after Kaikeyi's intervention, when Rama goes into forest exile, she insists on accompanying him. Sita's strength and self-possession are apparent. She is dutiful, indeed, but she has to argue her case in order to do what she knows is right. She is not an obedient servant to a godlike husband; she has a will of her own and her relationship to Rama is governed by love for him, rather than obedience to his orders.

She shows her determination and independence throughout the years in the forest; her insistences that Rama get the gold-spotted deer and her command that Laksmana come to his rescue, eventually leads to her abduction by Ravana. She shows self-control and she doesn't give in to Ravanna's will. On being freed, she defends herself whole-heartedly against Rama's accusations. She is far from passive. It is in the context of this "dwelling in another man's house" that Vedic regulations for women are invoked and popular sentiment demands an ordeal to prove her purity.

This strength of character has not gone unnoticed by Indian women, who have found much in her to applaud. Despite being commonly held up as a paragon of the submissiveness, obedience, and loyalty that many men would like to see in their wives, women have often taken other lessons from her behavior. To many Hindu women, she is a great heroine, not just a goddess. Sita is a unique ideal of fidelity and chastity. She had to undergo unbearable trial and tribulations throughout her life but with the power of her unshakable fidelity and dedication to her husband she bore all the difficulties of life with fortitude and she, along with her husband, smilingly enjoyed the hardships of life in jungle. The *rakshas* king *Ravana* failed to lower her morale or weaken her moral strength.



It was through the ordeal of fire that *Sita* proved and established her virtue and stainlessness of her character. With the injury of the time of exile (*Vanavasa*) when *Sri Rama* as the king, in order to satisfy some of his subjects, banished Sita, she remained in the hermitage of *Rishi Valmiki*.

The very fact that Rama and Sita are always mentioned in one breath endows Sita with equality: whatever status Rama occupies, this will also be Sita's. If he is king, she will be queen, if he is god, she will become his goddess. However, she is queen and goddess on her own merit, not because of Rama's grace.

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3. Savitri

She, who is mentioned among the great chaste and faithful godly women, took *Satyavan* as her husband knowing fully well that he would not live long. When only four days of his age were remaining she undertook a vow to defeat death.
On the fourth day *Satyavan* died with *Yamaraja* (The god of death) walking away with his vitality. Savitri walked pursuing Yamaraja. As they were walking one behind the other, on the way there occured a ' question-answer ' between them. Yamaraja was very much impressed by the gentle behaviour of Savitri, her wisdom, her one pointed devotion (dedication) to her husband. Getting pleased he asked Savitri to ask for boons. Savitri asked for such boons which helped not only to obtain for her the well-being of both her father's and her husband's families but Yamaraja had also to return the vitality of Satyavana. Savitri with the power of her chastity and fidelity protected her good fortune.

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4. Draupadi

Draupadi was a very impressive and brilliant and strong personality (character) in Mahabharata.



The daughter of Drupada, the king of Panchala (Punjab), came to Hastinapur as a daughter-in-law of the Kuru-clan on being won by Arjuna, at her Swayamvara, by piercing with arrow the eye of a moving fish on a high pole, looking into the fish's image in a cauldron of oil below. **She was never ready to compromise on either her rights as a daughter-in-law or even on the rights of the Pandavas and remained ever ready to fight back or avenge high-handedness and injustice meted out to her and them.** Draupadi had absolute faith in Sri Krishna. She was also dear to Sri Krishna equal to his real sister. Draupadi was put through much suffering and disgrace in life.

Dussasana tried to remove her clothes and as such made an attempt to violate her modesty in full view of the assembly.



During the days of the banishment to jungle of the Pandavas, Jayadratha made an attempt to abduct her and during the period of their dwelling secretly, Keechaka wanted to outrage her modesty. After the duration of their stay in the jungle was over, Draupadi, with a view to fulfill her vow (promise to herself to tie her untied hair after washing them with the blood of *Dussasana*) and to punish all those who had disgraced her and perpetrated offence against her, blazed the fire of revenge burning in her heart into the hearts and minds of Pandayas. The refulgence (glow) of Draupadi's lustrous prototype of womanhood shall always be a source of inspiration for the women of India.

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5. Akka Mahadevi also known as Akka (elder sister) Mahadevi. She was a

12th century religious poet, much like Meera. She devoted her life to the worship of Lord Shiva.

Born in Udutadi, this young Veerashaiva saint achieved Aikya or Oneness with the Divine within a short twenty years of age. Her outpourings are contained in over 315 vachanas and in a small text for advanced sadhakas called Yoganga Trividhi. She came on the scene when the reformist movement of Veerashaivism had just begun to impact, particularly the lower rungs of the society, with its remarkable empowerment techniques. Right from her childhood unlike other young girls she chose the Beautiful Lord, Pure white as the Jasmine, Chennamallikarjuna, as her playmate.Her friends chose to play with dolls instead. She was never content in fulfilling the restricted role of a girl in the house. It was more interesting to hear the glories of the Lord. The urge to go beyond the average practice of Shaiva sampradaya was compelling. The limitations placed on women, in the pursuit of spirituality and otherwise, was unacceptable to her.

(source: **Akka Mahadevi**).

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6. Mira Bai (1498-c. 1546).



Drenched in the color of love to Sri Krishna, Mira was a well known devotee of God in the 47th century Kali Yugabda (calculation of time in terms of cycles of ages — Yugas) i.e. in the 16th century A.D. Entire Bharat, particularly the area where Hindi is the language that is spoken and read, has been resounding with the verses sung by Mira in her love for Krishna. In the case of Mira, the daughter of Ratna Singh Rathaur, attachment with the devotion to Krishna had touched her heart even in her early childhood. She was married to the son of Maharana, named Bhojaraja, but her heart and mind were already in the grip of her devotion to Krishna.

She used to be always absorbed (engrossed) in devotion to God. In the midst of saints, in temples, she sang her own devotional compositions (songs) and danced filled with emotion. After the untimely death of Bhojaraja, his brother Vikramajit wanted Mira to turn her back to the path of devotion and face towards the life of ordinary people. Her going to temples, singing and dancing there, appeared to him to be against tradition and discipline of his family. For not renouncing her obstinacy of love to Krishna Mira was subjected to great deal of infliction of. pain and suffering. But Mira on the contrary, laughingly submitted herself to these inflictions and bore them with fortitude but there did not occur any change in the one pointed ness of her divine love and devotion. The refrain of her life's song was : ' Mine is the preserver of cows who upholds mountain and no one else '. Her songs in the propensity of emotions are unmatched.

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7. Durgavati



Durgavati was that brave woman of India during the 47th century of Kaliyugas i.e. 16th century A.D. who fought with the alien invaders with utmost courage and heroic bravery and in the end, thinking that lest her living body may even be unpurified by a touch of the aliens she with her own sword brought forth a situation of self-sacrificing through which she got the ' going of the brave (Viragati) '.

After the death of king Dalpatishah of Gadha Mandala there came the hazard of a crisis over the state. The Mughal ruler Akbar sent a big army to capture the state of Gadha (fort) Mandala. Mounting on an elephant, Maharani Durgavati fought with utmost bravery along with providing a constant encouragement and inspiration to her army. Unfortunately because of internal disunity and her army being too small in comparison with the invaders, self-defense did not succeed. Among the brave women who resisted, retaliated and acted towards containing the Mughal thirst for empire-building Maharani Durgavati occupies a high place.

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8. Ahilya Bai Holkar



After the death of Malhar Rao Holkar (1694-1766), founder of the Holkar dynasty, as his son had died before him (killed by a cannon ball), he was succeeded by his daughter-in-law **Ahilya Bai Holkar**. She ruled from 1767 to 1795 with great skill and understanding. She governed the state from a palace fort at Maheshwar on the northern bank of the Narmada river.

Sir John Malcolm, in his memoirs of Central India described her as a

"female without vanity... excercising in the more active and able manner, despotic power with sweet humanity..."

Though Ahilyabai never stayed in Indore, it is in her reign that Indore grew up into a city. Indore was an island of prosperity in a sea of voilence. Her rule became proverbial for justice and wisdom. She was the rare Indian royalty to be deified in her life time. She contributed a lot to the heritage of India by establishing several religious edifices remarkable in architecture. The *Kashi Vishweswar* temple at Varanasi being notable among them. Her unique pan-indian look is reflected in the fact that she built *Dharmashalas* at Badrinath in the north and Rameshwaram in the south, established *Anna Chhatras* at Dwarka in the west, Jagannathpuri in the east, and at Omkareshwar and Ujjain in central India. She also establishes charitable institutions at Gaya, Varanasi, Ayodhya, Prayag (Allahabad), Haridwar and Pandharpur. She was at heart a queen of whole India rather than that of the Holkar kingdom. She died at Maheshwar where a large mousoleum stands in her memory.

(source: http://www.ee.ualberta.ca/~naik/holkar.html).

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9. Kittur Rani Chennamma (1778 - 1829)

Chennamma received training in horse riding , sword fighting and archery in her young age. She was married to Raja Mullasarja of Kittur, a princely state of Belgaum in Karnataka. Her husband died in 1816. Her only son died in 1824. Chennamma adopted Shivalingappa as her son and made him heir to the throne. The British did not accept this and ordered the expulsion of Shivalingappa. The Rani defied the order. A great battle ensued. The Rani fought the British with great courage and skill. She could not, however, hold out for long. She was taken captive and lodged in Bailhongal Fort where she died on 21-02-1829.

(source: **Great Women of India**).

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10. Queen of Jhansi - Lakshmi Bai (1830 -1858)

Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of a principality called Jhansi in northern India, led an uprising against a takeover of her homeland by the British. She became a heroine and a symbol of resistance to the British rule.



Lakshmi Bai was born around 1830 into a wealthy, high-caste Brahmin family. **She was named Manukarnika, which is one of the names of the holy river Ganges. As a young woman, she learned to read, write and debate. She also learned to ride horses and use weapons while playing with her adopted brothers.** She accepted the name Lakshmi Bai when she married Gangadhar Rao, the maharajah of Jhansi and became the Rani (short for maharani, the wife of maharajah) of Jhansi.

Gangadhar Rao was between forty and fifty years of age at the time of their wedding. This was his second marriage. His first wife died without producing an heir. The new Rani of Jhansi gave birth to a son, but he died when he was three months old. Subsequently, Damodar Rao, Gangadhar's relative, became their adopted son. In 1853, Gangadhar Rao died.

The Governor-General of India, the Marquess of Dalhousie, announced that since Gangadhar Rao left no heir, the state of Jhansi would be annexed by the British Government. The British rejected the claim that Damodar Rao was the legal heir. According to Hindu law, little Damodar Rao was Gangadhar's heir and successor. In the Hindu religion, a surviving son, either biological or adopted, had an obligation to perform certain sacrifices after his father's death to prevent his father from being condemned to punishment or hell. The refusal of the British to acknowledge the legitimacy of Rajah's adopted son caused a

serious consternation in the local population. Rani appealed her case to London, but that appeal was turned down.



Not wishing to give up her kingdom, Lakshmi Bai assembled a volunteer army of 14,000 rebels and ordered that defenses of the city itself be strengthened. Jhansi was attacked by the British in March 1858. Shelling of Jhansi was fierce and the British were determined not to allow any rebels to escape while Rani was determined not to surrender. The British noted that the Indian soldiers fighting them showed more vigor than they ever had while following British orders. Women were also seen working the batteries and carrying ammunition, food and water to the soldiers. Rani, herself, was seen constantly active in the defense of the city. Jhansi, however, fell to the British forces after a two week siege. A priest from Bombay who witnessed the British victory, said that what followed were four days of fire, pillage, murder and looting without distinction. He said it was difficult to breathe due to strong smell of burning flesh. British historians, on the other hand, suggested that while four to five thousand people died in battle, the civilians were spared.

The Rani managed to escape on horseback under the cover of darkness and within twenty-four hours rode over one hundred miles to the fortress of Kalpi. Several other Indian rulers joined the rebel forces there. It is believed that the Rani was influential in convincing the others to go on the offensive and seize the fortress of Gwalior. This maneuver was successful and helped rally the rebel forces together.

It wasn't long, however, before the British forces determined to win Gwalior back. A fierce battle ensued. Rani was in charge of the eastern side of defense, however she lost her life on the second day of fighting. The British won back Gwalior. Rani's body was given a ceremonial cremation and burial by the faithful servants. **Sir Hugh Rose,** the commander of the British force, wrote later, "The Ranee was remarkable for her bravery, cleverness and perseverance; her generosity to her Subordinates was unbounded. These qualities, combined with her rank, rendered her the most dangerous of all the rebel leaders." A popular Indian ballad said:

How valiantly like a man fought she,
The Rani of Jhansi
On every parapet a gun she set
Raining fire of hell,
How well like a man fought the Rani of Jhansi
How valiantly and well!

"Bundeli har boli mein suni yehi kahani thi...
Khoob laDi mardaani woh toh Jhansi Wali Rani thi...."

(for more information refer to site on **Jhansi Ki Rani**).

J. Lang, who was the only Britisher who saw her face to face, left the following description of her: "She was a woman of about the middle size, rather stout but not too stout. Her face must have been very handsome when she was younger, and even now it had many charms... The expression also was very good and very intelligent. The eyes were particularly fine and the nose very delicately shaped... Her dress was a plain white muslin, so fine in texture and drawn about her in such a way and so tightly that the outline of her figure was plainly discernible, and a remarkably fine figure she had."



"Bundelay harbolon ke munh hamne suni kahani thi/khuh lari mardani woh to Jhansi wali Rain thi" sings the ballad narrating the valiant struggle of one of the most famous characters of India in recent history. When Rani Lakshmi Bai rose against the British in I857 AD she immortalized Jhansi. She has since become a heroine of the Indian independence movement, a sort of central Indian Joan of Arc.

Long before Bal Gangadhar Tilak said "Swaraj hamara janm huk hai," Jhansi Lakshmi Bai said "Azadshahi hamara huk hai."

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2. **Herstory - Women Who Changed the World - edited by Ruth Ashby and Deborah Gore Ohrn**, Viking, 1995.

For more refer to chapter on **GlilmpsesVIII**).

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11. Rani Avantibai

When Vikramaditya Singh, the ruler of Ramgarh State died leaving behind his wife Avantibai and no heir to the throne, the British put the state under court administration. Avantibai vowed to win back her land from the British. She raised an army of four thousand men and led it herself against the British in 1857. A fierce battle ensured and Avantibai fought most valiantly but could not hold out for long against the superior strength of the British army. When her defeat become imminent she killed herself with her own sword and became a martyr on 20-03-1858.

(source: **Great Women of India**)

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12 Jalkari Bai

The folklore of Bundelkhand (part of Jhansi State then) are full of heroic exploits of Jalkari Bai. She was a village girl and hailed from a very poor family. It is said that she had an encounter with a tiger while she was collecting firewood in the jungle and she killed the tiger single handed with her axe. She had a striking resemblance to Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi and because of this Rani took interest in her and inducted her into the women's wing of the army.

During 1957-58 there were several British raids on Jhansi Fort and the Rani repulsed every one of the attacks. Later when the fall of fort became imminent Jalkari bai and some generates convinced Laxmibai to escape quietly with the help of supporters. In a ploy to deceive the British, Jalkari bai dressed herself up like the Rani and took command of the army. The British found out the truth, but it was too late. The Rani had covered a considerable distance by then. Jalkaribai fought the British forces valiantly but was eventually forced to surrender. The British general, impressed by her loyalty, courage and fighting prowess treated her with respect and set her free.

(source: **Great Women of India**)

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13. Shakuntala Devi



Shakuntala Devi, the human computer - holds an undisputed place in the Guinness Book of Records for multiplying in 1980 two randomly chosen 13-digit numbers and giving the correct answer in 28 seconds.

Her abilities, defying common theories of human intelligence, have been the subject of much research. In 1977 she won a standing ovation from an audience of mathematicians when she extracted the 23rd root of a 201-digit number. That means she found the number that when multiplied by itself 23 times equaled the 201-digit number she was given. She solved it in 50 seconds flat. The day's most sophisticated computer, a Univac 1108, also did the deed - in 62 seconds - but only after days of programming, 13 thousand instructions and 5,000 data locations. No one has a plausible theory as to how she could have arrived at the answer, for the feat far exceeds the supposed limits of human intelligence. Shakuntala Devi attributes her mathematical wizardry to her friendship with **Lord Ganesha,** developed in her early childhood.

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14. Sarojini Naidu



Sarojini Naidu, (1879-a freedom fighter and the first Indian woman as Governor of West Bengal after the partition. Sarojini Naidu was a poet, mother of four and the first President of the Indian National Congress. Widely known as the Nightingale of India, she was the younger sister of the renowned poet, actor and playwright, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. Sarojinidevi was a great patriot, politician, orator and administrator. She had an integrated personality and could mesmerize audiences with her pure honesty and patriotism. She was a life-long freedom fighter, social worker, ideal housewife and poet.

She was born on February 13, 1879 in Hyderabad. Her father, Dr. Aghornath Chattopadhyaya, was the founder of Nizam College of Hyderabad and a scientist. Her mother, Mrs. Varasundari, was a Bengali poetess. Sarojinidevi inherited qualities from both her father and mother.

Young Sarojini was a very bright and proud girl. Her father aspired for her to become a mathematician or scientist, but she loved poetry from a very early age. Once she was working on an algebra problem, and when she couldn't find the solution she decided to take a break, and in the same book she wrote her first inspired poetry. She got so enthused by this that she wrote "The Lady of the Lake", a poem 1300 lines long. When her father saw that she was more interested in poetry than mathematics or science, he decided to encourage her. With her father's support, she wrote the play "Maher Muneer" in the Persian language. Dr. Chattopadhyaya distributed some copies among his friends and sent one copy to the Nawab of Hyderabad. Reading a beautiful play written by a young girl, the Nizam was very impressed. The college gave her a scholarship to study abroad. At the age of 16 she got admitted to King's College of England. There she met famous laureates of the time.

During her stay in England, Sarojini met Dr. Govind Naidu from southern India. After finishing her studies at the age of 19, she got married to him during the time when inter-caste marriages were not allowed. Her father was a progressive thinking person, and he did not care what others said. Her marriage was a very happy one.



Her major contribution was also in the field of poetry. Her poetry had beautiful words that could also be sung. Soon she got recognition as the "Bul Bule Hind" when her collection of poems was published in 1905 under the title "Golden Threshold". After that, she published two other collections of poems--"The Bird of Time" and "The Broken Wings". In 1918, " Feast of Youth" was published. Later, "The Magic Tree", "The Wizard Mask" and "A Treasury of Poems" were published. Mahashree Arvind, Rabindranath Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru were among the thousands of admirers of her work. Her poems had English words, but an Indian soul.

One day she met Shree Gopal Krishna Gokhale. He said to her to use her poetry and her beautiful words to rejuvenate the spirit of Independence in the hearts of villagers. He asked her to use her talent to free Mother India.

Then in 1916, she met Mahatma Gandhi, and she totally directed her energy to the fight for freedom. She would roam around the country like a general of the army and pour enthusiasm among the hearts of Indians. The independence of India became the heart and soul of her work.

She was responsible for awakening the women of India. She brought them out of the kitchen. She traveled from state to state, city after city and asked for the rights of the women. She re-established self-esteem within the women of India.

(source: **http://swaraj.net/iffw/profiles/naidu_s.htm**).

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15. Sarada Devi

Sri Sarada Devi was born in Bengal in 1853 to devout Brahmin parents. Her early years were marked by simplicity, charity, prayer, meditation and visionary gifts. At the age of six, she was betrothed to Sri Ramakrishna, but they lived apart until Sarada Devi was 18. It was he who initiated her into many spiritual disciplines, notably into the worship of the Divine Mother. Living a celibate life, they saw God in themselves and in each other. Sri Ramakrishna taught her the great mantras and instructed her in the method of spiritual guidance for others who would seek her help.

Immediately after her husband's death in 1886, Sri Sarada Devi began a pilgrimage through North India. For a time she lived at Vrindavan, where she attained the highest contentless consciousness called nirvikalpa samadhi, and where she began her

role as guru.



On her return, Sri Sarada Devi went to Kamarpukur, where she met with great hostility from the uncomprehending villagers. Having no money and strictly observing purdah, she was forced to dig the earth herself to cultivate a few vegetables. When Sri Ramakrishna's disciples heard of her plight, they invited her to Calcutta. There she became known as the Holy Mother and gave spiritual instruction and initiation to many people. She was noted for her maternal tenderness and hospitality, her gift of healing, and her willingness to suffer vicariously for her disciples' sins.

In 1909, Sri Sarada Devi moved into what is known as the Holy Mother's House in Calcutta, and lived there for the next 11 years with several other holy women. In 1919, she was stricken with black fever and, although in great pain, continued to strengthen her disciples and to give spiritual advice until her death on July 20, 1920.

The spiritual teachings of this great woman seer are a window on the beauty of her soul: "As clouds are blown away by the wind, the thirst for material pleasures will be driven away by the utterance of the Lord's name." "No one is a stranger, my child; this whole world is your own."

(source: **http://www.hssworld.org/all/great_people/sarada.html)**

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16. Bhagini Nivedita - A Proud, Generous, Momentous and Ardent Woman (1867-1911)

She great offering, giving her life for Mother India, was like a song of love, Love is blind for it sees no faults of the beloved, and Nivedita never found faults with India. Sister Niveditas childhood name was Margaret Elizabeth Noble.



She was born in Ireland on October 20, 1867 to parents Mary Isabel and Samuel Richmond Noble Her father was a preacher to whom religion meant service to the poor. This had an imprint on Nivedita. She was very intelligent and hard worker, loved music, art, and the natural sciences. After her education, she spent ten years in teaching, from 1884 to 1894. She had a gift of being able to impart knowledge and inspire her students She was a proud, generous, impulsive and ardent woman. By the age eight~eil she came to understand that religion did not mean belief in the doctrines; it meant search of Divine Light and Eternal Truth. She began to doubt the truth of the Christian doctrines. She started reading about Buddhism but only with partial success.

This was the time when she met a Hindu Monk, Swami Vivekanand visiting England in 1895. She attended all the lectures. In question-answer sessions, she was an active and enthusiastic participan!. The Swamiji's words that selfishness, ignorance, and greed were the evils which brought suffering to the world, pierced through her mind and heart and her life changed for ever. Swami Vivekanand was very much impressed and urged her to help the women of I,?dia in his plans. In response to the call of Swaini Vivekananda, Nivedita left England and arrived in Calcutta on January 28, 1898. Swamiji could envision her future role in the service of Mother India. He initiated her to be his disciple on March 25, 1898 and gave her name 'Nivedita', meaning one who is dedicated to God. She started to study Gita and practice meditation. This helped her to cast off her pride in English culture and became humble. Salvation for one self and the welfare of the world were two of the ideas she pledged herself to follow, For this, she lived a simpler pure, and holy life to realize God and humbly work for the welfare of the people.



By nature, she was optimist but there were times she felt disheartened in such situations. Swami Vivekananda's words 'Death for the cause is our goal, not success' inspired her She made India the object of love and worship When Swami Vivekananda passed away on July 4. 1902, she felt an added responsibility to India and its people. She realized that political independence of India is an essential first step towards

equality, progress and justice

She inspired the people in all walks of life through her lectures and writings She always believed that India could not be great and powerful unless there was unity. She emphasized this in every possible way and was never tired of speaking about it. Her hard work and lack of rest was having an adverse effect on her health She passed away on October 13, 1911.

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17. Mother Mirra (1878- 1973)



The Mother, Mirra Alfassa, was born in Paris on the 21st of February 1878. Her mother was Egyptian and her father was Turkish. Both of them were perfect materialists. However, Mirra had divine visions from her childhood.

Outwardly, she was brought up as an atheist until she entered adulthood. In her early years, she had a good education in music (specially piano), painting, and higher mathematics. During this period she used to have spontaneous experiences including those of coming out of her body to discover inner realities, without understanding what they really meant. As she was growing up, she began to have such experiences more often. One day in the year 1912 the Mother had a first vision of the future: "the advent of universal harmony, the realization of human unity and the establishment of ideal society". Sri Aurobindo had already visualized these ideas in his writings. What a coincidence?

She met Sri Aurobindo on 20th March, 1914. He exactly resembled the man she used to see in her vision since 1904. She went back to Paris, Japan and other places and finally returned to Pondicherry in India where Sri Auribindo had established an Ashram, a celebrated spiritual centre. Now the question was as to the ways and means by which this great vision of whole-being, whole-knowledge and whole power could be attained for the whole society. Sri Aurobindo found, and this was Mother's discovery, that this could be done through the processes of Yoga, many of which were known, and many of which had to be rediscovered, created, built and perfected, so that they could meet the needs of modern man's upward evolution. This was the task Sri Aurobindo was engaged in since he came to Pondicherry.

The Mother also participated in this endeavor. The result was what is known as 'Integral Yoga' - developed jointly by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In integral yoga, the Divine Power in us uses all life as the means of our upward evolution and then every experience becomes a step on the path to perfection. In this whole process the Mother was Shakti in action. She accelerated this process with great vigor even after Sri Aurobindo left his mortal body on December 5, 1950. She continued to expand that vision through education and counseling of the seekers of inner peace. Under her direction, Pondicherry developed into a residential Ashram.

Her imprint can be seen in almost all aspects of Ashram routine. She worked relentlessly till she passed away on November 17, 1973.

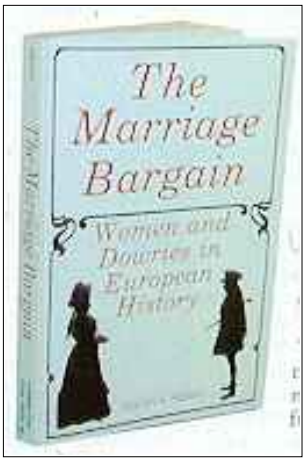
(source: **http://www.hinduwomen.org/biographies/mother.htm**)

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Did you Know?

Dowry Didn't Evolve from India.

Where'd We Get This Zany Idea?
Hindus got it from the Europeans.



According to several sources, the present dowry practice in India can be traced only to the 19th century - likely because that is when Indians observed the full-fledged practice of dowry among the British rulers. Here are some excerpts from a wonderfully, enlightening book, The Marriage Bargain, Women and Dowries in European History.

"In France, the dowry was almost a universal institution, even among servants, laborers and tenant farmers, until the interwar era (1918-1939). Only the poorest urban industrial workers had no dowries, and as a result many of them did not marry at all. "For the great majority of the bourgeoisie (middle class) marriage is the greatest financial operation of their lives." Wrote an observer of the French scene in 1927.

"What was the status of the daughter whose birth ' filled a father's heart with fear' (Dante, Renaissance poet, 1265-1321 C. E. because of the large dowry which her marriage would require?"

(source: **The Marriage Bargain, Women and Dowries in European History.** By Marion A. Kaplan. Harrington Park Press. 28 East 22 Street, New York, 100010. USA and **Hinduism Today**).

The concept of **stri dhan** in which gifts --usually jewelry, including often a quarter pound of gold--was given to the bride by her family, in order to secure some personal wealth for her when she married. This jewelry remained her personal property throughout the marriage, providing some security in case of her husband's death or other calamity. **However, in approximately the 19th century, under the British rule, the loving practice of stri dhan was joined by the very much different concept of dowry.** Dowry became first an expected, then a demanded, offering given by the bride's family to the groom's family at the time of marriage. Whereas stri dhan is considered the property only of the woman, passed matrilineally, dowry is not.

Please refer to a forthcoming book **Dowry Murder: The Imperial Origins of a Cultural Crime - By Veena Talwar Oldenburg**. The author argues that 'these killings are neither about dowry nor reflective of an Indian culture or caste system that encourages violence against women. Rather, such killings can be traced directly to the influences of the British colonial era. In the pre-colonial period, dowry was an institution managed by women, for women, to enable them to establish their status and have recourse in an emergency. As a consequence of the massive economic and societal upheaval brought on by British rule, womens' entitlements to the precious resources obtained from land were erased and their control of the system diminished, ultimately resulting in a devaluing of their very lives.' More good things thanks to the Christian State.

(source: **Taming the predatory State of today - Rajeev Srinivasan - rediff.com**).

The book takes us on a journey into the colonial Punjab, Veena Oldenburg skillfully **follows the paper trail left by British bureaucrats to indict them for interpreting these crimes against women as the inherent defects of Hindu caste culture. The British, Oldenburg claims, publicized their "civilizing mission" and blamed the caste system in order to cover up the devastation their own agrarian policies had wrought on the Indian countryside.**

(source: **amazon.com**).

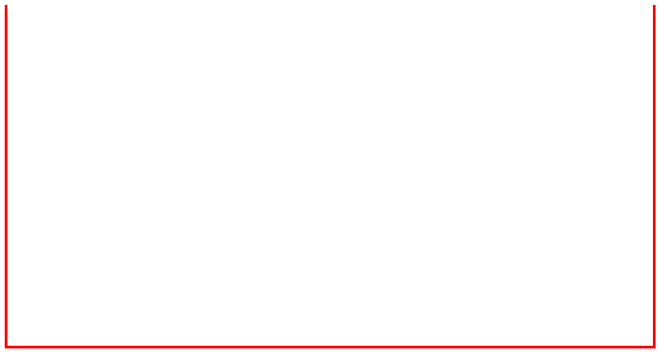
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Indian Temples and 19th century British woman in India

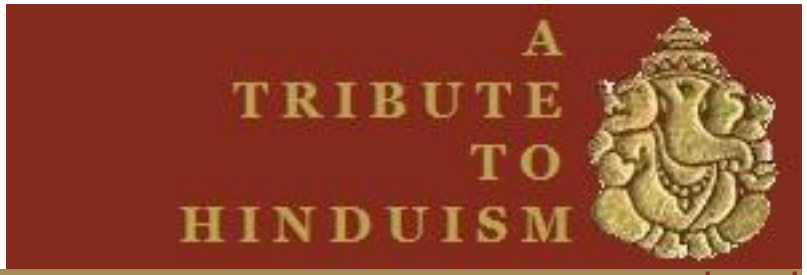
Indian temples were a popular destination for British tourist, but escorts usually steered female sightseers away from the erotic art featured on some temple facades. One 19th century guide book advised women to tip local guides for not pointing out suggestive temple carvings.

(source: **What Life Was Like in the Jewel of the Crown: British India AD 1600-1905 - By The Editors of Time-Life Books.** p.156).

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Of the many nineteenth-century Indo-Western cultural confrontations, none was more troublesome than that of evangelical Christianity's challenge to indigenous religious beliefs and practices. The British conquest of most of the subcontinent had thrust aside the indigenous rulers and their pattern of rule, as well as an increasingly aggressive propagation of the Christian gospel by Western missionaries. The East India Company's initial policies toward Christian missionaries were at best ambivalent. Until pressure at home was created by the evangelical Christian interests, the British parliament eliminated these restrictions in the charter renewals of 1813 and 1833, opening British India to missionary endeavor.

While some Britons admired the achievements of Indian civilization, others, including the evangelical Charles Grant, believed that India was a backward place, stagnated by Hindu beliefs and practices. If Britain was obligated to uplift India, then surely Hinduism, which Grant conceived as the ultimate source of India's many social evils, must be undermined. As early as the 1830's Christian representatives were visiting towns in the remote corners of the countryside. As these endeavors became more widespread, so too did popular antipathy and antagonism.

It is generally accepted by most scholars on the subject that in many Asian countries political nationalism was preceded by religious awakenings that arose in response to Christian missionary activities.

Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale, Arumuga Navalar, Dayanand Saraswati, were some of the earlier reformers and revivalists. Although given scant attention by Indian historians, their contribution and defense of Hinduism is remarkable. Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale was not the first Marathi polemicist against the Christian missionaries, but he was one of the most colorful and widely known. Arumuga Navalar is regarded as the "father" of modern Tamil prose and a staunch defender of Shaivism against Christian missionary attacks. Dayanand Saraswati was an aggressive reformer, who directed his efforts against the missionary faiths, Islam and Christianity. Modern day revivalists and social worker, Mr. Pandurang Vaijnath Athavale, is well known for selfless work for the good of humanity.

Introduction
Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale
Arumuga Navalar of Jaffna
Swami Dayanand Saraswati
Pandurang Vaijnath Athavale Shastri



Introduction

After reaching its maturity, Hindu civilization had to withstand the shock of two alien intrusions. The first of these, was the series of invasions by Islamic peoples from Central Asia that ended in the establishment of political control over almost all of India. The second shock was the coming of the European peoples as a part of the great wave of expansion that had begun late in the fifteenth century, and, as far as India was concerned, reached its height in the nineteenth century. The effect of Western intrusion was greater on the Indian society.

Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale (1825-1871)

Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale was born in 1825, the tenth child of a modestly placed Konkanastha (Chitpawan) Brahmin family residing in a village, Shiraval, near Mahad in the Thana (now Kolaba) district. His education appears to have consisted only of a few years in a village school along with some of study of the Vedas in preparation for his sacred thread ceremony. At the age of fourteen he worked at the customs office at Sangamseshvar Bandar, leading in a few months to appointment with pay at Thana in the Customs Department. The young Vishnu seemed safely on the path of the *laukika* (secular) brahmin, secure in "service". Yet this bureaucrat-in-becoming seems to have spent his own time engaged in religious exercises and disciplines, memorizing *stotras* and mingling with *sadhus.* His custom service postings were at several places in the Thana area - Vasai, Bhiwandi, and Kalyan - each of which was also in close proximity of Bombay.



It was while posted at Uran, a small port on the harbor opposite to Bombay, that Vishnu Gokhale sensed that other work awaited him. As he was drowsily emerging from sleep one morning, he heard what he took to be a divine voice calling: " *Are,* Vishnu. If you live in the company of beast, are you therefore one? Take a decision - who am I? Abandon service, go into the wilderness lost in philosophic meditation. Inspired, Vishnu resigned his appointment, retained but a loin cloth and a staff, and commenced several years of penance and meditation at the sacred hill of Saptashringiri near Nasik.

There, he had further visions giving him a mandate to propagate *dharma* throughout the land. In 1852 he moved first to Nasik and then on to Pandharpur. He stayed on at this great pilgrimage center for three years during which time he learned traditions of the **varkari panth,** studying Eknath's **Bhavartharamayana**. Subsequently the young ascetic, now known as Brahmachari Bawa or Vishnubawa Brahamachari, published his own book. **Bhavarthasindhu** (sea of devotion), which gave emphais to dyan or "special knowledge". *Dynan,* he explained could be found only in Vedic religion and realized through devotion *(bhakti)* as expressed by the saint-poets of Maharashtra. **Apparently,**



he also heard Christian missionaries at Pandarpur criticizing Hinduism and resolved that he would answer them.

In September 1856, Vishnubawa Brahmachari went to Bombay to step upon a wider stage. Having forsworn marriage, abandoned worldly employment, and absorbed the available teachings of regional and Sanskritic religious knowledge, Vishnubawa stood poised to combat the Christian missionaries and to defend *dharma.* Yet, his defense by no means excluded the possibility of, even the necessity for, that Hindu society and culture could themselves be reformed.

Christians had been proselytizing in Western Maharashtra since the days of the Portuguese conquests. (For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism** and **FirstIndologists**). However, the nineteenth century saw the entry of a new element - the British and American Protestant missionaries fired with a zeal for bringing India to Christ and doing it rather quickly, too. Relying upon the sympathy of the Governor, Sir Evan Neapean, they ultimately established residence in the city. Initially utilizing the Serampore Press Marathi grammar, dictionary, and New Testament, these missionaries commenced a vigorous campaign of street preaching near Hindu temples in Bombay. **The American Congregationalist Gordon Hall, spoke in hostile tones about Hinduism. He called Hinduism, " a shapeless mass of cruelties."**

In 1829, Dr. John Wilson, a Scottish missionary arrived in Bombay along with his evangelical ambitions. In May 1830, public debates were inaugurated at Bombay. In the following year, **Morobhat Dandekar** debated with Wilson for six successive evenings. He published a tract setting forth his views, **Shri Hindudharmasthapana** (Foundations of Hindu Religion) which in turn called forth rebuttals published by Wilson.

Dandekar entered the fray with a new broadside against Christianity, **Upadesha Chandrika** (Moonlight of Admonition), which a missionary journalist in *Dnyanodaya* asserted even went so far as to use arguments of the "books of infidels like Voltaire and Tom Paine. Hindus were beginning to use the same technologies employed by their Christian antagonists. Now oral debates were being recorded and printed, and additional polemics were published.

In this context of over a quarter of a century of Christian-Hindu disputation and polemic, and with the intensification of missionary endeavors provoking greater apprehension and hostility among Hindus, Vishnubawa Brahmachari was not the first Maharashtrian Hindu to enter the lists against Hinduism's critics. Rather, he was the first to launch a widely recognized defence of Hindu *dharma*, using an effective style reinforced by an aggressive counterattack against Christian doctrines. Even his missionary opponents had to concede that he possessed "an agreeable manner, remarkable fluency and ease, a fine command of the Marathi language, (and) an air of sincerity and piety."

At the same time, Vishnubawa decried the fact that because Hindus were ignorant of their own religion, they consequently could not defend it against missionary critiques. Yet Vishnubawa recognized that Hindus had to go beyond denigrating other religions, turning instead to a clear exposition of what was essential in their own system of belief. Thus he began writing his magnum opus, a survey of what he called the ultimate kernel of Hindu faith. entitled the Light of Vedic Religion or **Vedoktadharmaprakasha**. This work opens quite simply: "Dharma mhange kay?" "what does dharma mean?"

Vishnubawa Brahmachari died in the Viththal Mandir at Bombay on Mahashivaratri, February 18, 1871.

To many of his large circle of admirers, Hindus, both Gujarati and Maharastrian and

some Parsis, he had triumphed and turned back the tide of conversion. He became a symbol of resistance to the criticism launched against Hinduism by evangelizing missionaries, and his considerations of what dharma truly means, he contributed to the objective survival of the ancestral faith. In his vigor, his polemics did defend dharma without foreclosing on the desirability or possibility of reform.

True to his given name, he remained Vishnu - the preserver.

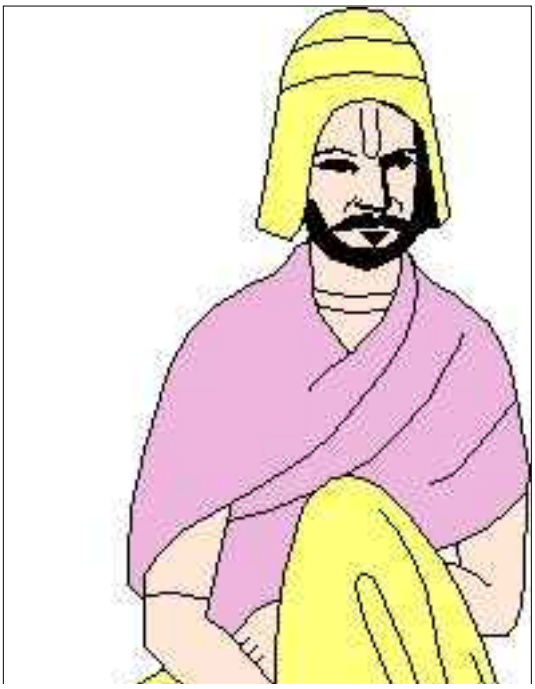
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Arumuga Navalar of Jaffna (1822-1879)

Arumuga Navalar is regarded as the "father" of modern Tamil prose and a staunch defender of Shaivism against Christian missionary attacks. Less known are his attempts to reform Shaivism itself. **He worked within the heritage of Shaiva scholars as he responded to the newer challenges of an intrusive Western Civilization.** A Hindu of Hindus, affectionately called the 'Champion Reformer of the Hindus', author of numerous treatises on Saiva Literature, was a pioneer prose writer and publisher of rare books of the Sangam Age.

Arumuga Pillai, Navalar's original name, belonged to a high-status caste known as Vellalas, a class that along with Brahmins had produced most of the Tamil literati for centuries, perhaps millennia. Born in 1822, he grew up in the Tamil regions of Sri Lanka. Because his father was a Tamil poet, Arumuga Pillai received a solid foundation in Tamil literature at an early age. Like many high-status boys of the second generation to live under British rule, he entered a Christian mission school to study English. Arumuga was twelve when he attended this school as a day student. He did so well that he was asked to stay on the Jaffna Wesleyan Mission School to teach English and Tamil. Peter Percival, the principal asked him to serve as his own Tamil pandit, to assist him in writing and editing hymns and translating the prayer book and Bible. Arumuga Pillai worked with Percival for eight years in his late teens and early twenties, when he wrestled seriously with the questions, What does it mean to be a Hindu?

Background



At the time of Arumuga Pillai's birth, Protestants from England and America, had established stations in nine villages on the Jaffna peninsula from whence they conducted vigorous campaigns to convert the Hindus and Muslims into Christians. The first significant Hindu opposition to these efforts emerged in 1828 when the teachers of the American Missionary Seminary at Batticotta (Vattukkottai) began to stress the Shaiva scripture Skanda Purana (Kanta Purana) in their school. The decision angered Jaffna Hindus, who doubted that in such a foreign setting the sacred quality of this Tamil story of Murugan, the warrior son of Shaiva, would be respected or that its esoteric meanings would receive a sympathetic hearing.

Christians had their portions translated from poetry into prose. The classes immediately



created a stir. Though they were voluntary, social pressures caused attendance to gradually dwindle until they were abandoned. From the Shaiva point of view, this act by Christian educators had pulled a text from sacred center (*akam)* of *dahrma* out into the darkness of the wilderness (*purappuram*), stripping it of its ritual context and laying it bare for profanation. Indeed this is what the educators had intended, as the end of the report said:

"Enough, however, was read to convince all who would reflect, that the book is filled with the most extravagant fictions, many of which are of an immoral tendency, (just as the Bible says,) "for the people will walk everyone in the name of his god."

Two long anti-Christian poems appeared around this time in Jaffna. They reflected an increasingly vocal opposition.

The Vellala poet, **Muttukumara Kavirajar** (1780-1851), wrote the "Kummi Song on Wisdom (jnanakkummi) and "Abolition of the Jesus Doctrine" (Yesumataparikaram). The timing of their publication suggests a connection with this opposition. The "Kummi Song on Wisdom," moreover attacked the Christian Bible and Christians just as the Christians had criticized the *Skanda Purana* and Shaivas. In Jaffna, the Christian assault on Shaivism intensified.

In September of 1842 over two hundred Hindu men of high status gathered at the monastery (matam) of the Shiva temple in Jaffna to discuss plans for establishing a Veda and Agama school to teach Shaivism. **They also agreed to purchase a printing press, if possible, in collaboration with "the white men of this place," and to publish tracts on the absurdities of the Christian religion, "which would effectually shut the mouths of the missionaries and stop their abuse."**

In October of 1842, when the Veda school opened Arumuga Pillai had been teaching Tamil and English at the Wesleyan Mission School and working with the British missionary Percival for a year. Sympathetic to the Christian arguments, he studied the Bible regularly, but while doing so began to have questions about it. Soon he turned away from it in favor of his own heritage. In 1848, he quit to devote himself fully to his own projects. He had studied in depth the Agamic literature forming the scriptural Sanskrit. He was now adept in the three literary languages of modern religious discourse in the Tamil world: Tamil, Sanskrit, and English. Not surprisingly, his reputation had been growing among local Shaivas as a man who knew more about obscure Agamic literature than anyone else.

The Veda and Agama school had not survived and a printing press was still a dream. In 1846 Arumuga Pillai began night and early morning classes in the primary and secondary literature of Shaivism. His students were a few of his friends, young Vellala, Brahman, and Chettiyar men. The classes were free and informal. Soon he crossed the Palk Strait and to Madras, his first trip to India. A Shaiva school was clearly on his mind. Struggling against Christians and some Hindu reformers as well as orthodox priests, he made a dramatic move at the end of 1847 to spread the "Splendor of Shiva" (Sivaprakasam) and disperse the "darkness" shared by Hindus and Christians. He believed that if the people knew the rudiments of Agamic Shaivism acted on them, they would strengthen dharma and weaken the Christians.

In 1849, He set out for Madras, with his colleague, Sadashiva Pillai, to purchase a printing press. While waiting for a press, Arumuga Navalar published two texts he had been editing from various copies. One was an important educational tool the Cudamani Nikantu, a sixteenth-century lexicon of 1,197 easily remembered verses giving approximately eleven

thousand words, in both their verse and prose forms. The other text, Saundaryalahari, a poem in praise of the goddess, was important for devotion, and was published with comments (urai). He had laid out the lines of his work he would continue for the rest of his life: writing, publishing, preaching, teaching and reform. He openly disputed with the claims and refuted the abuses of the Christians.

The Impact of Navalar

His literary production was amazing. Among his approximately ninety-seven Tamil publications, twenty-three were his own creations, eleven were his commentaries (urai), and forty were his editions of those works of grammar, literature, liturgy, and theology he thought Tamils should know. With his recovery, editing, and publishing of ancient works, Navalar, laid the foundations for the recovery of lost Tamil classics, a task his successors continued.

The religious revival among the Hindus in Sri Lanka was largely due to the pioneering efforts of Arumuga Navalar (1822-1879). This is not the place to narrate in detail the crucial and seminal role played by him in kindling a consciousness among the Tamils in Sri Lanka and South India about their spiritual heritage. In many ways Navalar could be compared to Dayananda Saraswathi (1824-1883) who founded the Arya Samaj in North India. **What Dayananda did for the Vedic religion in the North, Navalar accomplished for the Saiva-Agamic faith in South India and Sri Lanka.**

(For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism** and **FirstIndologists**).

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Arumugam Navalar, Great Saiva Revivalist of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, Honored on 181st Birthday

SRI LANKA, December 15, 2003: Tamils in several parts of the northeast observed the 181st birth anniversary of the Saiva-Tamil revivalist Sri Arumugam Navalar on Sunday. Sri Arumugan Navalar is chiefly remembered for his work to revive Saivism in Jaffna and South India. He is also considered one of the important pioneers of Tamil revival in the 19th century. Though Sri Arumugam Navalar's 181st birth anniversary falls on 18th December 2003 the Trincomalee District Young Men's Hindu Association organized his Guru Pooja on Sunday. The TDYMHA organized the event with the octogenarian Saivite activist Mr. P. Kandiah (Gandhi master). Attorney-at Law Mr. K. Sivapalan and Assistant Director of Education Mr. S.Vipunasekaram spoke of the services Navalar rendered to Saivism and Tamil language.

Many Tamils in South India and Sri Lanka are Saivaites. Sri Arumugam Navalar was born on 18th December 1822 in Nallur in Jaffnapeninsula at a time when several elite and middle class Tamils in Jaffna felt that Ceylon's British rulers were promoting Christianity and the English language at the expense of Saivisim and Tamil.

Navalar's original name was Arumugam. For his services rendered to Saivaism and Tamil language and culture, the head of the great Tamil monastery/temple complex in South India, Dharmapuram Aadheenam, conferred on him the title "Navalar" in recognition of his literary and debating skills. Since then he was known as

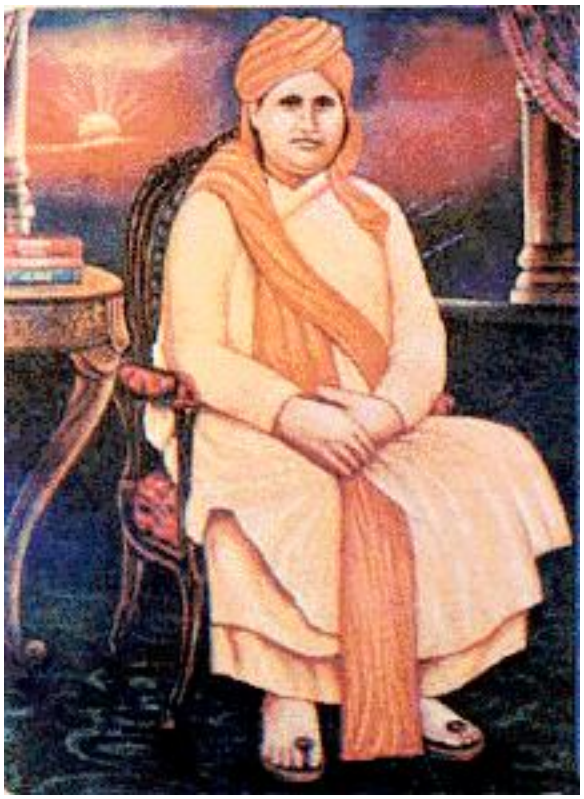
Arumugam Navalar. At the age of twelve he completed his Tamil education under the traditional, non-formal education "Guru-Shisya" mode of learning. He later joined Jaffna Methodist English School, currently known as Jaffna Central College for his English education when Rev Peter Percival was its Principal.

Navalar emerged the champion of the Saiva renaissance movement of the nineteenth century, both in Jaffna and South India. He published several ancient Sangam literary works, which were found in Palmyra (Ola) leaf manuscripts. He also wrote learned commentaries to ancient and medieval Tamil grammars Navalar was versatile writer, eloquent speaker and efficient debater. Navalar wrote several books on Saivaism such as Saiva Vina Vidai, which is a Saivite catechism. Navalar developed a prose style even laymen could understand. Arumugam Navalar established schools in several parts of Jaffna peninsula to propagate Saivaism.

(source: **Arumugam Navalar, Great Saiva Revivalist of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, Honored on 181st Birthday**).

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Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883)



Rightly described as a human dynamo, Swami Dayananda shook the structure of established Hinduism to its foundations and infused into it new blood and fresh vigor. The founder of **Arya Samaj,** was a prophet with a difference. Dayanand is the father of both Renaissance (he brought to life world's supreme knowledge, the Vedas, with his slogan 'Back to Vedas) and Reformation.

Background: The Punjab, after centuries of Hindu rule followed by over five hundred years of Islamic dominance and half a century of Sikh control, contained three religions. Two of these converted, Islam and Sikhism while the third Hinduism, had neither the concepts nor the rituals necessary for conversion. In 1849, the British annexation of Punjab, introduced the aggressive conversion of faith of Christianity. In time, Christianity threatened each of the coexisting religions. Christian missionaries brought with them new forms of organization and techniques of proselytism. Proponents of each religious ideas sought to defend their beliefs and to discredit those of the opposing groups. It was a struggle of *mandan-khandan*, of disseminating one's "true" ideas and rejecting others "false" concepts. Exponents of Hinduism and Sikhism struggled to defend their religions in general and sectarian ideologies in particular against the missionary attempts to proclaim the superiority of Christianity.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati was born in Tankara, a small town on the Kathiawar peninsula of Gujarat in 1824. He ran away from home in search of his release from the cycle of rebirth and in the process became a sanyasi, taking the name of Dayanand Saraswati. He passionately advocated a return to the pristine purity of Vedic Hinduism, and denounced with intolerant indignation of the post-Vedic Hindu scriptures such as the Puranas. He also condemned idol worship and caste distinctions, advocated full equality for women, initiated a widespread educational campaign with special emphasis on female education, and launched a crusade against untouchability.

Rightly described as a human dynamo, Swami Dayananda shook the structure of established Hinduism to its foundations and infused into it new blood and fresh vigor.

For more on Dayanand Saraswati refer to chapter on **Quotes251_270**).

(source: **Religious Controversy in British India** - **Edited by W. Jones** Suny 1992) **Essays on Hinduism** - **By Karan Singh** 1993). (For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism** and **FirstIndologists**).

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Pandurang Vaijnath Athavale Shastri (1920-2003)

The inspiration and founder of Swadhyay Parivar and Swadhyay work is Rev. Pandurang Vaijnath Athavale affectionately known by millions of Swadhyayees as "Dada", a reverential common name for an elder brother.

Rev. Dada was born of Brahmin parents in the village of Roha near Bombay on October 19, 1920. His father and grandfather were great scholars of Vedic literatures. From childhood Dada was inclined towards Vedic scriptures as Geeta. He mastered many languages like Sanskrit, English and several local dialects. At very early age, he acquired a deep and clear understanding of scriptures, logic, grammer, Greek and European philosophy, Sanskrit and English literature, comparative religions, history and various social sciences.



In 1954, Rev. Dada was invited to attend the Second World Religion Congress held at Shimizu City near Tokyo, Japan. This was truly a historic event where religious leaders, philosophers and scholars from many nations had gathered to discuss the question of human happiness. People were concerned about the atomic power which destroyed Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Dada spoke on Vedic philosophy and asserted that Geeta was capable of resolving the dilemmas of man and the general welfare of mankind. He emphasised the necessity of religion in human life.

In 1956, he established a residential school of philosophy - "Tattva Jnana Vidhyapith". This institute was to give importance to nothing except God.

In 1958, Rev. Dada began devotional visits - "Bhaktiferi". This became one of the basic practices of Swadhyay participants. They travelled from door to door to meet people, and since that time Swadhyay has spread across 100,000 Indian villages and the world. It has

transformed the lives of over 20 million people.

When Pope Paul VI visited India in 1964, he requested a meeting with Dada to hold philosophical discussions.

In 1982, Rev. Dada was the honored chief guest speaker at the celebration of the 15th century saint, St. Nicholas's 500th birthday held in Trier, West Germany. To the delight of those in attendance , he spoke in a scholarly way of the affinity between the doctrines of the Upanishad and Geeta, with the views of Saint Nicholas regarding the theory of human knowledge, mysticism and God. Rev. Dada emphasised that the Hindu doctrine too is not only a view life, but also a way of life, much in common with Christian doctrine.

In 1986, at the meeting of world - religion leaders at 'Tirthraj Milan', India, German philosophers Rudolf Haubst and Helmut Pfeiffer dedicated their translation of Nicholas of Cusa's "Vision of God" to Dada.

The Awards and Prizes:

- Rev. Dada was given an award in 1987 by the National Wasteland Board of India for the extraordinary success in preserving soil and developing soil and planting forests.
- In 1988, Rev. Dada was also awarded the prestigious Mahatma Gandhi Prize, the first time in 14 years.
- Rev. Dada received the 'Lokmanya Tilak Sanman Paritoshik' Award in 1992 for selfless work for the good of humanity.
- In 1996, Dada received the Ramon Masaysay Prize in the Philippines for demonstrating an outstanding community leadership.
- And in 1997, Pandurang Shastri Athavale received the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. This prize is valued at $1.21 million, the world's largest monetary award.

For the last fifty years Dada has single handedly spearheaded a silent revolution, which aims at social and cultural transformation of man. While treading this path, he had to fight against the deep-rooted tradition, beliefs, rituals and negative thinking prevalent in the Indian society, some of which are inborn in human mind. His work has brought forth a revolution on five fronts.

(source: **http://www.swadhyay.org/inspirer.htm**). For more refer to **Swadhyaya: A Global Indic Phenomenon - Contributed to this site By Pankaj Jain**).

For more on Hindu charity please visit:

Hindu Charity
http://www.geocities.com/hinduismcharity

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Did You Know?

Kalaripayit - Danger and Divinity in an Old Indian Art?



Originating at least 2,000 years ago, India's Kalaripayit is perhaps the oldest martial art taught today. It is also the most potentially violent, because students advance from unarmed combat to the use of swords, sharpened flexible metal lashes, and peculiar three-bladed daggers.

And yet Kalaripayit is suffused with the divine. A trainee does honor to Hindu deities at every turn - touching the ground with the right hand in homage to the earth goddess; raising that hand to the brow to honor the gods of knowledge; touching right hand to left knee in reverence to Hanuman, the divine embodiment of physical prowess; and uplifting both hands to the shoulders to show respect for Garuda, representing strength. The training space is strewn with symbols -oil lamps, a mirror, flowers - to make the students mindful that the gods are with them.

(source : **Eastern Mysteries - Time Life series**. p 144-145)

Kalarippayat is said to be the world's original martial art. More than 2,000 years old, it was developed by warriors of the Cheras kingdom in Kerala. Training followed strict rituals and guidelines. From unarmed kicks and punches, kalarippayat warriors would graduate to sticks, swords, spears and daggers and study the marmas -- the 107 vital spots on the human body where a blow can kill. Training was conducted in secret, the lethal warriors unleashed as a surprise weapon against the enemies of Cheras. **Still, Chinese traders learned some of the mysterious body movements and took them home to provide the basis of their own martial arts. According to Terence Duke, martial arts went from India to China. Fighting without weapons was a specialty of the ancient Ksatreya warriors of India.**

(source: **The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China - Terence Duke** p.3 - 158-174 and 242).

(please refer to chapter on **India and China** for more information).
(source: http://www.hinduismtoday.com/hpi/2001/9/7.html#2 and for basics refer to **The ABC of Kalarippayattu)** and **Kalaripayattu)**

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

India - A Spiritual Giant

Lin Yutang, Chinese scholar, author of **Wisdom of China and India**, has said:



"India produced too much religion and China too little." A trickle of Indian religious spirit overflowed to China and inundated the whole of Eastern Asia. It would seem logical and appropriate that any one suffering from a deficiency of the religious spirit should turn to India rather than to any other country in the world."

It is apparent that only in India is religion still a living emotion. "

(source: **The Wisdom of China and India - By Lin Yutang** Random House September 1955 ASIN 0394607597 p. 3-4)

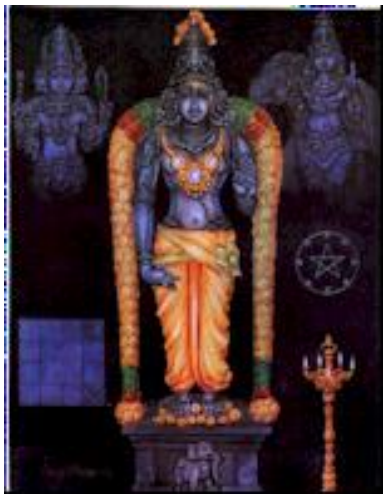
J. P. Couchoud has observed:

India has "man gone to the farthest limit of his religious faculty. Consequently, religious tales is one of India's richest traditions." in the book **Asiatic Mythology - J. Hackin** Crescent Books Place of Publication: New York p. 115).

(For more refer to chapter on **India and China**).

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India's Fabulous legends:



It has long been recognized that India's tales of gods and goddesses are closely related to those of ancient Greece, Rome and the Nordic and Germanic peoples. So similar are they, indeed that even the days of the week, both in India and in the West, continue to be named after the same deities, who represented the same planets: Sun for Sunday, Moon for Monday, Mars for Tuesday, Mercury for Wednesday (Woden's day in Norse legend), Jupiter for Thursday (Thor's day in Scandinavia; **Brihaspati**, or **Jupiter's day in India**), Venus for Friday, and Saturn for Saturday.

While on a tour of the Parthenon, a guide will tell you that the Greek legends came from India.....

(source: **The Hindu Way of Awakening - By J Donald Walters** p. 46 - 47). For more refer to chapter on **India and Greece** and **Hinduisms influence**).

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Democracy on Ashoka's Rock Edict



Ashoka, (273 BC - 232 BC) the most trusted son of Bindusara and the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, was a brave soldier. He was the most famous of the Mauryan kings and was one of the greatest rulers of India. During his father's reign, he was the governor of Ujjain and Taxila. Having sidelined all claims to the throne from his brothers, Ashoka was coronated as an emperor. Ashoka extended the Maurya Empire to the whole of India except the deep south and the south-east, reaching out even into Central Asia. For propagation of Buddhism, he started inscribing edicts on rocks and pillars at places where people could easily read them. These pillars and rocks are still found in India, spreading their message of love and peace for the last two thousand years.



A ringing declaration of Mauryan Emperor, Ashoka at the conclusion of his first rock edict:

esahi vidhi ya iyam: dhammena palana, dhammena vidhane, dhammena sukhiyana, dhammena gotiti.

The word dhamma or dharma is usually translated ``law'' although it could also mean ``tradition'' or ``truth''. If we choose the common meaning, Ashoka's declaration becomes:

For this is my rule: government by the law, of the law; prosperity by the law, protection by the law.

This sounds like the invocation in Lincoln's Gettysburg address!

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Cultural Unity of India

According to **Jawaharlal Nehru**: "Right from the beginning, culturally India has been one, because she had the same background, the same traditions, the same religions, the same heroes and heroines, the same old tales, the same learned language (Sanskrit), the village panchayats, the same ideology, and polity. To the average Indian the whole of India was a kind of **punya-bhumi** - a holy land - while the rest of the world was largely peopled by mlechchhas and barbarians. **Sankaracharya** chose the four corners of India for his ***maths,*** or the headquarters of his order of sanyasins, shows how he regarded India as a cultural unit. And the great success which met his campaign all over the country in a very short time also shows how intellectual and cultural currents traveled rapidly from one end of the country to another."



(source: **Glimpses of World History - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 129).

According to **Ronald B. Inden**: " The unity underlying the obvious diversity of India may be summed up in the word "Hinduism."

(source: **Imagining India - By Ronald B. Inden** p. 86)

Dr. Radhakrishnan: "In spite of the divisions, there is an inner cohesion among the Hindu society from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin."

(source: **The Hindu View of Life - By Sir. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** p. 73-77*).*

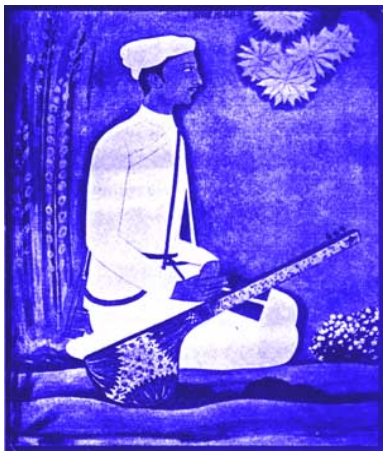
Cultural unity seems far more enduring than any artificial geographic or political unity.

Girilal Jain, late editor of Times of India: " It is about time we recognize that we are not a nation in the European sense of the term, that is, we are not a fragment of a civilization claiming to be a nation on the basis of accidents of history which is what every major European nation is. We are a *people* primarily by virtue of the continuity and coherence of our civilization which has survived all shocks. And though inevitably weakened as a result of foreign invasions, conquests and rule for almost a whole millennium, it is once again ready to resume its march."

(source: **Hindu Phenomenon - By Girilal Jain** South Asia Books 1998 ISBN 8174760105 p. 21). For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses VIII**).

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Tansen - One of Nine Jewels



Tansen is considered to be one of the greatest musicians that ever lived. He was the court musician of the famous Mogul Emperor Akbar (16th century). He was so highly valued in the court that he was called one of the "Nine Jewels" in his court *(navarathna)*.

The details of Tansen's life are incomplete. He was born in a Hindu community and had his musical training under the great Swami Haridas. He then went to the court of the Raja Ram Baghela, a great patron of the arts. From there he migrated to the court of Akbar. It is said that Tansen could work miracles with his singing. This is called *nada siddha* in Sanskrit. He is supposed to have acquired such supernatural abilities through the association with the saintly Swami Haridas. It is said that on occasion he could create rain by singing the monsoon rag *Megh Malhar*. It is also said that he could create fire by singing rag *Dipak*.

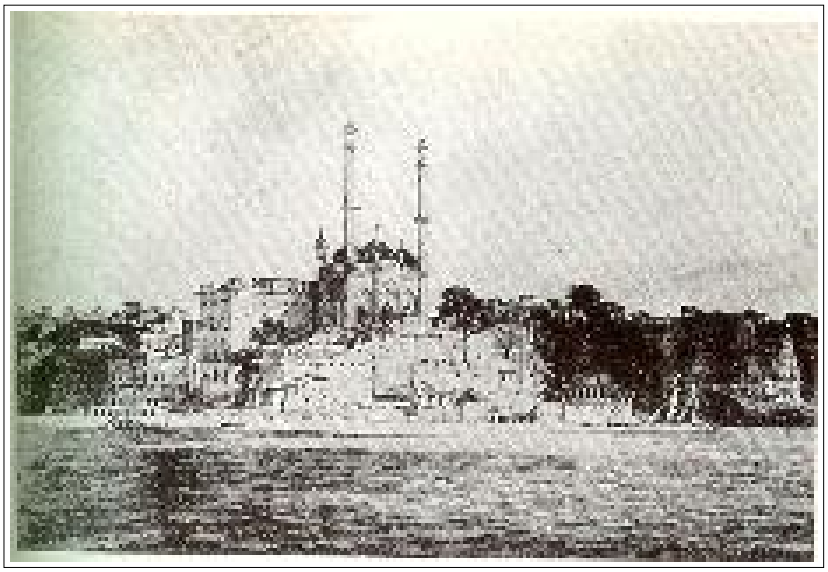
Many rag are ascribed to Tansen. Such rag as *Mian ki Malhar, Mian ki Todi* and *Darbari Kanada* are the most famous. Today his followers are refered to as *"Senia Gharana"*

Tansen, the court musician of Emperor Akbar, **once plunged the palace precincts in darkness by chanting a night raga, or melody, at Akbar's request, while the sun was still high in the sky.**

(For more refer to chapter on **Hindu Music**).

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Aurangzeb's great mosque on Benaras Ghat:



In the eighteenth century, Aurangzeb's great mosque above Panchganga ghat dominated the Benaras waterfront. Built on the site of a vast Hindu temple it helped explain the dearth of pre-Islamic architecture in the sacred city. Yet Benaras remained a center of Hindu scholarship where the first Orientalists sought the keys to India's past.

(source: **India Discovered - By John Keay** HarperCollins ASIN 0002178591 May 1992 p. 32).

Babri Masjid - A Symbol of slavery ?

The disputed structure at Ayodhya was a "symbol of slavery" and an "insult to the nation" as it was known by the name of an "aggressor."

The example of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) which changed the names of buildings, cities and roads after gaining independence, shows that Rhodesians did this despite the fact that their erstwhile (White) rulers belonged to the same religion....

(For more refer to chapter on **Islamic Onslaught** and **Glimpses VIII**).

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Christian Missionaries damaged Easter Island History

Missionaries did more damage to the Easter island's history than even the Peruvian slave traders, which carted off most of the island's population. Those who escaped by hiding in the island's many caves were "saved" by these missionaries, who proceeded to destroy all the islander's wooden sculptures, religious artifacts and most importantly, the **Rongo- Rongo tablets**, which contained a record of the lost language of the Rapa Nui. So few of these tablets remain that no one has been able to decipher them satisfactorily.

(For more refer to chapter on **India on Pacific Waves**).

Infamous British Jail or Kala Pani

Once the capital of the group of islands strewn in this part of the Bay of Bengal, it is home to the (in) famous Cellular Jail or the **Kala Pani,** now declared a National Monument.



In 1788 AD, the East India Company, in the process of consolidating their foothold in India, summoned the services of Lieutenant Archibald Blair of the Navy, handing him a crisp, short brief - to discover, survey and recommend available sites to which revolutionaries, seditionists and later, convicts could be deported. After a year of scouting in the Bay of Bengal, Lieutenant Blair found an island and named it Port Cornwallis (now Port Blair). He found yet another small island located on the eastern entrance of Port Blair and called it Ross Island.

In 1857, as more and more areas of India joined the rebellion against the East India Company, in what was the first Indian struggle for Independence, the British found it difficult to deal with the surging number of rebels. In an attempt to douse the blazing flames of nationalism, they thought it prudent to segregate them from the rest of the population. A committee was set up to survey and report on the establishment of a penal settlement in the Andaman Islands. Dr James Patterson Walker, an experienced jail superintendent, with four other European officers, 773 convicts, an Indian overseer Muttan Dass, two doctors - Nawab Khan and Karim Baksh - and a guard of 50 men left Calcutta on 4 March, 1858. This lot formed the first group of penal settlers in the Andamans.

Immediately upon arrival, Dr Walker put the convicts, still in chains and fetters, to work. Crude grass and bamboo barracks were constructed for the convicts and thick forests ordered to be cleared. Due to their restricted movement and falling trees, many convicts perished. About 86 convicts, recaptured while escaping, were executed by hanging within a single day and their bodies buried together with their iron fetters.

(source: **http://www.indiagov.org/perspec/sept99/ross.htm**)



Veer Vinayak Damador Savarkar (1883–1966) Barrister, Indian patriot, revolutionary, hero of freedom struggle and author of **Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History**. In 1911 he was sentenced to life imprisonment on the Andaman Islands. This is the site where whippings used to take place, all under the supervision of the Anglo-Indian jailors, the room where Savarkar was locked up for so many years, the room where prisoners were hanged three at a time and the hole through which the bodies were removed outside of the prison wall to be cast into the sea, are all there. It was here that Savarkar was incarcerated along with thousands of freedom fighters, remains a symbol of indescribable colonial cruelty as also of freedom-loving humanity's undying spirit of resistance. After spending 16 years in Andamans, Savarkar was transferred to the Ratnagiri jail and then kept under a house arrest.

(For more information on please visit **Veer Savarkar** **Remembering Veer Savarkar** and **Veer Savarkar Vindicated: A reply to a Marxist Calumny - By J. D. Joglekar**). (For more refer to: **History of Andaman Cellular Jail**).

On 26th Feb 2003, Swatantrya Veer Savarkar's PunyaTeethi day, when his portrait was unveiled in Lok-Sabha.

Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi** said " Savarkar was a great figure of contemporary India and his name is by-word for daring and patriotism. He was cast in a mould of a classic revolutionary and countless people drew inspiration from him."



In 1970 she had released **a postal stamp recognizing the sacrifice and valor of Veer Savarkar** to the national struggle and she personally ordered a documentary to be made on his life. She also donated Rs 11,000 from her personal account to the Veer Savarkar Trust.

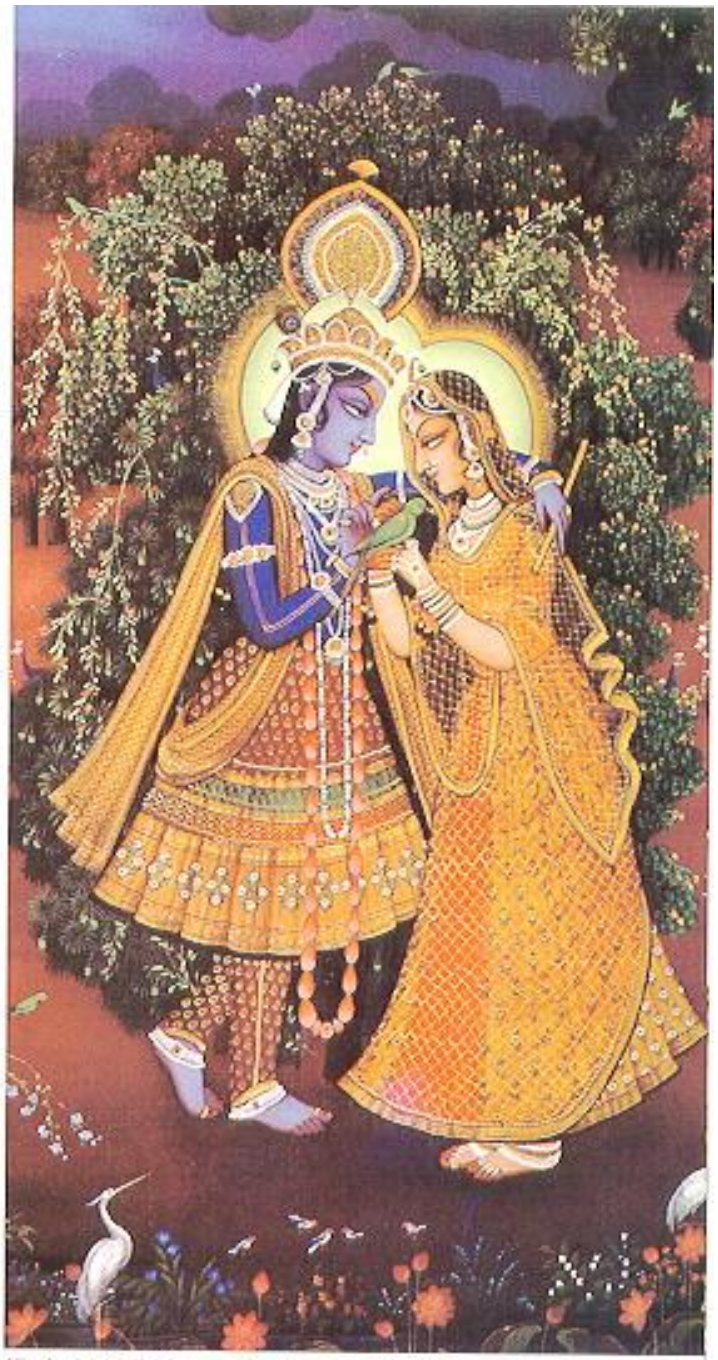
Please refer to **Swatantrya Veer Savarkar: The Eternal Hero - By Dhananjay Kheer** Sangam Books Ltd, London, 2nd Ed, 1988, 569 pages ISBN 086132 182 0

The Andaman Cellular Jail is a historic monument that symbolises British tyranny. It was here that the revolutionaries of 1857, the Wahabi Movement, the Moplah Uprising, the Gadar Party, the Lahore Conspiracy Case and Chittagong Revolt were dumped by the British, in the hope that cut off from the mainland, they would be dead and forgotten. "The 13x8 feet cells where we were put in solitary confinement," "had moss on the walls and insects crawling all over the floor. We were fed rotis with insects and boiled wild grass as *sabzi*. We were given stored rain water to drink and even that was rationed. When we went on a hunger strike they force-fed us through tubes, as a result of which many died." says 89-year-old veteran freedom fighter and revolutionary, Vishwanath Mathur.

(source: **Kala Pani old-boys Net Work** - For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses V**).

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Nation, Secularism and Hinduism



Hindu deities Krishna and Radha are traditionally annointed with saffron

According to **Girilal Jain**, editor of **The Times of India**, says:

"The nation concept is the product of developments over centuries in Europe. It does not represent only the triumph of the province over the priest; it represents the triumph of an altogether new approach to life. Along with its twin brother, secularism, it represents the triumph of matter over spirit, and of reason over intellect which the Hindus call **buddhi**. **The nation is a new god. Millions and millions have been killed and maimed in the name of the nation.** This god could not have arisen without the help of its twin brother, secularism. A nation must by definition be secular because it can rise only on the corpse of religion.

Communism is an unnecessary ugly face of secularism, just as it is an unnecessary crude face of modern Western civilization as such, that is gross materialism unrelieved by the residue of Christianity in the shape of humanism." Nazism, Fascism and Communism have been expressions of the same Semitic spirit in the secular realm.

The concept of nation itself is, in fact, alien to the Hindu temperament and genius. Such a concept is essentially Semitic in character even if it arose in western Europe in the eighteenth century. The nation concept too emphasizes the exclusion of those who do not belong to the charmed circle (territorial or linguistic or ethnic) as much as it emphasizes the inclusion of those who fall within the circle. **By contrast, the essential spirit of Hinduism is 'inclusivist' and not 'exclusivisit' by definition.** In that sense the Hindu fight is anxious to renew themselves in the spirit of their civilization and the state and the political and intellectual class trapped in the debris in which the British managed to bury our people before they left."

(source: **Hindu Phenomenon - By Girilal Jain** South Asia Books 1998 ISBN 8174760105 p. 134-135).

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Can Savitri be a Muslim name?

Certainly not in India. But Muslim Indonesians have plenty of **Savitris, Gayathris, Leelas,**

Pushpas and even Seetas among themselves. Indonesia adopted Islam as a faith but continued to hold on to the vestiges of **Hindu culture.** So you have Sukarnoputri for the current vice president. Bhasa Indonesia has umpteen number of Sanskrit words. Cultural aspects of Diwali and Holi are still observed by Indonesians. Pakistani Punjabis celebrate Basant Panchami and Lori. Bangladeshi women still sport bindi and sindoor and wear saris. In South India, *Kali poth* is Muslim equivalent for **Hindu manglasutra.** It symbolizes **suhaag**. History and cultural past cannot be disowned.Cultural pluralism broadens the vision, fosters creativity, increases tolerance and builds bridges with others.

(source: **http://www.islamicvoice.com/december.2000/viewpoint.htm#sav**).

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Cultural Orphans of India? or Pakistan-Identity crisis?

In my opinion the division of the Indian sub-continent was the biggest blunder in the history of mankind.-- Exiled leader of Muttahida Quami Movement, Altaf Hussain.

Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947 by order of the Governor-General of undivided India. A state was created overnight by government with the concurrence of political leaders. Well, nations are not invented like a machine, or a pharmaceutical cure for a disease. **Nations evolve over a large span of historical period in distinct geographical areas. They grow on a common soil and climate. They have a common heritage, culture and art, language and beliefs, racial affinity and shared social norms and traditions. They have a common identity.**

The Muslims came to India as conquerors from Afghanistan and central Asia and installed their kingdom as conquerors. Mohammad Ghori invaded India for its fabulous wealth. Babur came as a fortune seeker after losing his kingdom of Farghana in central Asia. These conquerors were joined by other Muslim adventurers and fortune seekers from Arab lands, central Asian countries, Turkey, Iran and remote corners of the Muslim world. The process of immigration from foreign Muslim lands continued for several centuries. The Muslim converts of India added to their numbers. As a class, the multinational, multiracial, multilingual group of Muslims in India always considered themselves conquerors, seldom as Indians. Even the royal blood of Muslim emperors and kings was diluted by marriages of convenience with Hindu princesses. The Muslim of India was a mixture of dozens of nationalities who, as immigrants, distinguished themselves as Muslims, seldom if ever, as Indians. The Muslims of India had no national identity like the later British rulers. When the British lost their empire they retreated to their homeland. The Muslims had nowhere to go when they lost their empire. No Muslim country offered them asylum. They had no homeland and no identifiable nationality except the natural one which they repudiated.

To escape from the perpetual rule of the Hindu majority in a democratic India they claimed the status of a separate "Muslim nation".... **The problem of identity and nationhood was never solved.** The consequences were soon visible on the ground in the ugly shape of tribalism, ethnicism, regionalism and provincialism, sectarian feuds, conflicts, murders, fratricide and language riots.

(source: **http://www.dawn.com/weekly/books/books2.htm**)

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Easter Island and Indus Valley Seals



One of the puzzle that is quite fascinating is that on Easter Island, 2600 miles off the coast of Chile in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, un deciphered hieroglyphics have been found that match those of Mohenjadaro, the ancient Aryan city of Indus Valley region. This is not possible unless the Vedic Aryans had been there nearly 5,000 years ago.

(source: **Proof of Vedic Culture's Global Existence - By Stephen Knapp** World Relief Network October 2000 ISBN 0961741066 p. 253).

Characters similar to those on the Indus seals have also been found on tablets excavated from Easter Island. This discovery has presented a difficult problem for the pre-historian. It is not known if the two belong to a common source, if one provided the model for the other, or if the similarity is purely accidental due to in accuracies of drawing. If the Indus models traveled about 13,000 miles eastward, it seems strange that the characters should have remained unaltered, because figures generally do not remain identical during prolonged transmission. And, if the seals were actually made in the Indus Valley and taken to the Easter Island, what is the explanation for the difference in arrangement between the two groups of seals?

(source: **Indian and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Michigan State Univ Pr November 1969 ASIN 0870131435 p. 4). (For more refer to chapter on **India on Pacific Waves**).

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Veterinary science in Ancient India



Since animals were regarded as a part of the same cosmos as humans, it is not surprising that animal life was keenly protected and veterinary medicine was a distinct branch of science with its own hospitals and scholars. Numerous texts, especially of the postclassical period, **Visnudharmottara Mahapurana** for example, mention veterinary medicine. Megasthenes refers to the kind of treatment which was later to be incorporated in Palakapyamuni's **Hastya yur Veda** and similar treatises. **Salihotra** was the most eminent authority on horse breeding and hippiatry. **Juadudatta** gives a detailed account of the medical treatment of cows in his **Asva-Vaidyaka**.

(source: **Indian and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Michigan State Univ Pr November 1969 ASIN 0870131435 p.187-188). For more refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture II**).

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Alexander - scourge of Mankind?



According to an Indian scholar, **Radha Kumud Mookerji**, designating Alexander as the precursor of the recognized scourges of mankind, points out that this contact "was achieved at the cost of untold suffering inflicted upon India - massacre, rapine, and plunder on a scale till then without precedent in her annals, but repeated in the later days by more successful invaders like Sutlan Mahmud, Tamerlane, and Nadir Shah."

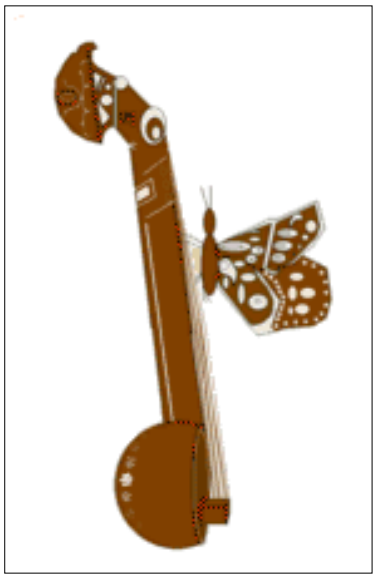
(source: **History and Culture of the Indian People - R. C. Majumdar** Publisher: Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan).

E. Badian, has said: "The story of Alexander the Great appears to us as an almost embarrassingly perfect illustration of the man who conquered the world, only to lose his soul. After fighting, scheming and murdering in pursuit of the secure tenure of absolute power, he found himself at last on a lonely pinnacle over an abyss, with no use for his power and security unattainable...Alexander illustrates with startling clarity the ultimate loneliness of supreme power."

(source: **Studies in Greek and Roman History - By E. Badian** p. 204).

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Yehudi Menuhin on Indian classical music



"Indian classical music, compared with our Western music, is like a pure crystal. It forms a complete perfected world of its own, which any admixture could only debase. It has, quite logically and rightly, rejected those innovations which have led the development of Western music into the multiple channels which have enabled our art to absorb every influence under the sun. Freedom of development in Indian music is accorded the performer, the individual, who, within fixed limits, is free to improvise without any restraint imposed externally by other voices, whether concordance or discordant - but not to the basic style, which excludes polyphony and modulation."

(source: **Indian and Western Music - Yehudi Menuhin, Hemisphere**, April 1962, p. 5)

" While Western music speaks of the wonders of God's creation, Eastern music hints at the inner beauty of the Divine in man and in the world. **Indian music requires of its hearers something of that mood of divine discontent, of yearning for the infinite and impossible."**

(source: Mrs. Mann cited in **H. A. Popley, The Music of India** LP publications ISBN 81-86142-87-8 p. 136). For more refer to chapter on **Hindu Music**).

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Santiago - the Battle cry against Non-Christians



"Santiago" was the battle cry, and the name would often be shouted out by the soldiers in their massacre of the Indians. Santiago Matamoros, St. James the Slayer of Muslims, was the patron saint of the Christian armies of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella when they crushed Granada, the last Muslim community that was left in Spain in 1492. The cry "Santiago" became a call for the heavenly power to purge the Earth of all non-Christians infidels, no matter if they were Muslims or Jews in Europe, Hindus or natives of the Americas.

(source: **The Universal Path to Enlightenment - By Stephen Knapp** World Relief Network September 1992 ISBN 0961741023 volume one Two. p. 122).

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Sambhota and Tibet



Sambhota is the Sanskrit title meaning the good Bhotiya, or Tibetan. The Tibetans call their country Bodi from which is derived Bhota, by which name Indians called Tibet. The inhabitants of Bhota were thus known as Bhotias.

Indian Interest in Astronomy

A passage from the **Aitareya Brahmana**, which dates from about two thousand years before Copernicus and centuries before Hipporchus, illustrates Indian interest in astronomy:

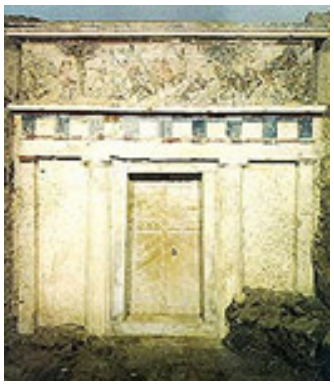
"The sun never sets nor rises; when people think to themselves the sun is setting, he only changes about after reaching the end of the day, and makes night below and day to what is on the other side. Then when people think he rises in the morning, he only shifts himself about after reaching the end of the night, and makes day below and night to what is on the other side. In fact he never does set at all."

(source: **Indian and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Michigan State Univ Pr November 1969 ASIN 0870131435 p. 397). For more refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture I**).

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Vedic Macedonia

USA, Jan 14 (VNN) — In 1977, a royal tomb was found at Vergina, near Saloniaca, in Macedonia, Greece. All the evidence proves it to be the tomb of King Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. However, Western scholars were puzzled because of the many artifacts, within the tomb of an obvious Indian/Vedic nature. Because of these artifacts, some experts dated the tomb to a time after Alexander's. This theory is no longer being accepted. In Michael Wood's series, In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great, he presents 2 sculpted portraits of Alexander and Philip. Archeologists accept these sculpted portraits of Alexander, as the only ones made during his lifetime.



Philip's portrait is also recognized as being made in his lifetime. Where were these portraits found? They were found in the Macedonian tomb, discovered in 1977, thus confirming that the tomb is definitely from before Alexander's march to Asia.

The question is, **"Why does King Philip's tomb have so many Indian influences? How is it possible if the Greek and Indian cultures had no direct contact until Alexander's Asian campaigns?"**

The answer is simple.

Because Greek culture is an offshoot of Vedic culture, it is only logical that there would be strong Indian influences in Greek art, religion and culture. The tomb of King Philip is also more than proof of Greece's vedic past. It is a smoking gun exposing the extreme prejudice involved in the cover up of the world's ancient Vedic heritage. Though western scholars now admit the tomb to be Philip's, they are mute about the evidences proving Greece's Vedic heritage.Some of the items found in the tomb, include a large ceremonial gold sheild, decorated with Vedic Svastikas, a beautiful frescoe, still in full color, of a lion hunt. Clearly defined, in this frescoe, are boundry markers tied around trees. This is a recognized feature of Indian Royal hunting grounds and yet they are clearly seen in this 2300 year old Macedonian frescoe. A royal diadem was also found of the type worn by Asian Kings and Princes and gold solar emblems remeniscient of the Solar Dynasty (Surya Vamsha) were found in abundance.

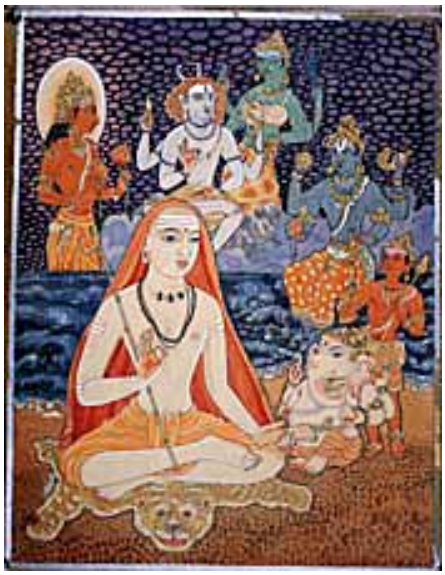
How many important finds have gone unrecognized by the mainstream academic community, that has no will nor ability to recognize Vedic artifacts.

(source: **http://www.vnn.org/world/WD0001/WD14-5273.html**).

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India in Greece

Many scholars have asserted that the Greeks borrowed heavily from India. According to Greek tradition, **Thales, Empedocles**, and others traveled to the East to study philosophy. The mystical resemblances and parallels at times are too close and too frequent to be purely coincidental. Features which are attributed to an Indian origin are much in character with Indian thought and alien to Greek attitudes.



Enfield says: "India was visited by Pythagoras, Anaxardes, Pyrrho, and others, who afterwards became eminent philosophers in Greece." There are authorities who suggest that Plato had found his way to the bank of the Ganges. (source:

E. Pococke has asserted that Greek civilization, not accepting its language, is a local variation of an Indian culture taken to Greece by early colonists from India. India in Greece.

(source: **India in Greece - By Edward Pococke** London. 1852)

James Princep author of **Essays on Indian Antiquities**. London, 1858, is recorded to have observed that **"Greek was nothing more than Sanskrit turned topsy-turvy."**

(source: **D.S. Mahalanbois, "A New Light on Plato" Modern Review,** August 1963, p. 142.)

Talking of Plato's mysticism, **Strutfield** says that "India, always the home of mystical devotion, probably contributed the major share."

(source: **Mysticism and Catholicism** p. 74.).

Hopkins says "Plato is full of **Samkhyan** thought worked out by him but taken from Pythagoras. Discussing the historical genesis of Greek antiquity,

J. P. Mayer observes: " Egyptian, Persian and Indian cultural influences were absorbed into the Greek world from very early times." (source: **Political Thought, The European Tradition,** p.7)



Sir William Jones has pointed out, "it is impossible to read Vedanta or the many fine compositions in illustration of it without believing that Pythagoras and Plato derived their sublime theories from the same fountain with the Indian sages."

(source: **Hindu Phenomenon - By Girilal Jain** South Asia Books 1998 ISBN 8174760105 p- 35-36)

H. T. Colebrooke, the great Orientalist, states significantly that "a greater degree of similarity exists between the Indian doctrine and that of the earlier than the late Greeks." He goes on to conclude that Greek philosophy, especially between Pythagoras and Plato, was indebted to Indian thought. (source: Royal Asiatic Transactions. I.)

A contemporary scholar of Western political thought, **John Bowle**, briefly but categorically declares that Plato was influenced by Indian ideals.

(source: **A New Outline of World History**. p. 91).

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Western Science and Hinduism

The Western scientific background originates from the pre-Christian Greeks, who like the Hindus were accused of being **pagans**. Christianity had no real philosophy or science or intellectual culture of its own, but in due course of time it adapted the **pagan philosophies of the Greeks**, along with Greek medicine, science and other cultural forms. On the contrary, Indian culture has had its own tradition of rational philosophy much like the Greeks as we can see in the Upanishads, Sankhya, Nyaya Vaiseshika and the Buddhist schools combined with ethical and meditational disciplines." Thus Western science has more in common with the oriental religions and with Hindu and Buddhist than the Judeo-Christian tradition. The basis of Western science is to be found in the free inquiry of the Greeks. The Church has never been on the cutting edge of science -- on the contrary, it has been the one persecuting scientists. The list of those who earned the wrath of the Church reads like a Who's Who of Science: Copernicus, Bruno, Galileo, Descartes, Tycho Brahe, Newton, Halley, Darwin, Hubble, even Bertrand Russell.

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Chinese learnt Indian mathematics



How well developed algebra was in India can be easily realized when it is compared with the work of Diophantus, who is looked upon as a fountainhead of Western mathematical thought. According to **Thomas Heath**,

"The Europeans were anticipated by the Hindus in the symbolic form of algebra, and Williams points out that the Chinese were familiar with Indian mathematics, and, in fact, continued to study it long after the period of intellectual intercourse between India and China had ceased."

(source: Cited in **Sarkar, Hindu Achievements in Exact Science**, p. 14)

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Cecil Rhodes and World Domination

Is it an honor to hold a Rhodes Scholarship?



What was the intent of Cecil Rhodes? **It is world domination.** His biographer, Sarah Millin, wrote: "The government of the world was Rhodes' simple desire." His own Confession of Faith was written into his first will dated 1877 which states: "I contend that we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race." By the way, he was Caucasian. **His plan for world domination was to create: ". . so great a power as to hereafter render wars impossible."** One should note there is a difference between the concept of world peace and the concept of world domination. professor, Carroll Quigley, stated in 1949 - "The [Rhodes] **scholarships** were merely a facade to conceal the secret society, or, more accurately, they were to be one of the instruments by which members of the secret society could carry out Rhodes' purpose."

(source:http://www.rebsutherland.com/TheRhodesScholarship.htm
http://www.fwkc.com/encyclopedia/low/articles/r/r022000724f.html)

Cecil Rhodes dream was to see British possessions running from the Cape to Cairo. Traveling between Britain's Oxford University and the diamond mines of Kimberley, Rhodes gained by the age of thirty both a classics degree and one of the world's largest personal fortunes. Although his imperial ambitions were thwarted - his last words were reported to be : "So little done, so much to do." **"If there be a God," he once said, "I think what he would like me to do is to paint as much Africa British red as possible."**

(source: **Colonial Overlords: Time Frame Ad 1850-1900** - Time-Life Books. The Scramble for Africa ASIN 0809464667 Noon of the Raj. p. 94-96). For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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Ancient Rome and Indian jewels

Of the jewels, the Romans were specially fond of **beryls and pearls.** The two beryls mines that existed in South India at **Padiyur and Vaniyambadi** were a great source of wealth.

Sacred Thread Ceremony



This introduces the male child to a teacher (guru) in order to receive education, marking the entry of the child into the Brahmacharya Ashrama (period of studentship), the first of the four stages of life. This samskara is performed from the fifth to the eighth year of age, when the male child is invested with a sacred thread (consisting of three strands) to be worn around the neck and waist. The three symbolize the following three debts that the child repays during his adult life: debt to one's parents, debt to one's guru, and debt to God.

The sacred thread is intended to be a constant reminder of one's individual duties and obligations. At the time of marriage and as a part of the wedding ceremony, the bridegroom is invested with three more strands of the sacred thread, which symbolize three more debts that he repays to his spouse. Thus the six-stranded thread around the neck of a Hindu is a reminder of the six debts that he must repay during adulthood.

(source: **The Hindu Mind - By Bansi Pandit.** p 253-254)

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Yavana - The Greeks

Ancient Indians, it appears originally used the term Yavana for the Ionian-Greeks, but later for all foreigners from the West. Yavanapuri was the Greek city-state.

Mountain Worship



Situated on the borders of Macedon and Thessaly, the 9600 foot high Mount Olympus was as sacred for the Greeks as were the **Himalayas** for the Hindus. The Greeks believed that the summit of Olympus reached the upper air where Zeus had his throne surrounded by the other gods and goddesses of Greek mythology. The Canaanites also chose the mountain Saphon, as the abode of their pantheon, and Mount Sinai as the meeting-place of Moses and Jehovah.

The Art of Spelling

D. Bethune McCartee, a well-known American scholar, writes: "The art of spelling was invented neither by the Chinese or the Japanese. Its introduction into both these countries, (and, as we are convinced, in Corea as well), was the result of the labors of ...the early Buddhist missionaries. **In all the three countries...the system of spelling is most undoubtedly of Sanskrit origin."**

(source: cited in **W. E. Griffin, Corea - The Hermit Nation** p. 338).

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Ancient India and Scandinavia?



Indian commerce and culture possibly traveled even further west than Rome to Scandinavia. This possibility is suggested by the second century inscriptions found at Junnar in western India which refer to the benefactions of two Yavanas, Irila and Cita, who have been interpreted as the **amber merchants** of Scandinavia. Kushan coins have been discovered in Gaul and Scandinavia. The excavations carried out in the mid-nineteen fifties on a small island called Lillion, or Helgo, in Lake Malaren, about 20 miles west of Stockholm, uncovered many foreign objects, including an exquisite bronze statue of the Buddha seated on a lotus throne.

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Fairy-lore of India

Theodore Gomprez says:

"Practically the entire fairy-lore of the Occident is derived from India. No one disputes this assertion today, but no one as yet can give a completely clear account of the ways and means by which its journey was accomplished." (source: **Great Thinkers**, Volumes I-II translated by Laurie Magnus, Vol. IV, by G.G. Berry. London: 1901-1912 p. 95).

"It may also be a complete revelation to find that the fabulous Hindu mind is responsible for the genre of animal fables and many stories of the Arabian Nights type, in which Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature abounds."

(source: **The Wisdom of China and India - By Lin Yutang** p. 6).



H. G. Rawlinson writes: " Numerous European fairy stories, to be found in Grimm or Hans Andersen, including the magic mirror, the seven-leagued boots, Jack and the beanstalk, and the purse of Fortunatus, have been traced to Indian sources." In his article, "**India in European Literature and Thought**" in **The Legacy of India,** " Many of them are to be found in the Gesta Romanorum, the Decameron, and the Merchant of Venice, is found in the romance of Barlaam and Josaphat, which is too clearly the story of Buddha, who was changed into a Christian garb, and later canonized as a Christian saint as St. Josephat! And everyone of course knows the story of the Milkmaid who dreamt of her wedding and overthrew the milk pail, now to be recognized in its original form as the story of the Brahmin's Dream, included in the selections from the **Panchatantra**."

(source: **The Wisdom of China and India - By Lin Yutang** p. 6-7)

India has produced a vast, rich imaginative literature and philosophy, and that Indian culture is highly creative and in fact has enriched the world literature with the droll humor that we associate with the Arabian Nights.

(For more refer to chapter on **India and China**).

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Christ spend his youth in India?

The celebration of the birthday of Christ might lose a little sheen if we seriously pursue the question, where did Jesus spend 18 years of his life, between the ages of 12 and 30? Both history and gospels, are completely silent about the life of Jesus before his 30th year.

A Chilean diplomat **Miguel Serrano** in his book, **The Serpent of Paradise: The Story of an Indian Pilgrimage** (1963) has written of his rich and varied experiences among yogis and sadhus of India. He was looking for great mystics who he believed were living in the Himalayas guarding a magical science.

During his sojourn in Kashmir, Serrano came across evidence to suggest that Jesus Christ had come to India and that the tomb of Yousa-Asaf in Srinagar was in fact the tomb of Jesus.

He quotes a legend, according to which he was in Kashmir, the original name for Kashmir, Ka means "the same as" or "equal to" and shir means Syria. Manuscripts in the Sharda language, which is derived from Sanskrit, seem to bear close relationship to the biblical story. According to this Kashmir legend, Jesus came to Kashmir and studied under holy men, who taught him mysterious practices. Later the legend says, Jesus returned to the Middle East and he then began to preach among the ignorant masses of Israel the mystical truths he had learned in Kashmir. To impress and to convert them he often used

the powers he had acquired through the practices of Yoga, and these were then referred to as miracles. Then in due course Jesus was crucified, but he did not die on the cross. Instead, he was removed by some Essenes brothers, restored to good health and sent back to Kashmir, where he lived with his masters until his death. There is yet another theory, which holds that the Jewish race originated in India centuries ago and some of them came back almost by instinct in search of their roots. This theory ties in with the legend of Jesus Christ also came to live in India at the age of about 13. This legend asserts Jesus spent 17 years in India, finally returning to the country of his birth to preach the doctrine of salvation and to assert that he was the Son of God.

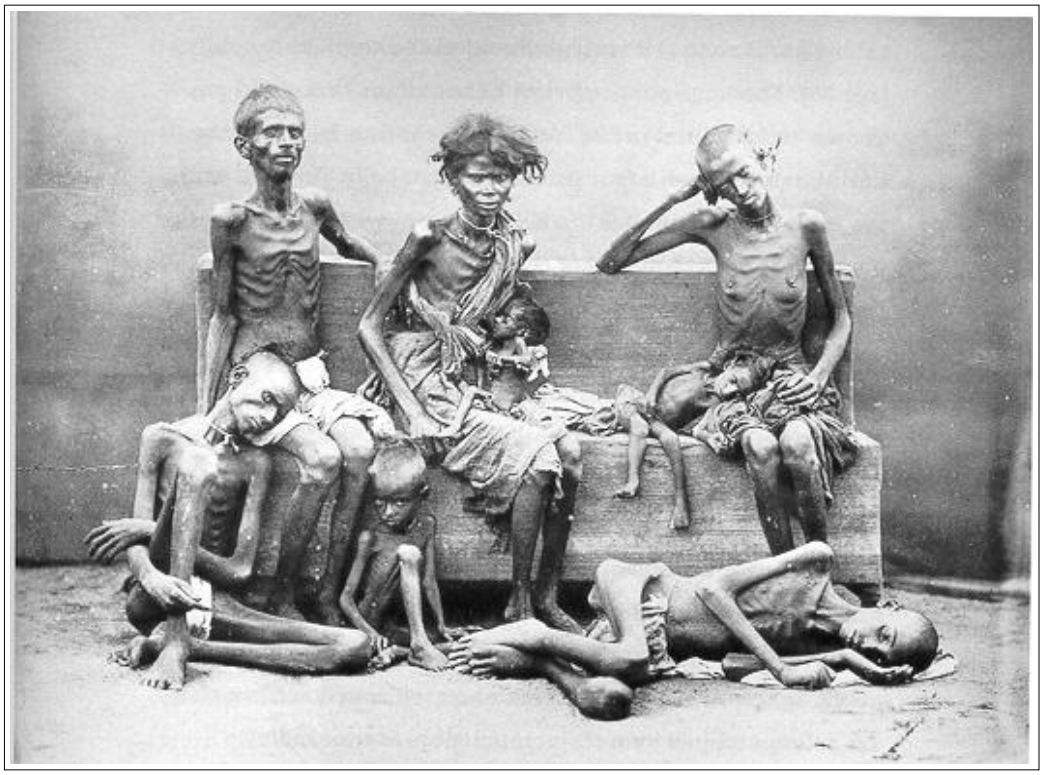
(source: **India Post - By Vinod Dhawan**. vol. 6 December 29, 2000. p. 44). For more refer to **Did Jesus die in Kashmir - by Abu Abraham**). For more refer to chapter on **Hinduisms Influence**).

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Lord Krishna's stamp in Japan

Did you know that just a couple of years ago **Japan issued a stamp showing Lord Krishna playing the flute,** yet curiously enough, secular India has not issued a stamp for Lord Krishna on Krishna Ashtami?

British "magnanimity" in India?



Madras Famine 1877-1878
Willoughby Hooper - Album print private collection.
(source: Indian Art - By Vidya Dehejia p. 399-402).

In the 18th and 19th centuries the synthetic dye had not been discovered, so all **blue dye** was derived from a certain crop which grew only in Bengal. However, this crop took out all the nitrogen from the ground, so that for the next two years nothing else could be grown. The British forced the farmers in Bengal to cultivate this.

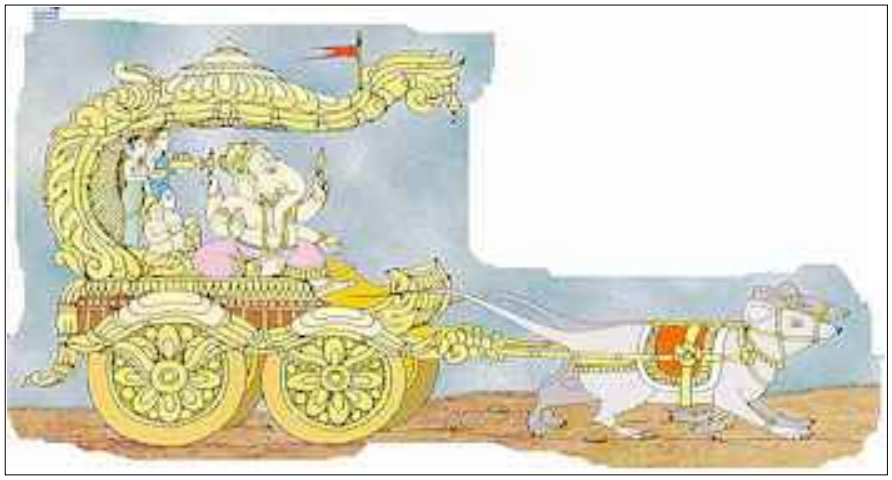
After a year, **famine struck,** because there was no rice, all the fields had been turned to Neel cultivation. The farmers revolted, and thousands were killed ruthlessly. This went on for decades, so that no village had any rice or money. By the way, the farmers were not paid for the Neel. That was the start of the great Bengal Famine, in which millions died. But the British only cared for the Neel. Actually, this was the first time common people rose in revolt against the British. This torture ended only after synthetic dye was discovered around the middle or early 19th century.

Did you know that British India used to have signs saying: "Dogs and Indians not allowed" in public places? and Mahatma Gandhi was thrown out of a train in South Africa for traveling in the first class?

(For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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When Gods Make Their Move



Each Hindu God and Goddess has a chosen mount, called Vahana, on which He or She traverses, the universe. Lord Ganesha's mount is Mushika, a tiny mouse or shrew. He attests to the all-pervasiveness of the Elephant God and carries Ganesha's grace into every nook and cranny.

(source: **Hinduism Today**).

Faith makes India go around

Hindu shrines abound with legends of gods drinking milk, stories and mysteries. Here a few instances where faith has beaten science!



A stone **Nandi** (bull) in the famous **Tanjavur Pratheeshwara** temple in Tamil Nadu, is said to be growing bigger. In an effort to stop the Nandi from growing any further, the temple authorities tried hammering a nail into the Nandi's head. The idol is more than six feet high now.



In Thane district of Maharashtra, there is a temple devoted to **Kopineshwar (Shiva)**. The temple is around 150 years old. The Shiva



linga is believed to be growing. The Nandi that is traditionally placed in front of the Shiva Linga is also said to be moving towards it. It is believed that when the Linga touches the roof and the Nandi reaches the Linga, it will be the end of the 'Kaliyuga'.

In **Chuntporni-Jwalaji** in Himachal Pradesh there is a **'kundh',** which looks as if it is boiling, the priests and the locals even cook rice and kheer in the hot water. But when someone touches the water, it is found to be cold.



A **well near the seashore in Tiruchendur** has water, which is very sweet. According to a story, **Lord Karthikeya** threw his staff near the seashore to quench the thirst of his soldiers while in war with the asuras. These legends are unending. People have tried and failed to come up with logical conclusions to such wonders.

A neem tree in **Shirdi** under which **Sai Baba** used to sit, bears leaves that are sweet. Even the bark of the tree is supposedly sweet. It is believed that anybody who tastes even a small part of the tree is cured of all ailments or is cleansed of all sins.

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Mass reconversions of Tribals

Thousands of Christian tribals reverted to their “natural” state of Hinduism in Chhattisgarh.

Most of the tribals said they were “disillusioned” with Christianity. “Mine was a Hindu family. But some 20 years ago the preachers came. They spoke of Christ and equality amongst all. They said they would educate us, feed us, clothe us and that no was would be any higher than the other,” said 50-year-old Manjuram of village Jamdohri. “Food flowed into our home like we had never ever dreamt before. In return we had only to visit Church every Sunday. My whole family converted. **But immediately after the conversion, the supplies stopped.** The priests diverted their attention from us to our neighbors,” Manjuram added.

“You regret that for a few freebies you gave up the religion, your God, the belief that our forefathers nurtured for centuries. Birsa Munda was one amongst us. He fought the British for the country. And I gave up my religion for a few kilos of rice. It’s like you have betrayed your ancestors, your own blood,” said Gandhi Bara of village Katkalu.

“So when the offer came from Kumarji (Judeo), I readily agreed,” he added. “I have returned to my roots now. I will paint my house white today. Kumarji has said he will supply the whitewash,” he added, explaining that in this belt a Christian house is painted with black charcoal and a Hindu house is painted white or blue.

(source: **http://www.telegraphindia.com/national.htm#head1**).

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Churchill hated Gandhi

New light has been shed on Churchill's racist arrogance by the recent release of certain British Intelligence records relating to the period. Some of the records made available have been used by British journalist turned historian **Patrick French,** extracts from whose readable book *Liberty or Death* have been published by newsmagazine **Outlook** in its August 25, 1997 cover story. Patrick writes of Churchill:

"His understanding of the country's social and religious structures was superficial. He had a broad, emotional Edwardian belief in the racial superiority of the pinkish-grey races and the need to maintain the British Empire". It was once suggested to him that he should meet "some prominent political activists who were then in London". Churchill's reply: **"I am quite satisfied with my views on India. I don't want them disturbed by any bloody Indian".**



Churchill blatantly employed racist arrogance, bluff, and the myth of British superiority, to stall Indian independence. To him, India only stood for the basis of British imperial power. He was hypocrite enough to stall Indian independence at a time when **his own agents in India were busily recruiting Indians for the armed forces. His hypocrisy allowed him to do all this despite the magnificent contribution of the Indian armed forces to the war effort, on several fronts. From a mere 350,000 at the outbreak of World War 2 in 1939, the number rose to well over 2,000,000 "bloody Indians".**

The orthodox Winston Churchill sneering at the **'naked fakir'** (Gandhi) and refusing to preside over the liquidation of the Empire. **He did not favor termination of India's colonial status. He refused to meet Gandhi when he was in London.**

Churchill's opinion of **Mahatma Gandhi** in 1930:

"It is alarming and also nauseating to see Mr. Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the vice regal palace, while he is still organizing and conducting a defiant campaign of civil disobedience, to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor."

(source: http://www.kamat.com/mmgandhi/churchill.htm).

***

Winston Churchill's scornful view of India and her religion: **"I hate Indians (read Hindus). They are beastly people with a beastly religion."**

(source: **The Saffron Swastika - By Koenraad Elst** Voice of India ISBN 8185990697 Volume 1. p. 532). (For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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Hinduism lies beyond History



Hinduism also lies beyond history. Other faiths, excluding some tribal and pagan paths, are rooted in events. They began on such and such a day, born with the birth of a prophet or the pronouncements of a founder. Thus they are defined, circumscribed, by history. Not Hinduism. She has no founder, no birthday to celebrate. Like Truth, she is eternal and unhistorical. Even if we compel Hinduism to admit of some immanence in history, she merely smiles and brushes aside the few thousand years that most of humanity takes as the crucial narrative. To the Hindu those few years are a pittance, and they too perish. While all known human history lies within a few hundred millennia, **Hinduism speaks of unspeakably vast epochs, of earthly yugas that last millions of years, of days and nights of Brahma that span billions, of a universe that lives and dies and lives again. Such is India's expansive reading of history. "**

(source: **Hinduism Today - December 1994** issue).

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Charm of Indian Women

Author, **Elizabeth Cooper** (1915), admires the Indian woman for her innate sense of modesty, her womanliness, her love of home and children and her feminine qualities which to the Western mind may appear as a weakness, but, in fact, constitute her appealing charm. She emphasizes that "if the Western woman offers her gifts of modern education and intellectual advancement, her Eastern sister will not be her debtor if she, by example, presents in return the even more precious charms of obedience, modesty and loyalty which fundamentally are the priceless jewels in the Crown of world's womanhood".

(source: **Indian Perspective September' 98** issue).

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India's Indigenous Systems of Medicine and Medicinal Plants



The medicinal plant Rauvolfia Serpentina, was pronounced **"Wonder drug of India"** all over the world in 1949 when the *British Heart Journal* reported that the plant is "Clinically effective in treating high blood pressure". This was reconfirmed few years later, when a Swiss researcher isolated reserpine from the plant root and established it as an antihypertensive and sedative. **In India, the plant was being used for more than 2000 years as antidepressant, sedative and in curing mental illness!** This is just one example. In Indian indigenous systems of medicine - Ayurveda, *Unani-tibbia, Siddha* and tribal remedies - more than 2500 medicinal plants are being used. In India, use of medicinal plants is referred to even in the earliest literature, *Rig Veda*. Ancient Ayurveda has elaborate description of the properties of various medicines; *Susruta Samhita* has comprehensive description of therapeutics and *Charaka Samhita* contains an unbelievable and

extensive Materia Medica of India. Indian medicines are mostly vegetatitve and are cheap, hardly harmful and are of minimum side-effects in comparison with allopathic medicines.

There is little question that centuries of colonization takes a toll, its tragic toll on a country's people, religions and languages, but one of the most lasting effects is the attack on its original healing arts. Both Muslim invasions in the 11th and 12th Centuries and later British colonization imposed their own medical beliefs to the point where both Indian folk medicine and Ayurvedic medicine were suppressed.



The **British Medical Journal** from the 1920s labeled the oldest healing system in the world as "unsupported metaphysical dogma". But despite being marginalised for decades, Ayurvedic medicine is the final victor. **It is unfortunate that during the British Raj, the Indian indigenous systems of medicine took a back seat. Derogatory terms like 'bazar (market) medicines' were used for Indian medicines.** The focus was shifted to allopathy - in learning, research, practice and promotion. The Indian systems were virtually looked down upon. But despite being marginalised for decades, Ayurvedic medicine is the final victor. Today, there is a global resurgence of interest in natural healing methods, and Ayurvedic medicine tops the list in terms of the West's latest "alternative" health fascination. Presently, the western world has woken up to the magic of Indian medicinal plants. India is a treasure house of medicinal plants due to the presence of bio-geographical regions varying from alpine, tropical to coastal, and thus is a leading exporter of medicinal plants and herbal formulations to Germany, U.K., France, Switzerland, U.S.A. and Japan, besides many other countries.

"Ayurveda is the best system of medicine for treating chronic conditions like bronchial asthma and diabetes and now many Russians are realising it," said Svetlana A. Mayskaya, president of the Medical Centre NAAMI-AYU, a Moscow-based nodal health agency. The radiation survivors, 50 men and 40 women, were treated at the Moscow centre by four Indian vaids from the Arya Vaidyashala in Kottakal, Kerala."

(source: **Chernobyl survivors respond to Ayurveda, Russia to recognise science - By Sanchita Sharma**
http://www.indian-express.com/ie/daily/20010117/ina17044.html

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Columbus "Discovery" or American Indian Holocaust

1492 - Began the process of genocide of Native Americans. "The only good Indian is a dead Indian".



Today, in spite of 500 years of a genocidal colonization, there is an estimated 40 million Indigenous peoples in the Americas. In Guatemala, the Mayan peoples make up 60.3 percent of the population, and in Bolivia Indians comprise over 70 percent of the total population. Despite this, these Indigenous peoples lack any control over their own lands and comprise the most exploited and oppressed layers of the population; characteristics that are found also in other Indigenous populations in the settler states of the Americas. The "greatness" of European religions and cultures was brought to the Indigenous peoples, who in return shared the lands and after "accidentally" being introduced to European disease, simply died off and whose descendants now fill the urban ghettos as alcoholics and welfare recipients. Of course, a few "remnants" of Indian cultures was retained, and there are even a few "professional" Indian politicians running around.

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Maha-Kumbh Mela - 2001

Bathing is a great blessing.

American author **Mark Twain,** who visited the Kumbh festival in the 1890s, wrote in a memoir: **"It is wonderful. The power of faith like that can make multitudes of the old and the weak and the young and the frail to enter without hesitation or complaint."**

BELIEVED to be the most ancient and the biggest holy congregation of humanity in the world, the Kumbh Mela in North India (held once in 12 years) is the greatest bathing festival. It is one of its kind with the world's huge assembly of people, symbolising India's unity. The Kumbh is held at the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers, and Hindu scriptures say this is one of four places on which the Gods spilt a drop of the elixir of immortality.



The timing of the pilgrimage, whose origins have been dated back to the Neolithic period, is dictated by planetary alignment. This year's event has special significance, with an alignment of planets that will not be repeated for another 144 years.

Some trace the origin of the Kumbha Mela to the Vedic age. Various legends are also part of its history.

According to story when the devas and the asuras churned the ocean, Dhanvantari (the divine leader) emerged holding in his hands an amrita Kumbha a pot of nectar that makes one immortal. For 12 days, a great struggle ensued between the devas and the asuras for the possession of the pot. The devas were alarmed at the prospects of the asuras attaining immortality by drinking the elixir. Ultimately, the devas succeeded. In the meantime, Jayanta (son of Indra, ruler of the heavens) managed to carry it away to the abode of mortals. Guru (Jupiter), Chandra (Moon) and Surya (Sun) were with him. On his way to the heavens, he had to fight with the asuras and kept the Kumbha at four places - Prayag (Allahabad), Hardwar, Nasik and Ujjain. The journey to heaven with the Amrita Kumbha took 12 days equivalent to 12 earthly years. That is why the (Poorna) Kumbha Mela is held in these four places once in every 12 years. Thus these four places became sacred and the devout came to believe that a dip in the waters earned them salvation.



The Maha Kumbh Mela, or Grand Pitcher Festival, takes place every 12 years and sees millions of devotees bathe in the Ganges **to purify themselves.** Kumbh Mela is certainly very ancient.

Jawaharlal Nehru has written in **The Discovery of India**, in my own city of Allahabad or Hardwar, I would go to the great bathing festivals, the Kumbh Mela, and see hundreds of thousands of people as their forebears had come for thousands of years from all over India, to bathe in the Ganges. I would remember descriptions of these festivals written thirteen hundred years ago by Chinese pilgrims and others and even then these melas'' were ancient and lost in an unknown antiquity. What was the tremendous faith, I wondered, what has drawn our people for so many generations to this famous river of India''.

Visiting the Kumbh Mela in 1954, Nehru confessed to having been fascinated by the sheer spectacle of a Maha Kumbh. He told the House: ``I was there in mela itself on the occasion and I can never forget that tremendous concourse of humanity, consisting of possibly 40 lakhs of people, on either side of the river. I have never seen anything like it in my life before either at the Kumbh Mela or in any other function in this country or anywhere else.''

Princes and peasants, seekers and scholars, mendicants and merchants, artist and artisans from all over India and abroad flock to Hardwar. The whole of India is represented here. Kumba Mela has also some scientific importance from the astronomical point of view. The Sun, Moon and Jupiter alfair a particular position every three years, when the Mela is held at Hardwar, Prayag, Ujjain and Nasik



At the recent Maha Kumbh Mela (the grand urn bathing festival), the six-week-long, the first in the new millennium began on Tuesday and about 70 million people are expected to participate over a 42-day period The Beatles' interest in yesteryears in Indian spirituality certainly had raised the the first crop of devotees. Demi Moore, Pierce Brosnan, Madonna, Sharon Stone and Richard Gere promise to make a splash. And Beatles' legend Paul McCartney as well, in addition to lesser known western devotees.

According to BBC, many foreign tourists mingled with the crowds and several more are expected. "It's the sheer scale of the whole thing that is so mind-boggling. **It's extraordinary to witness this sort of mass spiritual communion between so many people and the river,"** Briton Ross Anthony said.

It is the greatest show on earth," ? ``It is spiritual entertainment," explained an overseas broadcaster. ``You don't have to belong to any particular religion to watch Kumbh. The varied images from Kumbh attracts everyone from Boston to Benaras." -- the biggest spiritual event in the globe.

YOG MATA Keiko Aikawa emerged from her "samadhi" this afternoon, after spending three days buried in a mud pit. Amidst media frenzy, crashing barricades and chants of Om namah Shiva the Japanese Yog Mata emerged calmly from her pit and told her audience that she attained "samadhi" for world peace and goodwill of everyone.

(source: **Hindustan Times http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/240101/detnat03.asp**)

"This is an experience I am going to tell my grandchildren about," said John Arnett, a schoolteacher from Cleveland, USA. Jim Clarke of Los Angeles first heard about the Kumbh six

months ago in Malaysia, where he teaches English. "I had been a hippie for a long time, but nothing could give me peace of mind, until I witnessed the Mahakumbh," he said, using the Hindi words that mean "Great Kumbh," as the gathering is also called. "Now, I am planning to settle in India to feed my hunger for peace and spiritualism," Clarke said.

Bishambhar Bhushan, poor and blind, traveled two days in a cramped train from his village of Dhanvani in central Madhya Pradesh state. Bhushan, 80, scooped up the cold river with his hands, and offered it to the heavens in a centuries-old gesture. **"I told Mother Ganga, take me across life, mother," he said, his eyelids twitching with excitement. "My life's ambition is fulfilled."**

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Munenori Ikegami of Japan and the Kumbh Mela



Munenori Ikegami, saw a film on Kumbh four months back and tried to persuade the TV company where he was a cameraman to make a documentary on it. But his bosses were not impressed. He quit his job, packed his bags and came here for the Maha Kumbh. Munenori Ikegami of Japan does not regret his decision because the Kumbh mela is "huge...so vast, so big". "I've never seen such a big festival. Japan's biggest festival is Gion Maturi... Maturi means mela or festival. It is held in June-July in the old city of Kyoto, which is today Tokyo".

Asked if Gion Maturi is as big as the Kumbh, he shakes his head, "Oh, no. No way. I've been to the Millennium Festival in South Africa. The Aborigine Fest in Australia, on around this time, too is neither as big as this."So what is his plan after the fest? "I don't know, I lost my job. I'll have to get a job now. Then perhaps I'll make some money, plan making a film on Kumbh and come back for the next Maha Kumbh 12 years from now." That the next Maha Kumbh mela is so far away does not seem not to dissuade him. (PTI).

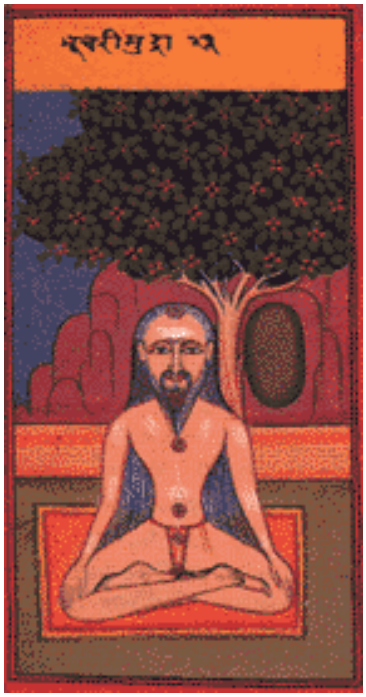
(source: **http://www.timesofindia.com/today/11indu8.htm**)

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Evangelist zeal in India

Reinhard Bonnke, widely regarded as the world's foremost evangelist, has spoken openly about his mission. At a press conference in Kochi (Kerala), Bonnke boasted that in the twenty years that he was active in Africa, the Christian population rose from just 2 per cent to over 40 per cent. (This refers probably to the areas in which he was active, and not all of Africa.) He further stated: "Now India is on top of my agenda."

Yoga and Patanjali



Yoga is from the Sanskrit word 'Yug' meaning union {with the Divine}.
Yoga is a path that leads to liberation and union with God.

The word Yoga, literally meaning “yoke”, is issued to mean a system of spiritual practice of any kind, so it is possible to talk about Buddhist, Hindu or Jain yoga.
Secondly, Yoga is the name given to a particular, very ancient school of Hindu thought and practice, possibly dating back to the Vedas themselves.

It was most famously set out by the philosopher Patanjali.

Patanjali set forth an “eight-limbed” system of mystical training, intended to free the mind from the senses completely.



Patañjali

The eight limbs of Patanjali’s yoga include Dhyanayoga, which focuses on meditation. Rajayoga, which is concerned with contemplation of Brahman; and Hathayoga, which uses physical postures (called asanas) to unite the body with the mind and advance spiritual progress. Hathayoga, particularly, has become popular among Westerners, few of whom have become Hindu or Buddhist.

For more on yoga refer to chapter on **Yoga and Hindu Philosophy**.

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Vikramshila: the World's largest ancient varsity

Is the world's largest ancient centre of learning, Vikramshila university, 47 km east of Bhagalpur in Bihar. King Dharmpala of the Pala dynasty, who ruled between 783 and 820 AD, founded Vikramshila university.



It used to hold open convocations, in which degrees were conferred on the students by the King himself. In size and sprawl, Vikramshila relegates the celebrated Nalanda University, one of the oldest universities of the world, to second place. **Hiuen Tsang,** a Chinese pilgrim who visited Nalanda in the first half of the 7th century, has mentioned about it in his travelogue.

Nalanda is spread over 80 acres, while the ninth century Vikramshila covers an area of 110 acres. It has 208 monasteries, each measuring 4.15 square metres. Besides, twelve underground cells with brick arches used for meditation, have also been found.
Since it's located at the bank of the Ganga, Vikramshila has a very good underground drainage system. Recently, a well was also excavated by the archaeologists of the Patna circle.

source:
http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon2.asp?cat=\nt3&d=Nation

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Ancient Fragrances



Distillation of scents, perfumes, fragrant liquids and ointments in India is 2,000-2,500 years ago show that the knowledge of chemistry was applied in ancient times. Perfumes and ointments were of two types: tirtha (liquids) and gandha (sluries of ointments).
People were sprinkled with aromatic oils on auspicious occasions, and fragrant ointments
based on sandalwood (native to India) were applied during ceremonial bathing.
Other common scents were derived from musk, jasmine, tamarind, camphor, spikenard, costus and macir. (Most of these words have their origin in Sanskrit)
Perfumes were exported widely, as recorded in 1st century CE travelogue by a Greek merchant.



Saying Grace before meals - is the most beautiful invocation according to **Joseph Campbell**:

"Brahman is the cosmic, universal, life consciousness energy of which we are all manifestations. Brahman is the the sacrifice. Brahman is the food that we are eating. Brahman is the consumer of the sacrifice. Brahman is the ladle that carries the sacrifice to the fire. Brahman is the process of the sacrifice. He who recognizes that all things are Brahman is on the way to realizing Brahman in himself."

The meaning of grace is that taking food into your system is like putting a libation into a sacrificial fire; the fire of your digestive apparatus consumes what you eat, so eating is the counterpart of a sacrifice.

(source: **A Joseph Campbell Companion - by Diane K Osbon** ISBN 0060926171 pg 91).

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Akbar, (1542-1605 A. D) the epitome of secularism?

'Akbar like all Mughal rulers had the holy Muslim title of GHAZI (Slayer of Kaffir - infidel). Like Timur Lane and Nader Shah, Akbar had a victory tower erected with the heads of the captured/surrendered army of Hemu after the second battle of Panipat. Later, Akbar again slaughtered more than 30,000 unarmed captive Hindu peasants after the fall of Chitod on February 24, 1568.



(source: **http://www.hindunet.org/hindu_history/modern/akbar_vs.htm** and The Cambridge History of India, Encyclopedia Britannica and other works based on **Akbar-nama by Abul Fazl**.

Life in the Moghul Zenana

Akbar, who cemented his political alliances by marrying women from the territories he conquered, is estimated to have had some 300 wives and to support a harem of 5,000 people. Women of the court lived apart from the public area of the palace compound. They dwell in lavishly decorated high-walled buildings enclosing pools and gardens and containing apartments for each of the noblewomen. Soldiers stood guard outside while armed females inside protected the women from intruders.

(source: **What Life Was Like in the Jewel of the Crown: British India AD 1600-1905 - By The Editors of Time-Life Books**. p. 20).

Akbar and the Sciences

The Moghuls neglected practical and secular learning, especially the sciences. **Throughout their long rule, no institutions was established comparable to modern university, although early India had world-famous centers of learning such as Taxila, Nalanda and Kanchi.** Neither the nobles nor the mullas were stirred into learning. **Nor did Akbar show any curiosity in European science and philosophy, although both Hindus and Muslims had made notable scientific contributions in the past. Akbar** was presented with printed books and a printing press, yet even the Indian classics were first printed by Europeans. It is therefore, not surprising that during the period of European struggle for power, India was in a state of unparalleled decline. Yet Akbar is considered great!

(source: **Indian and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Michigan State Univ Pr November 1969 ASIN 0870131435 p 198).

8,000 women immolated themselves during Akbar's capture of Chittorgarh in 1568 (whereas this most enlightened among Muslim rulers also killed 30,000 non-combatants).

(source: **The Saffron Swastika - By Koenraad Elst** Voice of India ISBN 8185990697 p. 824-826).

Akbar re-christened Hindu holy cities (Prayag being the most notable), imposed the jaziya and pilgrimage tax, and even indulged in forcible conversions in the early part of his reign. Though he ultimately did seek a more neutral legitimation, at least by way of supplement, the state under him remained unmistakably Muslim. 70% of his nobility consisted of foreigner-Muslims. The Hindu representation was confined to the Rajputs, there being just four other Hindus in the upper echelons of the nobility. These were Birbal, Todar Mal, his son, and another Khatri.

(source: **A Review of Romila Thapar's "Medieval India" - bharatvani.org**).For more refer to chapter on **Islamic Onslaught**).

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Ahmedabad May have Name Change
Source: Madhya Pradesh Chronicle

AHMEDABAD, GUJARAT, January 8, 2001: Other major cities have reverted to their pre-colonial names, Bombay to Mumbai and Madras to Chennai. Now major Hindu organizations in Gujarat's city of Ahmedabad are pushing for a name change from Ahmedabad to Karnavati. **Karna Deva** was the name of a Hindu sovereign that defeated a tribal ruler in the 11th century and the city became known as **Karnavati**. Subsequently in the 1400's, a **Moslem** ruler named **Ahmed Shah** conquered the territory and the city was named after him.

Sudra priests of Lingaraja Temple



The Lingaraja temple in Bhubaneswar, built in the eleventh century, has two classes of priests: Brahmins and a class called **Badus, who are ranked as Sudras** and are said to be of tribal origin. Not only are Badus priests of this important temple; they also remain in the most intimate contact with the deity whose personal attendants they are. Only they are allowed to bathe the Lingaraja and adorn him and at festival time when the god, "represented by his *calanti pratima* (original symbols for the diety), leaves the temple only Badus may carry this movable image. Without them, it is said, the god 'cannot move one step..."

(source: **Hindu Phenomenon - By Girilal Jain** South Asia Books 1998 ISBN 8174760105 p.24).

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Ikonos satellite takes shots of Kumbh Mela

Space Imaging's Ikonos satellite has taken a detailed color photograph of the **largest human gathering in the world history at the Maha Kumbh mela,** the US company has announced.

The Ikonos image was collected the day before the most sacred and busiest bathing day on January 24, according to a Press release. The one-metre resolution image of the Maha Kumbh mela was collected by space imaging's Ikonos satellite, which travels four miles per-second in an orbit 423 miles above earth. The spectacular image is the first high-resolution satellite image ever taken of such an event. The image shows the sacred site at the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati rivers, where millions of Hindu worshippers bath to wash away their sins and hasten the progress toward Nirvana, the company said in a Press release.

(source: **http://www.timesofindia.com/today/26indi26.htm**).

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Indonesia banks on Lord Ganesha (see image on the left of rupiah)

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world - but also has many Hindus - and saw fit to include our Lord Ganesha on its new 20,000 rupiah note.

Dalai Lama condemns religious conversions

The Dalai Lama has joined **Hindu leaders** in condemning the Muslim and Christian practice of conversion, stepping into one of the hottest religious controversies in South Asia. "I always believe it's safer and better and reasonable to keep one's own tradition or belief," the Dalai Lama told reporters during a break in the meetings. "To change it is not proper, it's much safer to follow one's own religion."

Secular Indians and their irrationality regarding Hindu organizations

Secular, progressive, cosmopolitan people have a problem with whatever the RSS says. Why? Now when the Gujarat earthquake, swayam sevaks are showing their real spirit and true nature? If Christian missionaries aided by the government and foreign funds do the same job, you will commend it. But why question this organization which is trying to do a humanitarian task? Because it is a Hindu organization? Does secular mean anti-Hindu in India? **Or is it that you convent-educated people feel that social work should be the sole prerogative of Christian missionaries which produce people attached more to the Vatican and the Pope, than to their country?**

(source: http://www.thenewspapertoday.com/mail/)

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Sun as the symbol of Ultimate Power



The Sun has been regarded as the symbol of Ultimate Power, Energy and Splendor and hence became a primordial deity. In India, the most famous Sun temple was built at **Konark in Orissa.** In ancient Egypt too, the temple of **Sun god Ra was built at Karnak,** and coincidentally both sites with strikingly similar names, lie on the same latitude i.e. 20 degrees N. This is not a stray coincidence as there are many other such parallels.
The Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta caves, the combined work of Hindu, Buddhist and Shaivite artisans, lie on the same parallel, 25 degrees N, as the ancient ruins of Yemenese Sun worshippers, Sudanese Nubin kingdom, and the **Aztec sites of Central America.**

Ishta Devata - One Personal God

There is only One. It was the poetic fancy of our imaginative ancestors that created many aspects to Divinity. Plus, we are permitted to pray to God as an ishta devata, or personal deity.



The idol, again, is only a representative object. It is a thing of beauty, created with reverence, before which to park the real focus point of worship: the flame. The flame represents Truth, burning away all ego, deceit and illusion, it stands for the pure energy or life force (heat) that keeps us and our world alive.

Lets turn to **Yajnavalkya,** rishis and lawgiver,

In the section called the **Ninth Brahmana**, a hapless soul called **Vidaghda Shakalya** asks, ‘‘How many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?’’ ‘‘As mentioned in the hymn of praise to the Vishve-devas, 303, and 3,003.’’ ‘‘Yes, but how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?’’ ‘‘Thirty three.’’

‘‘Yes, but how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?’’ ‘‘Yes, but how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?’’

‘‘Three.’’ And so on, down to One.

In other words, the Creator is the One who gives and sustains life in all its forms and functions, the One God who has different names and attributes because of the many jobs that must be done to keep Creation ticking!

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Grandfather Frost is a Vedic God?
http://www.indian-express.com/ie/daily/20010101/iin01058.html

MOSCOW, DECEMBER 30: A Russian scholar says red Russia's fairy tale Grandfather Frost, or Ded Moroz, is none other than **Varuna, the god of seas in Hindu stories.** In the year 2003, which marks the beginning of the astrological age ofAquarius, Grandfather Frost is expected to shed his dear-old-man mask and allow the people of the world to see him as he truly is Varuna, the supremeVedic god of water. Varuna was both the source of life and death, and was described in Vedic writings as holding the tree of life, an image reminiscent of Grandfather Frost standing next to a Christmas tree, says the ethnologist.

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Ban on Bangles and Bindis

Hindu girls are forced to tuck their bangles and bindis into their school satchels before entering the premises of St. Mary's Convent to attend school. Individuals have protested against the ban, including the mother of a young girl who said her daughter was beaten for wearing the traditional Hindu women's attire to school. The state chief of one Hindu group, Subash Chouban, has called the prohibition, **"An act against Hinduism."** However, no action has been taken against the school about the allegations as many individuals fear their children's expulsion from the well-respected convent that has a good educational record. Also school management will not bend long enforced rules.

(source: **Daily Pioneer**).

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The Search for the River Saraswati



NEW DELHI, INDIA, November 13, 2000: Establishing the location of the Saraswati River alluded to in ancient Indian religious literature would authenticate its existence as a mighty Himalayan river. Over 160 Indus sites were nurtured by the Saraswati, far from the Indus River Valley. Now satellite photos and ground studies of clay, silt, sand and gravel deposits establish the course of the river from the Himalayan foothills to the Sind gulf. **This enormous river, over five miles across from shore to shore, changed its course four times always in a westerly direction.** Initially flowing from the Himalayas in a south-west direction about 4000 bce, the Saraswati disappeared sometime between 2000 bce and 1500 bce With the disappearance of the Saraswati River and the migration it caused, the Ganges and Indus River populations became the central focus towards the end of the early Vedic period.

(source: **The Times of India**).

Killer quake breathes life into 'mythical' Saraswati river

The Saraswati river -- the missing third link in Allahabad's Sangam -- is making a sudden, pleasant appearance in quake-injured Gujarat. Scientists say shifting of tectonic plates in the Allah Bund fault area has led to a geographical osmosis in the Rann of Kutch area, pushing the hitherto mythical Saraswati over-ground in surprise spurts.

(source: **http://www.thenewspapertoday.com/india/inside.phtml?NEWS_ID=3106**).

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Demise of Tulsi Plant Critical to Science and Religion

PATNA, INDIA: **Lord Vishnu's** beloved is now down to the path of obscurity. Falling victim to neglect and the coming up of concrete jungles all around the city, the plant species with the richest cultural heritage is vanishing from sight. Tulsi, the plant which once enjoyed a high position in the flora of Bihar now finds it hard to survive in the present socio-climatic condition of the state. Noted environmentalist Dr. R.N. Trivedi found only three species of this medicinal plant in Patna. Tulsi, meaning "matchless," earned the status of a living deity in Hindu pantheon and is considered a symbol of good luck. Researchers are of the opinion that the adoption of ornamental plants in kitchen gardens coupled with the decline in the **Ayurvedic system of medicine** as well as the lack of awareness in the preservation of flora resulted in the extinction of many species. The rise in the mosquito menace is also directly related to the loss of tulsi plants as it has been scientifically proven that tulsi has repellent properties. The departure of the Deity's form spells an irreparable loss in terms of science and religious heritage.

(source: **Hindustan Times,** November 23, 2000).

Insult to Hindu religious icons

Recently, Hindu religious icons have been marketed in the West on toilet seats, shoes and other places.

Arjan P. Daryanani, guest columnists writes:



"Foreigners who know what kind of cowards Hindus, are by nature are exploiting us for monetary gains. Why don't these toilet seat manufacturers, as good Christians, put pictures of Christ, Virgin Mary, St. Peter etc. on toilet seats? Would the Christian community be thrilled? Why don't they put a picture of the Kabba, or verses from the holy Koran on a toilet seat? I can bet you the whole of Islamic World will go on Jihad to wipe out, not only the factory that made the seat, but the sellers and entire families of the people involved."

Vibhakar Modi says: "Horrific insults to Hindu religious icons are becoming frequent." The belief that their god is the true god and savior goes to show how ignorant these people really are."

(source: **News India-Times Feb. 9th 2001**).

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Samdura (ocean) and Aryan Invasion Theory

Although the correct translation of the Sanskrit term **samudra** is ocean, it was initially translated as "a body of water." Hence the references to ships in the **Rig Veda** and to the river **Saraswati** (and other ancient rivers) were **considered false and mythical by Western scholars.** If samudra had been translated correctly as ocean, the references to ships and the vast trade over water would have been considered real and not mythical, and would have also indicated that the Aryans were civilized people and not nomads. The idea of nomadic Aryans had been assumed by Western scholars to fit their idea of the Aryan invasion.

(For more refer to chapter on **Aryan Invasion Theory**).

Islam wiped out Buddhism in Afghanistan 1,400 years ago.

Islam wiped out Buddhism in Afghanistan 1,400 years ago. But the presence of ancient Buddhist statues from the smallest miniature to the 50 metre-high Buddhist carved into a cliff face in the town of Bamiyan have posed problems for the Taleban. Also, an exquisite one metre-high carving which is thought to be unique. Other works include Buddhist statues and bowls, and ancient Hindu pieces.

(source: BBC - **http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/south_asia/newsid_1165000/1165983.stm**).

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India's Nero

All through the autumn of 1876, while the vital kharif crop was withering in the fields of southern India, Lord Lytton had been absorbed in organizing the immense Imperial Assemblage in Delhi



Figure 1.2 The Poet as Viceroy: Lytton in Calcutta, 1877

to **proclaim Victoria Empress of India (Kaiser-I-Hind)**. As The Time's special correspondent described it,

" The Viceroy seemed to have made the tales of Arabian fiction true….nothing was too rich, nothing too costly." Lytton put on a spectacle," adds a biographer of Lord Salisbury (the secretary of State for India), " gaudy enough to impress the Orientals'….and furthermore a pageant which hid 'the nakedness of the sword on which we really rely." Its "climateric ceremonial" included a week-long feast for 68,000 officials, satraps and maharajahs: **the most colossal and expensive meal in world history.**

An English journalist later estimated that 100,000 of the Queen-Empress's subjects starved to death in Madras and Mysore in the course of Lytton's spectacular durbar.

In Madras city overwhelmed by 100,000 drought refugees, famished peasants dropped dead in front of the troops guarding pyramids of rice, while, "on any day and every day mothers might be seen in the streets…offering children for sale."

Thus, Lytton, became the personification of free market economics of British India - a mask for colonial genocide.

(source: **Late Victorian Holocausts - By Mark Davis** Verso Books January 2001 ISBN 1859847390 p. 28-29). For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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Blaming the Hindus but glorifying the Moghuls and the British rule?

Secularists/commies/missionaries/mullahs have used caste to flog the Hindus into feeling ashamed. They have used Hindus as a scapegoat to hide their own inadequacies. For too long Hindus, have suffered humiliation and taunts about the evils of caste system.

When Muslims were ruling India from 1000 AD to 1800 AD, they have been called the great Mughals. Akbar was Great. Babar was Great. Under the Mughal rules, the Brahmins who were slaves of Muslims were exploiting backward classes? How? They were not teaching to the lower castes. Why were the great Mughals who governed helpless to look after the interests of lower caste Hindus. The all powerful British could not stop the Brahmins from breaking the temples constructed by Dalits? Then how can they be called great? if they could not stop this casteism?

What were the Muslims doing while they governed India for 1000 years? Why did they not institute reforms for the lower castes? **Why is Akbar and Babar glorified as Great, when they did nothing for the lower castes of India?**

What were the so called **Enlightened British** doing, they had the White Man's burden. Why didn't they lift the lower castes up?? What stopped them from doing it for 200 years?

(source: posted on **sulekha.com**).

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Korean memorial to Indian princess

In the northern Indian city of Ayodhya, a visiting Korean delegation has inaugurated a memorial to their royal ancestor, Queen Huh. More than a-hundred historians and government representatives, including the North Korean ambassador to India, unveiled the memorial on the west bank of the River Saryu.

Korean historians believe that Queen Huh was a princess of an ancient kingdom in Ayodhya.

She went to Korea some two-thousand years ago and started the Karak dynasty by marrying a local king, Suro.

Today, the historians say, Queen Huh's descendants number more than six-million, including the South Korean president - Kim Dae Jung.

(source: **http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/asia-pacific/newsid_1205000/1205728.stm**).

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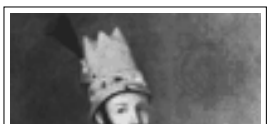
Did you Know

Koh-i-noor - a lost property or a colonial swindle?

The most famous diamond in the world, the Kohinoor or Padshahnama, was found in the **Godawari River in South India some 4,000 years ago.** It was long reputed to give its owner the crown and rule of the world. At the same time, its possession was supposed to be a hazard to the life of the man who owned it. The curse did not apply if the owner was a woman.



At the time its recent history began in the 14th century, the Kohinoor weighed 186 carats and was clumsily cut. It had been owned for several hundred years by the Raja of Malwa (now in Madhya Pradesh). When the Moghuls conquered India in 1526, the stone was taken to the treasury at Delhi. It remained there until 1739, when the ruler of Persia, Nadir Shah, invaded India, took Delhi, seized the treasures of the Indian capital, and took the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah prisoner. His systematic pillage of the city failed to uncover the huge stone, but then he was told by one of the harem women that the conquered Mogul emperor had hidden it inside his turban. Taking advantage of an Oriental custom, Nadir Shah invited his captive to a feast and suggested they exchange turbans. Retiring from the feast, he unrolled the turban and released the great gem. Seeing it he cried “Koh-i-Noor!” (Mountain of Light). He also took the fabulous Peacock Throne with him, was reportedly one of the most splendorous thrones ever made.



Nadir Shah returned to Persia with his trophy, but he was assassinated soon afterwards. His son and heir was overthrown by rebellion. Arrested, tortured, and blinded by his enemies, he refused to reveal the hiding place of the Kohinoor. When the king of Afghanistan came



to his rescue, the dying son of Nadir Shah, soaked in his own blood, handed him the Kohinoor.

The king took it back to Afghanistan. Years later his grandson Zaman was deposed, imprisoned, and blinded by his own brother but managed to hide the Kohinoor under the floor of his cell. Eventually he escaped with the gem and took refuge at Lahore. There he was received by Ranjit Singh, "Lion of the Punjab," who treated him with great respect but insisted that he give up the Kohinoor. Singh had the diamond set in an armlet and wore it. At his death in 1839 it went into the Lahore treasury. It was still there when the Punjab was annexed by the British.



In 1849 it was taken by the British East India Company as partial indemnity after the Sikh Wars and was presented to Queen Victoria. At the time, its value was estimated at $700,000. In 1851 Victoria decided to recut the Kohinoor. This undertaking required 38 days at a cost of $40,000 and the extraordinary stone was reduced to 108 carats. In 1911 a new crown was made for the coronation of Queen Mary with the KOH-I-NOOR as the center stone. In 1937, it was transferred to the crown of Queen Elizabeth (now Queen Mother) for her coronation. It is now on display with the British Crown Jewels in the Tower of London.

Today, the Kohinoor is still part of the British crown jewels and is on display in The Tower of London.

(source: **Feast of India: A Legacy of Recipes and Fables -** By Rani p. 72). For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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Kohinoor crown to adorn Queen Mother's coffin

The Kohinoor-embedded Crown of the Queen Mother will be placed on her coffin as a mark of tribute to her, the Palace sources said today.

The crown was made for her to wear at the coronation of her husband King George VI in 1937, though the controversial 105-carat oval cut Kohinoor diamond was brought from India in 1849. No male heir to the British throne has worn the Kohinoor following a superstition that it brings bad luck to any male who wears it.

India has made repeated demands for the return of the Kohinoor, saying it was taken away by subterfuge. Britain has, however, steadfastly refused to oblige. The 101-year old Queen Mother, who died on Saturday, had rarely worn that crown, which is on display at the Tower of London as a tourist attraction. The crown is normally kept along with others in a highly secured glass case.

(source: **http://www.naradonline.com/displaynews.php3?id=43333**. For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

Bada (Big) Ganpati



Better known for its size than antiquity, this temple houses perhaps **the largest Ganesh idol in the world, measuring 25 ft. from crown to foot**. Created as a result of a dream to an Avantika (Ujjain) resident Shri Dadhich, it was built in 1875.

The idol has a most interesting configuration of ingredients: bricks, lime stone, masala made of gud, methi dana, soil collected from seven moksha puris: Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya, Kashi, Kanchi, Avantika, and Dwaraka, mud from stables of horse, elephant and cow, the powder of Pancharatna : heera, panna, moti, manek and pukhraj (diamond, emerald, pearl, ruby and topaz) and the holy water from all major places of pilgrimage. The metallic frame is of gold, silver, copper, brass and iron. Twice a year in the 'Bhadwa' and 'Magh' months 'chola' of pure ghee and 'Sindoor' is applied to Ganesh idol.

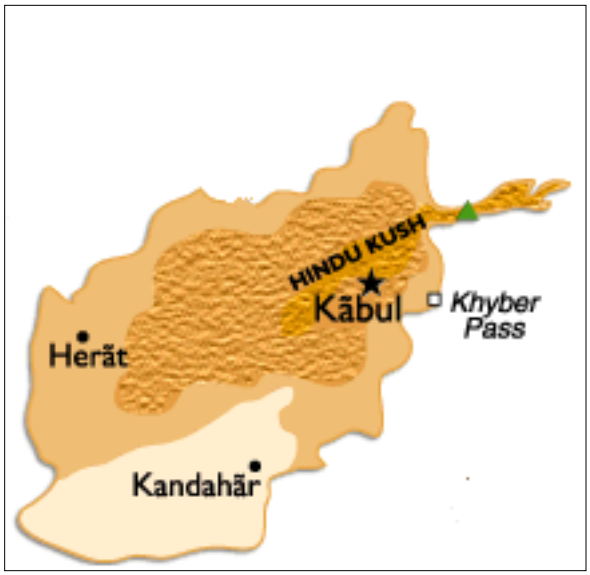
Idol is believed to be miraculous.

(source: **http://www.infodore.com/Badeganpati.html**).

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The Afghan Connection

Afghanistan is under intense turmoil today. Yet it enjoyed close ties with mainland India for millennia.



Afghanistan was part and parcel of the socio-religious-political ethos of India. Close cultural ties of Afghanistan and India go back to 4500 B.C. It enjoyed the cultural and trade relations with the Indus-Saraswati culture that flourished in the Indus valley. The deities of the Vedic culture like Apam Napat, Ahirbudhnya, Maruts and the lost recension, the Bashkala samhita of the Rg Veda can be linked to Afghanistan. The Arya-Dasa conflicts in the Rig Veda occured in the Seistan province of southern Afghanistan. The purs destroyed by Indra were the mounds or butts formed in the region due to the erosive action of Bad-i-sad-o-bist, ie. wind of 120 days.

Many tribes of Afghanistan today are traced back to the Vedic period. They participated in the famous **Ten kings war of the Rig Veda lore. The name of the nation itself is rooted in the ancient Indian literature.** The celebrated text of **Brhatsamhita by Varahamihira** (6th century A.D.) refers to a group of people named **avagana** along with Huns and Chinese (brhatsamhita 11.61) which in later period turned into Avagana and then to Afghan. The Afghan identity is closely associated with the Sanskrit origin. The Pakhtoons are the most dominating tribal group in Afghanistan. The oldest text of the world, the Rig Veda refers to the tribal enemies of the king Sudasa who had formed a federation against the king. The tribal federation against the king Sudasa included Pakhtha, Bhalanasa, Alinasa, Visani and Siva tribes.

Panini, the great grammarian was a Pathan by birth. His contribution to the Sankrta grammar is beyond comparison. Being a resident of the North-western Frontier Province, his unique grammar astadhyayi contains several references to the locations, tribes and geographical landmarks in the region. The roots of abhiras tribes can be traced to Afghanistan. They were defeated by Nakula as mentioned in the **Mahabharata**. (MHB Sabha 32.9-10). They participated in the Mahabharata War.

Language similarity between the Kafiri language in Northern Afghanistan and Sanskrit

Kafiri	Sanskrit
totta (father)	tata
istri (female)	stri
angura (finger)	anguli
basana (cloth)	vasana
asta (is)	asti

In the ancient period Afghanistan was closely linked with Indo-Aryan and Indo-Iranian civilization. Geographically Afghanistan lies at the center of two great civilizations, namely, the Indian and the Iranian. Both have influenced the cultural ethos of the region. Legend has it that the kingdom of Gandhaar was established by Taksha, grandson of Bharat of Ayodhya. Gandhaar's borders extended from Takshashila to Tashkent (corruption of 'Taksha Khand') in the present day Uzbekistan. In the later period, Mahabharat relates Gaandhaari as a princess of Gandhaar and her brother, Shakuni as a prince and later as Gandhaar's ruler.

The north Afghanistan lay on the famous ancient 'Silk Route.' The commercial activity and spread of Buddhism gave impetus to the closer interactions with the Indian civilization.

The word "Sthan" is actually a Sanskrit derivative that means place or land. There are a string of countries to the west of India with the suffix of "sthan," including Afghanisthan, Baluchisthan, Kurdisthan, Siwisthan, Arvasthan and Turgasthan (Turkey). Until the 10th century A.D. Hindu kings ruled over Afghanistan, and thereafter still in parts of it. As mentioned in **Albiruni's India**, Hindu kings continued to have their coronation in Kabul, although Kabul had passed out of their hands. India's interest in the West and Central Asian region isn't new either, with historic and cultural ties dating back centuries. At its peak during the 1800s, the sweep of the greater Indian empire extended from Kabul to Burma. Parts of Afghanistan were ruled by Indian kings and later the British, and even after **Afghanistan became a separate nation, it continued to regard India as "the mother country,"** according to **Monu Nalapat**, professor of geopolitics at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education in south India. The famous “Kabuliwala” story by Rabindranath Tagore is a symbol of India’s emotional and cultural ties with Afghanistan.

(source: **The Afghan Connection - By P. V. Pathak** and **Proof of Vedic Culture's Global Existence - By Stephen Knapp** World Relief Network October 2000 ISBN 0961741066 and **Subcontinental Quicksand for the U.S. - Manjeet Kripalani BusinessWeek Online** October 23 2001). For more information refer to **Hindu Kush** and **Bamiyan Statues**). For more refer to chapter on **Islamic Onslaught** and **Glimpses VII**).

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Entirely by Memory

Rig Veda is the oldest surviving religious record of the human race. Much before the printing press came into existence, Rig Veda was transmitted from one generation to another by word of mouth. Naturally, question would arise about interpolations and mutilations during this transmission. There is a true story, almost unbelievable, to answer this question of interpolations and mutilations in respect of Rig Veda.



In his book **India: What can it teach us?** **Friedrich Maximilian Müeller**, (1823-1900) German philologist and Orientalist. He repeatedly drew attention to the uniqueness of the Vedas and awakened interest in Indology among educated people. He writes:

"Entirely by Memory: This may sound startling**,** but-what will sound still more startling, and yet is a fact that can easily be ascertained by anybody who doubts it-at the present moment, **if every MS of the Rig Veda were lost, we should be able to recover the whole of it - from memory of the Srotriyas in India.** These native students learn the Veda by heart, and then they learn it from the mouth of their Guru, never from a MS, still less from my printed edition, - and after a time they teach it again to their pupils." I have had such students in my room at Oxford, who not only could repeat these hymns, but who repeated them with the proper accents (for the Vedic Sanskrit has accents like Greek), nay who, when looking through my printed edition of the Rig Veda, could point out a misprint without the slightest hesitation.

"Of course, **this learning by heart is carried on under a strict discipline;** it is, in fact, considered as a sacred duty. A native friend of mine, himself a very distinguished Vedic scholar, tells me that a boy, who is to be brought up as a student of the Rig-Veda, has to spend about eight years in the house of his teacher. He has to learn ten books: first, the hymns of the **Rig-Veda**; then a prose treatise on sacrifices, called the **Brahmana**; then the so-called Forest-book or **Aranyaka**; then the rules of domestic ceremonies; and lastly, six treatises on pronunciation, grammar, etymology, metre, astronomy, and ceremonial.



"These ten books, it has been calculated, contain nearly 30,000 lines, each line reckoned as thirty-two syllables. "A pupil studies every day, during the eight years of his theological apprenticeship, except on the holidays, which are called "non-reading days". There being 360 days in a lunar year, the eight years would give him 2,880 days. Deduct from this 384 holidays, and you get 2,496 working days during the eight years. If you divide the number of lines, 30,000, by the number of working days, you get about twelve lines to be learnt each day, though much time is taken up, for practicing and rehearsing what has been learnt before.

"Now this is the state of things at present, though I doubt whether it would last much longer and I always impress on my friends in India, and therefore impress on those who will soon be settled as Civil Servants in India, **the duty of trying to learn all that can still be learnt from these living libraries. Much ancient Sanskrit lore will be lost for ever when that of Srotriyas becomes extinct."**

(source: **Selection from Hindu Scriptures - Prof. G. C. Asnani** - India). For more refer to chapter on **Hindu Scriptures** and **Quotes1_20**).

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Myths of the British Raj

There have been persistent attempts of Western scholars to argue that "India was not a country but a congeries of smaller states, and the Indians were not a nation but a conglomeration of peoples of diverse creeds and sects. Anybody familiar with the relevant situation will know that this attitude still forms the major undercurrent of Western scholarship on India. (refer to article: **Hindu Nationalism Clouds the Face of India - H. D. S. Greenway.** Even today the same attitude is alive and well, Mr. Greenway says in his article: "Secularists realize that a united India was a product of the British Empire. Before the British, Indians owed their allegiances to family, clan, religion, or princely state. It was the British who established a centralized administration, a common educational system, and countrywide transportation that gave the subcontinent a sense of belonging to one country).

Regarding countrywide transportation:



Amitav Ghosh author of several books, The Circle of Reason (1986), won France's top literary award, Prix Medici Estranger, and **The Glass Palace also makes fun of the claim that the British gave India the railways.**

"Thailand has railways and the British never colonized the country," he says. **"In 1885, when the British invaded Burma, the Burmese king was already building railways and telegraphs. These are things Indians could have done themselves."**

(source: **Travelling through time - interview with Amitav Ghosh**). Please refer to chapter on **History of Hinduism**

Note: The Konkan Railway, the first major railway project in India since Independence, has been a major success despite the difficult terrain and the logistics nightmares. As for the story about the Konkan Railway, it is an inspiration. In the face of obstacles, including extremely difficult terrain (many tunnels, bridges, etc) as well as the task of raising large amounts of money through a public bond issue, the railway was constructed on schedule and within budget. **It used to be said that Indians could never match the feats of the British engineers who built much of India's network; isn't it amazing that E. Sreedharan, the man who ran this Herculean effort, is a virtual unknown?**

(source: **Historicide: Censoring the past... and the present**. Refer to **Indian engineering skills go poetic and heroic in the Western Ghats**

Education:

" Every village had its schoolmaster, supported out of the public funds; in Bengal alone, before the coming of the British, there were some 80,000 native schools - one to every four hundred population. Instruction was given to him in the "Five Shastras" or sciences: grammar, arts and crafts, medicine, logic and philosophy. Finally the child was sent out into the world with the wise admonition that education came only one-fourth from the teacher, one-fourth from private study, one-fourth from one's fellows, and one-fourth from life."

(source: **Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage - By Will Durant** MJF Books.1935 p.556-557).

Christian missionaries and the British are also proud that they brought education to India, "but," counters **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**, Founder of the Bangalore based Art of Living, an International Foundation. He recently addressed the UN Peace Summit on Aug 28. He is the only non-westerner to serve on the advisory board of Yale University's School of Divinity and is author of the book - **Hinduism and Christianity**:

"it is not true: there were for instance 125,000 medical institutions in Madras before the British came. Indians never lacked education, the Christians only brought British education to India, which in fact caused more damage to India by westernizing many of us."

Sir John Woodroffe, (1865-1936) the well known scholar, Advocate-General of Bengal and sometime Legal Member of the Government of India. Referring to the **Macaulay's Educational Minute of 1834** (for education refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture** and **First Indologists**) he wrote:

"To an Indian, self-conscious of the greatness of his country's civilization, it must be gall and wormwood to hear others speaking of the "education" and "civilization" of India. India who has taught some of the deepest truths which our race has known is to be 'educated.' She whose ancient civilization ranks with the greatest the world has known is to be civilized."

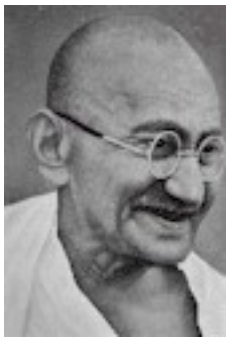
(source: **Is India Civilized - Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** Ganesh & Co. Publishers 1922 p.290).

European travelers and administrators bear testimony to the great veneration in which Hindus held learning and instruction. One of the earliest observation was made on the subject of indigenous education was by **Fra Paolino Da Bartolomeo**. Born in Austria, he spent 14 years in India (1776-1789). He wrote: "No people, perhaps, on earth have adhered as much to their ancient usage and customs as the Indians." and "temperance and education contribute, in an uncommon degree, to the bodily confirmation, and to the increase of these people."

Brigadier-General Alexander Walker who served in India between 1780-1810, says, that **"no people probably appreciate more justly the importance of instruction that the Hindus."**

The fact of wide-spread education - a school in every village - was uniformly noticed by most early observers. Even writing as late as 1820, **Abbe J. A. Dubois** says that "there are very few villages in which one or many public schools are not to be found...that the students learn in them all that is necessary to their ranks and wants...namely, reading, writing and accounts."

(source: **On Hinduism Reviews and Reflections - By Ram Swarup** p. 179-180 - refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture** and **Education in Ancient India** and **European Imperialism**).



In October 1931 **Mahatma Gandhi** made a statement at Chatham House, London, that created a furore in the English press. He said, "Today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago, and so is Burma, because the British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and left the root exposed and the beautiful tree perished". Mahatma Gandhi said, **"The beautiful tree of education was cut down by you British. Therefore today India is far more illiterate than it was 100 years ago."** We now learn, with almost a sense of disbelief, that a large part of the country did have a sustainable education system, as late as even the early years of the 19th century, and that this was systematically demolished over the next 50 years or so. The present education system is, in effect, a legacy of the colonial rule. This system has perpetuated the notion that traditional societies were seeped in ignorance, superstition and rituals for thousands of years and lived a life of abject poverty, which was caused by an extreme form of social discrimination and exploitative socio-political systems. So deep has this notion seeped into our collective consciousness that, it colours the belief of both, providers of education as well as of recipients and aspiring recipients in our society.

(source: http://www.indiatogether.org/education/opinions/btree.htm). (For more please refer to noted Gandhian, **Dharampal**'s book. **The Beautiful Tree**, (Biblia Impex, Delhi, 1983).

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Sense of belonging: Hinduism has imparted to the whole of India a strong and stable cultural unity that has through the ages stood the shocks of political revolutions.

James Ramsey MacDonald (1866-1937) first Labor Party prime minister of Great Britain has said: **"India and Hinduism are organically related as body and soul."**

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p.208).

Political Unity of India since Ancient Times



The name Bharatvarsha has a deep historical significance, symbolizing, a fundamental unity. The term was associated not only with the geographical boundaries but also with the idea of universal monarchy. The term was associated not only with the geographical boundaries but also with the idea of universal monarchy. This name together with the sense of unity imparted by it "was ever present before the mind of the theologians, political philosophers and poets who spoke of the thousand Yojanas (Leagues) of land that stretches from the Himalayas to the sea as the proper domain of a single universal emperor".

This is what is stated in an inscription of **King Yasodharman of Mandasor, Successors of the Guptas in the North:**

"From the lands where the Brahmaputra flows,
from the flanks of the southern hills, thick with grove of palms,
from the snowy mountains whose peak the Ganga clasps,
and from the ocean of the West,
come vassals, bowing at his feet,
their pride brought low by his mighty arm,
and his palace court is a glitter,
with the bright jewels of their turban."

The rulers of medieval India also considered India as one geographical unit and sought to extend their sway over the whole of the land. **The song Vandematram embodies that sense of unity.**

There is also an under-current of religious unity among the various religious sects in the country. That is partly due to the overwhelming impact of Hinduism on the Indian mind which transcends any other single religion. This is mainly due to the comprehensive and all-embracing pervasiveness of Hinduism. Hinduism is not a mere form of religious approach or system. It is a "mosaic of almost all types and stages of religious aspiration and endeavor."

(source: **Ancient India - By V. D. Mahajan** p. 15).

The unifying effect of Hinduism and Sanskritic culture was great. Records dating from the early centuries indicate that shrines regarded sacred by all Hindus were located at widely separated points in all directions. Clearly, some concept of religious and cultural unity already existed. Long pilgrimages to such shrines created for many a connection with peoples in areas under different sovereignties. Then, too, the great body of Sanskritic literature provided a significant bond.

(source: **India: A World in Transition - By Beatrice Pitney Lamb** p. 32).

According to **Jawaharlal Nehru**: "Right from the beginning, culturally India has been one, because she had the same background, the same traditions, the same religions, the same heroes and heroines, the same old tales, the same learned language (Sanskrit), the village panchayats, the same ideology, and polity. To the average Indian the whole of India was a kind of **punya-bhumi** - a holy land - while the rest of the world was largely peopled by mlechchhas and barbarians. **Sankaracharya** chose the four corners of India for his ***maths***, or the headquarters of his order of sanyasins, shows how he regarded India as a cultural unit. And the great success which met his campaign all over the country in a very short time also shows how intellectual and cultural currents traveled rapidly from one end of the country to another."

(source: **Glimpses of World History - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 129).

Dr. Radhakrishnan: "In spite of the divisions, there is an inner cohesion among the Hindu society from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin."

(source: **The Hindu View of Life - By Sir. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** p. 73-77*).*



Girilal Jain, late editor of Times of India: " It is about time we recognize that we are not a nation in the European sense of the term, that is, we are not a fragment of a civilization claiming to be a nation on the basis of accidents of history which is what every major European nation is. We are a **people** primarily by virtue of the continuity and coherence of our civilization which has survived all shocks. And though inevitably weakened as a result of foreign invasions, conquests and rule for almost a whole millennium, it is once again ready to resume its march."

(source: **Hindu Phenomenon - By Girilal Jain** South Asia Books 1998 ISBN 8174760105 p. 21).

Guy Sorman visiting scholar at Hoover Institution at Stanford and the leader of new liberalism in France, says that the idea of a nation-state was an 18th century creation of the West. It is the cultural identity that has helped India stay together. The British did not do it for the love of India. It was here that the West started to colonize what was to become the Third World, a shameless process of systematic exploitation without any moral or religious justification.

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** (**Le Genie de l'Inde**) Macmillan India Ltd. 2001. ISBN 0333 93600 0 p. 197)

N. S. Rajaram: "It was claimed by the British, and faithfully repeated by the Leftist intellectuals, that the British unified India. This is completely false. **The unity of India, rooted in her ancient culture, is of untold antiquity.** It may have been divided at various times into smaller kingdoms, but the goal was always to be united under a 'Chakravartin' or a 'Samrat'. This unity was cultural though not always political. This cultural unity was seriously damaged during the Medieval period, when India was engaged in a struggle for survival — like what is happening in Kashmir today. Going back thousands of years, India had been united under a single ruler many times. The earliest recorded emperor of India was Bharata, the son of Shakuntala and Dushyanta, but there were several others. I give below some examples from the Aitareya Brahmana.

"With this great anointing of Indra, Dirghatamas Mamateya anointed Bharata Daushanti. Therefore, Bharata Daushanti went round the earth completely, conquering on every side and offered the horse in sacrifice.

"With this great anointing of Indra, Tura Kavasheya anointed Janamejaya Parikshita. Therefore Janamejaya Parikshita went round the earth completely, conquering on every side and offered the horse in sacrifice."

There are similar statements about Sudasa Paijavana anointed by Vasistha, Anga anointed by Udamaya Atreya, Durmukha Pancala anointed by Brihadukta and Atyarati Janampati anointed by Vasistha Satyahavya. Atyarati, though not born a king, became an emperor and went on conquer even the Uttara Kuru or the modern Sinkiang and Turkestan that lie north of Kashmir. There are others also mentioned in the *Shathapatha Brahmana* and also the *Mahabharata.* This shows that the unity of India is ancient. Also, the British did not rule over a unified India. They had treaties with the rulers of hereditary kingdoms like Mysore, Kashmir, Hyderabad and others that were more or less independent. The person who united all these was Sardar Patel, not the British. But this unification was possible only because India is culturally one. Pakistan, with no such identity or cultural unity, is falling apart.

(source: **Distortions in Indian History** http://www.voi.org/books/dist/ch2.htm#3

Sri Aurobindo has said: "In India at a very early time: **the spiritual and cultural unity was made complete** and became the very stuff of the life of all this great surge of humanity between the Himalayas and the two seas....Invasion and foreign rule, ...the enormous pressure of the Occident **have not been able to drive or crush the ancient soul out of the body her Vedic Rishis made for her."**

(source: **India's Rebirth - By Sri Aurobindo** Publisher: Mira Aditi ISBN 81-85137-27-7 p 158).

Sri Jayendra Saraswati - The Sankaracharya of Kanchi has said:

The British never created anything in India - they merely destroyed. Instead of uniting, they divided; so the question is meaningless. For five thousand years Hindus have chanted in their morning prayers:

"**Gange cha Yamunechaiva! Godavari! Sarasvati!**
Narmade! Sindhu! Kaveri! Jale asmin sannidhim kuru!"

"Hail! O ye Ganges, Jamuna, Godavari, Sarasvati, Narmada,
Sindhi and Kaveri, come and approach these waters."

There has been an explicit and clear geographical area that we have referred to as our land. Adi Sankara not only went to the four corners of this territory, he set up tens of shrines all over the Hindu land to be able to revive and revitalize Hinduism. It is absurd to think that India is a new idea.

(source: **Interview with Sri Jayendra Saraswati - by Rajeev Srinivasan** - India Abroad March 8'2002). For more refer to chapters on **European Imperialism** and **Glimpses VIII**).

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Priceless Indian treasures that are part of the Queen's collection

Priceless Indian treasures that are part of the queen's collection that will not be returned to India can be seen at the largest exhibition of crown treasures to be launched next year.

Among the riches on display will be the famous **Shivaji's sword** and some of the possessions of **Guru Gobind Singh** and **Bird of Paradise** from the throne of Tipu Sultan. The British took away this priceless figure in gold and emeralds after the death of the legendary warrior king of Mysore. The palace is reportedly keen not to fuel such demands by showing too much that India might want back.

(source: **http://www.rediff.com/us/2001/nov/27uk.htm**). For refer to chapters on **Glimpses VIII** and **European Imperialism**).

Excellence of Vedic Culture

Huent Sung, a Chinese visitor to ancient India has noted in his travel account:



"The Kshatriyas and Brahmans are clean-handed, unostentatious, pure and simple in life and very frugal. They are pure of themselves and not from compulsion. With respect to the ordinary people although they are naturally light-minded yet they are upright and honorable. In money-matters they are without craft, and administering justice. They are considerate. They are not deceitful and treacherous in their conduct and are faithful to their oath and promises. In their rule of government there is remarkable rectitude. while in their behavior there is much gentleness."

(source: **Ancient India - By Dr. R. C. Majumdar** p. 454).

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Saffron - A sacred symbol vulgarized?

Many of should decry the cynical misuse of the idea and spiritual associations of saffron by the Indian media. Saffron is a vibrant visual symbol for those who are nurtured in the Vedic tradition, and it evokes powerful associations of self-renunciation, purity, sacrificial dedication and moral dynamism.

It is in this sense, and not in any narrow communal sense, that saffron finds its rightful place on our national tricolour, as **Jawaharlal Nehru** noted while moving the resolution for its adoption as our flag in the **Constituent Assembly**. We have remained passive witnesses to the continued communal vulgarization of this **sacred symbol**. Alarmingly, the situation is already so confusing that many people today associate saffron with nothing more than communalism! I would urge the media to give no quarter to the **abuse of religious symbols like this**. As Confucius said, calling things by their right names is the bottom-line of public service. Using the word 'saffronisation' as a synonym for 'communalisation' is a frontal insult to the spiritual sentiments of a large section of the

people of this country and deserves to be denounced.

(source: **Swami Agnivesh** of Bandhua Mukti Morcha http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/100901/detlet01.asp).

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The Roman Empire - A Gangster State?

According to **Peter Beckman**, author of ' **A History of Pi**: " While Alexandria had become the world capital of thinkers, Rome was becoming the capital of thugs. Rome was not the first state of organized gangsterdom nor was it the last; but it was the only one that managed to bamboozle posterity into an almost universal admiration. Few rational men admire the Huns, the Nazis or the Soviets; but for centuries, schoolboys have been expected to read Julius Caesar's militaristic drivel. They have been led to believe that the Romans had attained an advanced level in the sciences, the arts, law, architecture, engineering and everything else.



It is my opinion that the alleged Roman achievements are largely a myth; and I feel it is time for this myth to be debunked a little. **What the Romans excelled in was bullying, bludgeoning, butchering and blood bath.** They enslaved peoples whose cultural level was far above their own. They not only ruthlessly vandalized their countries, but they also looted them, stealing their art treasures, abducting their scientists and copying their technical know-how, which the Romans' barren society was rarely able to improve on.

Then there is Roman engineering: The Roman roads, acqueducts, the Coliseums. Warfare, alas, has always been beneficial to engineering. In a healthy society, engineering design gets smarter and smarter; in gangster states, it gets bigger and bigger.

The architecture of the Coliseums and other places of Roman entertainment are difficult to judge without recalling what purpose they served. It was here that gladiators fought to the death; that prisoners of war, convicts and Christians were devoured by a many as 5,000 wild beasts at a time; and that victims were crucified or burned alive for the entertainment of Roman civilization. **When the Roman screamed for ever more blood, artificial lakes were dug and naval battles as many as 19,000 gladiators were staged until the water turned red with blood. The only Roman emperors who did not throw Christians to the lions were the Christian emperors. They (Christians) threw the pagans to the lions with the same gusto and for the same crime - having a different religion.**

Romans were not primitive savages, but were sophisticated killers. The Roman

contribution to sciences was mostly limited to butchering antiquity's greatest mathematicians, burning the Library of Alexandria. and it demonstrates an abysmal ignorance of sciences. **Pliny tells us that in India there is a species of men without mouths who subsist by smelling flowers.**

Yet most historians extol the achievements of Rome. "it accustomed the Western races to the idea of a world-state, and by pax romana....."

(source: **A History of Pi - by Peter Beckan** St. Martin's Press; ; 19th edition (August 1976) 0312381859 p. 55-59). For more refer to chapter on **India and Greece**).

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Martand Surya Temple of Kashmir



Perhaps the best-known early structure in Kashmir is the ruin of the Surya temple at Martand. Built within a large rectangular courtyard (220 by 140 feet), edged by a massive stone wall, the Sun Temple is situated on a high plateau with a magnificent view of distant snow-covered mountains. This majestic shrine was erected by the great Kashmiri king **Lalitaditya Maktapida**, who is recorded in the Kashmiri chronicle **Rajatarangini** as conquering most of Northern India. The riches gathered from this campaign embellished not only the Surya Temple but others in Kashmir, and later made them in turn objects of plunder.

(source: **Indian Art - By Roy C. Craven** p. 177)

The most memorable and beautiful work of Lalitaditya is the construction of spacious Martand temple which the emperor got built in honour of the Sungod (Bhaskar). It may be mentioned here that Lalitaditya was himself a Kshatriya of Surya dynasty. The style of the construction of the temple and the skill of the makers are rare in the history of the world. According to Stein, it is not possible to find and excavate cities, towns and the ruins belonging to the era of Lalitaditya. But from whatever material and ruins, found and excavated so far, one learns about the fame of their matter Lalitaditya. The remnants of the big Martand temple, which the emperor had built at the pilgrimage of the same name, is an example of unique building skill of ancient Hindus. These ruins, even in total disarray, receive praises for their design, beauty and art.

(source: **Translation of Rajtarangani - By Stein** Page 60). For more refer to chapter

on **Glimpses VIII**).



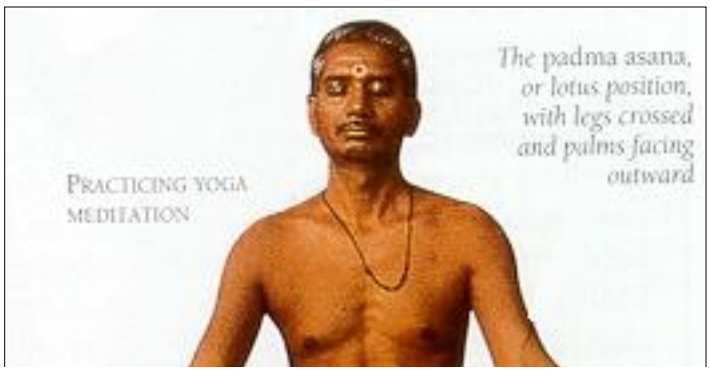
According to **Younghusband Martand has a very high place in the world's great architecutral designs.**

It is an example of not only the Kashmiri architectural skill but it has pride of having been set up at a fine spot which is prettier than the spots where Parthinan, Taj Mahal, St. Peters have been built. It can be considered either a representative of all such great buildings and monuments or a combination and sum total af all the qualities. It gives an insight into the greatness of the people of Kashmir. The ruins of the huge temple stand in a square field with snow capped mountains of the smiling valley as the background. In terms of beauty and strength and in grandeur it is next to Egypt and Greece. This temple has been built with strong and square limestones. The temple has received grandeur and beauty through the pillars of Greek pattern. It is now in ruins and there are many such ruins scattered in Kashmir. The very existence of this temple encourages man to carry out study of the skill and art of Kashmiris. Anyone bereft of the love of nature could not select such a special spot for the construction of the temple. A restless and destructive mind would have not been able to built such a spacious and praiseworthy temple.
(**Kashmir - By Younghusband** Page 201).

(source: **http://www.kashmir-information.com/ConvertedKashmir/Chapter5.html**. For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses VIII**).

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Is Yoga the Work of the devil?



Fundamentalist Christians in Georgia stopped the Toccoa-Stephens County Recreation Department from offering a Yoga class. Philip Lawrence, who headed the fight against the class, solicited help from a number of local church organizations. He claimed Yoga could lead to devil worship. Christian conservatives and other



rigid and dogmatic religious sects have some serious issues with Yoga. The *Yoga Sutras* offer a philosophy which includes the Yamas and Niyamas - suggestions for living. These suggestions encourage honesty, purity, devotion, chastity, non-violence and non-stealing. Many people who practice Yoga eventually find themselves embracing many of these ideals. Of course, according to Fundamentalist Christianity, good works will not get you into Heaven - only accepting Jesus Christ as Lord will do that. Hindu belief that a spark of the divine exists within every living being. Hindus also believe in an immortal soul. Fundamentalist Christians disagree completely with these ideas - according to their beliefs, seeing God in yourself creates a void which can be filled with very dangerous forces. In addition, there are many conservative interpretations of the Bible which assert that the soul is not immortal and can be destroyed.

As many as 20 million Americans practice yoga in pursuit of physical or mental fitness, with a little om along the way. According to **BBC News**, **"Madonna is a big fan. So is Sting. They are just two stars who are devoted practitioners to the discipline of yoga. An increasing number of people have taken up the ancient eastern health and fitness practice."**

(source: **Is yoga good for you? - BBC News**). Former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell is doing it on TV flashing her newly flat stomach, Madonna and Sting swear by it and ever more vigorous variations are crossing the Atlantic with enticing images of toned and fit 'yogis', Uma Thurman and Christy Turlington, but no one is sure just how American British yoga should be allowed to get.

(source: **Times of India**).

A few years ago the Pope issued a proclamation telling Catholics, particularly monks and priests, to avoid yogic practices and mixing Catholicism with Eastern traditions like the Hindu and Buddhist.

(source: **Hinduism: The Eternal Tradition (Sanatana Dharma) - By David Frawley** Voice of India. ISBN 81-85990-29-8 p. 233-234).

Kristin Davis gives youth yoga high marks. "Yoga has been around 5,000 years. It doesn't matter if actresses are doing it. People are responding to yoga on a deeper level. It's not a fad."

Actor-turned-Health Minister **Shatrughan Sinha** was today all praise for Yoga and said his practicing of the physical exercise for nearly two decades has kept him fit.

(source: **Outlookindia.com**). For more on yoga, please refer to chapter on **Yoga and Hindu Philosophy**).

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Dhyana (meditation) = Jhana = Ch'an = Zen

According to **Dr. Ananda**





Coomaraswamy, late curator of the Boston Museum: " Japanese Buddhism on the ritualistic side elaborated the cult of Amida and the Western Paradise, and on the mystical side the practice of the Ch'an Buddhists of China, which had been established, ca. 527-536, by the Indian monk Boddhidharma, and derived in the last analysis from the Indian Yoga.

Dhyana (meditation) = Jhana = Ch'an = Zen. The external influence of Indian thought created a theology and forms of art resembling those of India; the more fundamentally stimulating influence of a method, acting inwardly, enabled the Japanese genius to realize itself in an attitude of aesthetic appreciation of natural beauty and an art which bear no evident resemblance to anything Indian.

(source: **History of Indian and Indonesian Art - By Ananda K. Coomaraswamy** Dover Pubns; ; Reprint edition (August 1985) ASIN 0486250059 p. 155).

The Japanese word Zen(na) (Chinese Ch'an(na); Sanskrit Dhyana) refers to the unity of mind which can be obtained through spiritual practice.

(For more refer to chapter on **India and China** and **Glimpses X**)

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Oldest and largest group of Jews in India

Bene Israel, the oldest and largest group of Jews remaining in India. The Bene Israel claim to be descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. Jews trace their roots back two millennia - were always able to live freely as Jews in India. There are 4,500 in India today. Some 3,500 of them, including Ezekiel and Joseph, live in and around Bombay. There are also a few hundred Baghdadi Jews in Bombay and Calcutta, 70 in Cochin (once a flourishing Jewish center), and several hundred in Thane, a 400-year-old Jewish community about 40 km. from Bombay.

That history has been **untarnished** by antisemitism. " **The Hindus have traditionally been very tolerant of other religions**," says Ezekiel, who works at the Israeli consulate in Bombay and is very active in the Jewish community. Joseph, a businesswoman, nods in agreement, but adds that she did experience anti-semitism when she was growing up - **at the hands of Catholics**. Like many members of the Jewish community of Bombay, she attended a convent school because of its high standards and English-language instruction.

"The Jews in the school were constantly taunted," she recalls. "The nuns would say: 'You killed Christ.'"

Indeed, in a recent report, **UNESCO pointed out that out of 128 countries where Jews lived before Israel was created, only one, India, did not persecute them and**

allowed them to prosper and practice Judaism in peace.

(source: **To the Very Last Jew - The Jerusalem Post** and (source: **Redefining India - By Francois Gautier** - dailypioneer.com December 11 '02). For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses VI** and **Glimpses VII**).

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Hindu Palace of Cairo, Egypt

"Walking in the suburbs of the famous city, I was pleasantly surprised to find a Hindu Palace in the elite suburb of Heliopolis. **From the outside, this mansion looks just like one of the fabulous Hindu temples of Orissa with the Garuda and other Hindu icons sculpted on its facade.** The **Palais Hindu** was completed in 1911. Since it is one of the protected monuments of the Egyptian Archaeological Department, there was no problem in walking into the grounds of the building and examining it at close quarters. This palace with beautiful sculptures of Hindu deities was vacant. It was known as the Hindu Palace for nearly 90 years.



An article was published in the **Egyptian Gazette** two decades ago, describing the history of the palace. The Belgian-born industrialist, **Baron-General Edouard-Louis-Joseph Empain** (1852-1929), belonging to one of the eminent aristocratic families of France, had extensive business interests in Indonesia. An eminent Egyptologist, after his retirement from his commercial career, he decided to settle down in Cairo. Ever since the interest shown by Napoleon 200 years ago, France has always been in the forefront when it comes to study of Egyptology. During the turn of the century, **Empain** became the adviser to the Egyptian Government on metropolis planning. He developed the suburbs of Cairo into magnificent plazas/gardens/and residential areas. For his own home, he chose Heliopolis — the best portion of the super-rich planned suburb. He decided to build a huge mansion, which was to be a copy of the Indonesian Hindu temples he had seen during his sojourn in that country. He obtained the best Indonesian artists and sculptors for its construction. In a matter of few years, the Hindu Palace became one of the magnificent buildings of Cairo." In the early 70s, Muslim fundamentalists, especially in Saudi Arabia, were enraged that, at the citadel of Muslim Cairo, there is a Hindu palace with the icons of Hinduism represented!

(source: **The palace that is an enigma - K. R. N. Swamy - tribuneIndia.com**).

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Servants for the Afterlife

In Ancient Egyptian burial it was important that the deceased had a workforce to carry out

their every day tasks in the underworld so they would not have to dirty their hands. Originally in high ranking Old Kingdom burials servants were buried with their masters. It is not known if these were sacrifices, or people honored with a resting place beside their King when they died. The Egyptians had as many as 2000 gods and goddesses. Some, such as Amun, were worshipped throughout the whole country, while others had only a local following. Often gods and goddesses were represented as part human and part animal. For example, Horus, the sky god, had the head of a hawk, and body of a human.

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Annam Brahma - Food is God

The Upanishads state "Annam Brahma" - "Food is God," and therefore it must be given the highest veneration. Even today, in many Indian homes, be they meager or affluent, a symbolic offering of food is given to Brahma before every meal.

(For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses VIII**).

Russia's Fascination with Valmiki Ramayana Continues



Russia is perhaps the only European country where the Valmiki Ramayana, the story of Lord Rama written by the Hindu sage Valmiki, has sold tens of thousands of copies in Russian. More than a thousand people offered prayers and tributes to the Hindu God Ram in the first ever Ramnavami celebrations, at which Russian artists and writers who took Ram's story to the people were felicitated. The Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Center (JNCC) at Moscow organized a function to honor those who are associated with translating and staging the Ramayana as a play in Russia. While eminent Indologist **Alexander Baranikov** first translated the Ramayana into Russian in 1948, Natalia Guseva, another prominent scholar on India, had written the script for a play based on the Indian epic that was staged in Moscow Children's Theatre in the Soviet Union for the first time in 1957. The Ramayana, popularly perceived as a tale of triumph of good over evil, is used extensively for inculcating noble values in Russian children, and has been staged in scores of cities many times over during the past five decades.

(source: http://www.indiaabroaddaily.com/2001/04/08/08ramayan.html).

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Prosperity of Ancient India

For well over a millennium and a half, the Indian subcontinent may have been the richest area in the world. As early as the first century A.D., a statesman in ancient Rome wrote in worried vein about the squandering of Roman wealth on Indian luxuries. In south India, large hoards of ancient Roman coins have been unearthed. The legend of the wealth of the "Indies" continued to grip Western minds. A few intrepid world travelers, Marco Polo among them, confirmed it with eyewitness accounts. The power of this legend caused Columbus in 1492 to take his dangerous journey westward across the Atlantic, seeking to re-establish direct contact with India. **As late as the eighteenth century, British observers were repeatedly struck by the material prosperity of the land they were beginning to conquer.**

(source: **India: A World in Transition - By Beatrice Pitney Lamb** p. 19). For more refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture1** and **Hindu Culture2** and **European Imperialism**).

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The Gobind Deva Temple



The Gobind Deva temple in Vrindavan, Mathura, is indeed massive; its plinth is 105 to 117 feet. Its height today is about 55 feet. It is estimated that the original height was twice this, without which the mashaal (torch) could not have been possible to be seen either from Agra or from Delhi. The temple was built in 1590 by Maharaja Mansingh of Jaipur. Bharatvarsha. For the satisfaction of its desecraters, the celia, or the sanctum sanctorum, was destroyed. Fortunately, the idol of Sri Krishna or Gobind had been removed to Jaipur by the pujaris in anticipation of Aurangzeb's proposed visit in 1670; the emperor was already notorious as an iconoclast.

The roof of the truncated edifice was to be reserved for names. No sooner than the mehraab was constructed, as illustrated in the photograph copied from History of Indian and Eastern Architecture by **James Fergusson,** (John Murray; London), Aurangzeb inaugurated it by himself offering prayers. **Prof R Nath,** author of **History of Mughal Architecture** (Delhi, Abhinav 1985), introduces the subject of the Gobind Deva temple by quoting Aurangzeb's decree of April, 1669. It said, **"...eager to establish Islam, (Aurangzeb) issued orders to the governors of all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels (Hindus) and with the utmost urgency put down the teaching and the public practice of the religion of these disbelievers."** The great temple of Gobind Deva fell a victim to iconoclastic vandalism within a year of the decree. Its inner sanctum and its superstructure were almost entirely destroyed. The main hall was also damaged. Sculpted figures on the dvarasakha were literally defaced." Almost two centuries later, the original idol remained at Jaipur, another set of deities was installed by the pujaris.

While Aurangzeb's ego might have been gratified, the desecration took with it what is described by Fergusson as one of the most elegant temples in India, and the only one, perhaps, from which an European architect might borrow a few hints. What **F S**

Grouse (a Bengal civil service official) had to say about this? "I should myself have thought that solemn or imposing was a more appropriate term than elegance for so massive a building and that the suggestions that might be derived from its study were many rather than few." A number of motives have been attributed to the invaders who desecrated temples, such as loot of treasure, subduing the populace by arousing dread, informing the area that a sultan had replaced the raja. There is, however, no other instance of a temple being desecrated because it defied the ego of a Mughal emperor.

(source: Daily Pioneer Oped)

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Diamonds and Dam

Did you know that India was the world's only source of diamonds until 1896, according to the Gemological Institute of America. For more refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture1** and **Hindu Culture2**).

Earliest Dam

The earliest dam for irrigation was built in Saurashtra. According to Saka King Rudradaman I, a beautiful lake called Sudarshana was constructed on the hills of Raivataka in Chandragupta Maurya's time.

Christian missionaries and History of India



The Christian missionaries were interested in the history of India, although for a different purpose. They had no sympathy for Hinduism which, in their view, was "at best work of human folly and at worst the outcome of a diabolic inspiration." According to **Charles Grant**, "**the people of India lived in a degenerate condition because Hinduism was the source of dishonesty, purgery, selfishness, social divisions, sexual vices etc."** The Christians saw no future for the people of India unless they were converted to Christianity.

Like the Christian missionaries, the Utilitarian of England also had no sympathy for the purpose of India. **James Mill** was a Utilitarian. He wrote "**History of British India**" which was published in 1817. He divided Indian history into three periods - Hindu, Muslim and British. **He was critical of Indian culture which he called barbarous and anti-rational.** The 'History of British India' was prescribed as a textbook at the Haileybury College and other institutions where English officers were given military training before they were sent to India. The views of James Mill must have affected the minds of those officers against India.

(For more refer to the chapter on **European Imperialism** and **First Indologists**).

Lord Wellesley, Governor General from 1798-1805, whose policy was frankly annexationist, called **Indians, "vulgar, ignorant, rude, familiar, and stupid."**

(source: **Ancient India - By V. D. Mahajan** p. 1 and **India: A World in Transition - By**

Beatrice Pitney Lamb p. 61).

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Heroism of Prithiviraj Chauhan

Prithviraj Chauhan III was the last of the great Chauhan rulers of Ajmer who left a deep imprint in the sands of time and redefined the concept of valour in its noblest form. The legendary Prithviraj lived here and became a force to reckon with. His exploits are related with great wonder and sometimes disbelief. Few rulers of that time could match the charisma and heroism of this dynamic ruler.



Prithviraj was the son of **Someshwara** who died in 1179 A.D. The second Turkish attack was led by Mu'izzu'd-Din Muhammad (also known as Muhammad Ghuri), who conquered Sindh and Lahore in 1182. Soon after, he commenced his attack on the Rajput kingdoms. Prithviraj Chauhan successfully led the Rajputs against Ghuri at the first battle of Tarain in 1191 AD. However, at the second battle in 1192 AD, Prithviraj who became the last **Hindu ruler** was defeated and the kingdom of Delhi fell to Muhammad Ghuri.

Prithviraj Chauhan, king of Delhi, magnanimously let Ghuri off. Legend has it - and it is widely believed in India - that when Ghori eventually succeeded in defeating Prithviraj Chauhan at the Second Battle of Tarain in 1192, he blinded him and took him in chains to Afghanistan along with his friend, the poet **Chandravardai**.

Adhai – din- ka- Jhonpra - Its construction took two and a half days (Adhai-Din) to complete. It was originally a Sanskrit college, built within a temple. In 1193 A.D., Mohammad Ghauri conquered Ajmer and converted the building into a mosque by adding a seven arched wall in front of the pillared hall in just two-and-a-half days (adhai-din) and hence the name.

To this day, Prithviraj Chauhan is remembered by the Rajputs as a model of chivalry and courage, and is the hero of many folk ballads.

(For more refer to chapter on **Islamic Onslaught**).

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Decolonizing Indian Studies ?



An address at North Gujarat University, delivered by **Makarand Paranjpe** of the English department at **JNU. Astonishingly, here is an actual real-life JNU person writing about the need for 'Decolonizing Indian Studies: Attaining Swaraj'.**

He mentions, approvingly, that **Bhartrihari's Vakyapadiya, Panini's Asthadhyayi, and Bharata's Natyashastra have been introduced into the curriculum at JNU.** Amazing that such a thing could ever happen at that last bastion of neo-imperialist Marxist obscurantism, that white elephant devoted to Fabian Socialist-Stalinist ideas that have been thrown in the trash everywhere else. Says Paranjpe: "The point is that the day you

begin to take your own tradition seriously, you begin to get a strength, a grounding, a sense of belonging, a purpose, and an identity... you experience liberation, decolonization... [And] if you are serious about critiquing Indian traditions you first have to read them, you first have to engage with them. This, a lot of us are unable or unwilling to do. We are used to condemnation and repudiation, often mouthing the very words of those who tried systematically to destroy this civilization."

(source: **http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/may/16rajeev.htm**. Refer to chapters on **First Indologists**, **European Imperialism**, **Glimpses VIII**, **Glimpses IX** and **Glimpses X**).

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Khakis are from India



While serving in the heat of India, **Sir Henry Lumsden** dyed his pajama bottoms **khaki (Hindi for 'dust')** so he can wear comfortable pants and still look presentable. Khaki is a closely twilled cloth of linen or cotton, dyed a dust color. The color caught on with troops worldwide. Today khakis have made it from World War II to civilian life.

A New Vocabulary

The British during their time in India incorporated into speech many Indian terms that, because of their familiarity and usefulness, made their way to England and beyond. A sampling of 900 words or so adopted from India include:

bandanna, bangle, bungalow, calico, cheroot, chintz, chit, chutney, cot, cummerbund, curry, cushy, dinghy, dungaree, gunny, jodhpurs, khaki, loot, musk, pajamas, pariah, punch, pundit, sandal, seersucker, shawl, shampoo, swastika, thug, tomtom, and veranda.

(source: **What Life Was Like in the Jewel of the Crown: British India AD 1600-1905 - By The Editors of Time-Life Books**. p. 119). For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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The Puranas

Partition, which the British wilfully and consciously left behind as a parting gift (remember the words of Churchill when he learnt of the chaos following Partition: 'At last, we've had the last word').

It is used to be the general opinion of Western scholars that the Puranas belonged to the

latest productions of Sanskrit literature and came into existence during the last thousand years. However, this view is not accepted today. The Poet **Bana** knew the Purana very well and he tells us that he attended a reading of the Vayu Purana in his native village. Kumarila Bhatt relies on the Puranas as a source of law. Shankara and Ramanuja referred to the Puranas as ancient and sacred text. Arab **Albernuei** was familiar with the Puranas and he gives us a list of the 18 Puranas. There is a lot of common between the Puranas and Latiavistara. The Puranas are 18 in number but all of them are not equally important for historical purposes. As a source of history, we depend largely on the Vishnu Puranas, Vayu Puranas, Matsya Puranas, Brahma Puranas and Bhavishya Puranas. The Puranas start with the rulers who trace their origin from the Sun and the Moon. They describe the various kings who ruled in the Madhyadesh. They give the names of the Puru kings of Hastinapur and the Ikshvaku King of Kosala. The give us details about Sisunaga Kings and Nanda Kings.



Dr. V. A. Smith has shown that the Vishnu Puranas is reliable as regards to the Mauryan dynasty and the Matsya Purana is reliable as regards to the Andhra and Saisunaga dynasties. the Vayu Purana describes the rule of the Guptas as it was under Chandragupta I. At the end of the list of kings certain Puranas give a series of dynasties of low and barbarian origin such as Abhiras, Gardabhas, Sakas, Yavanas, Tusaras, Hunas etc...

The Puranas can be used for the purpose of building up the history of ancient Indian geography. In them, we come across the names of very many cities which existed in their times. The distances between cities is mentioned as well as names of rivers and mountains.

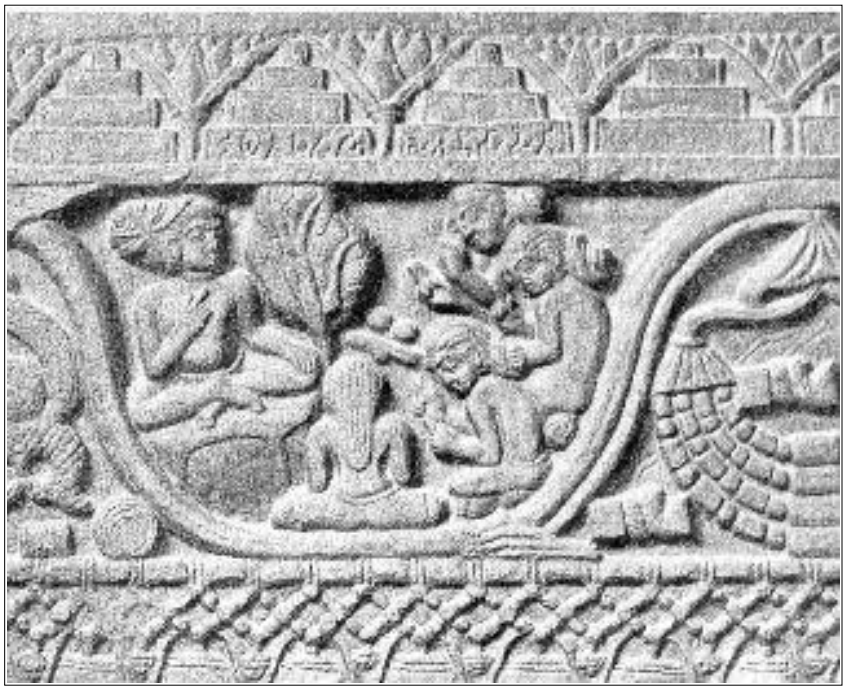
There is a tendency among modern scholars to belittle the value of the information found in the Puranas. It has been suggested that the genealogies of the Puranas were invented by some fertile brains. However, there is nothing to support such a view. The Pauranikas profess to tell the truth and they had nothing to gain from kings and their descendents who were already dead and gone. **Most western scholars seem to suffer from the old prejudice against the Puranas dating from the time of Lord Macaulay. It is high time that the scholars give up their prejudices and give the Puranas a due place as a source of ancient Indian History.**

(source: **Ancient India - By V. D. Mahajan** p. 19-21).

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Education in Ancient India

Education in India has always been regarded as one of the basic inputs in human resource development. In the ancient days, the *Gurukul* system of education was prevalent. The teacher was the *Guru* and the disciple was the *Sishya*. The disciples lived in the Guru's *aashram* during the course of their training and in turn offered their services to the ashram. This period of learning of, about 12 years, was considered as a great sacrifice or a penance. The Guru identified the capability of his Sishya and accordingly imparted knowledge. The sishyas learnt amidst the natural surroundings of the ashram, in open air, in close contact with nature. The Kings sent their Princes to Gurus for training on the art of using weaponry, *vedas*, music, art and physical forms of exercising & defence. At the end of their training, the disciples thanked their Gurus with a gift in the form of a *gurudakshina* - which literally means "offerings to the Guru".



One of the most popular cultural institutions in India which still follows the *Gurukul* system is *Shanthiniketan* near Calcutta which was established by the great teacher, artist, philosopher and literary laureate *Rabindranath Tagore*. *Kalakshetra* in Madras, established by the great dancer *Rukmini Arundale* too follows the Gurukul system. To-date, a teacher in India is regarded as a Guru, a master in his discipline.

One of the most ancient universities of India is in *Nalanda* near Patna. Founded in the 5th Century AD, this great seat of learning flourished until the 12th century AD. Gautam Buddha and Parsvanath Mahavir are believed to have visited Nalanda. The Chinese chronicler Huen Tsang spent many years here both as a student and as a teacher. *Nagarjuna*, the Buddhist Mahayana philosopher, *Dinnaga*, the logician and *Dharmapala*, the Brahmin scholar taught here. At one point of time about 2000 teachers and 10,000 students crowded the portals of Nalanda University. Besides religious texts, students in the ancient universities learnt about *Ayurveda* (Medicine), *Ganitha* (Mathematics), *Arthashastra* (Political science), *Jyothisha* (Astrology), *Vyakarna* (Grammar), *Shilpathana Vidya* (Art and Crafts), and *Adyatma Vidya* (Philosophy).

(source: http://www.geocities.com/tokyo/shrine/4287/education.htm - For more on education, please refer to chapter on **Education in Ancient India**).

Christians are also proud that they brought education to India, "but," counters **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**, Founder of the Bangalore based Art of Living, an International Foundation. He recently addressed the UN Peace Summit on Aug 28. He is the only non-westerner to serve on the advisory board of Yale University's School of Divinity and is author of the book - **Hinduism and Christianity**:

"it is not true: there were for instance 125,000 medical institutions in Madras before the British came. Indians never lacked education, the Christians only brought British education to India, which in fact caused more damage to India by westernizing many of us."

Sri Aurobindo has commented on the state of education: "In India...we have been cut off by a mercenary and soulless education from all our ancient roots of culture and traditions..."

(source: **India's Rebirth - By Sri Aurobindo** Publisher: Mira Aditi ISBN 81-85137-27-7 p 65).

In the Round- table conference in 1931, **Mahatma Gandhi** in one of his speeches said, **"The beautiful tree of education was cut down by you British. Therefore today India is far more illiterate than it was 100 years ago."**

(For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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Gupta period - The Classical Age in India



According to (Marxists) historian **Romila Thapar**, the Gupta Age as the Classical Age of ancient India is true so far as the upper classes are concerned, amongst whom standards reached a peak never before attained. **Dr. D. N. Jha** has also concluded: " For upper classes, all periods in history have been golden: for the masses, none. The true golden age of the people does not lie in the past, but in the future.

In the light of what has been stated by **V. A. Smith, Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Dr. M.A. Mehendale, and Prof. R.N. Dandekar** in the support of the view that the Gupta period was the Golden Age of Indian history, the criticism of Romila Thapar and Dr. D.N. Jha does not seem to be convincing. (Both Thapar and Jha are known for their Marxist interpretation of Indian history). Moreover, Dr. Sriram Goel points out that main emphasis of the critics is on the point that prosperity and culture of the Guptas did not reach certain classes and certain areas.

According to Dr. Goyal, those critics have shown, the mentality of a drain inspector who concentrates merely on certain shortcomings in a system. They have tried to misinterpret and distort certain facts. Dr. Goyal points out that the benefits of progress does not reach all the regions in any country or society. Such a thing did not happen even in Athens in the Periclean Age. It did not happen in the Age of Elizabeth.

(source: **Ancient India - By V. D. Mahajan** S. Chand and Company Ltd. New Delhi 1990 p. 575-577).

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Prayer in US Schools Doesn't Mean Christian Prayer

A frequent proposal from the Christian Right in America is for a constitutional amendment

to allow voluntary prayer in public schools. Proponents will cite results from the Gallup poll, such as at "source," which show 78% of Americans support such an amendment. What they don't usually cite is the response to this question Gallup also posed: "Suppose spoken prayers were allowed in the local public schools. Do you believe that the prayers should be basically Christian, reflecting Christian beliefs and values, or should the prayers reflect all major religions, including Christianity?" 76% say the prayers should "reflect all major religions" and only 18% say basically Christianity. So if the amendment ever does pass -- a very unlikely scenario -- Hindu and Buddhist prayers would be just as eligible for the classroom as anything from Christianity.

(source: **http://www.hinduism-today.com/#3**).

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Vijayanagar - the splendor

Of all the kingdoms of the south, Vijayanagar was the finest with the longest history. It was founded in 1336 and was visited by Italian **Nicolo Conti** who came in 1420; **Abdur-Razzaq of Herat**, in 1443; and **Paes**, a Portuguese, who visited the city in 1522. Abdur-Razzaq from central Asia wrote of a temple made of pure molten brass: "It was 15 feet high, and 30 feet high by 30 at its base." He goes into ecstasies over the city" "The city is such that eye has not seen nor ear heard of any place resembling it upon the whole earth."


Krishnadeva Raya

Paes, who came in 1522, describes it: **"The city of Vijayanagar, is as large as Rome and very beautiful to the sight."** He describes at length the wonders of the city, and the charms of its innumerable lakes and waterways and fruit gardens. It is the best-provided city in the world...for the sate of the city is not like that of other cities, which often fail of supplies and provisions, for in this everything abounds." He also describes the great ruler of Vijayanagar at the time of his visit. He was one of the great rulers of South Indian history, and his reputation as a great warrior, and as one who was chivalrous to his enemies, as a patron of literature, and a popular and generous king, still survives in the south. His name was **Krishna Deva Raya**, and he ruled from 1509-1529. "Great irrigation works were erected about 1400 to bring good water to the city. A whole river was dammed up and a big reservoir was made. From this the water went to the city in an aqueduct, 15 miles in length, often out of the solid rock.

Other descriptions of Vijayanagar: " The opulent palaces, the magnificent temples and the massive fortifications appear very natural among the rock formations, as if they have just grown out of these theatrical, barren, craggy surroundings. A foreigner said of the stones: ``they are piled one block on another in a manner most singular, that it seems as if they stood in the air, not connected with each other''.

" One of the finest is the **Hazara Rama** temple, an exquisite structure for private worship of the Vijayanagar kings. Standing within a walled enclosure, it exudes an air of elegant serenity either when the moonlight softly washes over the friezes, or when it glows in the sunlight. The herds and bands of elephants, horses, dancing girls and musicians, and scenes from the Ramayana come alive on the outer walls of the temple. The eye lingers

on the fine features of a musician, or the graceful limbs of a dancing girl or the noble prancing of a caparisoned steed. Inside, the four black polished pillars invite you to run your fingers over their smoothness. Their geometrical square blocks alternate with cylindrical shafts, all luxuriantly carved in tangible loveliness."



"The large stone chariot in the Vithala temple is a marvelous testimony to the skill of the stone carvers - its wheels can rotate on the axle. The carved pillars in the **Hall of Musical Pillars** resound like musical instruments. The Hampi ruins include the monolithic statues of Ugra Narasimha (Vishnu's incarnation of the man-lion creature), badly mutilated by the invading Moghul armies and Ganesa. The 22 ft. high statue of Narasimha had Lakshmi seated on his thigh - unfortunately it was hacked to pieces. The **Virupaksha temple** has beautiful gopurams, and on the way there is the King's Balance on which he was weighed against gold and diamonds which were then distributed to the people."

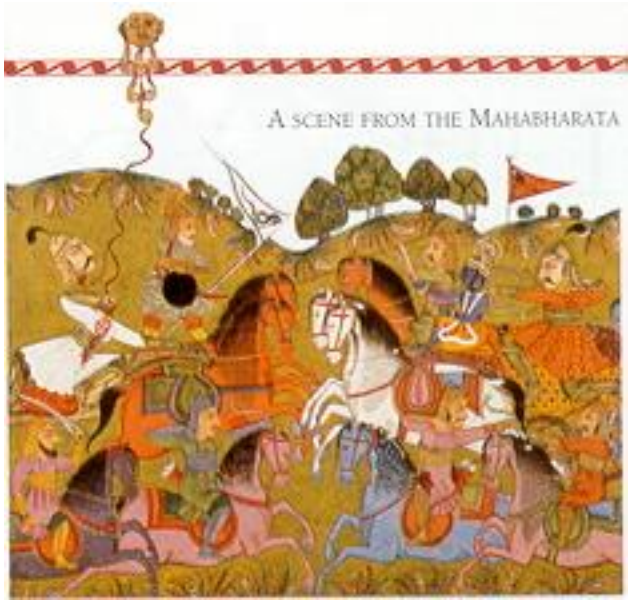
In a series of wars Rama Raja completely defeated the Bijapur ruler to inflict humiliating defeats on Golconda and Ahmadnagar. It seems Rama Raja had no larger purpose than to maintain a balance of power favourable to Vijayanagara. The five broken Bahamani kingdoms, did a combined crusade on Vijayanagara at Bannihatti in 1565 and in the battle of Rakshasa-Tangadi, Rama Raja was surrounded, taken prisoner and immediately executed and this brought an end to the Best Empire of the South. **It was thoroughly looted and left in ruins.**

(source: **Glimpses of World History - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 257-259 and **The stones of Hampi - By Maya Jayapal**). For more information on architecture refer to chapter **Hindu Art**).

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Is India Civilized?

Is India Civilized: Essays on Indian Culture a book under this rather startling title was published some decades ago, by **Sir John Woodroffe**, the well known scholar and writer on Tantric philosophy. That well known dramatic critic, **Mr. William Archer**, leaving his safe natural sphere for fields in which his chief **claim to speak was a sublime and confident ignorance, assailed the whole life and culture of India and even lumped together all her greatest achievements, philosophy, religion, poetry, painting, sculpture, Upanishads, Mahabharata, Ramayana, in one wholesale condemnation as a repulsive mass of unspeakable barbarism.**



It is argued by many at the time that to reply to a critic of this kind was to break a butterfly, or it might be in this instance a bumble-bee, upon the wheel. What he has done is to collect together in his mind all the unfavorable comments he has read about India, eke them out with casual impressions of his own and advance this unwholesome and unsubstantial compound as his original production, although his one genuine and native contribution is the cherry cocksureness of his second-hand-opinions. The book is a journalistic fake, not an honest critical production.

Both materially and spiritually Europe has thrown herself repeatedly upon Asia, to conquer, assimilate and dominate. India, is the quintessence of the Asiatic way of being.

(source: **The Foundations of Indian Culture - By Aurobindo** p. 1-45).

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For Europeans Only

In his **Discovery of India** (written in 1943), **Jawaharlal Nehru** recorded how humiliating he had found it always to see posted in railway carriages, in station waiting rooms, on park benches, and in other places the exasperating sign "For Europeans Only." He added:

"The idea of a master race is inherent in imperialism. There was no subterfuge about it; it was proclaimed in unambiguous language by those in authority. More powerful than words was the practice that accompanied them, and generation after generation, and year after year, India as a nation and Indians as individuals were subjected to insult, humiliation, and contemptuous treatment....The memory of it hurts, and what hurts still more is the fact that we submitted for so long to this degradation."

Nehru has remarked: **"In India every European, be he German, or Pole or Rumanian, is automatically a member of the ruling race. Railway carriages, station retiring rooms, benches in parks, etc. are marked 'For Europeans Only.' This is bad enough in South Africa or elsewhere, but to have to put up with it in one's own country is a humiliating and exasperating reminder of one's enslaved condition."**

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p.295). (For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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Great Zimbabwe (Africa) and Eurocentrism

If it was great, it must have been white: If advanced science, art, or architecture is found in Africa or South America, then Phoenecians, Greeks, Celts, Vikings must be

invoked to explain their presence.



Alluding to the way in which the spectacular stone ruins of Great Zimbabawe (zimbabwe means "stone enclosure") were viewed as Phoenician creation, **M. Posnansky** (1982) refers to "the notion that what was advanced in Africa's past was the work of outside invaders, merchants or metal-workers, variously derived from Phoenicia, Israel, India and Indonesia." He adds that

"this was an idea that was extremely attractive to the White community that at no time amounted to even 10 per cent of the total population of Rhodesia. It served to justify their depreciation of the Black capabilities and past achievements and their occupation of more than half of the best agricultural land. The preservation of White civilization ultimately retarded the discovery of Black civilization and hampered the progress of archaeology."

About the 11th century AD the first stone building began, and this rapidly developed into a distinctive and impressive architectural style. Stone building reached its first peak in the city of Great Zimbabwe, which was built between the 11th and 15th centuries. Several attempts by people to argue for an early external origin for Great Zimbabwe. Archaeologists and historians believe that from the 13th to 15th centuries Great Zimbabwe was the capital for a large area in southern Africa. Throughout this region there are smaller but similar madzimbabwe. The site Great Zimbabwe covers over 1779 acres and comprises mainly stone wall enclosures and areas of hut remains. Because of the wealth of Zimbabwe and the importance of Sofala as a trading city, the Zimbabweans from 1000 AD onwards were exposed to **Indian,** Chinese, and Persian crafts and culture.

(source: **Colonial Indology: Sociopolitics of the Ancient Indian Past - By Dilip K. Chakrabarti** p. 25-26). (For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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France's love affair with Shiva continues



Shiva, the Hindu god of destruction, continues to fascinate the French literary world that has already seen the publication of numerous books on him. Two more books on differing aspects of Shiva have joined the list. "Le religion de Shiva" (The religion of Shiva) has been written by renowned Sanskrit



scholar, N. Ramachandra Bhatt. Bhatt, who has exceptional understanding of the Sanskrit texts, has explored in depth ancient texts and through it studied history in a scientific line," says the preface of the book.

The second book, written by Catherine Clement, a renowned French writer and wife of a former French diplomat who had served in India, deals with Varanasi, a city closely related to Shiva. "Le religion de Shiva," translated into French by **French Sanskrit scholar Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat** and published by Editions Agamat, tries to explain Hinduism through the famed temple art of South India in the medieval ages. Bernard Bouanchaud, owner of Editions Agamat, an Indophile, says he fell in love with India during his first visit to the country over 30 years ago and since then he has been in regular contact with India and its philosophy, spirituality and religion.

(source: **http://www.indiaabroadonline.com/thearts/apr2001/france.shtml**).

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Languages - survival of the fittest?

Sanskrit — never a mass language — is being used by fewer and fewer people. For centuries, it has turned into an ossified artefact used only by Hindu priests on duty or finance ministers showcasing their aesthetic prowess. By trying to impose Sanskrit on school and college syllabi, the government has made noises about resuscitating a dead language. While the immediate parallel to Sanskrit is Latin — used on occasions to show erudition — one must not forget the Israeli experiment of resurrecting Hebrew. While the task of making a new nation speak a forgotten tongue had more to do with the construction of a national identity rather than linguistic preservation, Hebrew today is alive and kicking.

Taj Mahal: A stable?

R P Anand, professor of international law at JNU, writes:

"In the 19th century, the Britishers had turned the Taj into a stable. It also wanted to take it apart to sell the marble..."

(source: Why is the world helpless? http://www.timesofindia.com/040301/04sprp3.htm).

For more information go to TAJ MAHAL AND THE GREAT BRITISH CONSPIRACY http://www.hindunet.org/hindu_history/modern/godbole_taj2.html)

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Diamonds of India

Hope Diamond



The "Great Blue Diamond", the Hope is also called the "cursed diamond" because it is said to have brought nothing to its possessors but tragedy. Nothing is further from the truth. A jewel trader, **Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, purchased it in India** and sold it in 1669 to Louis XIV, who had it cut into the heart shape, which reduced its weight from 112 to 68.8 carats. Later, the stone was stolen, and it came into the possession of the British banker Philip Pierre Hope in 1830. Via Sultan Abdul-Hamid, the Paris jeweler Pierre Cartier, and the newspaper magnate William McLean, the Hope diamond landed in the United States. In 1958, a diamond dealer Harry Winston donated it to the Smithsonian Institute where it is now on display. The stone was sent to the Institute by ordinary mail.

The Daryinoor



The Crown Jewels of Iran are considered to be the finest in the world-exceeding even those of the United Kingdom and Austria-Hungary. Along with the Noor-al-Ain, Precious Light, the Darya-I-Noor once formed the world's largest pink diamond, the Great Table. A centerpiece of the Crown Jewels of India, the Darya-I-Noor was brought to Iran by the great conqueror Nadir Shah where it became the most spectacular gem in the considerably imposing collection. Considered the sister of the Kohinoor, Mountain of Light, the Darya-I-Noor was reunited with its real sibling in 1959 when the Shah purchased the Precious Light diamond for a wedding tiara. Because of its legendary origins, its rank as one of the world's largest diamonds..

The Orlov



The Orlov diamond, originally called the Sun of the Sea, **once decorated a Hindu temple statue.** A French deserter stole it and sold it in Madras to a British sea captain, who in turn, sold it to a Jew who passed it on to a Persian. This man met Count Grigory Grigoryevich Orlov, a rejected lover of Catherine II the Great, who bought the Sun of the Sea for 400,000 rubles, a fabulous sum at the time. Although the Empress accepted the gift, her love was not reawakened. The Count died in an institution for the mentally ill. It may be a comfort to him that

the diamond now bears his name. It is now in the Kremlin, mounted on the imperial scepter.

The Shah of Persia



Nadir Shah of Delhi, India, owned this 99.52-carat, yellow, cushion shaped diamond in1739. It was believed that the diamond was presented to General V.D. Starosselky, a Russian military expert for his excellent command of the Persian army. The general brought the diamond to America. The diamond is mounted in a pendent brooch with 72 smaller diamonds. For a long time, this pendent was owned by Carl D. Lindstrom, a Los Angeles gems dealer. Harry Winston, a New York City gem dealer bought it in 1957.

The Pigott

Supposedly, this diamond weighed form 47 to 85.80 carat, it is a fine quality Indian diamond. Named after Baron George Pigott who **acquired it in 1775 from an Indian Prince**, this diamond changed hands several times, ending finally in the hands of Ali Pashas, ruler of Albania in 1818 for $150,000.



He carried it around in a small bag and seldom showed it to anyone. The Sultan of Turkey, over lord of Albania, became envious of Ali's popularity and sent his army to capture Ali. During the fighting, the 80-year-old Ali was fatally wounded, he ordered his captain to his side, gave him the diamond and asked him to smash it right there and then.

The Great Mogul

When found the Great Mogul Diamond weighed 787.50 carat in the rough. After it was cut into a rose cut diamond it weighed only 280 carats. T



he owner of the stone, Emperor Shah Jahan, who is also the builder of the Taj Mahal fired and fined the cutter $10,000 (the cutter's entire fortune) for doing such a poor job. The whereabouts of this diamond is unknown.

(source: **Diamonds of India - Hindustan Times).**

India has lost the great **Kohinoor Diamond, marble bath of Shah Jahan and the Amravati marbles.**

(For more refer to chapter on **European Imperialism**).

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Persecution Forcing Hindus to Flee Pakistan

Religious persecution and violation of human rights are forcing Hindus in Pakistan to flee to India, a Pakistani migrants association said today. Each month groups of persecuted Hindus are coming to India in the hope of a better future, but they face a tough time due to the lack of a refugee policy in the country, the Visthapit Sangh said. There are 17,000 Hindu refugees who have yet to get Indian citizenship. Five thousand of them live in Jodhpur alone. Many of those who arrived in India as refugees in 1965 have also not received citizenship, convenor of the Sangh, Hindu Singh Sodha, told reporters. Others are scattered in Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jalore and Pali districts. He said the Centre should amend the Citizenship Act and fix a time limit for granting citizenships. He also said the government should review the rehabilitation policy prepared in 1978 for those living in camps after leaving Pakistan in 1965 and 1971.

(source: **http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/sep/05pak3.htm**).

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Did You Know?

Kaliyug - The Age of Kali



According to Vedic scriptures, we are now living in the kaliyuga, the age of Kali. We are given to using the term kaliyuga quite freely and frequently, not quite knowing its import or significance. In the cosmic timetable, kaliyuga is the last of the four yugas (ages) - satyayuga, tretayuga, dwaparyuga and kaliyuga - called chaturyuga. The duration of kaliyuga is said to be 432,000 years; of dvaparayuga 864,000 years; of tretayuga 1,296,000 and of satyayuga 17,280,000 years. Kaliyuga is so called because it is dominated by Kali, the embodiment of evil.

The abysmal low that human values would descend to in kaliyuga is vividly described in the twelfth canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam. The purana forecasts that in kaliyuga people will succumb to the rule of barbarians who will be steeped in adharma and untruth, and the yuga will be calamitous for the whole of mankind. All good human qualities and values will decay; might will be right; wealth will signify goodness; business will tantamount to cheating and fraud; people will live to eat and not eat to live; they will observe false dharma; rulers will be unrelenting thieves; humans will behave like animals; leaders will perpetuate rule by their children;

adultery will be rampant; adharmic persons will preach dharma; people will fight over trivialities; old and infirm parents will be abandoned as will old and dry cows; atheism will be widespread and people will mock those who utter the name of God.

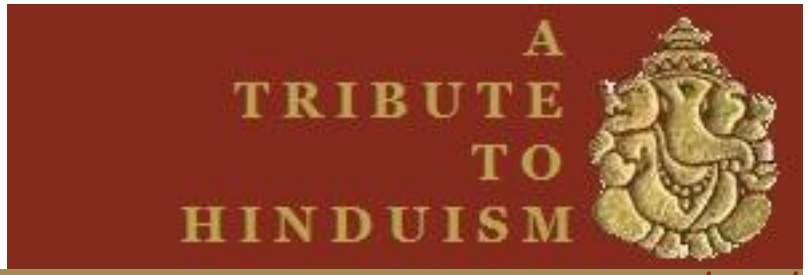
In the Kalisantarana Upanishad it is stated, "To save oneself from the contamination of Kali there is no alternative but the chanting of the names of the Lord".It is said that spiritually inclined people in other yugas who seek liberation, pray to be born in kaliyuga to take advantage of this bright silver lining. Even though it is simple and easy, not many are able to follow this method because of the damning influence of Kali. The story goes that when Kali was once confronted by a sage and told that his days were numbered because people would be able to escape his scheming ways simply by remembering the Lord, shrewd Kali replied, "That is if I let them!".

(source: **Kaliyuga has a Silver Lining - Parmarthi Raina**).

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washingtonpost.com	A Hindu Quest for Some Holy Water more...
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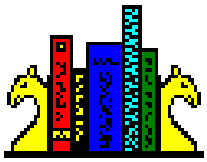
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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002

Here is a list of good books and publications to read on Hinduism.

- **Philosophy of Hinduism** - An Introduction - By T. C. Galav
- **The Hindu Mind:** Fundamentals of Hindu Religion and Philosophy for All Ages - By Bansi Pandit
- **The Elements of Hinduism** - By Stephen Cross
-  **Ancient Wisdom for Modern Ignorance** - Swami B. V. Tripurari
- **A Survey of Hinduism** - By Klaus K. Klostermaier
- **The Bhagvad Gita: A Scripture for the Future** - Translation and Commentary by Sachindra K. Majumdar
- **India - Living Wisdom** - By Richard Waterstone
- **Essays on Hinduism** - By Karan Singh
- **Hinduism Today (**a monthly magazine published by the Kauai's Hindu Monastery) - 107 Kaholele Road. Kapaa, Hawaii, 96746. U.S.A.
-  **The Sacred Thread -** By J.L. Brockington
- **Mantra - Hearing the Divine in India** - By Harold Coward and David Goa
- **Readings in Vedic Literature** - By Satsvarupa dasa Goswami
- **The Universal Gita -** By Eric J.Sharpe
- **Wisdom of the Ancient Seers** - By David Frawley.
- **In Search of The Cradle of Civilization** - By George Feurstein, Subhash Kak and David Frawley
- **The Philosophies of Asia -** By Alan Watts
- **The Hindu Tradition Readings in Oriental Thought** - Edited by Ainslie T. Embree
- **Darsan: Seeing the Divine in India** - By Diana L. Eck
- **The Hindu Temple** - By George Michell

- **Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita** - By George Feuerstein
- **The Epics of Hinduism:** The Mahabharat,
  The Ramayana
  Other Scriptures: The Vedas (Rig, Artha, Sama, Yajur), The Upanishads, The Bhagvad Gita, The Puranas
- **Vedanta: Heart of Hinduism** - By Hans Torwesten
- **The Wisdom of the Vedas** - By J.C. Chatterji
- **Commentaries on the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita** - By Sri Chinmoy
- **Virtue, Success, Pleasure, Liberation** **-** By Alain Danielou
-  **India's Rebirth** **-** By Sri Aurobindo
- **Veda and Torah** - By Barbara Holdrege
- **Arrow of the Blue Skinned God. Retracing the Ramayana through India** - By Jonah Blank
- **Am I a Hindu?** - By Ed Viswanathan
-  **Sadhus** - By Dof Hartsuiker
- **Philosophies of India** - By Heinrich Zimmer
- **Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys into India** - By Paul Williams Robert
- **Deep River** (Fiction) -By Shusaku Endo
- **The Hindu Awakening: Its Revelation, Its Symbols** - By Swami Kriyananda (J Donald Walters)



- **Missionaries in India** - By Arun Shourie
- **The World's Religions** - By Huston Smith
- **Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity and Belief** - By Gauri Vishwnathan

- **Banaras: City of Light -** By Diana L.Eck
- **Sacred River** (Children's book) - By Ted Lewin
- **Father India** - By Jeffrey Paine
- **Ganesha: Song of the Self** - By John Grimes
- **A Short Introduction to Hinduism** - By Klaus Klstermaier
- **The Upanishads** - Translated by Eknath Easwaran
- **The Missionary Position** - By Christopher Hitchens
- **The Wisdom of the Hindu Gurus** - By Timothy Freke
- **Indian Philosophy** - By Daya Krishna
- **Hymns From The Rig-Veda** - Translated by Jean Le Mee
- **Hinduism: Its Historical Development** - By Troy Wilson Organ
- **Hindu Theology** - Jose Pereira
- **Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes** - By Milton Singer
- **Return of the Aryans** - By Bhagwan S. Gidwani
- **God who Walked on Earth** - by Rangaswami Parthasarathy
- **Vimana Aircraft of Ancient Indian & Atlantis** - By David Hatcher Childress
- **From here to Nirvana** - By Anne Cushman and Jerry Jones
- **India and World Civilization** - By D.P. Singhal
- **Aryans and British India** - By Thomas R. Trautmann
- **Travel Through Sacred India** - By Roger Housden
- **India** - By James O'Reilly and Larry Habegger
- **The Invasion That Never Was** - By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar
- **Hinduism Reconsidered** - Edited By Gunther-Dietz Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke
- **Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion** - By Stephen P.Huyler
- **Origins of Hindu Social System** - By V. Nagarajan
- **Huston Smith: Essays on World Religion.** - edited by M. Darrrol Bryant.
- **India Unveiled** - By Robert Arnett
- **Principles and Practice of Hindu Religion -** By Bala N. Aiyer, published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
- **Vedic Physics: Scientific Origins of Hinduism** - By Raja Ram Mohan Roy
- **A Joseph Campbell Companion** - Selected and Edited by Diane K.Osborne
- **The Celestial Key To The Vedas: Discovering the Origins of the World's Oldest Civilization** - By B.G. Sidharth
- **The Heart of India** - By Mark Tully
- **The Secret Teachings of the Vedas**: The Eastern Answers to the Mysteries of Life. Volume One - By Stephen Knapp

- **The Universal Path To Enlightenment**: The Eastern Answers to the Mysteries of Life. Volume Two - By Stephen Knap
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- **Vedic "Aryans" and the Origins of Civilization** - By Navaratna S. Rajaram & David Frawley
- **India Discovered** - By John Keay
- **Proof of Vedic Culture's Global Existence** - By Stephen Knapp
- **Late Victorian Holocausts -** By Mark Davis
- **Glimpses of World History -** By Jawaharlal Nehru
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- **Wisdom of China and India -** By Lin Yutang
- **Technology of the Gods: The Incredible Sciences of the Ancients** - By David Hatcher Childress
- **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** Oxford University Press. 1995.
- **The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China** - By Terence Dukes/ Shifu Nagaboshi Tomio
- **Eastern Religions and Western Thought** by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan
- **Arise, O India - By Francois Gautier** ISBN 81-241-0518-9 Har-Anand Publications 2000.
- **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German** - By Valentine Stache-Rosen.
- **The Spirit of India** - By W. J. Grant London published by B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1933
- **Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India -** By D. C. Sircar
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- **Hinduism and Scientific Quest** - By T R. R. Iyengar
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- **War in Ancient India -** By V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar
- **The Art of War in Ancient India -** By P. C. Chakravarti
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- **The Raj Syndrome: A Study in Imperial Perceptions -** By Suhash Chakravarty. Penguin Books.1991
- **Is India Civilized: Essays on Indian Culture -** By Sir John Woodroffe

- **The Foundations of Indian Culture -** By Aurobindo
- **Crises in Modern Thought: The Crises of Reason -** By Swami Kriyananda (J. Donald Walters)
- **Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History -** By Veer Vinayak Damador Savarkar - (Veer Savarkar Prakashan, Mumbai 400 028).
- **The Dance of Shiva -** By Ananda K Coomaraswamy
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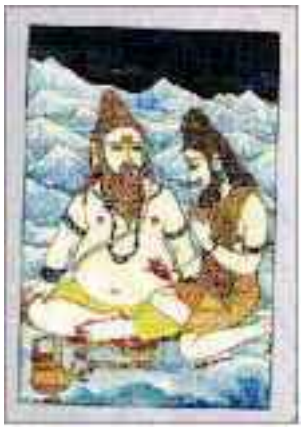
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- **Yoga and Indian Philosophy -** by Karel Werner
- **Yoga and The Bhagavad Gita -** By Tom McArthur
- **The serpent power: being the Sat-cakra-nir¯upana and P¯aduk¯a-pañcaka, two works on Laya yoga, translated from the Sanskrit, with introd. and commentary -** by Sir John Woodroffe aka Arthur Avalon
- **Yoga: The Technology of Ecstasy -** By Georg Feuerstein
- **Yoga and the Hindu Tradition** - By Jean Varenne
- **Hinduism** - By Solange Lemaitre
- **Yoga in Hindu Scriptures** - By H. Kumar Kaul
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- **The Aryan Hoax (That Dupes the Indians)** - By P. Choudhury
- **Hinduism The Eternal Religion** - By M. D Chaturvedi
- **The Yoga and Its Objects** - By Sri Aurobindo
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- **Geometry in Ancient India** - By Svami Satya Prakash Sarasvati
- **The Complete Idiot's Guide to Hinduism** - By Linda Johnsen
- **India's Culture Through the Ages** - Mohan Lal Vidyarthi
- **History of Science and Technology in Ancient India** - BY Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya
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- **India and The World** - By Buddha Prakash
- **Nostradamus and Beyond – N S Rajaram**
- **The Universal History of Numbers - By Georges Ifrah**
- **Mother Teresa: Beyond the Image - By Anne Sebba**

- **The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice - By Christopher Hitchens**
- **Mother Teresa, The Final Verdict - By Aroup Chatterjee**
- **The True History and the Religion of India: A Concise Encycloedia of Authentic Hinduism - By Swami Prakashanand Saraswati**
- **The Heathen in His Blindness...: Asia, the West and the Dynamic of Religion - By S. Balagangadhara**
- **A Brief History of India - By Alain Danielou**

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Did You Know?

Sri Krishnaprem Vairagi (1898-1965) **was a Foreign Guru:**



It is rare to find a foreigner accepted as a guru by native Hindus. First of these was the man who became known as **Krishnaprem**. Born Ronald Nixon in 1898 in Cheltenham, UK, he studied classics and science at Cambridge and served as a fighter-pilot in World War I. He later came in contact with the Theosophical Society. He became the disciple of Yashoda Ma, and began to lead the very austere life of a Vaisnava vairagi (renunciant). He studied Sanskrit and Pali and wrote several book, appreciated by scholars and seekers alike. He died in 1965. Hundreds came to carry his body to the burial grounds.

He used to say **'I have won Him, my Krsna!'.**

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The Soul:

" It is never born, nor does it die: after coming to be, it does not cease to be; it is without birth, eternal, imperishable and timeless; it is not destroyed with the destruction of the body."

- Lord Krishna from the Bhagavad Gita.



God:

"He is the One, the One alone. In Him all deities become one."

- declares the Artha Veda.



Incarnation:

"Whenever there is decline of righteousness and predominance of unrighteousness, I embody Myself. For the protection of the good and for the destruction of evil-doers and for the re-establishment of dharma (righteousness) I am born from age to age."

- Lord Krishna from the Bhagvad-Gita.



Liberation:

O Lord, liberate our souls
From the shadows of birth and death,
Not from our aspirations
of existence i.e. immortality.

— Yajurveda, 3.60



One reality:

" Tat twam asi" meaning "That thou art."

- from the Upanishads.

Sin:

"Even if thou art the worst of sinners, thou shalt cross the ocean of sin by the bark of wisdom."

- Lord Krishna from Bhagvad Gita.



Creation:

"None knoweth whence creation has arisen, and whether He has or has not produced it. He who surveys it in the highest heavens, he only knows, or perhaps he knows not."

- from the Hymn of Creation, Rig Veda.

Humanity

"To you, I declare this holy mystery,
there is nothing nobler than humanity"

Guhyam brahma tad idam vo bravini
Na manusat sresthataram hi kincit.

- Mahabharat XII, 300-20)



Life:

"Life is a bridge, enjoy while crossing but don't build a castle on it."
- Upanishads.

"Do good deeds with a sense of urgency, Before death's approaching rattle strangles the tongue.

What wondrous greatness this world possesses that yesterday a man was, and today he is not."
— From the Tirukural, 335-36



Happiness:

"In the finite there is no happiness. The Infinite alone is happiness."
- Upanishads

"That Light which is
residing in the Sun and
which illumines the whole world, and that which is in the moon and in the
fire - know that
Light to be Mine.
- Lord Krishna in Gita 12

River Ganges:

" The Ganges fell from Heaven and her fall was softened by the long locks of Lord Shiva."

Seeking God:

Who sees me in all things, and all things in me, he is never far from me, and I am never far from him."
Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita



The City of Benares:

Are there not many holy places on this earth?
Yet which of them would equal in the balance one speck of Kashi's dust?
Are there not many rivers running to the sea?
Yet whcih of them is like the River of Heaven in Kashi?
Are there not many fields of liberation on earth?
Yet not one equals the smallest part of the city never forsaken by Shiva
The Ganges, Shiva, and Kashi: Where this Trinity is watchful, no wonder here is found the grace tha leads one on to perfect blisss.
- Kashi Khanda



DA-DA-DA: datta, dayadhvam, damyata

Be Self Controlled!
Give!
Be Compassionate!

- Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (Chapter 5)

Faith and Belief

A man of faith, absorbed in faith, his senses controlled, attains knowledge, and, knowledge attained, quickly finds supreme peace. But the ignorant man, who is without faith, goes doubting to destruction. For the doubting self there is neither this world, nor the next, nor joy.
- Bhagavad Gita 4.39-40

"If men thought of God as much as they think of the world, who would not attain liberation (moksha)."
- Maitri Upanishad 6.24



Yugas:

One who lies down is Kali
One who awakes is Dvãpara
One who stands up becomes Tretã
And one who moves on realises the Satya Yuga.
Therefore move on!
- Aitareya Brãhmana



divine:

By divine, we mean the following --
Absolute (Eternal) Existence
Absolute Knowledge
Absolute Bliss
Absolute Freedom



Message from the Gita:

Whenever there is a decline in
Dharma,
And a rise in Adharma,
I incarnate Myself,
For the protection of the good,
For the destruction of the wicked.
For the establishment of Dharma,
I come into Being from age to age.
- Bhagavad Gita IV, 8



Karma:

It is karma that brings joy or sorrow
Willing or unwilling, we live by our karma.
Observe the potter shaping his pots:
Some break on the wheel,
Some crack after removal from the wheel,
Some spoil when wet, some when dry,
Some burst while being fired
Some after removal from the kiln,
Some shatter in use...
So some of us die in the womb
Some immediately after birth,
Some a fortnight later, some a month,
Some in youth, some in middle age, some in old.

Their karma determines it all.
This is the way of the world is -
So what is the point of grieving?
Swimmers dive,
then emerge from the water;
So creatures sink into
and emerge from the stream of life.

-The Mahabharata of Vyasa (The Eleventh book: The Women)



Gayatri Mantra:

OM BHOOR BHUVAHA SWAHA TAT SAVITUR VARENYAM BHARGO DEVASYA DHEEMAHI DHIYO YO NAHA PRACHODAYAAT

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः
तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि
धियो योनः प्रचोदयात्।

"O God, Thou art the giver of life, the remover of pain and sorrow, the bestower of happiness; O Creator of the Universe, may we receive thy supreme, sin-destroying light; may Thou guide our intellect in the right direction." Gayatri Mantra is an adoration of the effulgence of the Sun



Moksha:

"Those who meditate on Me and Worship Me without any attachment to anything else, As Lord Krishna said in the Gita: " those I soon lift from the ocean of death".



Creation:

"Creation is only the projection into form of that which already exists... The atoms of the universe may be counted, but not so my manifestations; for eternally I create innumerable worlds." Srimad Bhagavatam, III.2, XI.10

" There is no existence for the unreal and the real can never be non-existent. The Seers of Truth know the nature and final ends of both. Know That to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. No one is ever able to destroy that Immutable. These bodies are perishable; but the dwellers in these bodies are eternal, indestructible and impenetrable. Therefore fight, O descendant of Bharata.

He who considers this Self as a slayer or he who thinks that this Self is slain, neither of these knows the Truth. For It does not slay, nor is It slain. This Self is not born, nor does It die, nor after once having seen, does It go into non-being. This Self is unborn, eternal, changeless, ancient. It is never destroyed even when the body is destroyed. - From the Bhagavad Gita II.16-20

As milk is spontaneously changed into curd and water into ice, so Brahma modifies Itself in diverse ways, without the aid of instruments or external means of any kind whatever. Thus the spider spins its web out of its own substance, subtle beings take diverse forms, and the lotus grows from marsh to marsh without organs of locomotion. - From the Brahma Sutra II.1

The yon is fullness, this.
From fullness, fullness doth proceed.
Withdrawing fullness's fullness off,
E'en fullness then itself remains. - Brihadaranyaka Upanishad



God's definition:

" God sleeps in the rocks, proclaims the Hindu scriptures, "dreams in the plants, stirs toward wakefulness in the animals, and in mankind is awake to his own ego individuality."



Respect for Mother Earth:

"O Goddess Earth, the consort of Visnu,
you whose garments are the oceans and
whose ornaments are the hills and mountain ranges;
please forgive me as I walk on you this day."

****

" One who has attained mastery over his mind is indeed a greater conquerer than one who has vanquished a thousand enemies."
- Gautama Buddha



Nourishing Steps:

May God come and reside in our hearts;
May our body be the temple of God.
May He feed freely upon the harvest of our actions as the cows graze in the pasture.
May we reap the harvest of our life and dedicate all at His feet,
May we ever remain His true servants.
- Rig Veda 1.91.13



Four Yugas:

" One who lies down is Kali
One who awakes is Dvãpara
One who stands up becomes Tretã
And one who moves on realises the Satya Yuga.
Therefore move on!"
- Aitareya Brãhmana



Shanti Mantrams:

Swasti prajabya paripalayantam nyayena margena mahim mahisha goh brahmananasya subham bhavatu loka samasta sukhino bhavantu. sarve jana sukhino bhavantu.. Om Shanti Shanti Shanti."

" O God - Give the ruler of the Land Good Ideas and make him follow the path of truth. Let the pious animal - cow and pious human - brahmin (Cow is not selfish and a true brahmin is not selfish) live happily.. let all the living organisms in all lokas have a peaceful life. "



Brahma - By Ralph Waldo Emerson
http://www.it.cc.mn.us/literature/brahma.html

(source : Our Oriental Heritage - By Will Durant pg 415)

If the red slayer thinks he slays,
Or if the slain thinks he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near
Shadow and sunlight are the same
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahman sings.



Lord Krishna describes himself:

I am the conscience in the heart of all creatures
I am their beginning, their being, their end;
I am the mind of the senses,
I am the radiant sun among lights;
I am the song in sacred lore;
I am the king of deities;
I am the priest of great seers;
Of words, I am the eternal *OM*,
the prayer of sacrifices
I am the measure of what endures
I am the chief of divine sages,
leader of celestial musicians.
I am the recluse philosopher among saints.
I am the thunderbolt among weapons
among cattle, the Kamadhenu
I am the procreative god of love
I am the endless cosmic serpent,
the lord of all sea creatures;

I am the chief of the ancestral fathers.
I am gracious Siva among howling storms.
Of restraints, I am death,
Of measures, I am time.
I am the purifying wind.
I am the cleansing Ganga
Of sciences, I am the science of the self;
I am the dispute of orators.
I am victory and resolve,
the lucidity of lucid men.
I am the brilliance of fiery heroes.
I am the morality of ambitious men;
I am the silence of the mystery
I am the seed of all creatures
I am the death destroyer of all.

-- Shrimad Bhagavad Gita



Sacred River:

O Mother Ganga, may your water,
abundant blessing of this world,
treasure of Lord Shiva, playful Lord of all the earth,
essence of the scripture and
embodied goodness of the gods,
May your water, sublime wine of immortality,
Soothe our troubled souls.



One Reality:

Into the bosom of the one great sea
Flow streams that come from hills on every side
Their names are various as their springs,
And thus in every land do men bow down
To one great God, though known by many names.

- A South Indian folksong. (The Folks Songs of Southern India By Gover 1871 p. 165)



Vande Mataram!
(The song is composed for Real Audio 4.0 format.)
http://www.bjp.org/vande.htm

Sujalam , Sufalam, Malayj Sheetalam,	I bow to thee, Mother, richly-watered, richly-fruited, cool with the winds of the
Sasyashyamalam, Mataram !	south, dark with the crops of the
Shubhrajyotsna Pulakitayaminim,	harvests, the Mother! Her nights rejoicing in the glory of the
Pullakusumita Drumadal Shobhinim,	moonlight, her lands clothed beautifully with her trees in flowering
Suhasinim, Sumadhur Bhashinim,	bloom, sweet of laughter, sweet of speech,
Sukhadam, Vardam, Mataram !	the Mother, giver of boons, giver of bliss.

(Composed by Bankim Chanda Chatterji**)**

(The English translation of the stanza rendered by Sri Aurobindo)

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Images of Interest:



Lord Krishna with Arjuna in Mahabharat



Lord Ganesh

Nandi











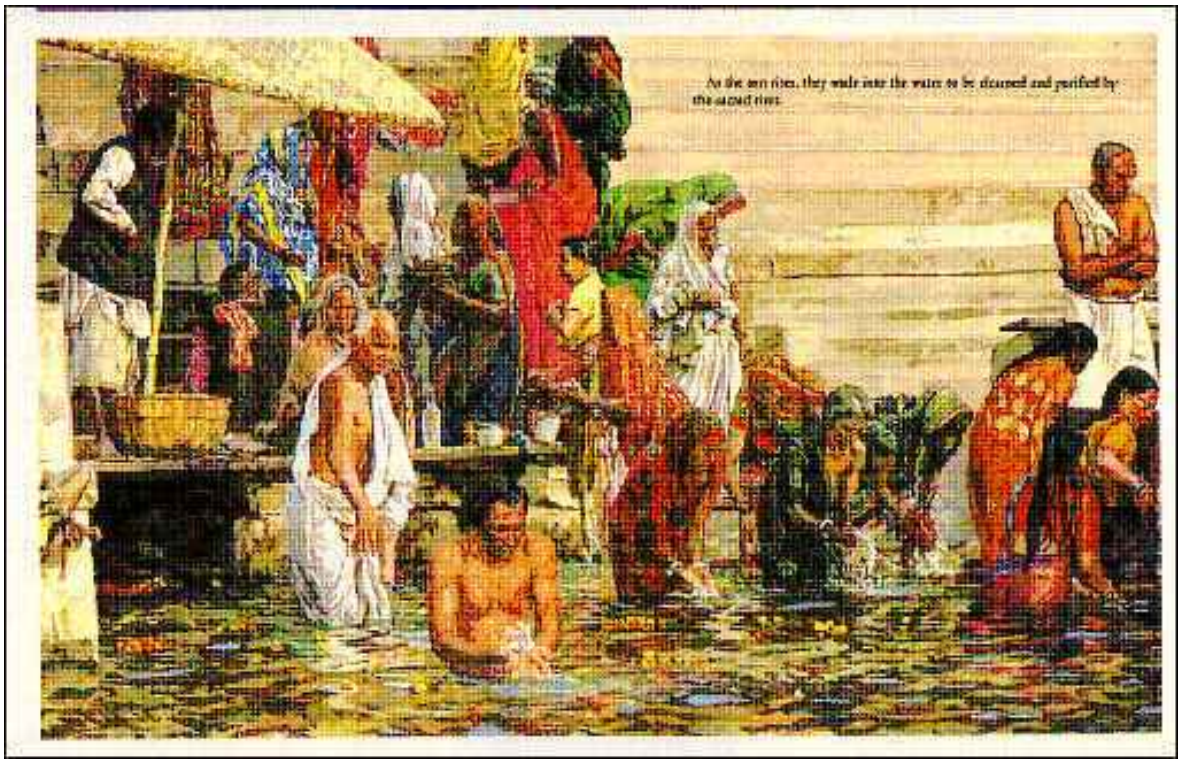
Gold Nataraja



Lord Krishna



Sant Tukaram



Bathing in Sacred River Ganges

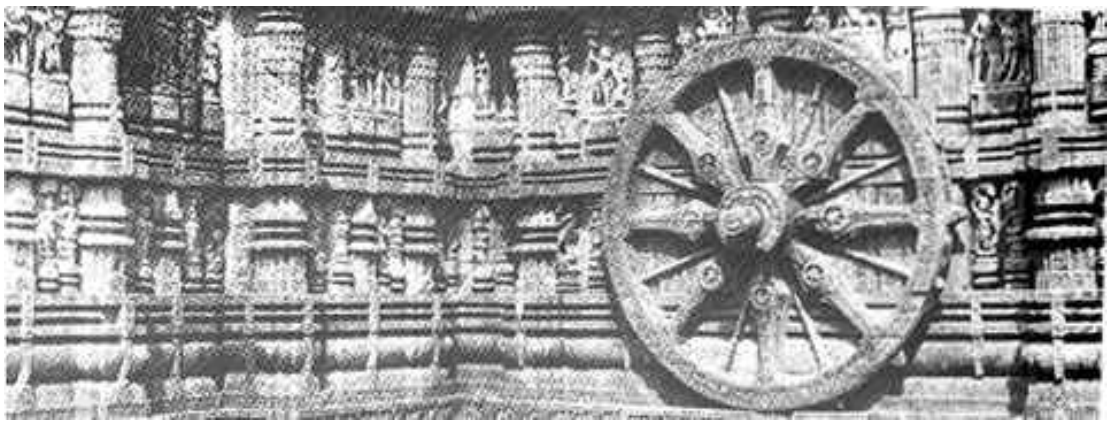


Sant Dyaneshwar



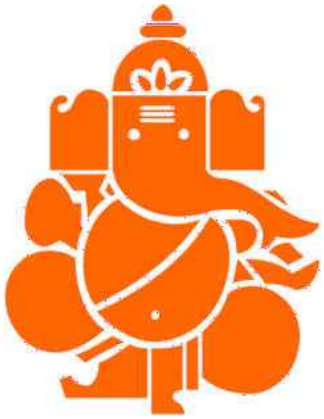
Shirdi Sai Baba

Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnu, Gurur Devoh Maheshwara !
GuruSakshat ParabrahmahTasmai Shree Guru Veh Namah !!

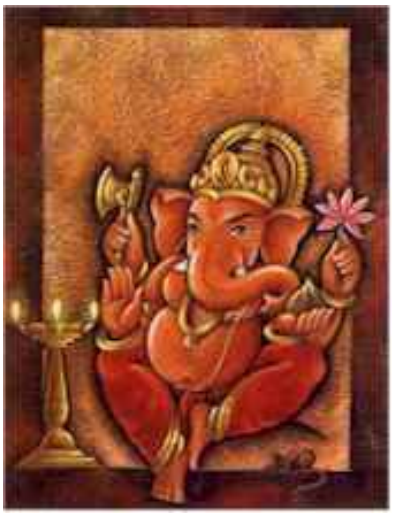


Konark Temple

Lord Ganesha Images





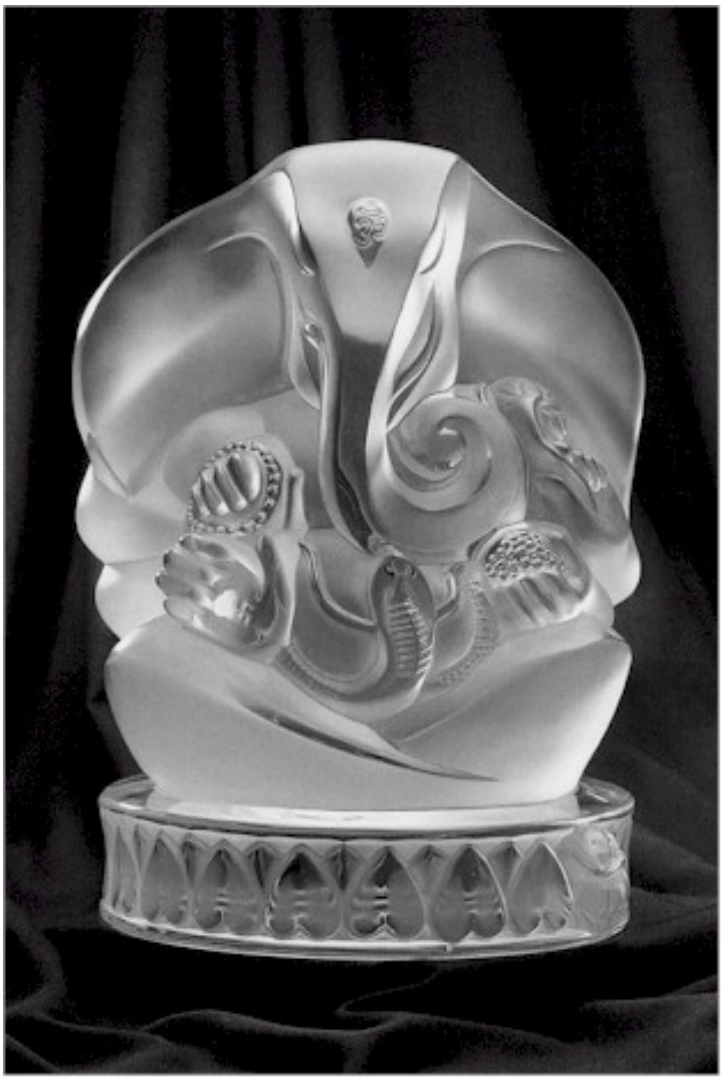










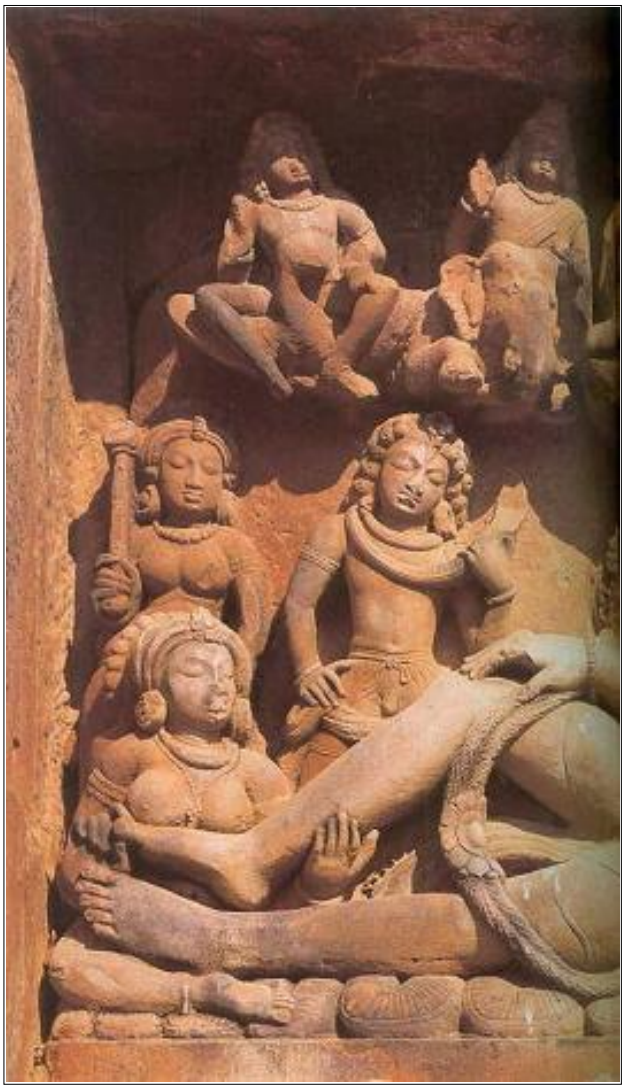
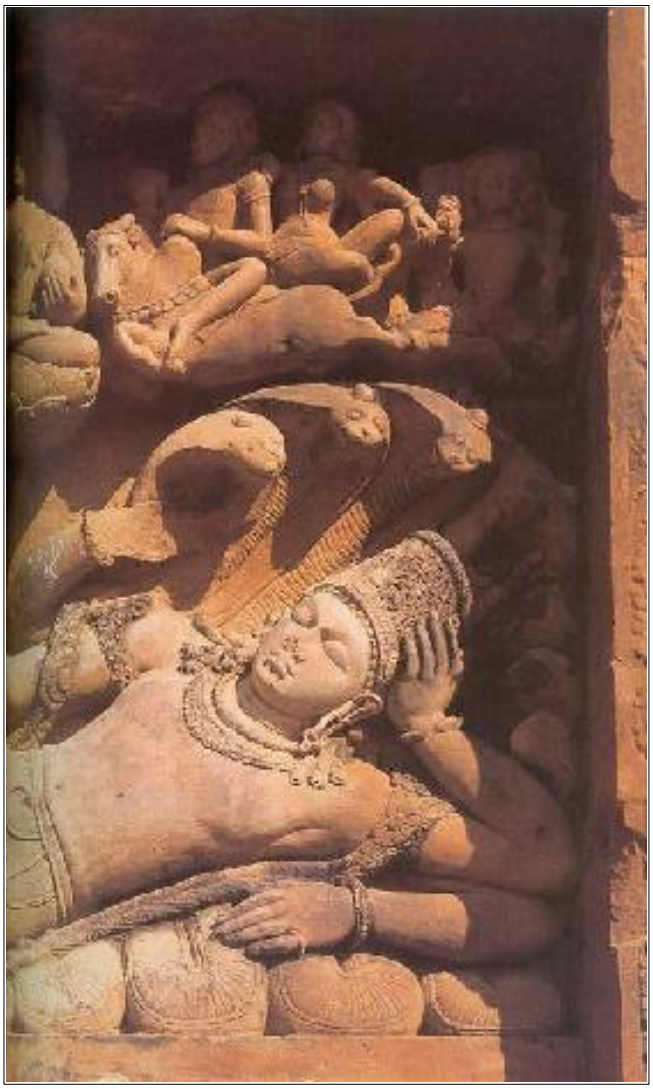




Tekadi Ganpati - Svyambhu Ganesha - Nagpur



Mahalakshmi Jagdamba Koradi - Nagpur

Vishnu is the infinite ocean from which the world emerges - Lord is shown standing or lying down on a thousand-headed snake (named Shesha or Ananta Nag - Timeless or ageless snake).

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Did You Know?

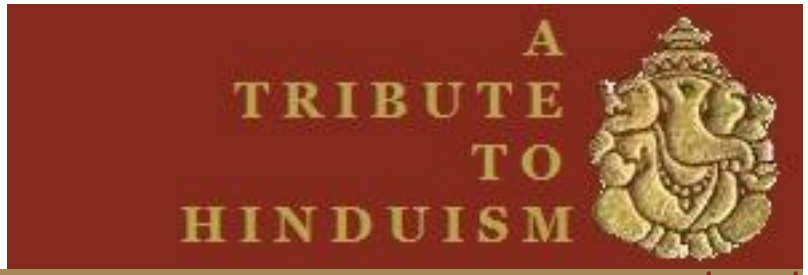
475,000 Devotional Songs?



Purandaradas (1484-1564), the famous bhakti poet and musician, is credited with having composed 475,000 devotional songs. He also standardized **Carnatic** music for teaching and pioneered a system of notation still used today. The first raga, musical scale, is believed to be the Hindustani Bhairav, equivalent to the Carnatic Mayamalvagoula, which Purandaradasa instituted as the scale that singers begin their study with. This raga is said to have emanated from Lord Shiva.

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A List of Interesting Sites

- The Bhagavad Gita
- Hinduism: World's Oldest Religion
- Mahabharat: A Myth or a Reality?
- Hinduism Today
- Saraswati River
- Arise Arjuna, Hinduism and the Modern World
- Aryan Invasion Theory Links
- Library of Hindu History
- Hindu Vivek Kendra
- The Hindu Universe
- Perspectives from the Vedas
- Knowledge of Reality
- Introduction to Hinduism
- Nation of Hindutva
- Vishwa Hindu Parishad
- Sword of Truth
- Satyameva Jayate
- Voice of Bharat
- IndiaStar
- FreeIndia
- India's Contribution to World history
- Sanskrit Religions Institute
- Modern Physics and Classical Hinduism
- The Real Bhagvad Gita Site
- Dharma Central
- Puja -Expressions of Hindu Devotion
- The Rig Veda

- Mahabharat
- Ramayana
- Of Cosmic Wakes and Humbler Heavens
- River of Heaven
- East Meets West
- Sanskrit Mantras and Spiritual Power
- SaraNAgathi Journal
- Ellora Caves
- Cosmic Dancer
- Dravidians and the Punjab
- Vivekananda Centre London
- Hinduism for Schools
- A Hindu Dream
- Bhajanwali
- Koenraad Elst's Indology Homepage
- Ram Swarup
- Memorable Writings of Anwar Shaikh - RgVeda
- Arun Shourie's Column
- Bhajan Kirtan
- Bharat - Root of all Western Civilization
- Chanakya
- American Sanskrit Institute
- Ram Carita Yatra-Colgate India Study Group
- Kamat's Potpourri-The History, Mystery and Diversity of India
- Hindu Mythology and beyond
- Shree Siddivinayak Ganapati Temple-Mumbai
- Elephanta Caves
- Organiser
- The Scientific Dating of the Mahabharat War
- The Birth of Ganga
- Vedic Mathematics
- Hindu Bibliography
- Sanatana Dharma Page
- Chinmaya.org
- American Institute of Vedic Studies
- World Views: Vedic Vs Western

- **Welcome to the World of Indian Archaeology**
- **Panchajanya**
- **Shiva - Lord Pervading All Existence**
- **Templenet**
- **The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother**
- **Rameswarnath Tulsi Krit Hanuman Mandir Official Website**
- **Home page of Neo-Hindus**
- **Guyana Hindus**
- **The Aryabhatiya of Aryabhata - By James Q. Jacobs**
- **Ganesh, symbole et presence - Bienvenue sur le site de Ganesh, dieu de l'Inde !**
- **Sivaloka**
- **Om-Guru -Biographies of Saints, Teachers & Seekers in the Indian Tradition**
- **BrahminWorld**
- **Sadhana - Basic information on Hinduism, Yoga and Hindu Philosophy**
- **HinduUnity.com**
- **Kalidas Vedic India**
- **People United for Religious Freedom - Exposing TV Evangelism**
- **Arogya Kendram - Leprosy Eradication Center**
- **karamsad**
- **Savarkar Darshan**
- **ONLINE DARSHAN**
- **Pragna Bharati**
- **Shree Venkataramana Temple**
- **Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India**
- **Nondualistic Vedanta**
- **Voice of India**
- **RamBhajan.com**
- **Templepages**
- **National Institute of Oceanography** (For Information on Dwaraka)
- **Bhaktivedanta Ashram**
- **Vellala site**
- **Tradimodern.com**

- **Hinduism / Indian Civilization discussion group**
- **Venkateshwar Press** - Indological/Indian books
- **Indian History Source Book**
- **Akhila Bharatha Ayyappa Seva Sangham and Sabarimala**
- **Jignasa** (Sharing knowledge forum)
- **Diamond Way Buddhism**
- **Tejo-Mahalaya-Taj Mahal**
- **Taj Mahal and the Great British Conspiracy**
- **A New look at Vedic India**
- **Hinduism - Vande Mataram**
- **Authentic India/Hindu History (Corrected of British Distortions) Timeline/Outline**
- **Racism, History and Lies**
- **Lord Ganesh** (English) and **Lord Ganesh** (Italian)
- **Chitra Tanjore Painting Emporium**
- **Gentile Hellenes** - To restore the Ethnic, Polytheistic, Hellenic Tradition, Religion and Way in contemporary Greek society
- **Kalidas Vedic India** - Devoted to Indian History and Culture
- **JainWorld**
- **The Infinity Foundation**
- **The Hindu Holocaust Memorial Museum**
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- **Stephen Knapp - World Relief Network**
- **Speaking Out Against Prejudice Toward Hinduism and India**
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- **Radio Krishna**
- **Hindu Dharma in Bali**
- **Hindu Sitah**
- **Hindu Force**
- **Samskrita Bharati**

- Back To Godhead
- balagokulam.org
- Life Positive - Holistic Living
- International Forum for India's Heritage
- In the light of Atlantis
- Mayas were Nagas
- Home Page of Vishal Agarwal
- Sri Adi Sankara: Kamakoti.org
- Ayodhya
- Indian History Corrected of British Distortions
- Sanatan Society for Scientific Spirituality
- Articles by Prof. Subhash Kak
- Gurumurthy.net
- Welcome to the world of Hindu Holocaust
- Hindu Panchang
- Truth is God
- VEDA - Vedas and Vedic Knowledge Online
- Hindu Charity
- Good News India
- National Hindu Students Forum (UK)
- India The Beautiful
- IndiaCause.com
- Atlantis - The Lost Continent Finally Found
- Navya Shastra - grassroots activists who want to facilitate positive social and spiritual change for all Hindus
- Navya Shastra group - discussion of shastric reform
- Vindicated by Time: The Niyogi Committee Report On Christian Missionary Activities
- Blessings On The Net
- Hindu Jagran
- Gandhiexposed.com
- Vandematram.com
- Behind the Axis of Evil!
- Vigil - Public Opinion Forum
- Hindu Human Rights
- Specialreport

- Valmiki Ramayana
- True Story of the Dangs
- Evidence For The Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir
- Sign the Petition - For Plight of Hindu Woman in Bihar
- Sun Temples in India
- Kalnirnay
- The Scientific Dating of Mahabharata
- Indian Philosophers
- Kanchan Mishra Rescue Campaign
- faithfreedom International
- Gateway to Ancient India
- Sri Narasingha Chaitanya Matha
- saranam.com
- Indian Classical Music
- Read Bhagavad Gita
- Global Dharma Conference 2003 - "Explore, Express and Experience Dharma "
  July 25- 27th 2003, Edison, NJ, USA.
- Bharat, a country, a collection of cultures
- http://www.bharatvani.org/klugethapar.html
- Protest US Supported Marxist Assault Against Hindus
- The Arun Shourie Site
- DharmicScriptures.org
- NewDharma.org
- Jennifer A. Polan's page on Hinduism
- The Vedas and the Original Sin
- Scientific Thought - The Indian Way
- Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
- Vedic World
- Saivism website
- hamsa.org
- Esamskriti.com
- Aspiring India
- Hinduism.co.za
- Chandra & David's Homepage - Indian Music
- Next Future - Sri Aurobindo Society

- **Indians Against Christian Aggression**
- **Francois Gautier**
- **Introduction - Inde**
- **The Vedic Foundation**
- **Vedic Astrology**
- **Petition Against the Book insulting Lord Ganesha and Hinduism**
- **Hinduism - By Arvind Sharma - Encyclopedia Article in Encarta**
- **The French Institute of Pondicherry**
- **India Shining**
- **Glasgow University Hindu Society**
- **Indpride.com**
- **Indian Institute of Scientific Heritage**
- **indowave.com**
- **Hindu Numeric System**
- **Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum**
- **Dr. Karan Singh**
- **Shree Siddhivinayak Temple**
- **Jai Mataji**
- **India First Foundation**
- **Sacred texts - Hinduism**
- **Vijnana Bharati**
- **Brahman (God) in Hinduism**

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- **Where there's no will to reform, there's extinction - Varsha Bhosle**
- **Sewa International**

- **Let India Develop Campaign - sign the Petition**
- **IDRF serves meals to homeless in Houston**
- **The Organized Labor of Hate**
- **The Foreign Exchange of Hate: IDRF and the American Funding of Hindutva -- An Analysis**
- **Facts about IDRF**
- **A Factual Response to the Hate Attack on IDRF - Friends of India**

(Please note: Some sites have been suggested by readers).

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Did You Know?



Cow Dung is antiseptic! Not only is it free from bacteria, it does a good job of killing it. India's cows produce more than 800 million tons of dung every year. Most is used as fertilizer and some to prepare **vibhuti,** holy ash. Dried dung is odorless, and produces a slow, even heat. Additionally, smoke from a dung fire keeps flies away and acts as a mosquito repellent. Packed on the outside walls of a house, cow dung acts as an insulator, keeping heat out in the summer and holding it inside in winter.

India Losing on Patents ?

Indraprasth, Dec 8 (UNI) - **After Neem, turmeric and jamun, now it is cow's urine, traditionally used for medicinal purposes in India, which has been patented in the United States as a distilled bio-enhancer.**

The government was aware of this fact and was considering the steps to be taken in this regard, official sources said here.

Cow's urine is a component of 'Panch Gawya,' a mixture of cow's milk, curd, ghee, urine and dung, used from ancient times as a component of food and medicine. It is also used in various ayurvedic medicines.

Though there was no separate strategy for popularizing use of Panch Gawya, it was being popularised as part of

the popularisation of the Indian System of Medicine and Health medicines, they said.

Now with the patenting of Cow's urine has confirmed the belief of naturopaths that it has got medicinal properties which enhances the life span. Former Prime Minister Morarji Desai was among the staunch supporters of cow' urine.

Earlier, the patenting of turmeric and neem in the US had created a furore in the country as people protested the patenting of traditional Indian knowledge abroad.

Recently, the **Jamun fruits that has been widely used in the Indian system for treatment of diabetes, has been patented in the US.**

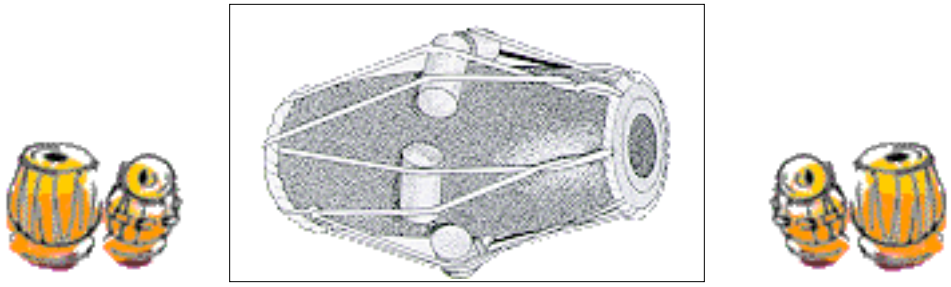
(source: **Cow's urine patented in US as bio-enhancer - The Hindu** December 6' 02).

Holy cow!

A US patent has been granted to Indian scientists on the use of cow urine distillate as bio-enhancer. A combination of Indian traditional wisdom and modern science led to the unique US patent No 6,410,059 granted on June 25, 2002. The patent has been granted for a pharmaceutical composition containing an antibiotic and cow urine distillate in an amount effective to enhance the anti-microbial effects of antibiotic and anti fungal agents. The invention relates to a novel use of cow urine as activity enhancer and availability facilitator for bioactive molecules, including anti-infective and anti-cancer agents. The invention has direct implication in drastically reducing the dosage of antibiotics, drugs and anti-cancer agent while increasing the efficiency of absorption of bio-active molecules, thereby reducing the cost of treatment and also the side-effects due to toxicity. The use of cow urine is known for a long time in India. Gaw-mutra (cow's urine) has been described as a substance with innumerable therapeutic values in **Sushrita Samhita** and **Ashtanga Sangraha**. However, the biological activity of cow's urine was not tested scientifically.

(source: **dailypioneer.com**).

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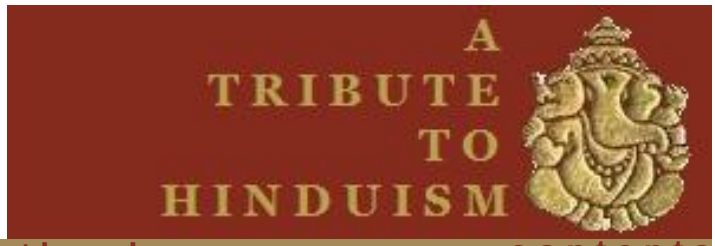


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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003



Entries: 910-861

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Date: 3/15/04 - 5:19 AM
Name: Martijn
Email: m.dupre@chello.nl
Site:
Location: Amsterdam. Netherlands.
Comments: Thanks for this Excellent Site. I am a Dutch man and already during my studies of Psychology I was never satisfied with the contemporary approach in the West. Always I had the feeling that there is such an immense amount of ancient knowledge in India. Books like 'the tao of physics' and 'Dancing wu li masters' opened a way for me. Later I started reading books on Buddhism and Hinduism, Advaita, Chatterji ' Wisdom of the Vedas' and so much more. And I know now that my feeling was correct. What we in the West have been taught at school and at the University, is so incomplete and incorrect at times. In short I am so happy with your site. It is a great portal to a much wider world view!

Date: 3/13/04 - 11:29 PM
Name: Siddharth
Email: stunninglooks@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: Great Website. Please keep up the good work. Don't hesitate to e-mail me for any kind of help.

Date: 3/11/04 - 12:39 PM
Name: Hemanga Dasa
Email: hemanga.hks@pamho.net
Site:

Location: Germany.

Comments: Dear all, I like your great website and I am pleased to share the following links with you: http://de.geocities.com/abhagaur2000/free_veda_online_pool.htm http://de.geocities.com/abhagaur2000/Spirituelle_vegetarische_Rezepte_links.htm http://de.geocities.com/hemangaji/linklisten.htm http://de.geocities.com/hspornhauer/Kuhschutz.htm Astrological Aura, get a color coded map of your personality Welcome to our Free On-line Vastu Consultation Ayurveda Consultation. New Delhi Temple: http://geocities.com/dharmainstitute/vedicexpobillboard.htm ISKCON HINDUJA VEDIK EXPO, 3 super hightech attractions, guaranteed to inspire and enlighten you. Featuring: Sound & Light Show - Animantronics Robot Show - The Quadeascope & more http://geocities.com/dharmainstitute/vedicexpo.htm India`s culture rediscovered. German temples http://www.goloka-dhama.de/ ISKCON-Tempel Abentheuer ISKCON Berlin http://www.harekrishna.at/site/deutsch/iskconberlin/ ISKCON-Tempel Berlin Bhakti Yoga Centre http://www.bhaktiyogacentre.net/index-de.html ISKCON-Tempel Hamburg ISKCON Köln http://www.krishna-tempel.de/ Krishna-Tempel Köln Krishna in Weimar http://home.t-online.de/home/krishnainweimar/ ISKCON-Gruppe Weimar ISKCON Wiesbaden http://www.iskconwiesbaden.de/ ISKCON-Gruppe Wiesbaden Krishna Tempel online http://www.krishnatempel.de/ ISKCON-Tempel München Nava-Jiyada-Nrishimha-Kshetra http://www.narasimha.net/ Farmgemeinschaft Jandelsbrunn/Bayr. Wald (inzwischen wohl offline...) ISKCON Zürich http://www.krishna.ch/ Website des Zürcher Krishna-Tempels ISKCON Wien http://www.harekrishna.at/ ISKCON-Tempel Wien krishna.at http://www.krishna.at/

Date: 3/10/04 - 12:37 PM

Name: Chandu

Email: iamchandub4u@rediffmail.com

Site:

Location: Mumbai, India.

Comments: Excellent. great. This site is very very good. Thanks for maintaining a good site. We Hindus have to protect our culture. All the best.

Date: 3/8/04 - 11:33 AM

Name: Rawindranath Ganeshji

Email: rsganeshie@zonnet.nl

Site:

Location: Nootdorp, The Netherlands.

Comments: Jai Hind, As a Hindu in Holland, I appreciate (the outstanding quality of this) site. It gives me and the community a lot of new insights in Hinduism as it was, is and should be...The awakening has started! bahut dhanbaad. Rawindranath.

Date: 3/6/04 - 11:32 PM
Name: Shyam Patel
Email: krazydayz47@aol.com
Site:
Location: Illinois, United States of America.
Comments: I am currently a student in the United States. This Internet publication has taught me much about my culture, my heritage, and my religion. I am extremely fascinated learning about Hinduism, the dominant religion of India that emphasizes dharma with its resulting ritual and social observances. Often with mystical contemplation and ascetic practices, Hinduism is an ancient religion like no other.

Date: 3/6/04 - 8:47 AM
Name: Rajesh Soni
Email: rajeshsoni@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Dubai (U.A.E).
Comments: Very informative website . keep it up

Date: 3/4/04 - 11:43 AM
Name: Swami Param
Email: classyoga@aol.com
Site:
Location: Manahawkin, New Jersey U.S.A.
Comments: Thank you for A Tribute To Hinduism! The Dharma is reaching out to many Souls. Here in America, many are interested in the many Yogas of our religion. Of course, sadly, the Hindu connection is not always made when presenting the classic Yogas. Here at the Classical Yoga Hindu Academy, we join with all other Hindus in offering this profound religion. Jai Sanatana Dharma!

Date: 3/4/04 - 4:55 AM
Name: Hitesh Pravinchundra Hurkchand
Email: hhurkchand@csir.co.za
Site:
Location: Johannesburg, South Africa.
Comments: This website opens my eyes to the richness and vastness of Indian heritage and history. It teaches/taught me of things that contradicts the indoctrinations of Western civilization. It is so rich and diverse however it pains me to think of the perversions and brutality that such a spiritual culture, throughout centuries, had to endure. Thank you for a very insightful website.

Date: 3/3/04 - 10:23 PM
Name: Vasant Keny
Email: vasantkeny@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: La Palma, California, USA.
Comments: Congratulations for creating this superb site. There is a wealth of information here. Extremely well organized. I know there are other sites that give Sanskrit Shlokas with their translations in English. I could not find it here. Is there some way that you could link to these sites ? It would be fantastic for Sanskrit language lovers like me. If needed I can volunteer to translate Sanskrit Shlokas for this site. Vasant Keny.

Date: 3/2/04 - 7:52 AM
Name: Arun Singh K
Email: k_arun_s2002@yahoo.co.in
Site:
Location: Bangalore, India.
Comments: This website is very good. I feel this web site is simply super. That's it.

Date: 2/27/04 - 3:55 AM
Name: Raghavendra K. Upadhya
Email: rk_upadhya@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Bangalore, INDIA.

Comments: This is the most excellent work on HINDUISM that I have ever seen on web. It is very informative/educative and I wish that the Governments in India (State and Central) include this in the education curriculum and educate every Indian about the "GLORY OF HINDUISM" instead of teaching things like "Aryans came to India and pushed Dravidians down south" which is just a myth. I wholeheartedly praise and appreciate the efforts put in to develop this site, which has come out "EXCELLENT". KEEP GOING.

Date: 2/26/04 - 10:43 PM
Name: Allaine Carreon
Email: allaine18@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Manila, Philippines.
Comments: the site is very nice and very interesting!!! I found out that Hinduism was very profound and complex topic. And also a religion of mystery.... More power to the site!!!

Date: 2/23/04 - 12:24 PM
Name: Raj Sharda
Email: rksharda2003@yahoo.co.uk
Site:
Location: West Midlands, England.
Comments: It is one of the most interesting and informative Hindu sites which covers all aspects of Hinduism. I feel illuminated after reading some of the elevating articles about our great religion. Regards.

Date: 2/20/04 - 5:25 PM
Name: Shrikanth
Email: 08366@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: I have yet to come across a site as tastefully and substantially presented as this. A wonderful source for material on Hinduism. A really amazing effort by the people who put it up online. I would be happy to pay to view this site if it would help in any way to keep it updated and growing.

Date: 2/16/04 – 4:42 PM
Name: Manmohan Kumar
Email: mohan26@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: Hinduism=Humanity=Hinduism. Hinduism is Humanity. Humanity is Hinduism. With Hinduism; Humanity lives. Who lives if Humanity (Hinduism) dies.

Date: 2/14/04 – 4:54 PM
Name: Eric Bondman
Email: bondman622002@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: Wonderful site. But I can't help to think how wonderful the world would be if everyone understood the beautiful blessing of the knowledge that is Hinduism. May the light be turned on in everyone's soul.

Date: 2/12/04 – 1:45 AM
Name: Nilasis Ghosh Dastidar
Email: nilasis@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: New Delhi, India.
Comments: Excellent work. A Great learning experience. I would love to see some detailed literature on ancient and mediaeval wars as well as weapons, especially types of swords used that time. The question comes to mind is that how come such a great warrior and knowledgeable nation like India could bow before the invaders.

Date: 2/11/04 – 7:48 PM
Name: CVHS
Email:
Site:
Location: California. USA.
Comments: Thank you for your extensive research - I used a lot of information in my project.

Date: 2/11/04 – 6:50 AM
Name: Surya S
Email: surya_iitm@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: IIT Madras, India.
Comments: Its really great. Being the coordinator of a small student group dedicated to Hinduism, I can understand how much efforts have been put in making this site.

Date: 2/6/04 – 8:21 AM
Name: Harishankar Kannan
Email: hari_k@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: United Kingdom.
Comments: I have just seen a couple of pages in your site and realized the wealth of information it has. Went through your guest book before making my own entry and I only, totally agree with the rest of people that this is a wonderful site and surely I am coming back for more of it. Tremendous job and do keep up the great work, dear editor. With warmest regards.

Date: 2/5/04 – 2:55 PM
Name: Raju Sagi
Email: rsagi@comcast.net
Site:
Location: Chicago, USA.
Comments: I wish to call your attention to an excellent article by an outstanding Indo-American, Dr. C. Alex Alexander entitled " Proselytization In India: An Indian Christian's Perspective,". I would like to see the content of this 'objective and significant' article incorporated into the content of your wonderful site.

Date: 2/5/04 – 2:45 PM
Name: Vasudha
Email:

Site:

Location: University of Georgia. USA.

Comments: I am currently taking a religion class on Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The professor, who is an atheist, is constantly questioning me on various aspects of Hinduism. I have referred to this website several times and find myself engrossed with the readings. Many times I spend hours upon hours and forget about all else! This website has answered any question that arises in my mind about the faith and my devotion to Hinduism has never been stronger. Thank you.

Date: 2/2/04 – 3:15 AM

Name: Sanjay Pattel

Email: san_pat@yahoo.co.uk

Site:

Location: London, United Kingdom.

Comments: This is one of the best and more interesting sites I've seen so far concerning the true meanings of Hinduism and our true history. I bow before you, Pranam.

Date: 2/1/04 – 7:58 PM

Name: Ankur

Email: jaihind2304538@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: West Bengal, India.

Comments: Absolutely the best site on Hinduism on the net. I am interested in military history, and the section "War in Ancient India" is second to none. I have not even looked through the entire site yet, but the parts I looked at had an incredible wealth of information. Keep up the excellent work!

Date: 2/1/04 – 9:15 AM

Name: Dipamrita

Email: dipamrita@wanadoo.fr

Site:

Location: France.

Comments: Om. The most documented, illustrated, inspiring site I have seen on India and Hinduism so far... What a work and what a love for India! Thanks! May truth prevail! Dipamrita.

Date: 2/1/04 – 2:34 AM

Name: Alvin Liu Choon Yoong

Email: alvinliuing@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Singapore.

Comments: I was looking for more information on the Ganesh and Nataraja statues my Indian friends gave me and I stumbled on your site. Amazing site you got here! I appreciate and admire the Hindu culture and philosophies very much, and I must say u have got a very comprehensive site here. I got the information I needed and more! I read the history part and liked it a lot, I also really like the part on the oppression by the Europeans, something my race(Chinese) can relate too as well. Keep up the great work!

Date: 1/28/04 - 4:11 PM

Name: Pushpraj Verma

Email: rajsarit@msn.com

Site:

Location: Georgia, USA.

Comments: I truly appreciate the hard work in pulling together facts about our great religion. The quotes and insights are absolutely convincing. All I say is big thank you and request for keeping it up!

Date: 1/27/04 - 3:10 AM

Name: Kaushik Sridharan

Email: atributetohinduism.5.chipmunk@spamgourmet.com

Site:

Location: Bellevue, WA, USA.

Comments: This is one of the most balanced sites on the Indian way of life that I have seen. Congratulations on a job well done! Please do continue to maintain editorial control over your Web site. It is important that the quality and more importantly, the variety and perspective of the site be maintained. Thank you for all the hard work, and keep it up!

Date: 1/25/04 - 3 :17 PM

Name: Geethakrishna Srihari
Email: geethakrishnasrihari@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Chennai, Tamil Nadu - India.
Comments: A good website. Please mail me if you have hard copy of it. I am ready to buy it whatever the cost may be. Hare Krishna.

Date: 1/22/04 - 5 :25 PM
Name: Preeti
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: This truly is a wonderful resource on Hinduism. I haven't been able to find many sites as comprehensive and easy to read as this one. You really have done your research, and I do appreciate your sharing this wealth of information with us. I also like the recommended books, images and links. While I was reading Glimpses I, it was upsetting to read about many Westerners' negative attitude towards Indians and Hindus. We can only pray for them, and hope that the ignorant will learn how to be tolerable of differences in others. It is through websites like this that people learn the actual truth, and not believe what they may hear from others. I bookmarked this website about a week ago, knowing that I would visit it frequently, because it really is a gem. Thank you very much. Jai Mata Di.

Date: 1/19/04 - 8:04 PM
Name: Anand Surve
Email: surveanand@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: My first impressions/reaction of this site was like a kid in a candy store. I feel a sense of spiritual calmness on every page I read. Please keep up the spirit alive.

Date: 1/18/04 - 6:27 AM
Name: Gopi Krishnan
Email: xecurenet@yahoo.com
Site:

Location: Singapore.

Comments: Excellent site ! A vast array of articles showing the depth in Hinduism. Keep up the great work & best of luck for your site. I hope this site can reach as many people as possible. I am proud to be a Hindu !

Date: 1/18/04 - 6: 11 AM

Name: Sandeep Pathak

Email: spathak_brt@yahoo.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Really a great site. U have really done a favour to HINDUS by spreading their views all over..All the best..

Date: 1/15/04 - 6:51 AM

Name: Harish

Email: harishonchat@yaho.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Really Excellent. Those who are interested please visit this site also - www.iish.org

---

Date: 1/12/04 - 2:29 PM

Name: Jay

Email: docmaharaj@lantic.net

Site:

Location: South Africa.

Comments: Keep up the good work in being so informative to the people seeking to learn. Long may your endeavours continue.

Date: 1/9/04 - 4:15 PM

Name: Senthil Kumar

Email: nskumar2004@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Virginia, USA.

Comments: Great site. When I read "The Art of War". I wondered whether we had any written manuals on warfare and wanted to know more about our approach towards war. There was lot of information on that. I don't have words to describe your contribution. I am sure this whole site must be the result of lot of research. Hat 's off for that.

Date: 1/9/04 - 12:32 PM

Name: Vladimir Wiedemann

Email: wiedemann@mail.ru

Site:

Location: Berlin, Germany.

Comments: Very nice and interesting site! I had a lot of fun while surfing it thru. Definitely, I'll be back!

Date: 1/9/04 - 11:58 AM

Name: Glasgow University Hindu Society

Email: guhs2002@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Glasgow, United Kingdom.

Comments: Excellent Site... Full of information... Keep up the good work GUHS TEAM http://www.gla.ac.uk/clubs/hindu

---

Date: 1/6/04 - 7:40 AM

Name: Poonam Bhikha

Email: poonambhikha@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Durban, South Africa.

Comments: This is a brilliant site. I am a graphic designer in Durban, studying for my B Tech & my line of research is the design in Indian Culture. Would it be a problem if I used the information from this site for my research & my Exhibition. It would be great if I could speak directly to the person in charge of this site to explain further about my project & what I am planning to do. Who knows.... maybe I'll also be able to assist with the site.

Date: 1/5/04 - 6 :17 AM
Name: Raj Sheth
Email: dreamraj5679@yahoo.co.in
Site:
Location: Bharuch, India.
Comments: Hello! ... Wish you a very happy and prosperous new year... This site is very good... Well, i would like to know one detail... I am reading some pages of this site...So, there i found about [Gopal Naik] {Baiju Bawara} the great musician... Well, i want to know the meaning of the name [{(BAIJU)}]. i tried to search on the web but unable to get the info.. So, can you please give me the meaning of the name... Thanks & Regards, Raj Sheth.

Date: 1/2/04 - 12:56 PM
Name: Arvind Singh
Email: arvindintrinidad@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Trinidad.
Comments: A phenomenal achievement. This site has marked the end of my searching the internet for at least two weeks now. I have not gone through the entire site yet but I have not seen anything on the bridge at rameshwaram. Here is a link to the sattelite pics if you dont already have them. http://www.indolink.com/Religion/r091702-130924.php. A huge effort on the greatest of civilizations yielding no less than a magnificent piece of work. keep it up. (Note: For the bridge at Rameshwaram, refer to chapter on Glimpses_IV).

Date: 1/1/04 - 5:20 PM
Name: Subramaniam Thuraisingam
Email:
Site:
Location: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Comments: I have been reading so many articles from various sites about Hinduism and I find that this is the site that fully covers all about Hinduism. Thank You.

Date: 1/1/04 - 12:07 AM

Name: Ravin Navneet Deo
Email: s99007748@student.usp.ac.fj
Site:
Location: Suva, Fiji Islands.
Comments: A truly great work. I have spent endless nights on this site.

Date: 12/30/03 - 8:32 PM
Name: Martha MacLeod
Email: macleodmartha@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Fargo, North Dakota, USA.
Comments: I salute the God in You and the God in Me.

Date: 12/30/03 - 6:41 AM
Name: Chandra Sekhar B
Email: bhagics@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: India.
Comments: I am very happy to see this site. World should know, who we are and what we are.

Date: 12/27/03 - 8:19 AM
Name: Ganesh Babu
Email: gb@comfyonline.com
Site:
Location: Australia.
Comments: Love is God.

Date: 12/23/03 - 11:57 PM
Name: Pratyush Pattanaik
Email: pratyush@yorku.ca

Site:

Location: North York, Ontario, Canada.

Comments: Great Site, great content. Fulfills a much needed site to explain to the Western World as well as most Indian people about the true import of Hinduism.

Date: 12/23/03 - 12:54 PM

Name: Pooran Kanta

Email: pokan2000@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: El Socorrro, Trinidad & Tobago - West Indies.

Comments: For many years the true meaning of our scriptures and idols has been shrouded by Western world. This web site has rekindled my faith in Hindu teaching. This is an absolute fantastic site. I will invite all to this site, those who are interested in knowing the truth. Great site for Hindus of the Diaspora.

Date: 12/23/03 - 12:53 PM

Name: Ram Odedra

Email:

Site:

Location: United Kingdom.

Comments: Content is outstanding - great history section. All the best.

Entries: 910-861

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Show in alphabetical order



321. **Srinivas Ramanujan** (1887-1920) is one of India's legendary intellectual heroes, hailed as one of the greatest Mathematician of India and compared to all time greats, Euler, Gauss and Jacobi, for natural genius, is an eternal source of inspiration, especially for the student of mathematics. Today's mathematicians --armed with supercomputers -- are still star-struck, and unable to solve many theorems the slate-scribbling mathematician, too poor for paper, erasing his errors with one elbow young man from India. Ramanujan spawned a zoo of mathematical creatures that delight, confound and humble his peers. They call them "beautiful," "humble," "transcendent," and marvel how he reduced very complex terrain to simple shapes. G H Hardy, brightest mathematician in England, later wrote: "A single look at them is enough to show that they could only be written down by a mathematician of the highest class. They must be true, for if they were not true, no one would have the imagination to invent them."

Ramanujan was a mathematician so great his name transcends jealousies, the one superlatively great mathematician whom India has produced in the last hundred years. "His leaps of intuition confound mathematicians even today, seven decades after his death. ..the brilliant, self-taught Indian mathematician whose work contains some of the most beautiful ideas in the history of science. His legacy has endured. His twenty-one major mathematical papers are still being plumbed for their secrets, and many of his ideas are used today in cosmology and computer science. His theorems are being applied in areas - polymer chemistry, computers, cancer research - scarcely imaginable during his lifetime. **His mathematical insights yet leave mathematicians baffled that anyone could divine them in the first place.**'

A mathematical genius who ascribed his brilliance to a personal relationship with a Hindu Goddess. He saw the divine in the dance of numbers.

The inexhaustible Ramanujan was an **observant Hindu**, adept at dream interpretation and astrology. His work was marked by bold leaps and gut feelings. Growing up he had learned to worship **Namagiri, the consort of the lion god Narasimha**. **Ramanujan believed that he existed to serve as Namagiri´s champion - Hindu Goddess of creativity. In real life Ramanujan told people that Namagiri visited him in his dreams and wrote equations on his tongue**.



Ramanujan could never explain to G H Hardy how he arrived at his deep insights in mathematical terms; **but he did say many of his discoveries came to him in dreams, from the goddess Namakkal, and that he had a morning ritual of awakening and writing them down.**

He was intensely religious. He often united mathematics and spirituality together. He felt, for example, that zero represented Absolute Reality, and that infinity represented the many manifestations of that Reality. Ramanujan felt that each mathematical discovery was a step closer to understanding the spiritual universe. He once told a friend, "An equation for me has no meaning unless it expresses a thought of God."

While growing up, he lived the life of a traditional Brahmin with his forehead shaved and wearing a topknot. He often prayed to his family Deity, the **Goddess Namagiri of Namakkal,** and followed Her advice. Namakkal is also called as "Namagiri". He pilgrimaged all over Tamil Nadu. He quoted the **Vedas,** interpreted dreams and was regarded by his friends to be a mystic. **Throughout his life, Ramanujan worshiped at the Sarangapani Vishnu temple in Kumbakonam.**

(source: **Ramanujan** and **Computing the Mathematical face of God**) (source: **Hit Play on Ramanujan** and **A Baffling Mind - By Iraja Sivadas - Hinduism Today** Oct/Nov/December 2003 p. 60 -62).

Mathematicians have mined his theorems ever since. They've figured out how to prove them. They've put them to use. Only recently, a lost bundle of his notebooks turned up in a Cambridge library. That set mathematics off on a whole new voyage of discovery. And where did all this unproven truth come from? Ramanujan was quick to tell us. He simply prayed to **Sarasvathi, the Goddess of Learning,** and she informed him. **The unsettling thing is, none of us can find any better way to explain the magnitude of his eerie brilliance.**

(source: http://www.uh.edu/engines/epi495.htm **- John H. Lienhard** and **The Man Who Knew Infinity: A Life of the Genius Ramanujan - by Robert Kanigel**).

He wasn't spiritually preoccupied, but he was steeped in the reality and beneficence of the **Deities, especially the Goddess Namagiri.** Math, of course, was his intellectual and spiritual touchstone. No one really knows how early in life Ramanujan awakened to the psychic visitations of Namagiri, much less how the interpenetration of his mind and the Goddess' worked.

(source: **Computing the Mathematical Face of God: S. Ramanujan**). (Unlike most other major religions, Hindu myth and theology contain ancient and deep mathematical threads, with particular accomplishments in Number Theory and a joyous spontaneity about huge numbers. An Indian stamp issued in 1962 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Ramanujan's birth).



322. **Georges Ifrah** (?) French historian of Mathematics and author of the book, **The Universal History of Numbers**

"The Indian mind has always had for calculations and the handling of numbers an extraordinary inclination, ease and power, such as no other civilization in history ever possessed to the same degree. So much so that Indian culture regarded the science of numbers as the noblest of its arts...A thousand years ahead of Europeans, Indian savants knew that the zero and infinity were mutually inverse notions."

(source: **Histoire Universelle des Chiffres - By Georges Ifrah** Paris - Robert Laffont, 1994, volume 2. p. 3).

Claiming India to be the true birthplace of our numerals, Ifrah salutes the Indian researchers saying that the "...real inventors of this fundamental discovery, which is no less important than such feats as the mastery of fire, the development of agriculture, or the invention of the wheel, writing or the steam engine, were the mathematicians and astronomers of the Indian civilization: scholars who, unlike the Greeks, were concerned with practical applications

and who were motivated by a kind of passion for both numbers and numerical calculations."

He refers to 24 evidences from scriptures from India, whose dates range from 1150 BC until 458 BC. Of particular interest is the work by Indian mathematician **Bhaskaracharya** known as Bhaskara (1150 BC) where he makes a reference to zero and the place-value system were invented by the god **Brahma**. In other words, these notions were so well established in Indian thought and tradition that at this time they were considered to have always been used by humans, and thus to have constituted a **"revelation" of the divinities.**

"It was only after the eighth century BC, and doubtless due to the influence of the Indian Buddhist missionaries, that Chinese mathematicians introduced the use of zero in the form of a little circle or dot (signs that originated in India),...".

The early passion which Indian civilization had for high numbers was a significant factor contributing to the discovery of the place-value system, and not only offered the Indians the incentive to go beyond the "calculable" physical world, but also led to an understanding (much earlier than in our civilization) of the notion of mathematical infinity itself.



“The real inventors of [the numeral system], which is no less important than such feats as the mastery of fire, the development of agriculture, or the invention of the wheel, writing or the steam engine, were the mathematicians and astronomers of Indian civilization: scholars who, unlike the Greeks, were concerned with practical applications and who were motivated by a kind of passion for both numbers and numerical calculations.”

Sanskrit notation had an excellent conceptual quality. It was easy to use and moreover it facilitated the conception of the highest imaginable numbers. This is why it was so well suited to the most exuberant numerical or arithmetical-cosmogonic speculations of Indian culture."

"The Indian people were the only civilization to take the decisive step towards the perfection of numerical notation. We owe the discovery of modern numeration and the elaboration of the very foundations of written calculations to India alone."

"**It is clear how much we owe to this brilliant civilization, and not only in the field of arithmetic; by opening the way to the generalization of the concept of the number, the Indian scholars enabled the rapid development of mathematics and exact sciences. The discoveries of these men doubtless required much time and imagination, and above all a great ability for abstract thinking. These major discoveries took place within an environment which was at once mystical, philosophical, religious, cosmological, mythological and metaphysical."**

"In India, an aptitude for the study of numbers and arithmetical research was often combined with a surprising tendency towards **metaphysical abstractions;** in fact, the latter is so deeply ingrained in Indian thought and tradition that one meets it in all fields of study, from the most advanced mathematical ideas to disciplines completely unrelated to 'exact sciences.

In short, Indian science was born out of a mystical and religious culture and the etymology of the Sanskrit words used to describe numbers and the science of numbers bears witness to this fact. "

"Sanskrit means “complete”, “perfect” and “definitive”. In fact, this language is **extremely elaborate**, almost artificial, and is capable of describing **multiple levels of meditation, states of consciousness and psychic, spiritual and even intellectual processes.** As for vocabulary, its richness is considerable and highly diversified. Sanskrit has for centuries lent itself admirably to the diverse rules of prosody and versification. Thus we can see why poetry has played such a preponderant role in all of Indian culture and Sanskrit literature. "

(source: **The Universal History of Numbers - By Georges Ifrah** p 365 - 441). For more refer to chapter on

GlimpsesIX and Hindu Culture1).



323. **Sir Lepel Henry Griffin** (1840-1908) Knight Indian Civil Servant. President, East India Association and the diplomatic representative at Kabul of the Indian government. Author of several books including **The Rajas of the Punjab**; being the history of the principal states in the Punjab and their political relations with the British government and **The Great Republic**. At a a meeting of the East India Association held at the Westminister Palace Hotel, London in December, 1901, he reported as paying the following tribute to Indian morality:

"The **Hindu creed is monotheistic and of very high ethical value**; and when I look back on my life in India and the thousands of good friends I have left there among all classes of the native community, when I remember those honorable, industrious, orderly, law-abiding, sober, manly men, **I look over England and wonder whether there is anything in Christianity which can give a higher ethical creed than that which is now professed by the large majority of the people of India.** I do not see it in London society, I do not see it in the slums of the East End, I do not see it on the London Stock Exchange. I think that the morality of India will compare very favorably with the morality of any country in Western Europe."

(source: **India in Bondage: Her Right to Freedom - By Rev. Jabez T. Sunderland** p. 329 - 330).

324. **Dr. Radhakumud Mookerji** (1884 -1964) distinguished historian and author of several books including **Hindu civilization** (from the earliest times up to the establishment of Maurya empire), **Ancient Indian education**; Brahmanical and Buddhist and **Indian shipping: a history of the seaborne trade and maritime activity of the Indians from the earliest times**. He writes:

"The first point of distinction is that the Vedas and especially the primordial work known as the Rig Veda, represents not merely the dawn of culture, but also **its zenith. Indian thought is seen at its highest in the Rig Veda**. ...On the one hand it is the first book of India and also of mankind. At the same time it shows the highest point of human wisdom. We see in it the whole process of evolution from its beginning to the completion."

(source: **The Call of the Vedas - By A C Bose** p. 16).

"For full thirty centuries India stood out as the very heart of the old world and maintained her position as one of the foremost maritime countries. She had colonies in Pegu, in Cambodia, in Java in Sumatra, in Borneo and even in the countries of the Farther East as far as Japan. She had trading settlements in Southern China, in the Malayan Peninsula, in Arabia and in all the chief cities of Persia and all over the East Coast of Africa. She cultivated trade relations not only with the countries of Asia, but with the whole of the then known world, including the countries under the dominion of the Roman Empire, and both the East and West became the theatre of Indian commercial activity and gave scope of her naval energy and throbbing international life."

"We now know that many ports on both Eastern and Western Coast had navigational and trade links with almost all Continents of the world. There are many natural and technological reasons for this. **Apart from Mathematics and Astronomy, India had excellent manufacturing skills in textile, metal works and paints. India had abundant supply of Timber. Indian - built ships were superior as they were built of Teak which resists the effect of salt water and weather for a very long time."**

(source: **Indian Shipping: A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Maritime Activity of the Indians From the Earliest Times - By R. K. Mookerjee** p. 4). For more refer to chapters **Seafaring in Ancient India** and **Suvarnabhumi**).



325. **Diana L. Eck** (?) Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and Member of the Faculty of Divinity, Harvard University. Her work on India includes the books **Banaras, City of Light** and **Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India.**

"Hinduism is an imaginative, an "image-making, religious tradition in which the sacred is seen as present in the visible world – the world we see in multiple images and deities, in sacred places, and in people. The notion of darsan call attention as students of **Hinduism, to the fact that India is a visual and visionary culture**, one in which the eyes have a prominent role in the apprehension of the sacred. For most ordinary Hindus, the notion of the divine as "invisible" would be foreign indeed. God is eminently visible, although human beings have not always had the refinement of sight to see. Furthermore, the divine is visible not only in temple and shrine, but also in the whole continuum of life – in nature, in people, in birth and growth and death. Although some Hindus, both philosophers and radical reformers, have always used the terms "nirguna"(qualityless) and nirakara (formless) to speak of the One Brahman. Yet the same tradition has simultaneously affirmed that Brahman is also saguna (with qualities) and that the multitude of "names and forms" of this world are the exuberant transformations of the One Brahman."

"India presents to the visitor an overwhelmingly visual impression. It is beautiful, colorful, sensuous. It is captivating and intriguing, repugnant and puzzling. It combines the intimacy and familiarity of English four o'clock tea with the dazzling foreignness of carpisoned elephants or vast crowds bathing in the Ganga during an eclipse. India's displays of multi-armed images, its processions and its pilgrimages, its beggars and its kings, its street life and markets, its diversity of people – all appear to the eye in a kaleidoscope of images. **Whatever Hindus affirm of the meaning of life, death, and suffering, they affirm with their eyes wide open.** Many westerners, for example, upon seeing Hindu rituals observances for the first time, are impressed with how **sensuous Hindu worship is. It is sensuous in that it makes full use of the senses – seeing, touching, smelling, tasting and hearing.** One "sees" the image of the deity (darsan). One "touches" it with one's hands (sparsa), and one also "touches" the limbs of one's own body to establish the presence of various deities (nyasa). One "hears" the sacred sound of the mantras (sravana). The ringing of bells, the offering of oil lamps, the presentation of flowers, the pouring of water and milk, the sipping of sanctified liquid offerings, the eating of consecrated foods- prasad – these are the basic constituents of Hindu worship, Puja." For all its famous otherworldliness, India is a culture that has also celebrated the life of this world and the realms of the senses.

(source: **Darsan - Seeing the Divine Image in India - By Diana L Eck** Anima Books. Page 10 - 12).



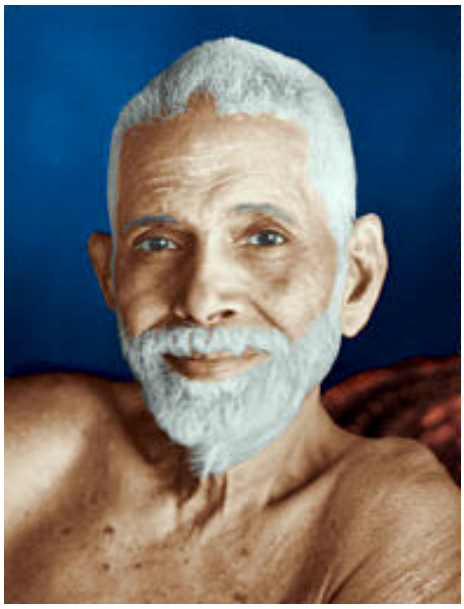
Benares: It antiquity has caught the imagination of many.
(source: Painting of Benares - By William Hodges - 1780 - Indian Art - By Vidya Dehejia p. 384).

She has written about the city of **Banaras**:

"It was an awesome city - captivating, challenging, and endlessly fascinating - Banaras raised some of the questions about the Hindu tradition which have interested me ever since - its complex mythological imagination, its prodigious display of divine images, its elaborate ritual traditions, and its understanding of the relation of life and death. It was Banaras that turned me to the study of India and the Hindu religious tradition."

"For over 2,500 years this city, also called Varanasi, has attracted pilgrims and seekers from all over India. Sages, such as the Buddha, Mahavira, and Shankara, have come here to teach. Young men have come to study the Vedas with the city's great pandits. Banaras is one of the oldest living cities of the world....It occupied its high bank overlooking the Ganges in the cradle days of Western civilization. **It antiquity has caught the imagination of many,** including Mark Twain. There are few great cities in the world which have converted the energy of an entire civilization into culture and have come to symbolize and embody that whole civilization in microcosm." "It sits above the earth as a "crossing place" (tirtha) between this world and the "far shore" of the transcendent Brahman."

(source: **Banaras: City of Light - By Diana L Eck** p. 3 - 5).



326. **Ramana Maharishi** of Arunachala (1870 -1950). A great saga, Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni, called him Bhagavan or God for he regarded him as the incarnation of Skanda or Subramania, and named him Ramana, the sweet one, and Maharshi, the great saga. At the age of sixteen Ramana Maharshi left his home, his family, and all he knew. He felt drawn to Arunachula - a small mountain in Southern India. Here he lived for the rest of his life. His only possessions were a piece of cloth to cover himself, and a walking stick.

In his famous discussion of "The Holy Men of India, **Carl Jung** described Ramana Maharishi as **"the whitest spot on a white surface,"** less a unique phenomenon than the perfect "embodiment of spiritual India. In Ramana Maharishi Jung finds "purest India, the breadth of eternity, scorning and scorned by the world. Jung correctly recognized that Ramana Maharishi typifies the holy men of India who for centuries have drowned "the world of multiplicity in the All and All-Oness of Universal Being."

F. H. Humphreys, a British Officer of the Indian Police Service, who was an earnest student of religion, once visited Ramana Maharishi in 1911 in his Ashrama, when he was curious to learn about **siddhis** from the saint. Ramana said:

"Do not think too much of psychical phenomena...The phenomena we see are curious and surprising, but the most marvelous of all we do not realize, namely, the one illimitable force alone is responsible for all the phenomena we see and for the act of seeing them. Do not fix your attention on the changing things of life, death and phenomena. Do not think of even the actual act of seeing or perceiving them, but only of that which sees all these things - **That which is responsible for it all. It is inside yourself."**

In a letter to a leading friend in London, which was subsequently published in a leading journal in London, Mr. Humphreys wrote about Ramana: "On reaching the cave, we sat before him at his feet and said nothing. We sat thus for a long time and I felt lifted out of myself. For half an hour I looked into Maharishi's eyes, which never changed their expression of deep contemplation. I began to realize somewhat that the **body is the temple** of the Holy Ghost."

Ramana Maharishi's grace and compassion touched man and animal alike; his eloquent silence made a tremendous impact. But his silence was more eloquent than a thousand words spoken. **F. H. Humphreys**, the first European visitor to the Ramanashram penned his experience, of seeing Ramana Maharishi, to a friend in London. "For half an hour I looked into the Maharishi's eyes, which never changed their expression of deep contemplation. I could feel only that his body was not the man: it was the instrument of God." But Humphreys was neither the first nor the last to experience God in the form of Ramana Maharishi. **Paul Brunton**, who arrived at Tiruvannamalai more a sceptic than a believer records the impact of the eloquent silence of Maharishi: "Before those (eyes) of the Maharishi, I hesitate, puzzled and baffled ... I cannot turn my gaze away from him. I know only that a steady river of quietness seems to be flowing near me ... "

Ramana Maharishi believed in the philosophy of self-realization based on Advaita Vedanta. Sri Ramana's entire system is based on his own realization of Self. He wrote:

"When I came to realize who I am
What else is this identity of mine.
But then,
Oh Thou who standest as the towering Aruna Hill?"

(source: **The Sage of Arunachala - By Lakshmi Devnath** and **Great Indian Saints - By Pranab Bandyopadhyaya** p. 328 - 327 and **The Spirit of Modern India - Edited by Robert A McDermont and V. S. Naravane** p. 197).

327. **Robert Blackwill** (?) lecturer on international security at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, former ambassador to India. Blackwill is the author and co-editor of numerous books and articles on U.S. foreign policy, including: America's Asian Alliances. Although he returned this summer, part of Blackwill's heart is clearly still in India. A huge map of "Mother India" adorns the cream-colored walls of his fastidious office in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. The only item on his vast desktop -- besides precisely arranged wooden "in" and "out" boxes -- is a tiny figurine of **Ganesh, the Hindu elephant-headed god of wisdom and success.** In What India means to me, he says:

".....India's innumerable and distinctive dances, beginning with the classical. **The Vedas** and the **Upanishads**.



They mean so much more when I read them here: **"It is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech, the breath of breath, and the eye of the eye. When freed (from the senses) the wise, on departing from this world, become immortal."**

And, despite my continuing contemplations, I am not always able to follow **Krishna's wise words, "Be thou of even mind."**

But, my friends, these terrorist outrages against my country and against yours will not continue indefinitely. We know this from the **Ramayana**, and many other holy books. Good does triumph over evil, although it sometimes takes more time than we would like. Someone once said, "the most sublime purpose of religion is to teach how to know God." India has been working on that challenge from a variety of perspectives for several millennia. It has been my immense privilege during these two years to experience, and to profit from, these profound wellsprings of Indian spirituality.

I will return to India. How could it be otherwise? **Mother India has changed my life -- forever."**

(source: **What India Means to Me - By Ambassador Robert Blackwill** - usembassy.state.gov and **washingtonpost.com**).

328. **J A B Van Buitenen** (1928- 1979) says that the **Bhagavad Gita** is:

"The most important text for Hindu religion and a recent survey of that religion says that during the last thousand years the Gita's "popularity and authority" have been "unrivalled."

(source: **The Mahabharata - By J A B Van Buitenen** p. xxviii 1973).



329. **Shashi Tharoor** (1956 -) Under-Secretary-General for Public Information at the UN, author of six novels and two non-fiction books. Educated in India and London, describes himself as a **`believing Hindu'.** He has written:

" Every other religion lays down certain fixed dogmas and tries to force society to adopt them. It places before society only one coat which must fit Jack and John and Henry, all alike. If it does not fit John or Henry, he must go without a coat to cover his body. "

"The Hindus have discovered that the absolute can only be realized, or thought of, or stated through the relative, and the images, crosses, and crescents are simply so many symbols — so many pegs to hang spiritual ideas on. It is not that this help is necessary for everyone, but those that do not need it have no right to say that it is wrong. Nor is it compulsory in Hinduism .... The Hindus have their faults, but mark this, they are always for punishing their own bodies, and never for cutting the throats of their neighbors. If the Hindu fanatic burns himself on the pyre, he never lights the fire of Inquisition. "

"I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a country which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all countries of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I remember having repeated a hymn from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: "As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men

take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee." ....



Lord Krishna says: "Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me." (source: Bhagavad Gita).

***

The wonderful doctrine preached in the **Bhagavad Gita** says: "Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me."

(source: **ShashiTharoor.com**).

"The Rig Veda asserted that gravitation held the universe together 24 centuries before the apple fell on Newton's head. The Vedic civilization subscribed to the idea of a spherical earth at a time when everyone else, even the Greeks, assumed the earth was flat. By the Fifth Century A.D. Indians had calculated that the age of the earth was 4.3 billion years; as late as the 19th Century, English scientists believed the earth was a hundred million years old, and it is only in the late 20th Century that Western scientists have come to estimate the earth to be about 4.6 billion years old. **It was an Indian who first conceived of the zero, shunya; the concept of nothingness,** shunyata, integral to Hindu and Buddhist thinking, simply did not exist in the West. The **Vedanga Jyotisha**, written around 500 B.C., declares: **"Like the crest of a peacock, like the gem on the head of a snake, so is mathematics at the head of all knowledge." Our mathematicians were poets too!**

(source: **Why Indian science scores - The Hindu** - Sunday June 8 2003).

" **I am proud to claim adherence to a religion without an established church or priestly papacy**, a religion whose rituals and customs I am free to reject, a religion that does not oblige me to demonstrate my faith by any visible sign, by subsuming my identity in any collectivity, not even by a specific day or time or frequency of worship. **(There is no Hindu Pope, no Hindu Vatican, no Hindu catechism, not even a Hindu Sunday.) As a Hindu I am proud to subscribe to a creed that is free of the restrictive dogmas of holy writ that refuses to be shackled to the limitations of a single holy book."**

(source: **ShashiTharoor.com**).



330. **Alfred B. Ford** ( ) **aka Ambarish Das** grandson of Henry Ford (founder of the **Ford Motor**), and Trustee member of Ford Motor Company. He is involved in Ford's corporate charity work.

Throwing light on his personal association with India, Ford said he was attracted to Indian civilization after he studied **Hinduism** during his college days 30 years ago.

Soon after, **he converted to Hinduism and has traveled to India dozens of times.** He even married an Indian girl, Sharmila Bhattacharya, a doctor, who hails from Jaipur.

He joined Iskcon in 1975. He traveled to India for the first time that same year with Srila Prabhupada. **He was instrumental in the establishment of the first Hindu temple in Hawaii.** He also helped establish the Bhaktivedanta Cultural Center, which is a highly regarded tourist destination in Detroit. Alfred has made significant donations to Iskcon over the years which have assisted many ongoing projects and helped to build the Pushpa Samadhi Mandir of Srila Prabhupada. He is the founding chairman of the Iskcon Foundation, and campaign chairman of the Sri Mayapur Temple of Vedic Planetarium.

The **love for Hinduism** brought a great grandson of US automobile legend Henry Ford to the Russian capital to lobby for a Vedic cultural centre.

"If Moscow wants to be a world class capital, it has to open up to other cultures, particularly **ancient cultures like Vedic culture."**



Ford, during a visit to Moscow last week, said: **"For me the most important thing is to spread the Hindu knowledge about the soul. This is more important than any other knowledge and is my main priority".**

Russia has an estimated 90,000 Russian Hindus, sources at International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) here claim. Addressing representatives of the Indian community in Russia, Ford lauded their efforts to build the cultural centre complex that would be named **"Glory of India".**

He has said: "My main activity is connected with propagandizing Indian culture throughout the world.' The Alfred Ford Foundation and the Indian community are financing construction of the center."

(source: **Alfred Ford lobbies for Vedic centre in Moscow - siliconindia.com** and **Indian Cultural Centre to be built in Moscow - russsiajournal.com** and **hindu.com** and **hindunet.com**).

331. **Arthur William Ryder** (1877-1938) Professor at Berkeley. **J Robert Oppenheimer** the nuclear physicist had studied Sanskrit with him at Berkeley in 1933. He has translated several books including, **Dandin's Dasha-kumara-charita : The ten princes**.

He wrote in his introduction to the **Gita**:

"Uncounted millions have drawn from it comfort and joy. In it they have found an end to perplexity, a clear, if difficult, road to salvation."

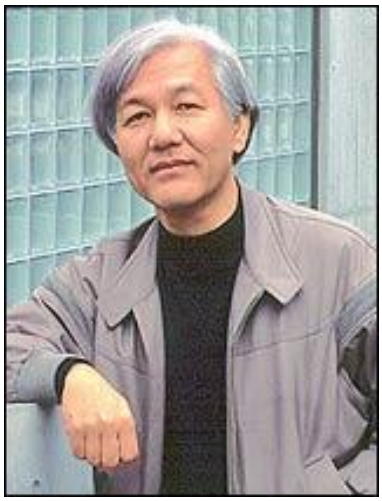
(source: **The Bhagavad Gita - translation by Arthur W Ryder** p. viii).

One of Kalidasa's long poems is the **Meghduta**, or **the Cloud Messenger.** A lover, made captive and separated from his beloved, asks a cloud, during the rainy season, to carry his message of desperate longing to her. To this poem and to Kalidasa, the American scholar, **Ryder**, has paid a splendid tribute. He refers to the two parts of the poem and says:

" The former half is a description of external nature, yet interwoven with human feelings; the latter half is a picture of human heart, yet the picture is framed in natural beauty. So exquisitely is the thing done that none can say which half is superior. Of those who read this perfect poem in the original text, some are moved by the one, some

by the other."

(source: **The Discovery of India - by Jawaharlal Nehru** pg 159).



332.**Takeo Kamiya** ( ) Japanese architect has spent about 20 years and all his savings traveling across India documenting the country's heritage buildings to enlighten Japan and the world about the "wonders of real India". He is a member of the Japan Architects Academy. Kamiya first visited India about 27 years ago and travelled across the country, like Hieun Tsang during the Golden Age of Guptas. When he was young, Japan was oriented only to the West and America. But he had a feeling that the world did not end there.

He says:

"The first place I visited was the Konark Sun Temple. I was shocked...awestruck at the site of the marvelous man-made wonder, "all my worries and complaints vanished then and there."

"That intense emotional experience made me come back again and again. It gave me the urge to travel and see as much as I could. It is after this that I concretized the idea of documenting my experiences in a book form,"



*Konark Sun Temple: A place of golden grandeur. One of India's great architectural marvels, this temple to the Sun God, Surya was conceived as a gigantic chariot with 12 pairs of wheels to carry the Sun on his daily journey across the sky. There are seven temples dedicated to the worship of Surya, the Sun in India. Konark is now a Unesco world heritage site. The world's finest Hindu Sun temple is also one of India's most innovative architectural masterpieces. (source: **Hinduism Today** Oct/Nov/December 2003).*

***

The result: **The Guide to the Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent**, a comprehensive classification and introduction of Indian architecture from north to the south. A complete guide, which has been a revelation for even several leading Indian architects.

"India had always fascinated me, though I had only little knowledge about the country where Buddha was born. There was hardly any literature available on Indian architecture while I was studying in the Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku (Fine Arts faculty in Architecture). So I decided to travel to India to study about the country, its culture and heritage,"

(source: **Japanese guide to Indian wonders -** timesofindia.com). For more refer to chapter on **Hindu Art**).



333. **Bulent Ecevit** (1925 -) the then Turkish prime minister, was asked what had given him the courage to send Turkish troops to Cyprus (where they still remain). His answer: he was fortified by the **Bhagavad Gita** which taught that if one were morally right, one need not hesitate to fight injustice. Besides the Gita, Ecevit was also influenced by Nehru's Glimpses of World History.

Ecevit first learnt **Sanskrit** at the Ankara University. Later his love for poetry and philosophy led him to Rabindranath Tagore. He learnt Bengali to appreciate and later translate Tagore's writings, including some poems from Geetanjali. During his visit to India in early 2000, Ecevit fulfilled his dream of visiting Shantiniketan. **After the 1971 military crackdown by the left, the Upanishads, Gita, and Geetanjali were banned in Turkey.**

Turkish prime minister Bulent Ecevit's passage to India has far greater significance than that of an Indophile scholar-statesman realising his long cherished dream. **Mr Ecevit, had translated Tagore's Gitanjali and the Bhagavad Gita into Turkish.** Together with Delhi and Agra, he has included a visit to Shantniketan in his itinerary.

(source: **The Turk who loves the Gita - telegraphindia.com**).

334. **Leonard Bloomfield** (1887-1949) American linguist and author of **Language**, published in 1933) characterization of **Panini's Astadhyayi** (**The Eight Books**) writes:



"**as one of the greatest monuments of human intelligence is by no means an exaggeration; no one who has had even a small acquaintance with that most remarkable book could fail to agree.** In some four thousand sutras or aphorisms - some of them no more than a single syllable in length - Panini sums up the grammar not only of his own spoken language, but of that of the Vedic period as well. The work is the more remarkable when we consider that the author did not write it down but rather worked it all out of his head, as it were. Panini's disciples committed the work to memory and in turn passed it on in the same manner to their disciples; and though the Astadhayayi has long since been committed to writing, rote memorization of the work, with several of the more important commentaries, is still the approved method of studying grammar in India today, as indeed is true of most learning of the traditional culture."

While in the classical world scholars were dealing with language in a somewhat metaphysical way, the Indians were telling us what their language actually was, how it worked, and how it was put together. The methods and techniques for describing the structure of Sanskrit which we find in Panini have not been substantially bettered to this day in modern linguistic theory and practice. We today employ many devices in describing languages that were already known to Panini's first two commentators. The concept of "zero" which in mathematics is attributed to India, finds its place also in linguistics.

"It was in India, however, that there rose a body of knowledge which was destined to revolutionize European ideas about language. The Hindu grammar taught Europeans to analyze speech forms; when one compared the constituent parts, the resemblances, which hitherto had been vaguely recognized, could be set forth with certainty and precision."

(source: **Traditional India -** edited by **O. L. Chavarria-Aguilar** refer to chapter on **Grammar - By Leonard Bloomfield Hall -** Place of Publication: Englewood Cliffs, NJ Date of Publication: 1964 p. 109-113).



335. **Colonel Frank Smythe aka Francis Sydney Smythe** (1900-1949) military leader, explorer, mountaineer, writer, photographer. He describes experiencing the same feeling of loneliness and revelation in the **Bhyunder Ganga Valley**. Chronicle of the author's four months in the remote, difficult to reach Bhyundar Valley in the Himalayas, the spectacular Valley of Flowers. The credit for the popularising the Valley of Flowers generally goes to Frank S. Smythe and R.L. Holdsworth who incidentally reached this valley after a successful expedition of Mount Kamet in 1931.

"In my mountaineering wandering I have not seen a more beautiful valley than this ... this valley of peace and perfect beauty where the human spirit may find repose." Originally called the Bhiundhar Valley (after a village located in south-east **Badrinath**) it was renamed “The Valley of Flowers” by Frank Smythe.

*He writes in his book **Valley of Flowers**:*

“For the first time in my life I was able to think. I do not mean to think objectively or analytically, but rather to surrender thought to my surroundings. **This is a power of which we know little in the West but which is a basic of abstract thought in the East.** It is allowing the mind to receive rather than to seek impressions, and it is gained by expurgating extraneous thought. It is then that the Eternal speaks; that the mutations of the universe are apparent; the very atmosphere is filled with life and song; the hills are resolved from mere masses of snow, ice and rock into something living. **When this happens the human mind escapes from the bondage of its own feeble imaginings and becomes as one with its Creator.”**

(source: **Sacred Waters: A Pilgrimage up the Ganges River to the Source of Hindu Culture – Stephen Alter** p. 356).

336. **Abu’l Hasan al-Qifti** (?) Arab scholar and author of **Chronology of the Scholars**, speaks of Arab admiration for Indian place-value system and methods of calculation.

“Among those parts of their sciences which came to us, the numerical calculation….it is the swiftest and most complete method of calculation, the easiest to understand and the simplest to learn; it bears witness to the Indians’ piercing intellect, fine creativity and their superior understanding and inventive genius.”

(source: **The Universal History of Numbers - By Georges Ifrah** p. 530 - 531).

337. **Christian Fabre aka Swami Pranavananda Brahmendra Avadhuta** (1942 -) was born in the south of France. He grew up in a family with ties to the garment industry. Author of **Swami : PDG et Moine hindou**



He is a Hindu holy man, who has renounced the material world - yet he is also a business tycoon who employs thousands of people. He became a Hindu holy man, or sadhu, some years ago. Now he runs an ashram, or a hermitage for holy men, in the south-western state of Tamil Nadu, roughly 400 kilometres from Madras, the state capital.

He came to work in India in the 1970s, and fell in love with the place. **"I was so powerfully attracted to India's culture, faith and its people that I cannot bear the thought of going back to France,**" he says.

At the time, his house was opposite that of a Brahmin family. His first exposure to Hinduism came at their hands. A woman from that house introduced him to a Hindu sage, or swami.

Today, his company, Fashion International, has 35 factories which employ 60,000 people. The clothes they make are exported to Europe and beyond. And as his business boomed, Mr Fabre's faith grew stronger. He did not stop taking instruction from his teacher, or guru, and continued searching for answers to his questions. His guru eventually invited him to take up the sanyas - renounce all worldly attachments such as family and money, and focus on their search for enlightenment. Mr Fabre now lives in the ashram in the manner of the other sadhus in his holy order.

He also wears the sadhu's saffron robes to his business meetings.

For Mr Fabre, there is no opposition between his business interests and his life as a Hindu holy man. This industrialist holy man has been truly industrious - for the villagers living near his ashram, he has provided running water and improved public

hygiene facilities.

(source: **The French Hindu Holy businessman - BBC news.com**).



338. **Edward Gibbon** (1734 - 1794) English historian and scholar, the supreme historian of the Enlightenment, who is best-known as the author of the monumental author of **The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire**

He admiringly describes the religious freedom in Hinduism:

"Thus the **Hindus have an extraordinary wide selection of beliefs and practices to choose from**: they can be monotheists, pantheists, polytheists, agnostics or even atheists. They may follow a strict or a loose standard of moral conduct, or they may choose instead an amoral emotionalism or mysticism. They may worship regularly at a temple or may not go there at all."

The ancient Romans also had a similar form of worship like the **Hindus** - "The policy of the emperors and the senate, as far as it concerned religion, was happily seconded by the enlightened, and by the habits of the superstitious, part of their subjects. The various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people, as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord. "

(source: **The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire - By Edward Gibbon** p.).



339. **Justice Manadagadde Rama Jois** (1931 -) Former Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court. A distinguished writer and historian, Justice M. Rama Jois has produced several authoritative books on Service Law, Habeas Corpus Law, Constitutional Law, etc., which are popular among the Law fraternity of India including students of Law. His most appreciated two-volume book **Legal and Constitutional History of India** is a textbook for Law Degree course. His another book **Seeds of Modem Public Law in Ancient Indian Jurisprudence** is also a much-valued contribution. A book authored by him **Eternal Values in Manu Smriti**, was released by former Chief Justice of India A.S. Anand. In this book valuable verses from "Manu Smriti" has been selected, which are still relevant to the society.

He has observed that: "In India, religious leaders have never exercised any control over the political authority. The ancient Indian constitutional law, the **Rajadharma**, did not recognise the authority of religious leaders to interfere with the political power of the king. Religious leaders had a purely advisory role, tendering opinion when it was sought or suo motu on matters of public interest. There used to be a process of consultation, not of confrontation.

"This is why no Hindu king has ever persecuted anyone on the ground of religion. Thus, it is Clear that in the Indian context, secularism meant respect for all religions as distinct from mere tolerance of other religions. **This respect is part and parcel of Hinduism, to which theocracy is unknown. In fact, they cannot co-exist any more than light and darkness."**

(source: **Conversion, fruit of intolerance - By Justice Manadagadde Rama Jois - indianexpress.com**).

340 **Beatrice Pitney Lamb** (1904 -) Author of several books including India: A World in Transition. She was Editor of the **United Nations News** for several years and has written and lectured extensively on Indian affairs. Beatrice Lamb first visited India in 1949 on an assignment for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Mrs. Lamb saw the many-hued soul of India revealed through its people, living, working and worshipping.



She has noted:

"In addition to the still visible past glories of art and architecture, the wonderful ancient literature, and other cultural achievements of which educated Indians are justly proud, the Indian past includes another type of glory most tantalizing to the Indians of today - prolonged material prosperity. **For well over a millennium and a half, the Indian subcontinent may have been the richest area in the world.** As early as the first century A.D. a statesman in ancient Rome wrote in worried vein about the squandering of Roman wealth on Indian luxuries.....Although direct relations between Europe and India were cut off by the Arabs in the Middle Ages, the legend of the wealth of the "Indies" continued to grip Western minds. The power of this legend caused Columbus in 1492 to take his dangerous journey westward across the Atlantic, seeking to re-establish direct contact with India. As late as the 18th century, British observers were repeatedly struck by the material prosperity of the land they were beginning to conquer."

(source: **India: A World in Transition - By Beatrice Pitney Lamb** p. 19 and 358).

"In India I have found great beauty of a kind far too rare in the United States. Instead of the hard, taut, anxious faces, so common in America, I have seen many there that were calm, open, untroubled, serene. I have seen dignity and grace of movement derived not from training but from inner peace and wholeness."

(source: **Why India? - By Beatrice Pitney Lamb**).



"Recently, increasing numbers of Westerners in revolt against what they have found to be the shallow, gadget-dominated, spiritually empty civilization of the West have turned to "Hinduism" in search of greater meaning or purpose in life. There is no doubt that the great Hindu tradition offers profound spiritual insights, as well as techniques for attaining self-realization, detachment, and even ecstasy."

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(source: **India: A World in Transition - By Beatrice Pitney Lamb** p. 19 and 358).

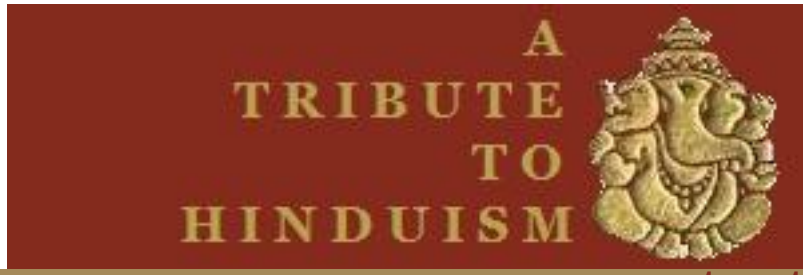
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21. **Swami Vivekananda** (1863-1902) was the foremost disciple of Ramakrishna and a world spokesperson for Vedanta. India's first spiritual and cultural ambassador to the West, came to represent the religions of India at the World Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago in connection with the World's Fair (Columbian Exposition) of 1893. His Chicago speech is uniquely Vedantic. Jawaharlal Nehru refers to this universal dimension of Vivekananda in his Discovery of India. “Rooted in the past, and full of pride in India’s heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life’s problems, and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.”

The cyclonic monk from India” that is how delegates to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1894 described Ramakrishna’s great disciple, Vivekananda. **Romain Rolland**, in his admirable biography of this **“tamer of souls”** refers to Vivekananda’s dominating personality in these words: “a great voice is meant to fill the sky. The whole world is its sounding-box…..Men like Vivekanada are not meant to whisper. They can only proclaim. The sun cannot moderate its own rays. He was deeply conscious of his role. **To bring Vedanta out of its obscurity and present it in a rationally acceptable manner; to arouse among his countrymen an awareness of their own spiritual heritage and restore their self-confidence; to show that the deepest truths of Vedanta are universally valid, and that India’s mission is to communicate these truths to the whole world** – these were the goals he set before himself.

(source: **The Spirit of Modern India - Edited by Robert A McDermont and V. S. Naravane** p.6 - 7).



"From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion.

God is the ever-active providence, by whose power systems after systems are being evolved out of chaos, made to run for a time, and again destroyed.

This is what the Brahmin boy repeats every day:

"The sun and the moon, the Lord created like the suns and the moons of previous cycles." And this agrees with modern science.

(source: **Hinduism - By Swami Vivekananda** chapter: A Universal Religion p. 3)

Vivekananda said: "The Vedas teach that the soul is divine, only held in the bondage of matter; perfection will be reached when this bond will burst, and the word they use for it is, therefore, Mukti - freedom, freedom from the bonds of imperfection, freedom from death and misery."

The Lord has declared to the Hindu in His incarnation as Krishna:

"I am in every religion as the thread through a string of pearls. Wherever thou seest extraordinary holiness and extraordinary power raising and purifying humanity, know thou that I am there."

(source: **Swami Vivekananda Paper on Hinduism** http://www.itihaas.com/modern/vivek-speech3.html).

For him India was synonymous with the spirit of religion. He said "**If India is to die, religion will be wiped off the face of the earth."**

(source: **A Call To The Eternal - By Swami Ashokananda** p. 78).

Swami Vivekananda in his essay, **The Future of India**: "It is the same India which has withstood the shocks of centuries, of hundreds of foreign invasions, of hundreds of upheavals of manners and customs. It is the same land, which stands firmer than any rock in the world, with its undying vigour, indestructible life. Its life is of the same nature as the soul, without beginning and without end, immortal; and we are the children of such a country."

(source: **Hindutva is liberal - By A. B. Vajpayee - rediff.com**).

Swami Vivekananda said about the **Gita**, **"No better commentary on the Vedas has been written or can be written."**

(source: **Gita, An Antidote For All Ills - Times of India**). "Hinduism is the mother of all

religions"- so wrote Swami Vivekananda.

“This is the ancient land, where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country… Here is the same India whose soil has been trodden by the feet of the greatest sages that ever lived… Look back, therefore, as far as you can, drink deep of the eternal fountains that are behind, and after that look forward, march forward, and make India brighter, greater, much higher, than she ever was.”

"Say it with pride : we are Hindus", is what Swami Vivekananda taught his fellow Hindus.

(source: **Ayodhya and After - By Koenraad Elst**).



Swami Vivekananda called upon his people to ‘rise, awake and acquire’ and reminded them that **‘Hindu religion does not consist in struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma, but in realizing not in believing, but in being and becoming.’**

(source: **India Rediscovered - By Dr. Giriraj Shah** p. 31 Abhinav Publications New Delhi 1975).

Vivekananda said if you want to do anything in India, do it with the **re-establishment of dharma or its reawakening. In India the soil and the dharma (the upward aspiration) are one and the same, are body and soul.**

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p. 206).

"By what strange social alchemy has India subdued her conquerors, transforming them to her very self and substance..... ? Why is it that her conquerors have not been able to impose on her their language, their thoughts and
customs, except in superficial ways?"

(source: **The empire strikes back - By Suma Varghese** - Free Press Journal December 5 1997).

"If one religion is true, then all the others must also be true. **Thus the Hindu faith is as yours as much as mine."**

(source: http://www.geocities.com/hindusoc/special/hindintr.htm).

Vivekananda's philosophy was one of pride in the past. " Look back, therefore, as far as you can, drink deep of the eternal fountains that are behind, and after that, look forward, much forward, march forward and make India brighter, greater, much higher than she ever was... We must go to the root of this disease and cleanse the blood of all impurities.”

He had put immense faith in Hinduism:

"To my mind', our religion is truer than any other religion, **because it never**

conquered. Because it never shed blood, because its mouth always shed on all, words of blessing, of peace, words of love and sympathy. It is here and here alone that the ideals of toleration were first preached. **And it is here and here alone that toleration and sympathy become practical; it is theoretical in every other country; it is here and here alone, that the Hindu builds mosques for the Mohammedans and churches for the Christians."**

(source: **Secularization of India...? - by S. Balasundar** - Hindu voice).

Religion is the main theme of India. Swami Vivekananda wrote:

"Each nation, like each individual, has one theme in life, which is its center, the principal note round which every note comes to form harmony....if one nation attempts to throw off its vitality, the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries, the nation dies....if one nation's political power is its vitality, as in England, artistic life is another and so on. **In India religious life forms the center, the keynote of the whole music of life."**

(source: **Glimpses of Indian Culture - By Dr. Giriraj Shah** p. 27).

He proclaimed the non-dualistic "spirituality" of Vedanta as the metaphysical root and basis of universal tolerance and brotherhood, as well as of India's national identity. He said:

"India alone was to be, of all lands, **the land of toleration and of spirituality**…in that distant time the sage arose and declared, ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti (He who exists is one; the sages call him variously). This is one of the most memorable sentences that was ever uttered, one of the grandest truths that was ever discovered. And for us Hindus this truth has been the very backbone of our national existence…our country has become the glorious land of religious toleration…The world is waiting for this grand idea of universal toleration….The other great idea that the world wants from us today….is that eternal ideal of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe…This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality."

(source: **Vivekanada's Complete Works** III, 186ff).



22. **Adi Shakaracharya** (788-820) was undoubtedly **an immortal spiritual leader who, by his matchless speculative daring, grand practical idealism, remorseless logic and stern intellectualism** gave an interpretation of the mysteries of life whose influence is still great.

Sankara's philosophy is called **Kevaladvaita or absolute monism** which can be summed up thus. **The Supreme Spirit or the Brahman is alone real and the individual self is only the Supreme Self and no other. Brahman is supreme intelligence, devoid of attributes, form, changes or limitations. It is self-luminous and all pervading and is without a second. The empirical world is unreal, an illusion born of ignorance. The jiva continues in Samsara only as long as it retains attachment due to ignorance or Maya. If it casts off the veil of Maya through knowledge or Jnana it will realize its identity with the Brahman and get merged into it.**

(source: **Main Currents in Indian Culture - By S. Natarajan** p. 35 - 37).

He is considered one of the foremost of India's mystic philosophers and religious thinker who developed **Advaita Vedanta**, a system of philosophical thought within Hinduism. Adi Shankaracharya was born during the time when Buddhism held somewhat of a sway in India, and the philosophy of Buddhism had come to be interpreted as a denial of God. Moreover, Hinduism was divided into various sects and the ritualistic practice had taken a predominance over actual philosophical practice.

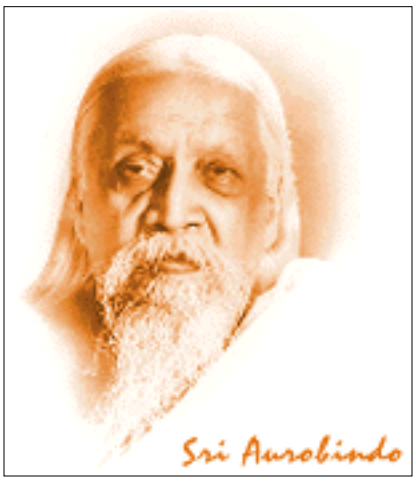
Adi Shankaracharya revived Sanatana Dharma. He effectively turned back the wave of Buddhism and Jainism and established Hinduism firmly in Bharat. His works on religion and philosophy pointed out the unique features of our ancient religion. Shankara, in his indisputable style, set out on a difficult mission and changed the outlook of the country and its people by revamping the vast hindu literature into simple easy to understand language.

The great genius of **Adi-Shankaracharya** led him to establish in the four corners of India, four principal seats of learning for propagating his teaching ; at a time when he had revived the understanding of the people and established the true and eternal fundamentals of Vedic wisdom.

(source: **Introduction to Shankara - About.com**).

This is what he thought of the **Bhagavad Gita**:

" From a clear knowledge of the Bhagavad-Gita all the goals of human existence become fulfilled. Bhagavad-Gita is the manifest quintessence of all the teachings of the Vedic scriptures."



23. **Sri Aurobindo** (1872-1950) most original philosopher of modern India. Education in England gave him a wide introduction to the culture of ancient, or mediaeval and of modern Europe. **He was described by Romain Rolland as ' the completest synthesis of the East and the West.'**

He was a brilliant scholar in Greek and Latin. He had learned French from his childhood in Manchester and studied for himself German and Italian sufficiently to study Goethe and Dante in the original tongues. He passed the Tripos in Cambridge in the first class and obtained record marks in Greek and Latin in the examination for the Indian Civil Service.

This is what **Aurobindo** said in his book, **India's Rebirth** (ISBN 2-902776-32-2) pg 139-140.

"Hinduism.....gave itself no name, because it set itself no sectarian limits; it claimed no universal adhesion, asserted no sole infallible dogma, set up no single narrow path or gate of salvation; it was less a creed or cult than a continuously enlarging tradition of the God ward endeavor of the human spirit. An immense many-sided and many staged provision for a spiritual self-building and self-finding, it had some right to speak of itself by the only name it knew, the eternal religion, Santana Dharma...."

" The people of India, even the "ignorant masses" are by centuries of training are nearer to the inner realities, than even the cultured elite anywhere else"

"The Gita is the greatest gospel of spiritual works ever yet given to the race." In his famous **Essays on the Gita**, Sri Aurobindo summed up the whole problem in these words:

We will use only soul-force and never destroy by war or any even defensive employment of physical violence ? Good, though until soul-force is effective, the Asuric force in men and nations tramples down, breaks, slaughters, burns, pollutes, as we see it doing today, but then at its ease and unhindered, and you have perhaps caused as much destruction of life by your abstinence as others by resort to violence. Strength founded on the Truth and the dharmic use of force are thus the Gita's answer to pacifism and non-violence. Rooted in the ancient Indian genius, this third way can only be practised by those who have risen above egoism, above asuric ambition or greed. **The Gita certainly does not advocate war ; what it advocates is the active and selfless defence of dharma. If sincerely followed, its teaching could have altered the course of human history. It can yet alter the course of Indian history."**

The Gita is, in Sri Aurobindo's words, "our chief national heritage, our hope for the future."

(source: **The Gita in Today's World - by Michel Danino** - bharatvani.org).

Aurobindo says in his book **Karmayogin**:

"Hinduism, which is the **most skeptical** and the most believing of all, the most skeptical because it has questioned and experimented the most, the most believing because it has the deepest experience and the most varied and positive spiritual knowledge, that wider Hinduism which is not a dogma or combination of dogmas but a law of life, which is not a social framework but the spirit of a past and future social evolution, which rejects nothing but insists on testing and experiencing everything and when tested and experienced, turning in to the soul's uses, in this Hinduism, we find the basis of future world religion. This Sanatana Dharma has many scriptures: The Veda, the Vedanta, the Gita, the Upanishads, the Darshanas, the Puranas, the Tantras:.....but its real, the most authoritative scripture is in the heart in which the Eternal has his dwelling."

Aurobindo in his book, **Letters**, Vol. II wrote:

"The Hindu religion appears....as a cathedral temple, half in ruins, noble in the mass, often fantastic in detail but always fantastic with a significance - crumbling or badly outworn in places, but a cathedral temple in which service is still done to the Unseen and its real presence can be felt by those who enter with the right spirit."

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p. 60-61).



"That which we call the Hindu religion is really the Eternal religion because it embraces all others."

(source: **The Wisdom of Hindu Gurus -Timothy Freke** pg 56).

In a brilliant speech, Aurobindo equated the Indian land with Sanatana Dharma or Hindu religion which is but another name for the yearning of the Divine or the quest of the Spirit. **He also said that in India religion and nationalism are one. India rises with religion, lives by it and will perish with it and to rise in religion is to raise India.**

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p. 206).

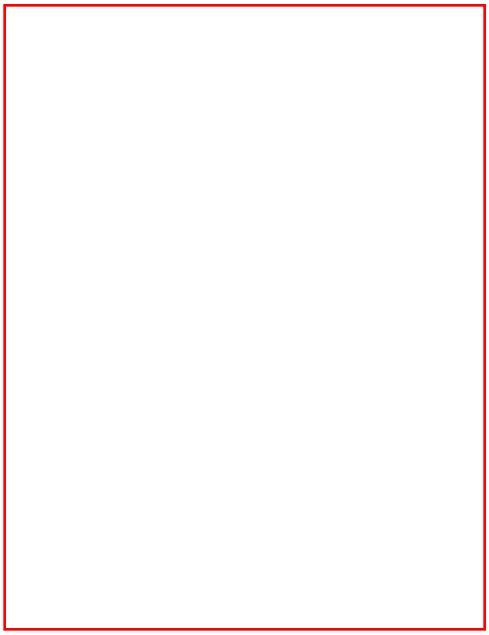
"India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples."

(source: **India's Rebirth - By Sri Aurobindo** Publisher: Mira Aditi ISBN 81-85137-27-7 p. 158).

Aurobindo calls the commercial civilization of the West "monstrous and asuric (demonic)".

He pointed out: " ...the seers of ancient India had, in their experiments and efforts at spiritual training and the conquest of the body, perfected a discovery which in its importance to the future of human knowledge dwarfs the divinations of Newton and Galileo, even the discovery of the inductive and experimental method in Science was not more momentous..."

(source: **The Upanishads - By Sri Aurobindo** vol. 12 p. 6).



" Spirituality is indeed the master key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinitive is native to it. India saw from the beginning, - and, even in her ages of reason and her age of increasing ignorance, she never lost hold of the insight, - that life cannot be rightly seen in the sole light, cannot be perfectly lived in the sole power of its externalities. She was alive to the greatness of material laws and forces; she had a keen eye for the importance of the physical sciences; she knew how to organize the arts of ordinary life. But she saw that the physical does not get its full sense until it stands in right relation to the supra-physical; she saw that the complexity of the universe could not be explained in the present terms of man or seen by his superficial sight, that there were other powers behind, other powers within man himself of which he is normally unaware, that he is conscious only of a small part of himself, that the invisible always surrounds the visible, the supra-sensible the sensible, even as infinity always surrounds the finite. She saw too that man has the power of exceeding himself, of becoming himself more entirely and profoundly than he is, - truths which have only recently begun to be seen in Europe and seem even now too great for its common intelligence.

She saw the myriad gods, and beyond God his own ineffable eternity; she saw that there were ranges of life beyond our present life, ranges of mind beyond our present mind and above these she saw the splendors of the spirit. **Then with that calm audacity of her intuition which knew no fear** or littleness and shrank from no act whether of spiritual or intellectual, ethical or vital courage, **she declared that there was none of these things which man could not attain if he trained his will and knowledge; he could conquer these ranges of mind, become the spirit, become a god, become one with God, become the ineffable Brahman."**

' India is the meeting place of the religions and among these Hinduism alone is by itself a vast and complex thing, not so much a religion as a great diversified and yet subtly unified mass of spiritual thought, realization and aspiration." "Metaphysical thinking will always no doubt be a strong element in her mentality, and it is to be hoped that she will never lose her great, her sovereign powers in that direction..."

(source: **The Renaissance in India - Shri Aurobindo** Arya Publishing House Calcutta. p. 10 - 55).

Maharshi Aurobindo points out, "Indian religion has always felt that since the minds, the temperaments and the intellectual affinities of men are unlimited in their variety, a perfect liberty of thought and of worship must be allowed to the individual in his approach to the Infinite."

(source: **Hindutva is liberal - By A. B. Vajpayee - rediff.com**).



He wrote this regarding Hindu culture:

"More high-reaching, subtle, many-sided, curious and profound than the Greek, more noble and humane than the Roman, more large and spiritual than the old Egyptian, more vast and original than any other Asiatic civilization, more intellectual than the European prior to the 18th century, possessing all that these had and more, it was the most powerful, self-possessed, stimulating and wide in influence of all past human cultures.

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p. contents).

Sri Aurobindo in a series of luminous essays called **A Defense of Indian Culture**, published in the **Arya**:

"Spirituality is the master key of the Indian mind. It is this dominant inclination of India which gives character to all the expressions of her culture. In fact, they have grown out of her inborn spiritual tendency of which her religion is a natural out flowering. The Indian mind has always realized that the Supreme is the Infinite and perceived that to the soul in Nature the Infinite must always present itself in an infinite variety of aspects. **The aggressive and quite illogical idea of a single religion for all mankind, a religion universal by the very force of its narrowness, one set of dogmas, one cult, one system of ceremonies, one ecclesiastical ordinance, one array of prohibitions and injunctions which all minds must accept on peril of persecution by men and spiritual rejection or eternal punishment by God, that grotesque creation of human unreason which has been the parent of so much intolerance, cruelty and obscurantism and aggressive fanaticism, has never been able to take firm hold of the Indian mentality."**

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisirkumar Mitra** p. 53 - 54).



24. **Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** (1888-1975) was one of the most profound philosophers of this century, author and educationalist. **Radhakrishnan** was also a professor of Eastern Religions at Oxford and later became the second President of free India:

"Hinduism is not just a faith. It is the union of reason and intuition that cannot be defined but is only to be experienced. Evil and error are not ultimate. There is no Hell, for that means there is a place where God is not, and there are sins which exceed his love. "

"In the history of the world, Hinduism is the only religion, that exhibits a complete independence and freedom of the human mind, its full confidence in its own powers. Hinduism is freedom, especially the freedom in thinking about God."

"In the search for the supernatural, it is like traveling in space without a boundary or barrier."

(source: **Bhagavad Gita - By S. Radhakrishan** pg - 55).

" A large part of the world received its religious education from India." In spite of continuous struggle with theological baggage, India has held fast for centuries to the ideals of spirit."

(source: **Eastern Religions & Western Thought - By. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan** p. 116).

"Hinduism is wholly free from the strange obsession of some faiths that the acceptance of a particular religious metaphysics is necessary for salvation, and non-acceptance thereof is a heinous sin meriting eternal punishment in hell."

(source: **The Hindu View of Life - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 28).

He noted that: "If the **Upanishads** help us to rise above the glamour of the fleshy life, it is because their authors, pure of soul, ever striving towards the divine, reveal to us their pictures of the splendors of the unseen. The Upanishads are respected not because they are a part of Sruti or revealed literature and so hold a reserved position but because they have inspired generations of Indians with vision and strength by their inexhaustible significance and spiritual power. Indian thought has constantly turned to these scriptures for fresh illumination and spiritual recovery or recommencement, and not in vain. The fire still burns bright on their altars. Their light is for the seeing eye and their message is for the seeker after truth."

(source: **The Principal Upanishads - By S. Radhakrishnan** London: Allen & Unwin/ New York: Humanities Press. 1953, p. 18-19).

"**Indian thought is an extraordinary mass of material which for detail and variety has hardly any equal in any other part of the world. There is hardly any height of spiritual insight or rational philosophy attained in the world** that has not its parallel in the vast stretch that lies between the early Vedic seers and the modern naiyAyikas."

(source: **Indian Philosophy, Volume I - By S. Radhakrishnan**).



"Hinduism has come to be a tapestry of the most variegated tissues and almost endless diversity of hues."

" Hinduism is therefore not a definite dogmatic creed, but a vast, complex, but subtly unified mass of spiritual thought and realization. Its tradition of the God ward endeavor of the human spirit has been continuously enlarging through the ages."

(source: **The Hindu View of Life - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 8-9).

"The truth suggested in the Vedas are developed in the Upanishads. We find in the seers of the Upanishads, an utter fidelity to every layer and shade of truth as they saw it. They affirm that there is a central reality, the one without a second, who is all that is and beyond all that is."

'From the time of the Rg Veda till today, India has been the home of different religions and the **Indian genius** adopted a policy of live and let live towards them. **Indian religion never quite understood the idea of exclusive worship. Indian religious tradition admits all forms in which the single truth is**

reflected. Proselytism is discouraged. It is not God that is worshipped but the group or the authority that claims to speak in his name."

The attempts of the western powers to impose their culture on India through the Government and its educational institutions have stirred the huge inertia of the Indian people and ruffled the surface of Indian society, but deep down the immemorial tradition of India has not been greatly disturbed."

(source: **East and West: Some Reflections - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 22 -42).

Hinduism according to him is not a religion, but a commonwealth of religions. “It is more a way of life than a form of thought….The theist and the atheist, the skeptic and the agnostic may all be Hindus if they accept the Hindu system of culture and life. **Hinduism insists not on religious conformity but on a spiritual and ethical outlook of life…Hinduism is not a sect but a fellowship of all who accept the law of right and earnestly seek for the truth.”**

(source: **The Hindu View of Life - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 77).

"By what **strange social alchemy has India subdued her conquerors**, transforming them to her very self and substance..... ? Why is it that her conquerors have not been able to impose on her their language, their thoughts and customs, except in superficial ways?"

(source: **The empire strikes back - By Suma Varghese** - Free Press Journal December 5 1997).

"They (Ancient Hindus) measured the land, divided the year, mapped out the heaven, traced the course of sun and planets through the zodiacal belt, analyzed the constitution of matter, and studied the nature of birds and beasts, plants and seeds."

(source: **The Story of Oriental Philosophy - By L. Adams Beck** p. 10 - 13).

"The Gita appeals to us not only by its force of thought and majesty of vision, but also by its fervor of devotion and sweetness of spiritual emotion."

(source: **Indian Philosophy, Volume I - By S. Radhakrishnan**).



25. **Julius Robert Oppenheimer** (1904-1967) Scientist, philosopher, bohemian, and radical. A theoretical physicist and the Supervising Scientist for the Manhattan Project, the developer of the atomic bomb. Graduating from Harvard University, he traveled to Cambridge University to study at the Cavendish Laboratory.

Oppenheimer acquired a deeper knowledge of the **Bhagavad Gita** in 1933 when, as a young professor of physics, he studied Sanskrit with **Professor Arthur W Ryder** (1877-1938) at Berkeley.

The Gita, Oppenheimer excitedly wrote to his brother Frank Oppenheimer, was **"very easy and quite marvelous"**.

(source: **Robert Oppenheimer Letters and Recollections - By Alice K Smith and Charles Weiner** p. 165).

Later he called the Gita **"the most beautiful philosophical song existing in any known tongue."** He kept a well worn copy of it conveniently on hand on the bookshelf closest to his desk and often gave the book to friends as a present.

(source: **The Story of J Robert Oppenheimer - By Denise Royal** St. Martin's Press New York 1969 p. 54).

He continued to browse in it while directing the bomb laboratory. After President Franklin Roosevelt's death in 1945, Oppenheimer spoke at a memorial service at Los Alamos and he quoted a passage from the Gita. In later years, too, he would look back on the Bhagavad Gita as one of the most important influences in his life.

In 1963, **Christian Century** magazine (May 15, 1963 p. 647) asked Oppenheimer to list the ten books that "did most to shape your vocational attitude and your philosophy of life" It is significant that two of the ten works that Oppenheimer claimed as most influential were Indian (**The Bhagavad Gita and Bhartrihari's Satakatrayam**) and a third, **The Waste Land by T S Eliot**, alluded to the Hindu Scriptures, The Upanishads and The Bhagavad Gita and concluded with a Sanskrit incantation: Shantih, Shantih, Shantih."

He said:

"Access to the Vedas is the greatest privilege this century may claim over all previous centuries."

He wrote:

"The general notions about human understanding… which are illustrated by discoveries in atomic physics are not in the nature of things wholly unfamiliar, wholly unheard of or new. Even in our own culture they have a history, and in Buddhist and Hindu thought a more considerable and central place. What we shall find [in modern physics] is an exemplification, an encouragement, and a refinement of old wisdom."

In this context it is worth emphasizing that India's contribution of Buddhism to China (and

other countries of the region) is by no means insubstantial. These civilizations would hardly exist without the Indian contribution in all aspects of culture— from science and technology, the arts, philosophy and spirituality.

(source: **India as a Creative Civilization** - **By N. S. Rajaram**).

Oppenheimer described the thoughts that passed through his mind when he witnessed the first atomic test explosion.



" If the radiance of a thousand suns
Were to burst at once into the sky,
That would be like the splendor of the Mighty One...
I am become Death,
The shatterer of Worlds."

As the gigantic nuclear cloud mushroomed up to the stratosphere followed by a doomsday roar, Oppenheimer continued with the verses in which the Mighty One reveals Himself:

"Death am I, cause of destruction of the worlds, matured and set out to gather in the worlds there" - (**Bhagavad Gita XI 12-32**).

(source: **A Survey of Hinduism - By Klaus K. Klostermaier**. State University of New York Press. 1994. pg 109-110. **The Eye of Shiva: Eastern Mysticism And Science - By Amaury de Riencourt** p. 14). For more refer to chapter on **GlimpsesX**).

Then and there, Oppenheimer symbolized a most extraordinary conjunction - the juxtaposition of Western civilization's most terrifying scientific achievement with the most dazzling description of the mystical experience given to us by the Bhagavad Gita, India's greatest literary monument.



The Gita, Oppenheimer excitedly wrote to his brother Frank Oppenheimer, was "very easy and quite marvelous".

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Oppenheimer's spontaneous conjunction of a Hindu mystical poem with a nuclear explosion was of great symbolic significance. Nowhere in Western literature could he have found an almost clinical description of mystical rapture that also fits the description of a nuclear explosion in the outer world.

(source: **The Eye of Shiva: Eastern Mysticism And Science - By Amaury de Riencourt** p. 14). For more refer to chapter on **GlimpsesX**).

"The general notions about human understanding...which are illustrated by discoveries in atomic physics are not in the nature of things wholly unfamiliar, wholly unheard of, or new. Even in our own culture, they have a history, and in Buddhist and **Hindu thought** a more considerable and central place. What we shall find is an exemplification, an encouragement, and a refinement of old wisdom."

(source: **The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism - By Fritjof Capra** p. 18).

Colonel James Tod with Pundit
(source: A Concise History of the Indian People - By H G Rawlinson p. 313).

26. **Colonel James Tod** (1782-1835) author of **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India**

"Where can we look for **sages like those whose systems of philosophy were prototypes of those of Greece**: to whose works Plato, Thales & Pythagoras were disciples? Where do I find astronomers whose knowledge of planetary systems yet excites wonder in Europe as well as the architects and sculptors whose works claim our admiration, and the musicians who could make the mind oscillate from joy to sorrow, from tears to smile with the change of modes and varied intonation?"

(source: **Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India - By James Tod** p. 608- 609).



27. **Sylvain Levi** (1863-1935) French scholar, Orientalist who wrote on Eastern religion, literature, and history. Levi was appointed a lecturer at the school of higher studies in Paris (1886), he taught Sanskrit at the Sorbonne (1889-94) and wrote his doctoral dissertation, **Le Théâtre indien** ("The Indian Theatre"). In **L'Inde et le monde** ("India and the World"), he discussed India's role among nations. He wrote :

"From Persia to the Chinese Sea, 'from the icy

regions of Siberia to the islands of Java and Borneo, from Oceania to Socotra, India has propagated her beliefs, her tales and her civilization."

"She has left indelible imprints on one fourth of the human race in the course of a long succession of centuries. She has the right to reclaim in universal history the rank that ignorance has refused her for a long time and to hold her place amongst the great nations summarizing and symbolizing the spirit of humanity."

(source: **Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p.200-210). Please refer to chapter on **Suvarnabhumi** and **Seafaring in Ancient India** for more on India's influence).

"The multiplicity of the manifestations of the Indian genius as well as their fundamental unity gives India the right to figure on the first rank in the history of civilized nations. **Her civilization, spontaneous and original, unrolls itself in a continuous time across at least thirty centuries, without interruption, without deviation.** Ceaselessly in contact with foreign elements which threatened to strangle her, she persevered victoriously in absorbing them, assimilating them and enriching herself with them. Thus she has seen the Greeks, the Scythians, the Afghans, the Mongols to pass before her eyes in succession and is regarding with indifference the Englishmen - confident to pursue under the accidence of the surface the normal course of her high destiny."

(source: **Eminent Orientalists: Indian European American** - Asian Educational Services. p. 377-378).

"The Mahabharata is not only the largest, but also the grandest of all epics, as it contains throughout a lively teaching of morals under a glorious garment of poetry."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 236).



28. **Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel** (1887--1961) was a great German philosopher and a philosophical predecessor of the New England Transcendentalists. He wrote in his "lectures on the Philosophy of History." **Hegel** belongs to the period of "German idealism" in the decades following Kant. He wrote:

"India has always been an object of yearning, a realm of wonder, a world of magic."

"India is the land of dreams. India had always dreamt - more of the Bliss that is man's final goal. And this has helped India to be more creative in history than any other nation. Hence the effervescence of myths and legends, religious and philosophies, music, and dances and the different styles of architecture." [61]

"India has created a special momentum in world history as a country to be searched for."

(source: **A Survey of Hinduism** - **By Klaus K. Klostermaier**. pg 17).

He was the first to proclaim that, alongside Greece and Germany, India had produced the greatest and most profound philosophers. And the great Hegel himself, who understood India far more profoundly, was to remark in his work on **The Philosophy of History**:

"It strikes everyone in beginning to form an acquaintance with the treasures of Indian literature, that a land so rich in intellectual products and those of the profoundest order of thought..."

(source: **The Soul of India - By Amaury de Riencourt** p. 301).



"India as a land of Desire formed an essential element in general history. From the most ancient times downwards, all nations have directed their wishes and longings to gaining access to the treasures of this land of marvels, the most costly which the earth presents, treasures of nature - pearls, diamonds, perfumes, rose essences, lions, elephants, etc. - as also treasures of wisdom. The way by which these treasures have passed to the West has at all times been a matter of world historical importance bound up with the fate of nations."

(source: **Asia and Western Dominance - By K. M. Panikkar** p. 21).

Hegel, in his **Lectures on the Philosophy of History**, says that " Persia is the land of light, Greece the land of grace, **India the land of dream,** Rome the land of empire." It is true of all cultures that the greatest gift of life is the dream of a higher life.

(source: **Towards a New World - By Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** p-37 ISBN 81-222-0087-7).

Hegel characterized India as a land which had exerted its world-historical influence in a passive manner, by being sought: "Without being known too well, it has existed for millennia in the imagination of the Europeans as a wonderland. Its fame, which it has always had with regard to its treasures, both its natural ones, and in particular, its wisdom, has lured men there. "

(source: **India and Europe - By Wilhelm Halbfass** p. 2).



29. **Solange Lemaitre** author of several books, including **Le Mystère de la mort dans les religions d'Asie** and **Râmakrishna et la vitalité de l'hindouism** has observed:

"The civilization of India, at root purely religious, is only now becoming known in Europe; and as the mystery surrounding it is unveiled **it emerges as one of the highest achievement in the history of mankind.** By the very breadth of the outlook it affords on to the destiny of man the Vedic religion offers in abundance the spiritual experience that has inspired the Indian people since the dawn of their history. The vocation of India is to proclaim to the world the efficacy of religious experience."

There is more than a purely literal meaning to be found in the Vedas. This can be felt behind the poetic imagery of many hymns about the Creation and the Divine, in which certain lines sparkle like specks of gold in the opacity of their vein.

(source: **Hinduism - By Solange Lemaitre** p. 1-12).

30. **Alain Danielou** a.k.a **Shiv Sharan** (1907-1994), son of French aristocracy, author of numerous books on philosophy, religion, history and arts of India, including **Virtue, Success, Pleasure, & Liberation : The Four Aims of Life in the Tradition of Ancient India.** He was perhaps the first European to boldly proclaim his Hinduness. He settled in India for fifteen years in the study of Sanskrit. He had a wide effect upon Europe's

understanding of Hinduism. Danielou had been sharply critical of the Western-educated Congress leadership which led the country to Independence from British rule in 1947.

Danielou said:



"The Hindu lives in eternity. He is profoundly aware of the relativity of space and time and of the illusory nature of the apparent world."

Hinduism is a religion without dogmas. Since its origin, Hindu society has been built on rational bases by sages who sought to comprehend man's nature and role in creation as a whole.

(source: **Virtue, Success, Pleasure, & Liberation : The Four Aims of Life in the Tradition of Ancient India** p. 9 and 154).

"Hinduism especially in its oldest, Shivaite form, never destroyed its past. It is the sum of human experience from the earliest times. Non-dogmatic, it allows every one to find his own way."

He also noted as early as 1947 that **"the Egyptian myth of Osiris seemed directly inspired from a Shivaite story of the Puranas and that at any rate, Egyptians of those times considered that Osiris had originally come from India mounted on a bull (Nandi), the traditional transport of Shiva."**

Ultimate reality being beyond man's understanding, the most contradictory theories or beliefs may be equally inadequate approaches to reality. Ecological (as we would say today), it sees man as part of a whole, where trees, animals, men and spirits should live in harmony and mutual respect, and it asks everyone to cooperate and not endanger the artwork of the creator.
It therefore opposes the destruction of nature, of species, the bastardization of races, the tendency of each one to do what he was not born for. It leaves every one free to find his own way of realization human and spiritual be it ascetic or erotic or both. It does not separate intellect and body, mind and matter, but sees the Universe as a living continuum. **"I believe any sensible man is unknowingly a Hindu and that the only hope for man lies in the abolition of the erratic, dogmatic, unphilosophical creeds people today call religions."**

31. **Erwin Schroedinger** (1887--1961) Austrian theoretical physicist, a Nobel prize-winner, on **Quantum Mechanics**, wished to see:

"Some blood transfusion from the East to the West" to save Western science from spiritual anemia."
Schroedinger explicitly affirmed his conviction that **Vedantic jnana** represented the only true view of reality- a view for which he was prepared even to offer Empirical proof.

(source: **A Short Introduction to Hinduism - By Klaus K. Klostermaier** p. 168).

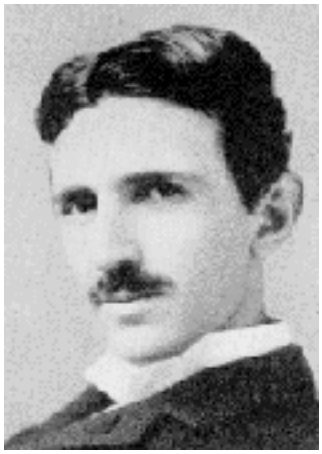
"In all world," writes Schroedinger in his book **My View of the World** (chapter iv), "there is no kind of framework within which

we can find consciousness in the plural; this is simply something we construct because of the temporal plurality of individuals, but it is a false construction....The only solution to this conflict insofar as any is available to us at all lies in the **ancient wisdom of the Upanishad."**

(source: **My View of the World - By Erwin Schroedinger** chapter iv).

Regarding mystical insights, Schrodinger tells us: "The multiplicity is only apparent. This is the doctrine of the Upanishads. And not of the **Upanishads** only. The mystical experience of the union with God regularly leads to this view, unless strong prejudices stand in the West."

(source: **The Eye of Shiva: Eastern Mysticism and Science - By Amaury de Riencourt** p. 78).



32. **Nicola Tesla** (1856-1943) the Serbian-American inventor, electrical engineer, and scientist, used ancient Sanskrit terminology in his descriptions of natural phenomena.

As early as 1891 **Tesla** described the universe as a kinetic system filled with energy which could be harnessed at any location. His concepts during the following years were greatly influenced by the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda was the first of a succession of eastern yogi's who brought Vedic philosophy and religion to the west. After meeting the Swami and after continued study of the Eastern view of the mechanisms driving the material world, Tesla began using the Sanskrit words **Akasha, Prana,** and the concept of aluminiferous ether to describe the source, existence and construction of matter.

(source: http://www.hinduism.fsnet.co.uk/namoma/life_swamiji/life_swamiji_tesla.htm).

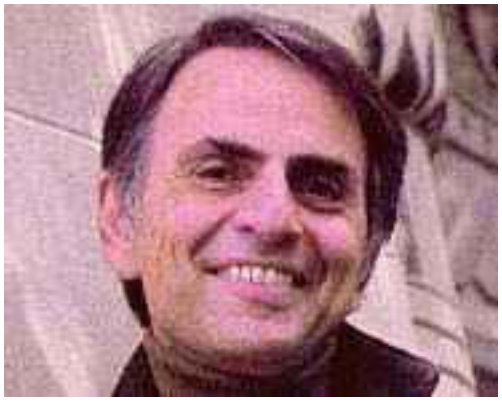
33. **Alistair Shearer** affirms:

"The Hindu understanding of the universe has often been misunderstood as bizarre and primitive.
The Hindu imagery is in fact a sophisticated iconography conveying universal religious truths only now beginning to be understood in the West."

34. **Dr. Carl Sagan**, (1934-1996) famous astrophysicist, in his book, **Cosmos** says:

"The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. **It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond, to those of modern scientific cosmology.** Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years long. Longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang. And there are much longer time scales still."

There is the deep and appealing notion that the universe is but the dream of the god who, after a Brahma years, dissolves himself into a dreamless sleep. The universe dissolves with him - until, after another Brahma century, he stirs, recomposes himself and begins again to dream the great cosmic dream.



Carl Sagan further says: " The most elegant and sublime of these is a representation of the creation of the universe at the beginning of each cosmic cycle, a motif known as the cosmic dance of Lord Shiva. The god, called in this manifestation **Nataraja, the Dance King.** In the upper right hand is a drum whose sound is the sound of creation. In the upper left hand is a tongue of flame, a reminder that the universe, now newly created, with billions of years from now will be utterly destroyed."

These profound and lovely images are, I like to imagine, a kind of premonition of modern astronomical ideas."

Sagan continues, "A millennium before Europeans were wiling to divest themselves of the Biblical idea that the world was a few thousand years old, the Mayans were thinking of millions and the **Hindus billions"**

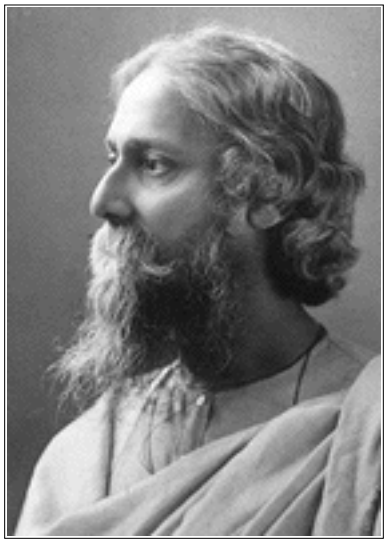
(source: **Cosmos - By Carl Sagan** p. 213-214).

In the episode entitled "The Edge of Forever" in the "Cosmos" television series, Carl Sagan visits India, and by way of introducing some of the bizarre ideas of modern physics, he acknowledges that of all the world's philosophies and religions those originating in India are remarkably consistent with contemporary scenarios of space, time and existence.

35. **Rabindranath Tagore**,(1861-1941) poet, author, philosopher, Nobel prize laureate. He described the Vedic hymns as:

"A poetic testament of a people's collective reaction to the wonder and awe of existence."

India harmonized rural life and urban life. She was no blind worshipper of urbanization like the west of today.



Tagore says well in his book, **Sadhana**:

"The civilization of ancient Greece was nurtured in the city walls. In fact, all the modern civilization have their cradles of brick and mortar, The walls leave their mark deep in the minds of men...Thus in India it was in the forests that our civilization had its birth, and it took a distinct character from this origin and environment. It was surrounded by the vast life of nature and had the closest and most constant intercourse with her varying aspects...His aim was not to acquire but to realize, to enlarge his consciousness by growing into his surroundings. the west seems to take pride in thinking that it is subduing Nature as if we are living in a hostile world where we have to wrest everything we want from an unwilling and alien arrangement of things. This sentiment is the product of the city wall habit and training of mind. But in India the point of view was different; it included the world with the man as one great truth. India put all her emphasis on the harmony that exists between the individual and the universal....The fundamental unity of creation was not simply a philosophical speculation for India; it was her life object to realize this great harmony in feeling and in action."

India chose her places of pilgrimages on the top of hills and mountains, by the side of the holy rivers, in the heart of forests and by the shores of the ocean, which along with the sky, is our nearest visible symbol of the vast, the boundless, the infinite and the sublime.

(source: **Indian Culture and the Modern Age - By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri** Annamalai University. 1956 p. 32-33).

"India has all along been trying experiments in evolving a social unity within which all the different peoples could be held together, while fully enjoying the freedom of maintaining their differences. The tie has been as loose as possible, yet as close as circumstances permitted. This has produced something like a United States of a social federation, whose common name is **Hinduism."**

(source: **Hindutva is liberal - By A. B. Vajpayee - rediff.com**).



In religion his inspiration was derived from the Vedas and the Upanishads. **Tagore** pointed out that Indian civilization was a "forest civilization". The essential continuity of the culture was developed and preserved by families living in small communities close to nature. " The ancient Indians distrusted the pace and pomp of urbandom; they distrusted it strongly enough to resist central authority and conformism. He further predicted that: "India is destined to be the teacher of all lands."

Tagore said of the **quintessence of India's spiritual philosophy** was :

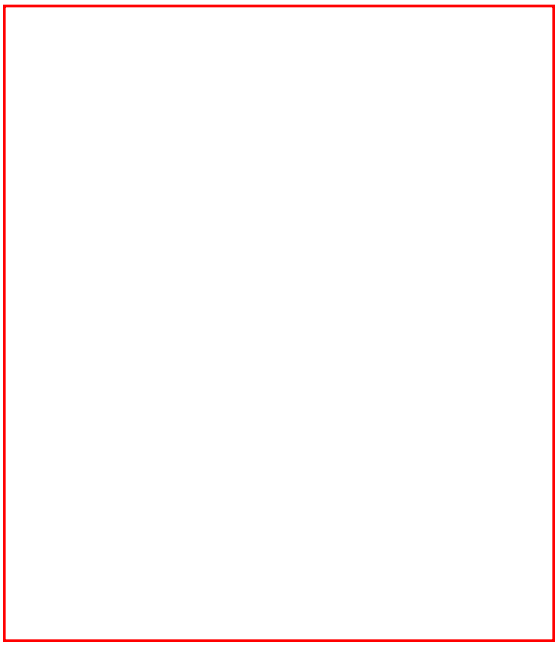
" Santam, Sivam and Advaitam (peace, goodness and Unity of all beings)." Rabindranath Tagore said that we Indians, can buy our true place in the world only with our inheritance, not with the inheritance of others.

Regarding the vitality of ancient India, Rabindranath Tagore has said: "To know my country one has to travel to that age, when she realized her soul and thus transcended her physical boundaries when she revealed her being in a radiant magnanimity which illumined the eastern horizon, making her recognized as their own by those in alien shores who were awakened into a surprise of life." He also said about the culture of Indonesia: **' I see India all around me.'** And in Indonesia, such words as 'sea' and 'ship' are recognizable for their Tamil roots.'

(Please refer to chapter on **Suvarnabhumi** - **Greater India**).

"The fundamental Unity of Creation was not simply a philosophical speculation for India: it was her life object to realize this great harmony in feeling and in action."

(source: **Our Heritage and Its Significance - By Shripad Rama Sharma** p. 56).



36. **T. S. Eliot** (1888-1965) American-English Harvard educated poet, playwright, and literary critic, a leader of the modernist movement in literature. **Eliot** was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1948. He drew his intellectual sustenance from the Bhagavad Gita. He considered it to be the greatest philosophical poem after Dante's *Divine Comedy.* (source: Resinging the Gita).

Also, he kept a copy of The Twenty-eight Upanishads in his personal library for ready reference. (Among the books from Eliot's library now in the Hayward Bequest in King's College Library is Vasudev Lazman Sastri Phansikar's The Twenty-Eight Upanishads (Bombay: Tukaram Javaji, 1906). Inscribed on the fly-leaf is the following note: Thomas Eliot with C.R. Lanman's kindest regards and best wishes. Harvard College. May 6, 1912. At Harvard, Eliot studied Sanskrit and Pali for two years (1920-11), probably in order to acquaint himself with Indian philosophical texts in the original, for he later admitted that though he studied "the ancient Indian languages" and " read a little poetry," he was "chiefly interested at that time in philosophy."

As early as 1918, Eliot reviewed for The Egoist an obscure treatise on Indian philosophy called Brahmadarsanam or Intuition of the Absolute by Sri Ananda Acharya.

(source: **T. S. Eliot Vedanta and Buddhism - By P. S. Sri** p. 10-11 and 126).

Over and over again, whether in **The Wasteland, Four Quarters, Ash Wednesday** or **Murder in the Cathedral,** the influence of Indian philosophy and mysticism on him is clearly noticeable.

In his poem **'The Dry Salvages'** **Eliot reflects on Lord Krishna's meaning:**

> " I sometimes wonder if that is what **Krishna** meant-
> Among other things - or one way of putting the same thing:
> That the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender spray
> Of wistful regret for those who are not yet here to regret."

He mentioned **"Time the destroyer"** (section 2), then summarized one of Krishna's points:

"And do not think of the fruit of action.
Fare forward...
So Krishna, as when he admonished Arjuna
On the field of battle,
Not fare well,
But fare forward voyagers (section 3).

He refers to the Gita's central doctrine of **nishkama karma,** 'selfless endeavor.' He also talks of the decomposition of modern civilization, the lack of conviction and direction, the confusion and meaninglessness of modern consciousness in his poem "The Wasteland."

As Prof. Philip R. Headings has remarked in his study of the poet, "No serious student of

Eliot's poetry can afford to ignore his early and continued interest in the **Bhagavad Gita."**

(source: **Dr. M. V. Kamath, The United States and India** (1776-1976), (The Embassy of India, Washington, D. C., 1976) p. 56).



Eliot familiarized himself with parts of the Vedas and the Upanishads in the course of his graduate studies and used this knowledge as background for certain poetic and dramatic situations in his work. **Of all the American writers who have drawn upon Indian sources T. S. Eliot was one who knew his sources first hand and not merely through translations by Western Orientalists.** The Indian tradition in poetry and philosophy was perceived by Eliot as a vital force in world culture and he appropriated whatever was suitable for his own themes and purposes. The theme of draught and sterility in the Waste Land seems to be inspired by the Vedic myth of Indra slaying Vritra who had held up the waters in the heavens. In the "What the Thunder Said" section of the Waste Land we have the following lines:

" Ganga was sunken and the limp leaves
Waited for rain, while the black clouds
Gathered far distant, over Himavant,
The jungle crouched, humped in silence.
Then spoke the thunder."

Then follows a sequential use of DA-Datta. What have we given?DA-Dayadhvam and DA-Damayata, which as he explains in the Notes are taken from **Brihadaranyaka Upanishad**. The last line has Shantih shantih shantih.

He says: "Two years spent in the study of Sanskrit under Charles Lanman, and a year in the mazes of Patanjali's metaphysics under the guidance of James Woods, left me in a state of enlightened mystification. **A good half of the effort of understanding what the Indian philosophers were after - and their subtleties make most of the great European philosophers look like schoolboys** - lay in trying to erase from my mind all the categories and kinds of distinction common to European philosophy was hardly better than an obstacle.

"In the literature of Asia is a great poetry. There is also profound wisdom and some very difficult metaphysics...Long ago I studied the ancient Indian languages, and while I was chiefly interested at that time in philosophy, I read little poetry too; and I know that my own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility."

On the influence of influence of the Bhagavad Gita, he felt "very thankful for having had the opportunity to study the Bhagavad Gita and the religious and philosophical beliefs, so different from (my) own with which the Bhagavad Gita is informed."

(source: **India in the American Mind - By B. G. Gokhale** p. 120-21) **India and World Civilization By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. Pg. 60-62).



37. **John Dobson**, scientist and a teacher. His theories in physics and cosmology boldly break new ground and significantly challenge the scientific orthodoxy. He was featured in the PBS television series "The Astronomers". **John Dobson** is perhaps best known for his work in the design and construction of telescopes, however, as most telescopes made today use what is known as a "Dobsonian" mount. He discusses the apparitional nature of the universe and why we are fooled into viewing it in a Newtonian-mechanistic way.

"Can we, by now, square science with religion? In particular, can we square relativity and quantum mechanics with **Swami Vivekananda's Advaita Vedanta**? Since there cannot be two worlds -- one for the scientists and one for the mystics -- it must be that their descriptions are of the same world but from different points of view. Can we, from the vantage point of the Swami's Advaita (non-dualism), see both points of view? Swami Vivekananda said that science and religion would meet and shake hands. Can we see things from his vantage point? Since the notion of maya or apparition as the first cause of our physics is central to the swami's Advaita, I have chosen as "The Equations of Maya". Can we find them in our physics? According to the philosophy of the Advaita Vedantins, as the swami himself has said, there cannot be two existences, only one. And maya is, as it were, a veil or screen through which that oneness (the Absolute) is seen as this Universe of plurality and change.

(source: **http://quanta-gaia.org/dobson/EquationsOfMaya.html#WhatIsMaya**).

38. **David Bohm** (1917-1992) a former associate of Einstein, was one of the world's greatest quantum mechanical physicists and philosophers. **David Bohm** explains his theory that there is something like life and mind enfolded in everything. Bohm was profoundly affected by his close contact with **J. Krishnamurti**.

"Yes, and Atman is from the side of meaning. You would say Atman is more like the meaning. But then what is meant would be Brahman, I suppose; the identity of consciousness and cosmos....This claims that the meaning and what is meant are ultimately one, which is the phrase 'Atman equals Brahman' of classical Hindu philosophy."

(source: http://www.ourworldharmony.com/kDavidBo.htm).



39. **Werner Karl Heisenberg** (1901-1976) German theoretical physicist was one of the leading scientists of the 20th century. **Heisenberg** is best known for his Uncertainty Principle and was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics.

"the startling parallelism between today's physics and the world-vision of eastern mysticism remarks, the increasing contribution of eastern scientists from India, China and Japan, among others, reinforces this conjunction. Physical science has now become planetary and draws into its fold an increasing number of non-westerners who find in its new vision of the universe many elements that are quick to note, one cannot always distinguish between statements made by eastern metaphysics based on mystical insight, and the pronouncements of modern physics based on observations, experiments and mathematical calculations. "

(source: **Hinduism Today** - December 2002).

"The scientific world view has ceased to be a scientific view in the true sense of the word." Werner Heisenberg went later in life to Rabindhranath Tagore's University in India called Shantiniketan (Abode of Peace) in a rural and natural setting evidently in search of what he missed in science, namely the certain principle which is Reality or Truth but which never known outside and therefore never spoken of but which is felt in the pure heart. It is the reflection of this which Heisenberg might have discerned in the spiritual writings of the poet.

(source: **The Bhagavad Gita: A Scripture for the Future** Translation and Commentary **By Sachindra K. Majumdar** Asian Humanities Press. 1991. p 33).

40 **Dr. Jean LeMee** born in France in 1931, Studied Sanskrit at Columbia University. Author of the **Hymns from the Rig Veda** says:

"Precious stones or durable materials - gold, silver, bronze, marble, onyx or granite - have been used by ancient people in an attempt to immortalize themselves. Not so however the ancient Vedic Aryans. They turned to what may seem the most volatile and insubstantial material of all - the spoken word ...The pyramids have been eroded by the desert wind, the marble broken by earthquakes, and the gold stolen by robbers, while the Veda is recited daily by an unbroken chain of generations, traveling like a great wave through the living substance of mind. .."



"The Rig Veda is a glorious song of praise to the Gods, the cosmic powers at work in Nature and in Man. Its hymns record the struggles, the battles, and victories, the wonder, the fears, the hopes, and the wisdom of the Ancient Path Makers.

Glory be to Them!"

(source: **Hymns from the Rig Veda - By Jean LeMee -** Illustrator **Ingbert Gruttner** ISBN: 0394493540 and ASIN 0224011812).

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

India's Glory

Albert Einstein said: We owe a lot to the Indians, who taught us how to count, without which no worthwhile scientific discovery could have been made.
Hu Shih, former Ambassador of China to USA said: India conquered and dominated China culturally for 20 centuries without ever having to send a single soldier across her border.
Alexander Duff, British historian of India: "Many advances in the sciences that we consider today to have been made in Europe were in fact made in India centuries ago

Sir William Hunter, said India," has even contributed to modern medical science by the discovery of various chemicals and by teaching you how to reform misshapen ears and noses. Even more it has done in mathematics, for algebra, geometry, astronomy, and the triumph of modern science -- mixed mathematics -- were all invented in India, just so much as the ten numerals, the very cornerstone of all present civilization, were discovered in India, and are in reality, Sanskrit words.
In philosophy we are even now head and shoulders above any other nation, as Schopenhauer, the great German philosopher, has confessed.
In Music, India gave to the world her system of notation, with the seven cardinal notes and the diatonic scale, all of which we enjoyed as early as 350 B.C., while it came to Europe only in the eleventh century.
In philology, our Sanskrit language is now universally acknowledged to be the foundation of all European languages, which, in fact, are nothing but jargonized Sanskrit.
`In literature, our epics and poems and dramas rank as high as those of any language; our Shakuntala was summarized by Germany's greatest poet, as `heaven and earth united'.... In manufacture, India was the first to make cotton and purple (dye), it was proficient in all works of jewelry, and the very word `sugar', as well as the article itself, is the product of India. Lastly she has invented the game of chess and the cards and the dice. So great, in fact, was the superiority of India in every respect that it drew to her borders the hungry cohorts of Europe, and thereby indirectly brought about the discovery of America."

Facts about India:
India never invaded any country in her last 10000 years of history.
India invented the Number System. Zero was invented by Aryabhatta.
An important Mathematics book prescribed by the New York State Education Department acknowledges the debt in the following words:

" The Western world owes a great deal to India for a simple invention. It was developed by an unknown Indian more than 1500 years ago. Without most of the great discoveries and inventions

(including computers) of western civilization would never have come about. This invention was the decimal system of numerals - nine digits and a zero. The science and technology of today (including the computers) could not have developed if we had only the Roman system of numerals. That system is too clumsy to be used as a scientific too. Today we take the decimal system for granted. We don't think about how brilliant the man who invented zero must have been. Yet without zero we could not assign a place value to the digits. That ancient mathematician, whoever, he was, deserves much honor."
Indians also made advances in other areas of mathematics. Very early in their history they developed a simple system of geometry. This system was used to plan outdoor sites for hindu religious ceremonies. Indians also added to our knowledge of even more complicated branches of mathematics such as trigonometry and calculus. They studied these branches of mathematics in order to apply them to astronomy."

The World's first university was established in Takshila in 700 BC. More than 10,500 students from all over the world studied more than 60 subjects. The University of Nalanda built in the 4th century CE was one of the greatest achievements of ancient India in the field of education. Sanskrit is the mother of all the European languages. Sanskrit is the most suitable language for the computer software - a report in Forbes magazine, July 1987.

Ayurveda is the earliest school of medicine known to humans. Charaka, the father of medicine consolidated Ayurveda 2500 years ago. Today Ayurveda is fast regaining its rightful place in our civilization.
Although modern images of India often show poverty and lack of development, India was the richest country on earth until the time of British in the early 17th Century. Christopher Columbus was attracted by her wealth.
The art of Navigation was born in the river Sindh 6000 years ago. The very word Navigation is derived from the Sanskrit word NAV Gatih. The word navy is also derived from Sanskrit `Nou'. Bhaskaracharya calculated the time taken by the earth to orbit the sun hundreds of years before the astronomer Smart. Time taken by earth to orbit the sun: (5th century) 365.258756484 days. The value of pi was first calculated by Budhayana, and he explained the concept of what is known as the Pythagorean Theorem. He discovered this in the 6th century long before the European mathematicians. Algebra, Trigonometry and Calculus came from India. Quadratic equations were propounded by Sridharacharya in the 11th century. The largest numbers the Greeks and the Romans used were 106 whereas Hindus used numbers as big as 1053 with specific names as early as 5000 BCE during the Vedic period. Even today, the largest used number is Tera: 1012.

According to the Gemological Institute of America, up until 1896, India was the only source for diamonds to the world. USA based IEEE proves what has been a century old suspicion in the world scientific community that the pioneer of wireless communication was Prof. Jagdeesh Bose and not Marconi.
The earliest reservoir and dam for irrigation was built in Saurashtra. According to Saka King Rudradaman I of 150 CE a beautiful lake aptly called 'Sudarshana' was constructed on the hills of Raivataka during Chandragupta Maurya's time.
Chess (Shataranja or AshtaPada) was invented in India.
Sushruta is the father of surgery. 2600 years ago he and health scientists of his time conducted complicated surgeries like cesareans, contracts, artificial legs, fractures, urinary stones and even

plastic surgery and brain surgery. Usage of anesthesia was well known in ancient India. Over 125 surgical equipment's were used. Deep knowledge of anatomy physiology, etiology, embryology, digestion, metabolism, genetics and immunity is also found in many texts.

When Europeans were only nomadic forest dwellers over 5000 years ago, Indians established Harappan culture in Sindhu Valley (Indus Valley Civilization) The place value system, the decimal system was developed in India in 100 BC.All of us who wear cotton cloth, enjoy taste of chicken, do yoga, seek peace of mind or tranquility through meditation, are indebted to India.

Iron Pillar -The forging of wrought iron seems to have reached its zenith in India in the first millennium AD. The earliest large forging is the iron pillar at New Delhi dated by inscription to the Gupta period of the 3rd c. AD at a height of over 7 m and weight of about 6 tons. The pillar is believed to have been made by forging together a series of disc-shaped iron blooms. Apart from the dimensions another remarkable aspect of the iron pillar is the absence of corrosion which has been linked to the composition, the high purity of the wrought iron and the phosphorus content and the distribution of slag. Town Planning and Great Baths of Indus Valley Urban planning is evident in the neat arrangement of the major buildings contained in the citadel, including the placement of a large granary and water tank or bath at right angles to one another. The lower city, which was tightly packed with residential units, was also constructed on a grid pattern consisting of a number of blocks separated by major cross streets. Baked-brick houses faced the street, and domestic life was centered around an enclosed courtyard.
The cities had an elaborate public drainage system, Sanitation was provided through an extensive system of covered drains running the length of the main streets and connected by chutes with most residences.

The statue of Nataraja (dance pose of Lord Shiva) is a well known example for the artistic, scientific and philosophical significance of Hinduism. The late scientist Carl Sagan, asserts that the dance of Nataraja signifies the cycle of evolution and destruction of the cosmic universe (Big Bang Theory). "It is the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of." Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the seasons and in the birth and death of all living creatures, but also the very essence of inorganic matter. For modern physicists, then, Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter. Hundreds of years ago, Indian artist created visual images of dancing Shivas in a beautiful series of bronzes. Today, physicist have used the most advanced technology to portray the pattern of the cosmic dance. Thus, the metaphor of the cosmic dance unifies, ancient religious art and modern physics. Fables such as Panchantantra, Arabian nights,
Grammar: Panini's Sanskrit grammar, produced in about 300 B.C.E. is the shortest and the fullest grammar in the world. Ideas of natural selection, atomic polarity and evolution. This is what Manu said, perhaps 10,000 years before the birth of Christ:The first germ of life was developed by water and heat.

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articles on hinduism

A date with history

http://www.deccanherald.com/deccanherald/mar07/pramod.htm

BY PRAMOD K NAYAR

DECCAN HERALD

Sunday, March 7, 1999

Ugadi, March 18, 1999, is special, even as India marches into the 52nd century of the grand old era of Kaliyuga. However, it also happens to be the anniversary of Aryabhatta`s discovery of 'pi` and the length of a solar year. PRAMOD K NAYAR looks back with interest at that point of history, centuries ago, when the early astronomers did some star-gazing.

IS the rest of the world behind time? Or is India ahead of its time? Whose time is it anyway? These questions are not, as they first appear, frivolous.

They arise out of a very unusual situation that occurs on the Ugadi day of March 18, 1999. For, on this day, India marches not into the 21st century but into the 52nd. Puzzled? Then read on.
This Ugadi we step into the 52nd century of Kaliyuga, which is calculated to have commenced with the Krishna Avatar, 5,100 years ago. On such a historical occasion, this article also celebrates another momentous year in India`s history: the anniversary of Aryabhatta`s 499 AD computation of pi as 3.1416 and the length of a solar year as 365.358 days.

The Arya Siddhanta of 499 AD is st ill in use! This Ugadi is therefore a significant date: the Hindu Nirayan calendar`s 52nd century and Aryabhatta`s way-ahead-of- his-times discovery.
As a paean to the world`s most ancient calendar, this piece looks at certain remarkable features of this calender system. Numerous thinkers and works contributed to making astronomy and the related sciences of astrology and cosmogony a near-accurate system. Among these figures are Varahamihira (490 AD) who set out the Bijakarana, and wrote the Pancha Siddhanta and Brihatsamita. Brahmagupta compiled the Sayan Meshasankramana. Munjala invented the 'Ayana` movement and determined one year as a 'kala`. Shatananda authored Bhasvatikarana and calculated the positions of the sun and the moon according to the constellations. Bhaskara (1114 AD) wrote the Udayantara. Ganeshdaivajna (1478 AD) compiled the Grihalagnava Garga.

However, it must be accepted that none of these developments occurred in hermetically sealed conditions. Indian astronomers were deeply influenced by thinkers from other civilisations, especially the Mesopotamian and the Yavana (Greek).

The earliest sources of the Hindu calendar system are texts dating from about 1000 BC.
This divided a solar year of 360 days into 12 lunar months of 27 (according to the Taittiriya

Samhita) or 28 (according to the Atharvaved, the fourth Veda).
The Jyotish Vedanga of 500 BC provided rules for calculating positions of the new and full moons amongst the 27 nakshatras and of the 'ayanas` which fall in cycles of five years, each of 366 days. In five solar years, there were 67 lunar months.

A year of 12 months would be retained, if the 31st and 62nd months were omitted from each cycle. This system was widely used in ancient India.
Examples are also found in the Jaina literature dating from this period. The Taittiriya Samhita constitutes the statements of nakshatras. These nakshatras each measure an area of 13 degrees 20`` of the ecliptic circle. The position of the sun at midnight was calculated from the nakshatra that culminated on the meridian at that time. The year was divided into three-thirds of four months, each heralded by a special religious rite - the 'chaturmasa`. Each of these periods was further divided into two parts (seasons).

Another interesting feature of the old system was the division of the two-year moieties: the 'uttarayana`, (northern course) when the sun rises further North every morning and the 'dakshinayana` (southern course) when it rises progressively further south.

After the influence of Greek and Mesopotamian astronomy, the nakshatras and a quarter of one made up one zodiac period or sign (30 degrees).
The names of the nakshatras are derived from the constellations on the horizon since those times have remained unchanged (Chaitra, Vaisakha, etc).

Eight types of planetary movements (describing their speeds of rotation) are also detailed in these works. It is amazing that in the absence of sophisticated instruments, our thinkers developed such advanced theoretical formulations.

Unlike contemporary science where 'simulation` of situations is available to validate a hypothesis, these ancient astronomers had only the crudest of implements (the water clock, circle and quadrant were extant in those times). This context of their epistemology is what makes their achievement so remarkable.

Later the revolution of the planet Jupiter was also used in Hindu astronomy. Jupiter`s synodic period brings it into conjunction with the sun every 398 days and 88 minutes. A year can be dated as a month of a 12-year cycle of Jupiter. This is extended to a unit of five cycles, or the 60-year cycle of Jupiter (Brihaspati chakra), and a 'century` of 60 years results.

From the 6th century AD, this new s ystem becomes evident.
These calculations reveal a ph enomenal development in ancient India cosmogony. These developments were significantly governed by certain principles (which, of course, varied over the ages). The 'Pitamaha` principle computed a year as 365 days and 21 1/2 ghatikas.

The 'Surya` principle analysed the movement of planets through constellations to draw up 'nadikas` (symbolic periods in days of the planet). On this principle, 584 4/11 days of Mercury (for instance) equalled 89 days and 2 hours. In the 'Romak` principle a year meant 365 days, 14 ghatikas and 18 palas. The ancient Indian calculation of time is easily superior to even present

nuclear time-keeping devices. The Hindu 'truth` is obtained when one divides a second (in the western system) with 33,750 equal parts!

The Hindu 'panchanga` system (analogously derived in its etymology from the 'fine limbs`) is any day more complicated than western calendars. In the Hindu panchanga, there are five basic elements in time division:

The vara (weekday) is the natural solar day (savana divasa) beginning at sunrise. This vara has numerous sub-divisions:
A sura (prativa pala) = 0.006 secs
60 prativa palas = 1 vipala = 0.4 secs
60 vipalas = 1 pala = 24 secs
60 palas = 1 ghatika = 24 min
60 ghatikas = 1 divasa
A further refinement was the division:
10 vipalas = 1 prana (4 secs)
6 pranas = 1 pala (24 secs)

The tithi is the moment of the new moon, or the point of time when the longitudes of the sun and moon are equal - 'amavasya`
(literally 'dwelling together`).
Tithi is the time occupied by the moon in increasing its distance from the sun by 12 degrees. The length of the tithi varies constantly. When the difference between longitudes is 180 degrees it is the 'purnima`.
Nakshatra: as we have seen above, is 13 degrees 20". The moon travels nearly one nakshatra daily.

Yoga: is the period of ti me when the joint motion in the longitude of the sun and the moon is increased by 13 degrees 20". Karana: is half the tithi, or the time during which the differences in longitude of the sun and moon are increased by six degrees. A solar year is the period of the earth`s rotation. This year has a three-fold system.

(a) The sidereal year when the earth makes one revolution round the sun. Standard length - 365 days, 6 hrs, 9 mins, 9.29 secs.

(b) The tropical year when the earth in its revolution passes from one equinox or tropic to the same again. Standard length - 365 days, 5 hrs, 48 mins, 45.37 secs.

(c) Anomalistic year when the earth moves from the apehilion to the perihilion or vice versa. Standard length - 365 days, 6 hrs, 13 mins, 48.61 secs.

Does the description appear too technical? It does. For what we have at hand is one of the most refined and accurate measurements of time.

The break-up of the day (or years) into such minute (excuse the pun) segments is truly astonishing and is unrivalled by any other system in the ancient world. It is perhaps a legacy of this accuracy

which many explain as the incredibly complex and technically perfect architecture of India`s old temples.

Surely the ancient system of mathematics had provided a base upon which future technology and engineering could be built?

From such smaller measurements of time in the Hindu system, one progresses to its computation of cosmic time. The length of
an ideal individual human life is 100 human years. Brahma`s (the Creator) has a day of 365 days or 'kalpas`.

A kalpa is simply one day of Brahm a`s life. The life of Brahma is 100 times 365 kalpas, forming a 'mahakalpa`. This makes
Brahma`s total lifespan to be 31,10,40,00,00,00,000 years! Man has now passed half the age of the Creator.

A kalpa is made of a 1,000 times four 'yugas`, or a 1,000 great yugas which are measured in years of gods. The great yuga is
equal to 12,000 years of gods and is divided into four yugas of unequal length separated by twilight. Finally one lunar year is a
day and night of the gods. Therefore one year of the gods equals 365 lunar years (Incidentally the lunar month is India`s contribution to the calendar system.

The term 'month` is derived from 'moon-eth`). The four yugas in descending order, starting from the present are:

Kaliyuga: Of 432,000 solar years
Dvaparayuga: Double the length of Kaliyuga, 864,000 years
Tretayuga: Triple the length of Kaliyuga, 12,96,000 years
Krutayuga: quadruple the length of Kaliyuga, 17,28,000 years.
A mahayuga is 10 times the length of the Kaliyuga, of 4,320,000 years.
(Heraclitus refers to a 'great year` of 10,800 years
and Berossos, the Babylonian astronomer, spoke of a 'cosmic year` of
432,000 years). The current Kaliyuga began on the
midnight of 17/18th Feb., Thursday, 3102 BC, according to these
calculations.

By comparison, the western Julian period of 7,980 year-cycle began on Tuesday, Jan 1, 4713 BC. The four yugas repeat themselves a 1,000 times on earth, which constitutes a mere one day for Brahma!

The 'Rig Veda` computes 10,800 metrical divisions of 40 syllables each, thus again giving a figure of 432,000. And then, of course, over time, various dynasties and kings evolved their own 'eras`. Though lacking any universal appeal or significance,
these divisions have continued to be of importance in India. A few of these Indian eras are: the Vikrama era, beginning 58 BC; the Saka era beginning 78 A D; the Gupta era beginning 320 A D;

and the Harsha era beginning 606 A D. The Vikrama and Saka eras are in use today too.

March 18, 1999, marking the start of the 52nd century, falls under the 'Shalivahana Saka`, 1921.

It must be noted that the Indian cosmogonic and astronomical systems, while developing independently of western systems, bear remarkable affinities with the latter. For instance, the calculation of the year in both systems are very similar. The Arya Siddhanta and Rajamriganka systems are in use even today.

And now, a quick look at the other major calendar systems of the world. England`s Stonehenge, dating back to 2000 BC, is perhaps the most famous.

Observations were made by lining up stones with a marker and watching for the appearance of the sun or moon against that point on the horizon that lay in the same straight line. Today more than 600 structures, perhaps contemporaneous with Stonehenge, have been discovered across Britain.

Hipparchus, the Rhodes astronomer of 150 BC, calculated the length of a tropical year as 365.242 days, and a lunation as 29.53058 days, both figures remarkably close to the present day calculation of 365.242199 days and 29.53059 days
respectively.
The Julian system of 7,980 year cycles was designed by the French scholar, Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609). The Roman Republican calendar is supposed to have been introduced by the fifth Roman king, Tarquinius Priscius (616-579 BC). This mainly lunar calendar was 10 1/4 days short of a 365 1/4- day tropical year, thus necessitating the intercalation of a month (termed 'Mercedonius`, derived from 'merces`, meaning wages).The Jewish calendar, a highly complex system, is 'lunisolar`, where the years are solar and months lunar.

The calendar employs a lunar cycle of 19 years (thus paralleling the l9-year Metonic cycle devised by the Athenian astronomer, Meton, in 432 BC). The Jewish era today is dated from 3761 BC. The Islamic calendar is lunar, beginning with the approximate New Moon and dating from the emigration of Prophet Mohammed from Mecca to Madina in 622 AD.

The western Julian system, with its long history of monarchical revisions, owes much to Sosigenes (an Alexandrian astronomer).
Pope Gregory XIII refined it with the help of Christopher Clavius in 1582. This Gregorian calendar had a tropical year of 365.2422 days. Other ancient and sophisticated calendars are the Athenian, the Egyptian, the Incan, the Aztec and the Mayan. A discussion of these alternate systems will require long essays and is therefore being omitted here.

What emerges from the above details is the indisputable fact that ancient Indian cosmogony is extremely complex and advanced. As historians of this calendar system, such as SB Dikshit and CPS Menon have demonstrated, the Hindu calendar
predates any European equivalent. Its splitting of 'levels` of time into micro-units is perhaps equalled only by nuclear clocks (which are of very recent origin). Today as we step into our very own 52nd century, we ought to congratulate our ancient astronomers who devised this system, still valid - and validated - by centuries of subsequent calculations.

On Ugadi day, March 18, 1999, the anniversary of the seminal ancient text, the Arya Siddhanta, wishing everyone a Happy New Year, is this ancient system. This day we have literally trysted with destiny, a tryst predicted centuries ago. Or one might say on this Ugadi we have a "date" with history.

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A day at Takshasila

By R. RAJAMANI

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(Taxila, stood on the banks of the river Vitasa in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent. Panini, the great Sanskrit grammarian, Charaka, the author of famous treatise on medicine, and Chanakya, writer of *Artha Shastra* -- these august names are assosiated with Taxila. Promising minds from far flung regions converged there to study the Vedas and all branches of secular knowledge)



R. RAJAMANI was at Taxila recently and the visit proved that it is the place school text books have portrayed - sentinel and a trade post at the foot of the Hindukush Himalayas. But what struck him most was the way this heritage site was preserved.

TAKSHASILA or Taxila, as the Greeks called it over 2,000 years ago, was at one of the entrances to the splendour that was India. Its antiquity is rooted both in mythological texts like the Ramayana and the other puranas, as well as in firm historical evidence relating to the post-Harappan and late Aryan period. It stood both like a sentinel and a trade post at the foot of the Hindukush Himalayas ranking in importance and access point to the invader of the subcontinent only next to Purushapura or Peshawar. It has seen so much of our ancient history that one considered it a privilege to visit the place recently, courtesy of Pakistani friends hosting a meeting this writer was attending.

Taxila is all that the school textbooks have told us about. It was an outlet westward for overland trade before the Mauryan Empire. But early records of trade and access to India through this outpost is found in records of the period before 530 B.C., when the Achaemenid emperor of Persia, Cyrus, crossed the Hindukush mountains. More lucid accounts are available from the fourth and third Century B.C. thanks to the Greeks, and mainly Herodotus. Buddhism and the Gandharas held sway over Taxila and this combination remained undisturbed for some time

inspite of the invasions by Persians and later the Greeks. Alexander's entry in 327 B.C., was through this town and the Greek influence was felt profoundly thereafter in town planning, buildings, religious places, the arts, dresses, martial training, coinage etc., of Taxila. Then followed the Mauryan reign which temporarily filled the vacuum created by Alexander's return. This was a golden period which saw the laying of a highway from Taxila to Pataliputra (which was to shine in later days as the Grand Trunk Road). But no border post can remain tranquil for long and Taxila took a heavy share of the repeated invasions and conquests by the Bactrian Greeks, the Shakas, the Kushans, the Sassanians, etc. It had its share of glory as the capital city of the Gandharas.



But political developments apart, it is the secular absorption of cultures in the various forms of art including the planning of human settlements and in house building as well as in being a crucible for international overland trading that Taxila became well-known. The connections with Greece, Iran and Afghanistan on the West and the rest of the subcontinent to the East extending right upto Pataliputra saw the burgeoning of trade in Taxila which steadily became heavily urbanised. It was the collection point from various parts of various handicrafts and commodities. Precious stones like turquoise and lapis lazuli came from the West and silk from China via Central Asia. Scholarship came from the Buddhist monks and their viharas, stupas and monasteries.

This then was the Taxila we set out to see after over 20 centuries. The excavations carried out in the earlier part of this century are well preserved. The township is a marvel of the concepts of human settlements incorporating wide roads for chariots to pass, individual houses with masonry walls, places for worship and common meetings etc. The undulating terrain and the magnificent backdrop of the hills combined to make one feel that there was a definite concept of the beauty on the whole while planning the individual areas. There were individual house plots having their own religious area and small stupas. One of them had three small doorways, each carved in a different style. The influences of Persian, Greek, Buddhist and Hindu origin were seen. Even the legendary double-headed eagle of Western origin was observed in one of the enclosures. Truly, it was and hopefully is, a confluence of cultures which has rubbed off on the whole of this subcontinent for eons.

The visit to the Buddhist stupa and monastery site was equally pleasing and rewarding. Access was not as smooth as in the case of the township excavations but the walk to and fro was made joyous by seeing hundreds of schoolchildren from schools in Pakistan coming to see this bit of ancient history. We had an able guide who was quite accurate and interesting in the accounts he gave us. It was heartwarming to see that this heritage is treated with respect and preserved as well

as it can be, in the circumstances. The preservation is of the same quality as one noticed in other ruins in India like Lothal.



At the Buddhist stupa site, the stupas were covered by overlays of mud and grass but the entrances and base showed evidence of the stucco embellishments. In the monastery area, one could not help noticing the incipient spiritual vibrations noticed in most places where holy men and women have lived, studied, meditated and laid to rest. There was tranquillity in our minds as we walked around silently and retreated to the unheard yet vivid strains of buddham saranam and sangam saranam gacchami.

The visit to the Taxila museum was the highlight. The rich treasures from the excavations dating to the different periods of history have been faithfully collected, stored and preserved. Specimens of Gandhara art with Greco-Persian influence abound here. Stone and stucco images of the Buddha, intricate pieces of jewellery with embedded stones of precious quality, Aramaic inscriptions, the utensils and implements of the era, images showing the way men wore robes or women wore their lovely tresses - these and more treasures gave an authentic and exhilarating peep into the past. The pleasing ambience of the setting of the museum among stately trees and the allowances to solitude, uninterrupted by the unwanted or raucous attention of vendors and tourist operators, ensured that we carried back to our hotel the most pleasant of memories of our combined legacy.

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WHAT IS DHARMA

http://www.sol.com.au/kor/index.html

What is Dharma? Why is it relevant to us, in the modern world? Why did the sages of old, of every civilization, insist that Dharma is the only TRUE path to fulfilment?

Dharma is a cosmic principle that is difficult, if not impossible, to define. Our Dharma is our true place in the cosmic process: in time, in space, in awareness, in thought, deed and desire. The eternal principle of Dharma determines the harmonious functions of the cosmic machine. In order that we fulfil our role in the divine play we must behave within our Dharma. That is, we ought to do the right thing, at the right time, In the right way, and for the right reason. By this we attain balance. To establish balance within ourselves ensures our own welfare and the welfare of society. And opens the path prepared for us by the divine.

Dharma is an Eastern term whose Western equivalents might include morality, ethics, virtue, righteousness and purity. Sadly, most of those terms are distinctly unfashionable in our modern culture. Yet it is Dharma by which the seeker of truth can evolve to gnosis.

In India the deity Sri Vishnu is believed to have taken more than 9 incarnations (avatars) on this earth to defend the righteous (i.e. those living within Dharma) against the demonic forces (adharma).

As the warrior-prince Sri Rama (c. 6000 BC), Lord Vishnu, rescued the Goddess Sri Sita from the immoral intentions of Ravana, the 10-headed demon King of Lanka. Ravana was a violent, materialistic and egotistical conqueror who despised the will of heaven.

The pure and innocent Rama fought a mighty battle against the demon king and his army of darkness, finally slaying him with a single silver arrow. Rama's army of bears and monkeys, whose weapons were little more than rocks and tree trunks, rejoiced for their beloved Sita had been reclaimed and the Divine Order restored.

This legend of Rama, the Ramayana, teaches that a person who defends dharma is destined to vanquish evil and ignorance. Indeed, the entire cosmos comes to their aid as is shown by the allegiance of the bears, monkeys and other aspects of nature. Fundamental to the defence of Dharma is the sanctity of woman, in this case Sita, who is a Goddess; the Divine Feminine incarnate. Ravana's death from a single silver arrow demonstrated the cosmic power of Rama's dharmic purity.

Sri Krishna (c. 4000 BC) also incarnated to destroy demons opposed to Dharma. Unlike in the age of Rama, impurity (adharma) was not exclusive to the demonic races alone but had begun to enter

into the minds of men. Krishna's life culminated in the Mahabharata war which was a single, momentous battle between two royal families involving the deaths of over 2 million warriors on a battlefield called Kurukshetra (now north of New Delhi). The entire battle pivoted around a divine woman called Draupadi.

The Kaurava family (the bad guys) had insulted her chastity in the royal court after cheating the Pandava family (good guys) in a game of dice. By threatening a woman's chastity the Kauravas had sunk to the lowest level of 'adharma'. Thus the egotistical and hate-filled Kauravas threatened the ancient essence of Indian civilisation.

Krishna guided the Pandavas to victory on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, often by miraculous intervention, so that Draupadi was avenged and Dharma restored.

Unlike Rama, Krishna did not adhere to an external code of Dharma. Rather, he saw to the essence of each situation and acted in such a way as to manifest the greatest divine good.

Despite many modern interpretations of Krishna, he was not a womaniser ‹ the ancient (and more authentic) scriptures show that he was completely innocent of lust and greed. Thus Krishna, as the essence of purity, was the master of yogic spirituality, the essence of dharma.

Today Kurukshetra is the battlefield of the human mind. The Mahabharata war is the struggle between our sublime aspirations (truth, beauty and awareness) and our gross desires (security, sensation and power). As individuals we merely choose sides. When we choose as the Pandavas, we choose Dharma and its fruit of spiritual evolution. The entire cosmos (Sri Krishna) guides us through the battle of life and we ultimately defend the sanctity of Draupadi, the divine feminine, fountain of truth within us. Choose the Kauravas and we are destined for defeat for we elect to move against the divine order. Dharma itself will destroy us and the ultimate prize of spiritual awareness becomes forfeit.

These legends illustrate both the heavenly and earthly importance of Dharma. The Mahabharata is very much older than the famous works of classical Greece (in fact it is longer than Homer's Iliad and Odyssey combined); even its origin is mystical, having been written by the sage Viyasa who perceived the entire story in the state of meditation ‹ thousands of years before it occurred.

When Moses brought down the 10 commandments from Mt. Sinai he taught the Israelites that Dharma was the divine law by which they (who loved truth) aspired could free themselves from their Egyptian slave masters (the base desires) and reach the promised land (spiritual liberation).

Although Mohammed led his followers into a bloody and terrible war to defend the law of Islam (Dharma) from the child-murdering and mysoginistic idolaters, he described that physical war as the 'lesser jihad'.The 'greater Jihad' is the infinitely more difficult war which the seekers fight within themselves for moral purification, death of the ego and victory over desire, attachment and conditioning.

Shakespeare's morality plays were all lessons in the cosmic supremacy of Dharma over human folly. Thus Hamlet's vacillation between his princely duty and his frivolous irresolution led to the death of Ophelia (loss of the divine feminine) and his own extinction ‹ the tragedy was that by procrastinating his Dharma he forfeited his destiny to true fulfilment as king (truth). Whereas Henry V, by immediately taking to his Dharma as a fair king, won not only a miraculous, victory

(the Battle of Agincourt in which the English were outnumbered 25 to 1) over the arrogant French (human ego) but also the fair French princess (sublime beauty and truth).

Christ taught us that forgiveness frees us from our own petty ego (and its qualities such as pride, vengeance, aggression, grudge bearing) so that we can stay on the path of Dharma. Christ's message is encapsulated in statements such as 'He who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery' ‹ in other words an external morality or ethic is insufficient, for true Dharma is purity of heart and mind.

So Why is Dharma so absent from the consciousness of the Western mind?

A significant share of the blame falls upon mainstream Christian doctrine. As more light is thrown upon the gnostic (mystic) Christian sects and their so-called heretical scriptures such as the Nag Hammadi library and the Dead Sea Scrolls, we see that Christ did in fact confirm the then popular ideas of Karma, reincarnation, self-realisation and the Divine Feminine (Holy Ghost/Mother Mary) as reality.

The church's erasure of the principle of karma reduces our feeling of direct responsibility for our life, our circumstances and our personal spirituality. It actually encourages immediate gratification and sensationalism. Cancelling the principle of reincarnation in preference for a single-life doctrine also encourages irresponsible action since we can supposedly atone for any bad actions by last minute conversion.

Worse, it blinds us to the idea of spiritual evolution through many lives through observance of Dharma. Paul was neither a saint nor an apostle, in fact many of the gnostic accounts describe him as an enemy of Christ's true teachings. His ideas of 'blind faith' and 'conversion' in order to enter heaven after death negates possibility of sustained experience of heaven while in the physical body. The cancellation of mysticism is furthered by the doctrine of 'original sin' in which human beings are said to be fundamentally flawed and therefore unable to perfect themselves let alone be worthy of the divine and its experience.

Finally, it is Christian false doctrine that denigrates women beginning with Eve's temptation and ending with the misogynist Paul. It is no wonder that the Holy Ghost/Divine Feminine is not understood in the Christian West since the patriarchal churches have virtually edited it out of existence.

Now the Christian West is comprised mainly of individuals with little real sense of connection to the cosmic order and so their mundane religion today has little bearing on spirituality. Nor does spirituality and its experience depend on their behaviour. Rather than living according to Dharma that pervades their life people are mentally enslaved to Church Doctrine and its empty promise of salvation. Whether or not we are Christians, the churches unauthorised cancellation of these principles has separated the Western awareness from its spiritual roots. Hence the poverty of Dharma in the West today rests considerably upon the shoulders of the Protestant and Catholic churches who have propagated their subtly Anti-Christian doctrines for over 1000 years.

When the Western Europeans colonised the New World the Amer-Indians there were stupefied by the whites' lack of relationship to the land and the gods, and also by the incredible credence given to material possessions. There was an AmerIndian prophecy predicting the coming of whites: Apparently if the whiteman came bearing the symbol of a circle the Age of Truth would begin. If

they came bearing a cross it would signal the end of the world. Apparently the Amerindian's were forewarned of the followers of Paul who came literally with a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other. While the gun may have murdered Indians, the Paulian distortion of the Bible murdered an entire spiritual culture.

The modern Churches of today continue that tradition by paying token respect to Christ while passively encouraging the culture of materialism, dogmatic dependence and superficiality to which He was so obviously opposed.

'True spirituality can enlighten science
so that it serves rather than enslaves'

Institutionalised religions and their inherently fake theologies are not the only culprit. While the Vatican and others like it may have cut the living heart out of religious experience, they still pay lip-service to the memory of morality.

Modern society has a new religion which has supplanted irrational faith. It continues to undermine Dharma with its narrow but self-glorifying creed of 'rationalism'. This new faith is 'science'.

When Newton 'explained' that the universe was little more than a giant piece of clockwork and when Descartes 'proved' that the human being was simply a complex machine devoid of divine inspiration, the age of rationality began.

The irrational ideas of spiritual experience (which so far can't be measured) and Divine Will (which is beyond intellect) were discarded in favour of reason and logic. The industrial revolution taught man that his science and technology could dominate Nature, whose laws, until then, he honoured and respected.

Metaphysics was discredited as illogical. Religion, mythology and many other aspects of the universal Dharma were explained away as 'coping mechanisms' designed to maintain 'psychological homeo-stasis' in a 'hostile environment'.

'Science' and the religion of 'rationality' became the pre-eminent cultural shaping force. Since, the scientists said, God doesn't exist, neither does 'goodness' nor 'badness', 'right' or 'wrong'. Moral instinct, wisdom and conscience (Dharma) were discouraged as illogical. The spiritual glue which holds a civilisation on a cohesive and Dharmic path was scientifically removed and replaced with the materialistic ethos called 'technological advancement', 'consumerism' and 'permissiveness'.

A society which could have looked to the beacon of spiritual experience and used its guiding light of Dharma to the betterment of all now scrambles blindly after the dollar in a lifestyle appropriately called the 'rat-race'. No wonder, then, that Western culture can create a sense of disintegration in so many of us.

However to simply blame science or the dead religions is unrealistic, for, I feel, they actually represent forces operating within us. Could science and rationality be symptoms of our own ego and intellect which has developed without relationship to the Whole? So much so that it dominates our awareness and convinces us to forget the innate dharma within us? Not unlike spoilt children who try to dominate their wiser parents with their own petty desires.

Do religious institutions represent the conditionings and fears within us? They exist only because we want to be told what to do, what is right and wrong, true and false. Our mind screams for something comprehensible to cling to rather than embark on the painful journey of self-awareness which ends not in dogma but in 'Gnosis' that will put an end to ego and mind as we join the divine intelligence.

True spirituality can enlighten science so that it serves rather than enslaves, and it can resurrect the spirit of universal religion that exists within us all.

The tenth avatar of Lord Vishnu is 'Kalki'. His name means "pure" and the prophets say he will ride a white horse at the end of this millennium to destroy the enemies of Dharma forever. St John's revelation foretells "The Rider" whose name is 'faithful and true'. He too will ride a white horse and avenge the true saints. Many other ancient cultures prophesy the coming of an awesome being who will bless the upholders of the Cosmic Order (Dharma) and wreak vengeance on the negative forces and their sympathisers. As the world teeters on the brink of ecological and cultural collapse, it seems that the salvation of humanity, indeed the world, lies in the path of balance and awareness called Dharma. The ancient prophecies remind us of the urgency with which we must choose our final path.

Our common sense, the ancient Scriptures, the prophets, the signs of Mother Earth and now the scientists themselves all promise that the path of 'adharma' will end in catastrophe, judgement and apocalypse.

To resurrect our civilisation from this imminent course requires the awakening of the essence of Dharma within us. Our culture does not teach us divine law, let alone the means to realise it. So we must look within to our true being, the Spirit, the source of living Dharma. The Spirit is made known by the process of self-realisation which occurs in the infinite space between two thoughts -ie. meditation. By true meditation the spontaneous and innate dharma can be awakened and made manifest in each of us.

The collective salvation of our civilisation requires the inner transformation of every individual from the ignorance of materialism and individualism to the Gnosis of collective spiritual awareness. The genuine seekers of truth will receive the spiritual awakening not by psychedelic drugs nor by occult practices. Nor shall they have to abandon society to join some spiritual aristocracy of monks, priests or hermits. Those who seek the truth with the depth of their heart shall have it awakened in them spontaneously and silently by the strength of their pure desire. They only need to recognise that it will manifest not in thought, image or philosophy but in the silent space between two thoughts. In this space inspires the breath and will of the Divine, the fountain of Dharma.

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THE MYSTERIES OF ANGKOR WAT- FORGOTTEN WONDER!
http://pharos.bu.edu/Egypt/Wonders/Forgotten/angkor.html



Located in Northwestern Cambodia, Angkor, the Capital of the Ancient Khmer Empire was possibly founded around the Ninth Century AD by King Jayavarman II. However, the city reached its peak glory in the 12th Century under Kings uryavarman II and Jayavarman VII. The most beautiful and most famous monument in the city, Angkor Wat, lies about one kilometer south of the Royal town of Angkor Thom which was founded by Jayavarman VII.

The Temple of Angkor Wat was dedicated to the Hindu God Vishnu by King Suryavarman II, who reigned between 1131 and 1150 AD. The Temple was constructed over a period of 30 years, and illustrates some of the most beautiful examples of Khmer and Hindu art. Covering an area of about 81 hectares, the complex consists of five towers, which are presently shown on the Cambodian national flag. These towers are believed to represent the five peaks of Mount Meru, the Home of Gods and Center of the Hindu Universe. Angkor Wat features the longest continuous bas-relief in the world, which runs along the outer gallery walls, narrating stories from Hindu Mythology.
With the decline of the Ancient Khmer Empire, Angkor Wat was turned into a preservation. In 1992, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee declared the monument, and the whole city of Angkor, a World Heritage Site.

http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/1848/angkor.html

Angkor Wat, one of the most beautiful and mysterious historical sites in the world. Located over 192 miles to the North-West of Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh, Angkor has been "protected" from tourism, and the customs and the cultures of the people living there have not changed much. However, intense internal warfare for over fifty years has impacted on the people and to an extent on the physical structure of the temples at Angkor.



For many years, Angkor Wat was totally isolated from the Western World. Large, thick jungles covers the area, and it is located in the center of Cambodia. The French colonialists were the first westerners to get exposed to Angkor. They heard rumors from the local population about "temples built by gods or by giants." Most of the colonialists referred these rumors to folk tales, but some believed that there really was a "lost city of a Cambodian empire", which had once been powerful and wealthy. The history of Angkor Wat dates back to the kingdom of Funan. This kingdom was established by an Indian Brahmin, and in AD200, the country was peacefully settled by Indian traders. Four hundred years later, the kingdom had become a prosperous trading region. As the area was located on the Pilgrim rout between China and India, Hinduism and Chinese Buddhism was adopted by the new settlers. The Indian and Chinese influence can still be felt in Cambodia, and the temples of Angkor Wat closely resembles Hindu and Buddhist temples that can be found in Northern India and in Nepal. In the end of AD600, the Funan Empire lost much of its power to the kingdom of Chenla. The capital of this new empire, Sambor, was located about 40 miles to the Southeast of Angkor. During this time, beautiful sculptures and carvings in sand-stone was popular. In AD750, a king with a reputation of being a war-like person, who was able to expand the Chenla kingdom. However, trade with India stopped, and the Indonesian Empire raised to power.

In AD800, the kingdom of Kambuja was established, and king Jayavarman I took control over the kingdom. He built several capitals near Angkor Wat, were responsible for many social changes, and was able to size land to the North and to the East. In AD889, a nephew of Jayavaram became the new emperor, andhe was able to bring peace and unity to the Khmer Kingdom. In AD944, Jayavarman V established many Mahayana Buddhist temples near Angkor, and moved the court to Yasodharapura, at Angkor. Cultures prospered, and so didthe Khmer empire. In AD1000, Suryavarman, a young man who may have come fromthe Malayan provinces of the empire, ascends the throne of Kambuja. He wouldbecome the king of Kambuja for over 50 years. He is responsible for theplanning and foundations of the city of Angkor. In AD1051, UdayadityavarmanII succeed Suryavarman, and continued to build the city of Angkor, andrestored many of the temples. Angkor was now both a sacred temple city andthe center of a vast irrigation system.



Massive expansion of the city continued throughout the next 200 years, and ambitious building programs expanded the city. Many temples were built. The temples are spread out over about 40 miles around the village of Siem Reap. Temples and similar structures to the temples that can be found in the city of Angkor are common sights in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and in China. Perhaps the most famous temple, **Angkor Wat, is a temple dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu was built during this period. Angkor Wat is the highest achievement of Khmer temple architecture, and is today the "flagship" of the temples at Angkor**. The temple is a huge pyramid structure. The compound at Angkor Wat covers an area of 1,500 by 1,300 m (4,920 by 4,265 ft) and is surrounded by a vast moat 180 m (590 ft) wide. Along the causeway leading to the enormous entrance gate are balustrades shaped as giant serpents, which are believed to represent emblems of cosmic fertility. The temple consists of a towering complex of terraces and small buildings that are arranged in a series of three diminishing stories and surmounted by five towers. The roofed and unroofed structures are covered with bands of finely carved stone sculptures. The walls are covered with carved reliefs that illustrate Hindu mythology, principally scenes relating to the god Vishnu, to whom the temple was dedicated. The "mass of bas-relief carving is of the highest quality and the most beautifully executed in Angkor." All the temple mountains of Angkor were filled with three-dimensional images and every inch of the walls are covered by sculptures.

In the beginning of AD1200, the Angkor and the Khmer empire started to decline. When jayavarman VII died, the Thai Empire in the West emerged as a major power in the region. The Thai capital was moved to Ayudhya, near Angkor, and obviously threatened the Cambodian kingdom. In AD1389 the Thais attacked Angkor, and the city fell into the hands of the Thais. The 15th-century conquest of the Khmer kingdom by the Thais resulted (1431) in the final abandonment of Angkor. The city was deserted and the capital was moved to Eastward to the region of the present capital Phnom Penh.

The splendour that was Angkor
http://www.hinduonline.com/daily/980719/09/09190071.htm

Date: 19-07-1998 :: Pg: 26 :: Col: a
Angkor art, that ranged from grandiose works in sandstone to intricate bronzes, would have been lost in the depths of Cambodia's jungles had it not been for the publication of a Frenchman's illustrated diaries ... And then, the world discovered the splendor of an empire. S. RANGARAJAN on an exhibition in Washington that highlighted the rise and fall of a civilisation.

THE culture of India has been one of the world's most powerful civilising forces. Countries of the Far East, including China, Korea, Japan, Tibet and Mongolia one much of what is best in their own cultures to the inspiration of ideas imported from India... But the members of that circle of civilisations beyond Burma scattered around the Gulf of Siam and the Java Sea, virtually owe their very existence to the creative influence of Indian ideas. No conquest or invasion, no forced conversion imposed them. They were adopted because the people saw they were good and that they could use them." (Philip Rawson - The Art of South-east Asia, published in 1967).

The National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. in an exhibition entitled ``Sculpture of Angkor and Ancient Cambodia: Millennium of Glory" captured the splendour that was Angkor and the wonder of India that made this historical legacy possible. In a period much before the sixth Century and one that continued for more than a 1, 000 years, Cambodian artists produced works of art glorifying many aspects of their culture belonging to both the Buddhist and Hindu religious traditions.



The sculpture ranged from grandiose and monumental works in sandstone representing goods, mythical guardians and legendary creatures to bronzes used for religious rituals and royal and aristocratic ceremonies.

Most of the exhibits were from the fabulous collections of the National Museum of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, and the Musse National des Arts Asiatiques -Guimet in Paris, which together possesses most of the world's richest Khmer art and are largely responsible for the discovery of Cambodia's cultural heritage.

How did this synthesis of civilizations come about? The clue is given by Philip Rawson when he says: ``The small colonies of Indian traders, who settled at points of vantage along the sea routes into the islands and around the coast of Indochina, merely imported with them their code of living, their conceptions of law and kingship, their rich literature and highly evolved philosophy of life. They intermarried with prominent local families: and dynasties evolved capable of organising extensive kingdoms within which their populations could live ordered and fruitful lives."



A brief chronology of Indian and Cambodian historical features will highlight the unfolding of this great Asian cultural drama.
INDIA: First century A.D.: Indian culture spreads throughout Southeast Asia;decoration of the portals of the great stupa at Sanchi; 78 Saka era begins;2nd century: Amaravati stupa Buddhist reliefs, classical phase; 4th century:
320: Gupta period begins; 5th century: Image of Teaching Buddha at Sarnath;6th century: c. 550: Chalukya dynasty (until 750); Elephanta cave; 7thcentury: Height of Pallava dynasty (600-850); Height of Ellora art; 8thcentury: Pala dynasty in Bihar and Bengal; 10th century: Chola Empire; 11thcentury: c. 1000: Khandariya Mahadeva temple at Khajuraho; 1025: Chola raid on Srivijaya; 12th century: 1193: Sultanate of Delhi; 14th century:Vijayanagara Empire.
CAMBODIAN: Pre-Angkor period from early in the Christian era until the end of the 8th century that saw the rule of Rudravarman (514-539) and Bhavavarman I (c. 550) and the construction of Bhavapura as capital of Bhavavarman followed by the kingdoms of Isanavarman I (c. 616-635) and Bhavavarman II (635-656). This was the period as mentioned above that the Chalukya dynasty ruled in India for two centuries from c. 550 and also saw the magnificence of the Pallavas.

The Angkor dynasty was founded by Jayavarman II after his return from ``Java" c. 790 and proclaimed himself universal king. He founded the cult of god-king or devaraja with the significant event of the installation of devaraja in 802 A.D. on Phnom Kulen (Mahendraparvata) by the Brahman Sivakaivalya, (``Khmer royal names are Sanskrit compounds that end in the word varman, meaning `shield'. Jayavarman is therefore the king `protected by jaya (victory), and Isanavarman the king `protected by Isana (a name for Siva)', etc.) - From ``Ancient Cambodia: A Historical Glimpse by Albert Le Bonheur.



Jayavarman II was succeeded through the centuries by rulers whose names and deeds (Indravarman II with a capital at Harihaaralaya; Yasovarman, who established a capital at Yashodharaprua and built an island temple at Indrataka and constructed the Bakheng temple- mountain; Harsavarman I; Rajendravarman II, under whose rule the construction of the Royal palace at Angkor began and was consecrated by the Brahmin priest Yajnavaraha in 967 setting in motion the Banteay Srei style of architecture; Udayadityavarman II, whose reign saw the coming of the Baphuon temple mountain and the unique art culture that has been associated with Baphuon) reveal a panoramic picture and sound of the clanging of metals, the rolling of stones and the chanting of hymns in praise of Visnu and Siva.

It was in the first half of the 12th century, during the rule of Suryavarman II (1113-at least 1143) that the temple mountain of Angkor Vat, one of the largest religious structures in the world, was built. Famous for its intricate bas-reliefs depicting stories from the two great Indian epics, Ramayana and Mahabaratha, the colossal work marked the apogee of Khmer architecture.
It is acknowledged that the last great emperor of Angkor was Jayavarman VII (1181-1218?), who built more monuments than any other Khmer ruler, as if to go with great hubris in a burst of fame and renown. The huge temple of the Bayon that he erected in the centre of the royal city of Angkor Thom gave its name to the style of the period. Jayavarman VII made Mahayana Buddhism as the state religion.



The next two centuries saw the revival of Hinduism as the state religion by Jayavarman VIII (1243-1295), increasing Thai raids on Angkor, the growing importance of Theravada Buddhism in Cambodia and the abandonment of Angkor and the location of the capital in Srei Santhor region to the south. It was becoming obvious that the Khmer empire was becoming a weakened power by alien onslaughts.
Slowly but steadily the breathtaking Angkor art was getting out of the sight of the world under the dense foliage of Cambodian forests until the publication in 1863 of the illustrated travel diaries of Henri Mauhot, a French naturalist and explorer, who had gone to South-east Asia in the late 1850's and succumbed to fever there in 1861.
Mesmerised by what he saw at the temple of Angkor Vat, Mouhot in lyrical descriptions said: ``At the sight of this temple, one feels one's spirit crushed, one's imagination surpassed. One looks, one admires, and, seized with respect, one is silent. For where are the words to praise a work of art that may not have its equal anywhere on the globe? ... What genius this Michalangelo of the East had, that he was capable of concaving such a work." (Le Tour du Monde, 2-1863-299).

The outpouring of words were hyperbolic but his accounts of the lost city and the historical treasures that were swallowed by trees and mountains, fired the imagination of scholars and archaeologists to rediscover Angkor.Cambodia which had become a French protectorate in 1863 lured artists, writers and tourists to the ancient sites. In the beginning of this century, the newly founded Ecole franchised'Extreme-Orient undertook the Herculean task of clearing and restoration of the monuments. Early explorers brought some works of sculpture to Paris, where they finally became the nucleus of the collections of Khmer art in the Musee national des Arts asiatiques-Guimet.
In 1918, the National Museum of Cambodia was founded in Phnom Penh to store and exhibit the pieces that had to be removed from the monuments to prevent theft and vandalism.



The restoration of the works of Angkor art, chronicling and cataloguing them in a historical sequence and throwing light on their grandeur is a fascinating story of the pioneering study done by French savants in this domain. Retracing of the genealogy of the Cambodian kings, an understanding of their religious affiliations and an aesthetic appreciation of the divine works of art that were produced during their periods of rule was done by Indologists and Sanskrit masters and colonial administrators in a painstaking and arduous process involving decades of dedication. The key to their success lay in decoding histories written on blackened stone.

The critical epigraphic scholarship so essential in this exercise was set in motion by an eminent Indologist from Leiden, Hendrik Kern, who had no problem in deciphering the Sanskrit-based characters of the ancient Cambodian texts and stone inscriptions, which were related to those used in southern India.

Kern's works which were translated in 1879 in French and appeared in the Annales d'Extreme Orient had a tremendous impact in France and produced in its wake a team of French Sanskritists headed by Auguste Barth and Abel Bergaigne. In a long-term project, Barth and Bergaigne produced an outline of Cambodian history, emphasising the lineage of the rulers. Helping them on the Khmer portion of the epigraphy was Etienne Aymonier, a French administrator with an admirable knowledge of the language. His voluminous work published as Le Cambodge (1900- 1904) is the classic reference on unravelling the evolution of Cambodian texts. Two types of characters were used from ancient India in the Cambodian inscriptions, the south Indian Chalukya-Pallava and the north Indian Nagari writing. ``On the evidence of the inscriptions, the first was more widely used from the early days until the middle of the ninth century. The second appears only in a few Sanskrit inscriptions; it had no real influence on the Cambodian calligraphic tradition. The south Indian type, which actually played a historical part, was known and used across all the former territory of Khmer." (Khmer Epigraphy - Saveros Pou).



In understanding the religions of ancient Cambodia, a phenemonal contribution has been made by Kamaleswar Bhattacharya in ``Les religions brahmaniques dans l'ancien Cambodge, d'apres l' epigraphie et l' iconographie (1961)." Bhattacharya was inspired and influenced by the great philologist-cum-historian, George Coedes, who in 1906, at the age of 20, published a long Sanskrit inscription from Cambodia and who over the next 60 years translated hundreds of complex Sanskrit and Khmer texts with wide-ranging significance and bearing.
``According to the Sanskrit epigraphy, iconography, and Chinese dynastic histories, Hinduism and Buddhism existed side by side in Cambodia during the fifth and sixth centuries. The main religion seems to have been Sivaism, one of the two major branches of Hinduism, but the other branch, Visnuism, also had adherents in the royal family." ``The grammatical work of Panini, the greatest grammarian of antuiquity, was highly prized in Cambodia, particularly among Sivaites. An Indian tradition held that it was Siva himself who had revealed the secrets of grammar to Panini." (The religions of ancient Cambodia, Bhattacharya.)

If Jayavarman II, the founder of the Angkor dynasty in 802, was an adherent of Sivaism and had a lingam installed with all the correct rituals in Phnom Kulen by a Brahmin well-versed in appropriate texts, ``his son and successor, Jayavarman III was a Visnuite," according to Bhattacharya, and the founder of Angkor Vat, King Suryavarman II (1113-1145?), believed in Visnuism, thus indicating that the faith in the two branches of Hinduism varied from ruler to ruler and that a sycretism existed not only between Sivaism and Visnuism, but between Sivaism and Buddhism, before the country embraced the Theravada form of Buddhism in the 14th century. The National Gallery of Art in a beautifully prepared pamphelt on Cambodian art by scholars on Khmer sculpture had outlined the broad contours in its development and the changes that were noticed from time to time over the centuries. Since virtually all Khmer art was religious, a background of the philosophical moorings of the people and their rulers is essential to an understanding of their divine stone carvings and the temple towns of Angkor and Angkor Vat that astound the beholder by their sheer size and proportion.

In turn hieratic and majestic, Khmer sculpture reflected the profound spirituality of the ancient Cambodian people, as well as their mastery of stone carrying and bronze casting. It is one of the misfortunes of history that few records survive to date the sculptures, and nothing is known about the artists who created these marvels. Thus the evolution of Khmer sculpture is traced by relying on a comparative study of architectural advancements over periods of time and a scrutiny of minute details, such as headdress styles, draperies and jewelry.
Pre-Angor art is distinguished from later Khmer art by its greater degree of realism, particularly in the anatomical proportions and the delicate modelling of the body. Almond-shaped eyes and long, thin are the other chief characteristics of works of this age. Also early Khmer statues were generally worked out from a single block of fine-grained sandstone and to ensure the stability of these thin, multi-armed figures, the artisans left elements of the block un carved to serve as support. Another device that served as a prop was an horseshoe-shaped arch that surrounded the body to reinforce the arms. These attribtues slowly disappeared in the ninth century.

After the establishment of the Angkor monarchy, as if to assert their power and supremacy, the Cambodian Kings constructed imposing temples and encouraged creation of sculpture images devoted to the divinities they wished to pay homage. The art of the ninth and 10th centuries stressed the divine nature of the figures by giving the statues a more imposing stance and making their features more simplified.



Some statues were erected on pedestals in sanctuaries exclusively meant for workship by the King and the priests. Others were placed in surrounding galleries where ordinary pilgrims made their prayer offerings. The 10th century Bakheng style, named after a major temple, was noted for male and female draperies that presented a unique type of narrow, vertical pleats, finely carved in relief all over the garments. The third quarter of the 10th century saw the marvel of Banteay Srei. Famous for its elegant pink sandstone and graceful decorations, the small Shiva temple of Banteay Srei was built around 967 with each doorway and each wall of the several gates and sanctuaries comprising the temple complex adorned with finely detailed relief sculpture.

The National Gallery exhibition included two carved pediments of Banteay Srei with scenes from Hindu mythology. One of them depicted two demon brothers fighting for the possession of a nymph sent by the gods to incite their rivalry and provoke a fatal fight to put an end to their crimes. It is the style of the 12th century Angkor Vat (within an enclosure of 1700by 1500 yards) that is uniquely epoch-making in the annals of Khmer art. The approaches to the vast stone complex with shrine pinnacles resembling sprouting shoots conjure visions of an illusion. Philip Rawson says that Angkor Vat is the crowning work of Khmer architecture, carrying to their high point all the features of earlier styles. But Rawson could not help noting ``the ultimate foundations of the style remain what they always were, securely Indian, reminiscent of the late Pallava and Chola art in south-eastern India."

Specially pertinent to this period is the image of Buddha seated on the mythological, multi-headed serpent or naga. The Buddha, deep in his meditation, does into see a storm coming. To protect him Mucilinda, the kind of serpents, spreads his heads in a hood over the Buddha while coiling underneath him to form his throne. Angkor Vat's new emphasis on ornamentation is seen in the decorative carving of the serpent's heads and the finely incised headdress of the Buddha.

The reign of Jayavarman VII, from late 12th century to early 13th century,proclaimed the reaching of the pinnacle with the construction of the Bayon temple. Many images of Bodhisattva Avalokiteswara (compassionate lord)
belong to this era, underlining the prevalent atmosphere of compassion and serenity. The trumpet and the glory of Angkor had lasted long and the decline was so on to set in with frequent attacks by neighbours in the late 13th and 14thecenturies. With the fall of the Khmer empire, the temples of Angkor were abandoned to the jungles until they came to the notice of the world of learning for restoration and preservation from the third quarter of the last century.

It was the misfortune of Angkor to suffer a second eclipse in 1970's due to a bloody and bitter civil was that was on the verge of wiping out an entire civilisation. When a semblance of political stability was reached and the burst of machine-gun fire and detonating mines stopped, work to save Angkor started with a few surviving conservators who had escaped the holocaust. India was the first to respond to the call for international help and the story of how the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) rose to the occasion is well described by C. M. Bhandari, former Ambassador of India to Cambodia,in hi shook ``Saving Angkor".

In the face of intense international competition, the ASI was assigned thetask of restoration of Angkor Vat because (a) 11the better placement of the Indians to understand and respect the cultural heritage of Angkar .....(b)the competence of the ASI in handling the work since they had undertakensimilar restoration works in India for many decades."
On April 25, 1986 India and Cambodia exchanged letters to formalise the Restoration Agreement for Angkor Vat.

With a civil war raging in the surrounding areas of Angkor, the security situation was perilous. With all educated and trained civilians brutally murdered in the ``killings fields", unskilled labour had to be taught the lessons of the specialised work of conservation. There was no electricity, no communication with the outside world and the health facilities were nil. It was under these extreme conditions that the 15 to 18 ASI experts worked seven to eight months at a stretch for seven continuous years from December1986 to save the Angkor Vat.



Highlights of ASI's restoration work at Angkor Vat included the SamudraManthan gallery, entrance porches, libraries and moat embankment and southwest corner pavilion of the third enclosure and chemical treatment. With the successful completion of its assignment by the ASI, history had made a complete circle. What the Indian genius had helped to found over a period of ten centuries from the fourth to the fourteenth in Cambodia, it was able to restore when the structure was about to crumble. The Cambodian exhibition held by the National Gallery of Art in Washington was, in a manner of speaking, a celebration of the peace accords, international cooperation for the restoration of the Khmer art and to emphasise the hope that all is not yet lost with the world.

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The Mystic Poets of Maharashtra

http://www.sol.com.au/kor/9_03.htm

There was a resplendent galaxy of poet saints in Maharashtra from the 13th to the 17th Century, from Jnandev (1275-'96) down to Turkaram (1608-'90). Altogether this was a time of great national vitality, covering the Maratha struggle for independence of the Moghul Empire and its final achievement under Shivaji. On the whole, however, the poet-saints showed no concern with such matters.

They were a strong, rugged, outspoken dynasty drawn from all social classes. Jnandev was a Brahmin, but there were also Namdev, a tailor; Gora, a potter; Savanta, a gardener; Chokha, a sweeper; and Tukaram, a tradesman. There were women too among them: Jnandev's sister Muktabai, Namdev's servant Jani, Chokha's wife Soyara. Their outstanding quality is a beautiful fusing of bhakti (devotion) with Jnana (knowledge). They worshipped and merged into Oneness with the God they worshipped. This is especially prominent in Tukaram. He declares for instance, "When I meditate on the Lord of Pandhari the body becomes transformed together with the mind. Where is there room for speech then? My I-ness is become Hari (God). With the mind merging in Divine Conciousness all creation looks divine. Tukaram says: 'how shall I put it? All at once I became lost in God-conciousness." And again, "The glory of the bhaktas is known only to themselves. It is hard for others to understand. In order to increase the happiness of love in this world they display duality without actually dividing. This is understood only by those who have experienced Unity through faith."

Jnandev with his sister Muktabai and his two brothers, all four of them poet-saints, had an unhappy childhood. Their father, after living the life of an ascetic, returned to married life, and on that account the orthodox Brahmins ostracised the whole family. They were orphaned young and their genius blazed forth while still in their teens. Jnandev, the greatest of them, is better known as Jnaneshwara, the 'Lord of Wisdom'. His great work, the Jnaneshwari is a monumental verse commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. Apart from this there are also his Anubhavamrita or 'Elixir of Experience'. Having himself attained this elixir, he says,

"The distinction between liberated, aspirant and bound subsists only so long as this Elixir of Experience is unknown to one. The enjoyer and the enjoyed, the seer and the seen, are merged in the non-dual, which is indivisible. The devotee has become God, the Goal has become God, the Goal has become the path; this indeed is solitude in the universe.'

This magnificent achievement was completed by the age of 22, when he declared that his life's work was finished and ceremoniously entered into samadhi in a specially prepared crypt, having given instruction that it was to be bricked up. This was in the village of Alandi in Poona district.

There is a beautiful atmosphere of sanctity and serenity there. It contains a tree under which an unending chain of recitation of the Jnaneshwari has gone until the present day. Jnaneshwara has remained a perrenial fount of inspiration for Maharashtra. He was at once the foundation and crown of this amazing dynasty.

Namdev, who arose next, described the three brothers as manifestations of Para-Brahmin and spoke of them as shining suns. In his youth he had been a thief and murderer, until one day, hearing a young mother explain to her fatherless child that they had to live in penury because his father had been killed, he realised with sudden horror that it was he who was the killer, and with a violent revulsion of feeling he rushed to the nearby temple to take his own life. He was prevented, however, and he devoted the rest of his life to penance and worship. He wrote in Hindi as well as Marathi (two sister languages both derived from sanskrit, as are most of those of North India), and it is interesting to note that some of his Hindi songs are included in the Granth Sahib, the scripture of the Sikhs, which their founder, Guru Nanak, partly wrote and partly compiled.

While he was still a simple devotee of God in the form of Vithoba it was Jnaneshwara's sister Muktabai who awoke him to deeper understanding. when he met her she astonished him:

What if you have become a devotee of the Lord?
The Inner Refuge is beyond your ken;
Never have you turned your gaze Spiritward!
What use is your godly talk till then?
Your Self you have never found;
I-ness has you in its iron grip.
Yet, unmindful of your own failure,
You question us about our roots.

She also wrote for him: **"All form is forever permeated with formlessness.**
Shape it has none, but enveloped in Maya
The devotee does with form endow
The all-pervading Boundless That within."

Such was the celestial group of which one, the sweeper Chokha proclaimed: 'God neither has form nor is without form.' Another, the servant-girl Janabai, felt that she 'ate God, drank God, slept on God and carried on all her activities with God.' Namdev died in 1350. He desired his ashes to be buried under the doorstep to the main entrance of the temple of Vitobha at Pandharpur so that all devotees who went there might bless him with their holy feet.

The next great saint of this galaxy was Eknath (1533-'99). He taught that bhakti and jnana are like flower and fruit, inconcievable in seperation. He carried on the tradition of Jnaneshwar and Namdev. The text of the Jnashwari had become corrupted, so he re-edited it, and his recension has remained current to the present day. He was both scholar and poet, and his verse exposition of chapter XI of the Bhagavata is as illuminating and as popular as the Jnaneshwari. His copious and varied compositions (including folk-songs called 'Bharudas') have enriched Marathi literature with their unique quality.

Eknath had a contemporary, Father Stephens, an English Jesuit from Oxford, living in Goa who composed a Christa Purana in Marathi distinctly reminiscent of Eknath's Bhagavata. There are

many sayings that bring out the pure advaitic understanding of Eknath. "My body is Pandhari" (a place of pilgrimage) he says, and Atma is Vitthala (God) therein." And again: "When I bathe in the river the water is liquid consciousness!" He was famed for his never-ending patience as well as for his tolerance and compassion. He was carrying holy water for his worship but gave it to a thirsty donkey. On the anniversary of his ancestors he called an untouchable for food and gave him the consecrated dishes prepared for the Brahmins.

The next great figure in this dynasty, Tukaram, (1608-'50) was a peasant trader by profession but ranks as the crown of Maratha sainthood after Jnaneshwara. The woman poet Bahinabai speaks of him as the steeple or pinnacle of the edifice whose foundation Jnaneshwara had laid. Rameshwar, a contemporary disciple, declaired that " in jnana, bhakti and vairagya (dispassion) there was no one to match Tukaram". Even today his songs sway our emotions as they did his contemporaries.

The secret lies in the rustic simplicity and utter frankness on self-revelationin his songs together with their profound understanding and ardent devotion. He had not an easy life. He could not get up any interest in trade, with the result that he and his family often went hungry,and his wife developed into a scold, as well as she might. The local Brahmins declared that, being of low caste, he had no right to compose poems and ordered him to throw them into the river flowing through the town. Obediently he did so, but the waters washed them ashore undamaged. Abashed by this, his critics allowed them to be kept. He rose above body-conciousness while still in the body. In a well known poem he declares; "I witnessed with my own eyes my bodily death. That was indeed a unique sacrament!" He started (like his prototype Namdev) as an ordinary devotee of God as Vitthala but attained transcendent experience "I went to see God and there stood transfigured into God'" he says.

He is one of those rare saints who have disappeared bodily at the end of life. Since there was no body to entomb there is no shrine to him to which pilgrims can repair. Instead they go to the spot on the river bank where his poems were washed ashore. There is a beautiful atmosphere there. Apart from this fraternity of saints centred around Pandharpur, there were two other contemporaries of Tukaram who were eminent Marathi poet-saints. One of them was a Muslim faqir , Sheikh Muhammed, whose tomb at Ahmednagar became a place of pilgrimage for Muslims and Hindus alike. The other was Samartha Ramdas, the powerful inspirer of Shivaji, whose shrine is at Sajjangad in Satara District.

Sheikh Muhammed is chiefly remembered today for his Yoga-sangrama, a long allegory in songs describing the spiritual struggle as a 'battle of yoga'. He confesses: "I do not know refined speech. Cultured pandits may laugh at my uncouth expression. But look into the core and understand my soul." Like Kabir he understood the basic unanimity of the religions and he could have said with Kabir: " Ram and Rahim, Ishwar and Allah are all the same." He regarded all sadhus as the same and not other than the Absolute, whatever their external forms or religions. "The peel of the jackfruit is rough and prickly but the pulp inside is sweet. The shell of the coconut is hard and rough, but the milk and kernel inside are delicious." He also said: "There is no difference between Paramatma (universal spirit) and saint. They are essentially the same although they appear different." Tukaram said in almost the same words: "All saints are the same. They appear different only in externals, just as milk is all the same though it comes from cows of different colour."

Samartha Ramdas also said the same: "Sadhus look different, but, merged in Self, they are all

manifestations of the One Real." What distinguished him from the Pandharpur group of saints was that, unlike them, he was interested in the national life also. He became the Guru of Shivaji and inspired the freedom struggle against Aurangzeb. His Das-Bodha is a Marathi classic of rare merit. Though composed in the ovi metre, it has the terseness and forthrightness of vigorous prose. Its pragmatism is impregnated with the highest spiritual values. It inculcates Vedanta in practical terms of work-a-day life. Its code of enlightened conduct covers all social classes and applies to both ruler and ruled.

The message and mission of Ramdas were summed up in the meaningful phrase 'Maharashtra Dharma'. His work contained that mixture of realism and intuition which are so characteristic of Maharashtra through the ages. In fact his Das-Bodha with Tukaram's Gatha or Book of Songs and the Jnaneshwari can be looked upon as the 'Triple Veda' of Maharashtra down to this day. Their appeal is both to the head and heart. They are couched in a form which some might consider more like rythmical prose than verse. But they are all alike embodiments of Satyam-Sivam-Sundaram - 'Truth, Purity, Beauty'. The truth must be experienced, and these had experienced it and could indicate it for others to experience.

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Discordant Concord XXI

http://www.investindia.com/newsite/religion/articles.htm#DISCORDANT

If the influence of Vaishnavism outside India has not been noticeable, the predominant reason may be just ignorance. This may be attributed in turn to the absence of any tradition of studying the history and evolution of the Eastern religions, with particular reference to their links with other ancient civilizations. The Christian impact on India, after some initial hesitations, became muscular (according to a phrase used by one of the missionaries in defense of the propagation of the faith) rather than understanding; and any research into the historical origins of the world religions was discouraged. This tradition has been changed. Only in last few decades, when. historical .and anthropological research has ceased to be guided by bias in favour of the established churches of Christendom.

Naturally, it has been possible in this changed atmosphere, with the ecumenical spirit inspiring the search, to find a surprising number of instances of contacts or parallel developments in thought. In appraising the mass of evidence, which has thus been collected, one has to be careful to weed out pseudo from genuine research. Chauvinistic claims, based on purely etymological variations, which might have been derived or twisted to suit particular purposes, will have to be sifted and rejected. Accidental similarities cannot be treated as instances of one religion borrowing from another. With these qualifications, however, it can be said that contacts between the east and the west were not less numerous in the past and were, perhaps, even greater than they are at present.

From Pythagoras, who believed in the transmigration of souls, apparently because of his contacts with religious teachers from the east. Pindar, who believed in metempsychosis, Plato, who could not have been ignorant of Karma, through Klaxons, the Indian sage, who accompanied Alexander, Apollonius of Tyana, who came to Taxila to study under the Brahmins, Clement of Alexandria, the early Christian teachers of the second century A.D., who refers to Buddhists and Brahmins in his work and Plotimus, who went to Persia to meet the Brahmins, the Contacts between India and Greek thinkers seem to have been continuous.

Parallels have also been found between the Biblical account of the creation of man by God in his own image and the creation of woman out of man(Genesis I :27) and the statements in the Hindu scriptures in the Hindu scriptures that God became man and created woman (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad(1:3 and 1:4) and Brahma as God divided himself into svayambhu Manu(man) and Satarupi(Woman)(the Bhagavata purana). There is a further parallel between the temptation of Adam and Eve, Who ate of the apple(Genesis III) and the references to two birds "beautiful of wing, inseparable friends, dwelling together in the same tree (the universe) of whom one(the individual being) eats the fruit of action, while the other (universal being) looks on and Svetesvatara Upanishad(4:6). The Indian scriptures, far from being in conflict with Western

thought, seem very often to contain the same or parallel ideas as in Biblical literature. The ascent of man in the Books of Enoch is said to match a similar account in the Kausitaki Upanishad and even the concepts of the kingdom of God and the son of man have been discovered in the Rig Veda.

There are those, who go much further and claim Jesus himself for India. Incredible accounts of his travels and studies in India, before and after the brief period of his ministry in Israel and crucifixion have been presented in two books: the Russian traveller Nicholas Notovich's 'Unknown life of Christ', published in 1895, and the German scholar Faber-Kaiser's more recent book entitled Jesus died in Kashmir'. The first book, based on certain scrolls in the lamassery at Hemis in Ladakh near the Tibetan border, claims that Jesus stayed with the Brahmins and studied the Indian religions, during the period of about sixteen years in his life, of which there are no The second book supports Ahmadiya sect in Islam that Jesus did not die on the Cross, but came to India and died near Rozabal not far from Srinagar in Kashmir.

The orthodox churches of Christendom do not accept these fancifully reconstructed accounts of the life of Christ; and they may be right. The evidence is flimsy and the authentic tradition of several centuries to the contrary cannot be ignored. But one need not reject in the more recent theory, following the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls between 1947 and 1956 that the Essenes, the upright men who lived in this area, were probably influenced by the Buddhists and themselves influenced by the early Jewish-Christian community in Israel.

Hilgenfeld, who tried to identify the Essenes, before the recent discoveries near the Dead Sea, thought in fact they were Buddhists tae(theraputta) were either an Indian community or were influenced by the Indian, they could transmit some of this influence to Christianity. In particular, the word of God or the Indian 'Vak' into the Logos, could have been their major contribution to the Christian religion.





The similarities between the legends and mythologies of Buddhism and early Christianity are too many and too striking for these possibilities to be ruled out. The royal birth of the Buddha and of Jesus through one of the royal tribes of Judah, the prophecies about their births, the feeding of many and the miracles of walking over the waters, and the parallels between Devadatta and judas, who were opposed to or betrayed entirely to accident. as a further and outstanding illustration of these early contacts with Buddhism, the young Buddha, Josaphat, is also venerated as one of the minor saints of the catholic church, along with his companion Barlaam. Josaphat by himself is venerated also in the Greek and Georgian churches.

If Christianity thus owes something to Buddhism it may owe as much or even more to Mithraism, with its central figure Mithra being closely allied to the sun. Renan says with considerable justification that if Christianity had failed, the whole of Europe could have become Mithraist, as this was the most popular of the so called Pagan religions in the Roman empire.

As it is, Christianity has drawn liberally on Mithraism which it has replaced. It has borrowed the date of Christmas from the birthday of Mithra. The concepts of Mithra and Christ as mediators

between God and man, the belief in the presence of Mithra for blessing all events in everyday life, like the presence of Christ during mass and the ideas of baptism and redemption are instances of similarities in there religions. There is even a precedent for Christ's last supper in Mithra's feast with Sol Helios(The Sun) before his own ascent to heaven.

One can add quite substantially to his list of parallels between the eastern religions and Christianity. But it is not necessary to do so, as no one, not even those who are controlling the churches and orthodox establishments, may now be inclined to advance or sustain the claim that the higher religions grew and developed independently, without any contacts as between themselves.

In this setting, in an environment, which is much less hostile, it will now be possible to look for the hidden though not direct influence of Vaishnavism on Christianity. We shall be devoting the next two installments, therefore to the discovery of the concordant rather than the discordant elements, in the light of recent research.

"A wise man should learn good behaviour, good words and good acts from every side, as a gleaner collects grains of corn from the field abandoned by the reapers. Virtue is preserved by truthfulness: learning by application: beauty by cleansing the body: high behaviour is not good fortune , cannot command respect. A king or a man who envies another's wealth, beauty, might, high lineage, happiness, good behaviour is essential to man. Intoxication of wealth is much more to be censured than wine: for a man intoxicated with prosperity can never be brought to his senses unless and until he meets with a fall." - Vidura Needhi.

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Jaipur

JAIPUR'S BRILLANCE AND THE JANTAR MANTAR

Raja Sawai Jai Singh II's or " The One-And-A-Quarter"
(Source: India-Rajasthan by Knopp Guides pg 132-141)

Spreading Fame



Raja Jai Singh II (1693-1743), was given the title of "Sawai", meaning "The One-and-a-Quarter", by Emperor Aurangzeb for his intelligence. Ever since, the rulers of Jaipur have flown two flags, one full and one quarter-sized, to symbolize this tile.

The Building of Jaipur - In the 1720's Raja Sawai Jai Singh II, realizing that his kingdom had outgrown its old capital at Amber, began to dream of a new city which would someday be the capital of a unified Rajaputana - a great, flourishing center of commerce, the arts, and religion. He started work on building Jaipur in 1727. The city turned out to be an astonishing well-planned one, based on the ancient Hindu treatise on architecture, the ***Shilpa Shastra.***

The town planner was a talented, young scholar and engineer, Vidyadhar Bhattacharya, whose family had been invited to settle in Jaipur from the distant state of Bengal by Raja Man Singh I.



Jaipur was built on a grid system. Its main streets, 119 feet wide were intersected at right angles by secondary streets, 60 feet wide, which were further criss-crossed by lanes and bylanes, 30 feet and 15 feet wide respectively. The streets were lined with fine buildings of uniform design and shaded by trees. In the middle of the main road run an aqueduct, and there were wells for drinking water at regular intervals, many of which are still used today. The city was divided into nine rectangular sectors (representing the nine

divisions of the universe). Different streets were allotted for different professions such as potters, weavers, dyers, jewelers, and bakers.

Louis Rousselet, the well-known 19th century French traveler, wrote, "The town is built in a style of unusual magnificence....I doubt whether at the time it was built there were many cities in Europe which could compare with it."

The 19th century English bishop, **Heber**, wrote that it was comparable to the Kremlin in Moscow. Raja Sawai Jai Sing II named the new city after himself (fortuitously Jaipur also means "City of Victory").

"... THE GOOD PEOPLE OF AMERICA BUILDED THEIR TOWNS AFTER THIS PATTERN, BUT KNOWING NOTHING OF JEY SINGH, THEY TOOK ALL THE CREDIT THEMSELVES."

Wrote RUDYARD KIPLING, *LETTERS OF MARQUE, 1899*



Raja Sawai Jai Singh II's observatory prompted the Portuguese Viceroy in Goa to send an emissary to Jaipur in 1729 to study it. Later, as its fame spread, French and German scholars, astronomers, and priests also came here. Through his Portuguese friend, Padre Manuel de Figueredo, Raja Sawai Jai Singh II procured the latest astronomical texts and instruments from Europe. Using his huge masonry instruments, he was able to detect errors in the well-known astronomical tables of Pere de la Hire, who like other European astronomers, used only standard-sized brass instruments. Raja Sawai Jai Singh II's eclectic collection of astronomical instruments and manuscripts from all over the then known world are displayed at Jantar Mantar and the City Palace Museum. The astrolabe, is a kind of celestial map engraved on a 7 foot wide metal disc. He called it the Raj Yantra, and wrote two volumes on the principles and utility of the device, which became one of his proudest possessions.

*****

Janatar Mantar



The Jaipur astronomical observatory built by Raja Sawai Jai Singh II in 1827 is am amazing monument. Jantar Mantar (the name roughly translates as "The Formula of Instruments") was one of five observatories he built in northern India. Its instruments, which look like giant, abstract, futuristic sculptures, are actually highly sophisticated devices that could, among other things, mark time accurate to one second.

The first observatory was built in Delhi. The second and more sophisticated one is Jaipur. In addition, three smaller ones, in Varanasi, Ujjain, and Mathura, were built to supplement the observations

made in Jaipur. (The Mathura one has since been destroyed.)

In Pursuit of Astronomy



Jantar Mantar

Raja Sawai Jai singh II eagerly devored every known work on the subject written by Indian, Arab, and Greek astronomers and even went to the extent of having Ptolemy's *Almagest* and Newton's *Principia* specially translated into Sanskrit for him. He greatly admired the work done by the Turkish royal astronomer, Ulugh Beg, who had built an observatory in Samarkand in the 15th century, which had produced the most accurated astronomical reading to date. In the introduction to his own comprehensive treatise, he wrote that since nobody had one any significant work in the field since Ulugh Beg, he would undertake the daunting task himself. He sent out his emissaries to collect all the most advanced astronomical instruments that were being used by 18th century Europeans and Islamic astronomers. During the course of his studies he discovered the inaccuracies in the existing astronomical tables of the time. In the tables of the French astronomers, Pere de la Hire, for example, he was able to detect a discrepancy of half a degree in the placement of the moon and planets. He was outspoken in his criticism and once wrote:

" Ptolemy is a bat…the demonstrations of Euclid are imperfect sketch of the inaccuracies in the existing tables were all a result of mechanical limitations of the instruments used at the time – they were too small in size to be accurate, and their moving parts made them unreliable. His solution therefore, was to build gigantic instruments from stone, masonry, and marble instead of conventional brass ones.

Samrat Yantra



His great Samrat Yantra, for example, is basically a sundial, except that it is a massive 89 feet high and 148 feet wide. As a result, when the sun moves across the sky it casts a shadow on the finely calibrated quadrants on either side, which moves at a precise and measurable 0.08 inch every second. It was designed to measure local time as well as such things as zenith distances, meridian pass time as well as such declination of the stards with remarkable precision. Interestingly, the Samrat Yantra at each of his five observatories varies slightly in shape in order to ensure that the hypotenuse of its great triangle is

aligned perfectly with the axis of the earth and the flanking quadrants are perfectly parallel to the Equator.

Other Instruments



In all, Raja Sawai Jai Singh II invented fifteen different instruments, all of them based on his principle of accuracy through gigantic size. They ranged from Ram Yantra , which determines the azimuths and altitudes of various heavenly bodies, to Misra Yantra, which, among other things, tells the time at four different foreign observatories. The instruments are in such a good condition that, surprisingly, they are still used today. Samrat Yantra, for instance, is consulted every year on the full moon night of *Guru Purnima*, along with the ancient Sanskrit texts, to predict the onset of the monsoon. One of the instruments on display at Jantar Mantar and the City Palace Museum is a telescope, indicating just how aware the Raja was of the latest technology of his time.

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Mathematics and the Spiritual Dimension

http://www.gosai.com/chaitanya/saranagati/html/vishnu_mjs/math/math_1.html

Archimedes and Pythagoras

A common belief among ancient cultures was that the laws of numbers have not only a practical meaning, but also a mystical or religious one. This belief was prevalent amongst the Pythagoreans. Prior to 500 B.C. E., Pythagoras, the great Greek pioneer in the teaching of mathematics, formed an exclusive club of young men to whom he imparted his superior mathematical knowledge. Each member was required to take an oath never to reveal this knowledge to an outsider. Pythagoras acquired many faithful disciples to whom he preached about the immortality of the soul and insisted on a life of renunciation. At the heart of the Pythagorean world view was a unity of religious principles and mathematical propositions.

In the third century B.C. E. another great Greek mathematician, Archimedes, contributed considerably to the field of mathematics. A quote attributed to Archimedes reads, "There are things which seem incredible to most men who have not studied mathematics." Yet according to Plutarch, Archimedes considered "mechanical work and every art concerned with the necessities of life an ignoble and inferior form of labor, and therefore exerted his best efforts only in seeking knowledge of those things in which the good and the beautiful were not mixed with the necessary." As did Plato, Archimedes scorned practical mathematics, although he became very expert at it.

The Abacus: A mechanical counting device

The Greeks, however, encountered a major problem. The Greek alphabet, which had proved so useful in so many ways, proved to be a great hindrance in the art of calculating. Although Greek astronomers and astrologers used a sexagesimal place notation and a zero, the advantages of this usage were not fully appreciated and did not spread beyond their calculations. The Egyptians had no difficulty in representing large numbers, but the absence of any place value for their symbols so complicated their system that, for example, 23 symbols were needed to represent the number 986. Even the Romans, who succeeded the Greeks as masters of the Mediterranean world, and who are known as a nation of conquerors, could not conquer the art of calculating. This was a chore left to an abacus worked by a slave. No real progress in the art of calculating nor in science was made until help came from the East.

Shulba Sutra

In the valley of the Indus River of India, the world's oldest civilization had developed its own system of mathematics. The Vedic Shulba Sutras (fifth to eighth century B.C.E.), meaning "codes

of the rope," show that the earliest geometrical and mathematical investigations among the Indians arose from certain requirements of their religious rituals. When the poetic vision of the Vedic seers was externalized in symbols, rituals requiring altars and precise measurement became manifest, providing a means to the attainment of the unmanifest world of consciousness. "Shulba Sutras" is the name given to those portions or supplements of the Kalpasutras, which deal with the measurement and construction of the different altars or arenas for religious rites. The word shulba refers to the ropes used to make these measurements.

> **Math cannot take the mystery out of life without doing away with life itself, for it is life's mystery, its unpredictability-the fact that it is dynamic, not static-that makes it alive and worth living.**

Although Vedic mathematicians are known primarily for their computational genius in arithmetic and algebra, the basis and inspiration for the whole of Indian mathematics is geometry. Evidence of geometrical drawing instruments from as early as 2500 B.C.E. has been found in the Indus Valley. [1] The beginnings of algebra can be traced to the constructional geometry of the Vedic priests, which are preserved in the Shulba Sutras. Exact measurements, orientations, and different geometrical shapes for the altars and arenas used for the religious functions (yajnas), which occupy an important part of the Vedic religious culture, are described in the Shulba Sutras. Many of these calculations employ the geometrical formula known as the Pythagorean theorem.

This theorem (c. 540 B.C.E.), equating the square of the hypotenuse of a right angle triangle with the sum of the squares of the other two sides, was utilized in the earliest Shulba Sutra (the Baudhayana) prior to the eighth century B.C.E. Thus, widespread use of this famous mathematical theorem in India several centuries before its being popularized by Pythagoras has been documented. The exact wording of the theorem as presented in the Sulba Sutras is: "The diagonal chord of the rectangle makes both the squares that the horizontal and vertical sides make separately." [2] The proof of this fundamentally important theorem is well known from Euclid's time until the present for its excessively tedious and cumbersome nature; yet the Vedas present five different extremely simple proofs for this theorem. One historian, Needham, has stated, "Future research on the history of science and technology in Asia will in fact reveal that the achievements of these peoples contribute far more in all pre-Renaissance periods to the development of world science than has yet been realized." [3]

The Shulba Sutras have preserved only that part of Vedic mathematics which was used for constructing the altars and for computing the calendar to regulate the performance of religious rituals. After the Shulba Sutra period, the main developments in Vedic mathematics arose from needs in the field of astronomy. The Jyotisha, science of the luminaries, utilizes all branches of mathematics.

The need to determine the right time for their religious rituals gave the first impetus for astronomical observations. With this desire in mind, the priests would spend night after night watching the advance of the moon through the circle of the nakshatras (lunar mansions), and day after day the alternate progress of the sun towards the north and the south. However, the priests were interested in mathematical rules only as far as they were of practical use. These truths were therefore expressed in the simplest and most practical manner. Elaborate proofs were not presented, nor were they desired.

Evolution of Arabic (Roman) Numerals from India:

A close investigation of the Vedic system of mathematics shows that it was much more advanced than the mathematical systems of the civilizations of the Nile or the Euphrates. The Vedic mathematicians had developed the decimal system of tens, hundreds, thousands, etc. where the remainder from one column of numbers is carried over to the next. The advantage of this system of nine number signs and a zero is that it allows for calculations to be easily made. Further, it has been said that the introduction of zero, or sunya as the Indians called it, in an operational sense as a definite part of a number system, marks one of the most important developments in the entire history of mathematics. The earliest preserved examples of the number system which is still in use today are found on several stone columns erected in India by **King Ashoka** in about 250 B.C.E. [4] Similar inscriptions are found in caves near Poona (100 B.C.E.) and Nasik (200 C.E.). [5] These earliest Indian numerals appear in a script called *brahmi*.

After 700 C.E. another notation, called by the name "Indian numerals," which is said to have evolved from the brahmi numerals, assumed common usage, spreading to Arabia and from there around the world. When Arabic numerals (the name they had then become known by) came into common use throughout the Arabian empire, which extended from India to Spain, Europeans called them "Arabic notations," because they received them from the Arabians. However, the Arabians themselves called them "Indian figures" (Al-Arqan-Al-Hindu) and mathematics itself was called "the Indian art" (hindisat)

Evolution of "Arabic numerals" from Brahmi (250 B.C.E.) to the 16th century.

Mastery of this new mathematics allowed the Muslim mathematicians of Baghdad to fully utilize the geometrical treatises of **Euclid** and **Archimedes**. Trigonometry flourished there along with astronomy and geography. Later in history, Carl Friedrich **Gauss**, the "prince of mathematics," was said to have lamented that **Archimedes** in the third century B.C.E. had failed to foresee the Indian system of numeration; how much more advanced science would have been.
Prior to these revolutionary discoveries, other world civilizations-the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Romans, and the Chinese-all used independent symbols for each row of counting beads on the abacus, each requiring its own set of multiplication or addition tables. So cumbersome were these systems that mathematics was virtually at a standstill. The new number system from the Indus Valley led a revolution in mathematics by setting it free. By 500 C.E. mathematicians of India had solved problems that baffled the world's greatest scholars of all time. **Aryabhatta**, an astronomer mathematician who flourished at the beginning of the 6th century, introduced sines and versed sines-a great improvement over the clumsy half-cords of Ptolemy.

A. L. Basham, foremost authority on ancient India, writes in ***The Wonder That Was India,***

Medieval Indian mathematicians, such as Brahmagupta (seventh century), Mahavira (ninth century), and Bhaskara (twelfth century), made several discoveries which in Europe were not known until the Renaissance or later. They understood the import of positive and negative quantities, evolved sound systems of extracting square and cube roots, and could solve quadratic and certain types of indeterminate equations." Mahavira's most noteworthy contribution is his treatment of fractions for the first time and his rule for dividing one fraction by another, which did not appear in Europe until the 16th century.

Equations and Symbols:

B.B. Dutta writes: "The use of symbols-letters of the alphabet to denote unknowns, and equations are the foundations of the science of algebra. The Hindus were the first to make systematic use of the letters of the alphabet to denote unknowns. They were also the first to classify and make a detailed study of equations. Thus they may be said to have given birth to the modern science of algebra." [7] The great Indian mathematician **Bhaskaracharya** (1150 C.E.) produced extensive treatises on both plane and spherical trigonometry and algebra, and his works contain remarkable solutions of problems which were not discovered in Europe until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He preceded **Newton** by over 500 years in the discovery of the principles of differential calculus. **A.L. Basham** writes further, "The mathematical implications of zero (sunya) and infinity, never more than vaguely realized by classical authorities, were fully understood in medieval India. Earlier mathematicians had taught that X/0 = X, but Bhaskara proved the contrary. He also established mathematically what had been recognized in Indian theology at least a millennium earlier: that infinity, however divided, remains infinite, represented by the equation oo /X = oo." In the 14th century, **Madhava**, isolated in South India, developed a power series for the arc tangent function, apparently without the use of calculus, allowing the calculation of pi to any number of decimal places (since arctan 1 = pi/4). Whether he accomplished this by inventing a system as good as calculus or without the aid of calculus; either way it is astonishing.

Spiritually advanced cultures were not ignorant of the principles of mathematics, but they saw no necessity to explore those principles beyond that which was helpful in the advancement of God realization.

By the fifteenth century C.E. use of the new mathematical concepts from India had spread all over Europe to Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, among others. **A.L. Basham** states also that

> The debt of the Western world to India in this respect [the field of mathematics] cannot be overestimated. Most of the great discoveries and inventions of which Europe is so proud would have been impossible without a developed system of mathematics, and this in turn would have been impossible if Europe had been shackled by the unwieldy system of Roman numerals. The unknown man who devised the new system was, from the world's point of view, after the Buddha, the most important son of India. His achievement, though easily taken for granted, was the work of an analytical mind of the first order, and he deserves much more honor than he has so far received.

Unfortunately, Eurocentrism has effectively concealed from the common man the fact that we owe much in the way of mathematics to ancient India. Reflection on this may cause modern man to consider more seriously the spiritual preoccupation of ancient India. The *rishis* (seers) were not men lacking in practical knowledge of the world, dwelling only in the realm of imagination. They were well developed in secular knowledge, yet only insofar as they felt it was necessary within a world view in which consciousness was held as primary.

In ancient India, mathematics served as a bridge between understanding material reality and the spiritual conception. Vedic mathematics differs profoundly from Greek mathematics in that knowledge for its own sake (for its aesthetic satisfaction) did not appeal to the Indian mind. The

mathematics of the Vedas lacks the cold, clear, geometric precision of the West; rather, it is cloaked in the poetic language which so distinguishes the East. Vedic mathematicians strongly felt that every discipline must have a purpose, and believed that the ultimate goal of life was to achieve self-realization and love of God and thereby be released from the cycle of birth and death. Those practices which furthered this end either directly or indirectly were practiced most rigorously. Outside of the religio-astronomical sphere, only the problems of day to day life (such as purchasing and bartering) interested the Indian mathematicians.

Poetry in Math:
One of the foremost exponents of Vedic math, the late **Bharati Krishna Tirtha Maharaja**, author of *Vedic Mathematics*, has offered a glimpse into the sophistication of Vedic math. Drawing from the *Atharva-veda*, Tirtha Maharaja points to many *sutras* (codes) or aphorisms which appear to apply to every branch of mathematics: arithmetic, algebra, geometry (plane and solid), trigonometry (plane and spherical), conics (geometrical and analytical), astronomy, calculus (differential and integral), etc.

Utilizing the techniques derived from these sutras, calculations can be done with incredible ease and simplicity in one's head in a fraction of the time required by modern means. Calculations normally requiring as many as a hundred steps can be done by the Vedic method in one single simple step. For instance the conversion of the fraction 1/29 to its equivalent recurring decimal notation normally involves 28 steps. Utilizing the Vedic method it can be calculated in one simple step. (see the next section for examples of how to utilize Vedic *sutras*)

In order to illustrate how secular and spiritual life were intertwined in Vedic India, Tirtha Maharaja has demonstrated that mathematical formulas and laws were often taught within the context of spiritual expression (mantra). Thus while learning spiritual lessons, one could also learn mathematical rules.

Tirtha Maharaja has pointed out that Vedic mathematicians prefer to use the devanagari letters of Sanskrit to represent the various numbers in their numerical notations rather than the numbers themselves, especially where large numbers are concerned. This made it much easier for the students of this math in their recording of the arguments and the appropriate conclusions.

Tirtha Maharaja states, "In order to help the pupil to memorize the material studied and assimilated, they made it a general rule of practice to write even the most technical and abstruse textbooks in sutras or in verse (which is so much easier-even for the children-to memorize). And this is why we find not only theological, philosophical, medical, astronomical, and other such treatises, but even huge dictionaries in Sanskrit verse! So from this standpoint, they used verse, sutras and codes for lightening the burden and facilitating the work (by versifying scientific and even mathematical material in a readily assimilable form)!" [8] The code used is as follows:

The Sanskrit consonants

ka, ta, pa, and ya all denote 1;
kha, tha, pha, and ra all represent 2;
ga, da, ba, and la all stand for 3;
Gha, dha, bha, and va all represent 4;

gna, na, ma, and sa all represent 5;
ca, ta, and sa all stand for 6;
cha, tha, and sa all denote 7;
ja, da, and ha all represent 8;
jha and dha stand for 9; and
ka means zero.

Vowels make no difference and it is left to the author to select a particular consonant or vowel at each step. This great latitude allows one to bring about additional meanings of his own choice. For example kapa, tapa, papa, and yapa all mean 11. By a particular choice of consonants and vowels one can compose a poetic hymn with double or triple meanings. Here is an actual sutra of spiritual content, as well as secular mathematical significance

gopi bhagya madhuvrata
srngiso dadhi sandhiga
khala jivita khatava
gala hala rasandara

While this verse is a type of petition to Krishna, when learning it one can also learn the value of pi/10 (i.e. the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter divided by 10) to 32 decimal places. It has a self-contained master-key for extending the evaluation to any number of decimal places.

The translation is as follows:

> O Lord anointed with the yogurt of the milkmaids' worship (Krishna), O savior of the fallen, O master of Shiva, please protect me.

At the same time, by application of the consonant code given above, this verse directly yields the decimal equivalent of pi divided by 10: pi/10 = 0.31415926535897932384626433832792. Thus, while offering mantric praise to Godhead in devotion, by this method one can also add to memory significant secular truths.

This is the real gist of the Vedic world view regarding the culture of knowledge: while culturing transcendental knowledge, one can also come to understand the intricacies of the phenomenal world. By the process of knowing the absolute truth, all relative truths also become known. In modern society today it is often contended that never the twain shall meet: science and religion are at odds. This erroneous conclusion is based on little understanding of either discipline. Science is the smaller circle within the larger circle of religion.

We should never lose sight of our spiritual goals. We should never succumb to the shortsightedness of attempting to exploit the inherent power in the principles of mathematics or any of the natural sciences for ungodly purposes. Our reasoning faculty is but a gracious gift of Godhead intended for divine purposes, and not those of our own design.

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The Incorruptibility of the Ganges

The Ganges is 2525 kilometers long. Along its course, 27 major towns dump 902 million liters of sewage into it each day. Added to this are all those human bodies consigned to this holy river, called the Ganga by the Indians. Despite this heavy burden of pollutants, the Ganges has for millennia been regarded as incorruptible. How can this be?

Several foreigners have recorded the effects of this river's "magical" cleansing properties:

1. Ganges water does not putrefy, even after long periods of storage. River water begins to putrefy when lack of oxygen promotes the growth of anaerobic bacteria, which produce the tell-tale smell of stale water.
2. British physician, C.E. Nelson, observed that Ganga water taken from the Hooghly---one of its dirtiest mouths---by ships returning to England remained fresh throughout the voyage.
3. In 1896, the British physician E. Hanbury Hankin reported in the French journal Annales de l'Institut Pasteur that cholera microbes died within three hours in Ganga water, but continued to thrive in distilled water even after 48 hours.
4. A French scientist, Monsieur Herelle, was amazed to find "that only a few feet below the bodies of persons floating in the Ganga who had died of dysentery and cholera, where one would expect millions of germs,there were no germs at all.

More recently, D.S. Bhargava, an Indian environmental engineer measured the Ganges' remarkable self-cleansing properties:



"Bhargava's calculations, taken from an exhaustive three-year study of the Ganga, show that it is able to reduce BOD [biochemical oxygen demand] levels much faster than in other rivers."

Quantitatively, the Ganges seems to clean up suspended wastes 15 to 20 times faster than other rivers. (Kalshian, Rakesh; "Ganges Has Magical Cleaning Properties," Geographic, 66:5, April 1994.) From **Science Frontiers #94, JUL-AUG 1994.** © 1997 William R. Corliss
http://www.knowledge.co.uk/frontiers/sf094/sf094g11.htm

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articles on hinduism

INFLUENTIAL HINDU RELIGIOUS PERSONALITIES OF THE CENTURY.

By Unknown contributor

1. **BHAGWAN RAMANA MAHARISHI 1879 -1950**

Venkataraman was born on December 30, 1879 near Trichi in Tamil Nadu. His father was a pleader in the town. He had his early education in Dindugal, and later in Madurai. When Ramanar was sixteen, an elderly relative narrated to him about the glories of Tiruvannamalai. From that day onwards Ramanar was fascinated and dwelled on Tiruvannamali (holy Light Mountain) and its presiding deity, Arunachala.

At the age of eighteen, he left his house without telling any one for Tiruvannamali with just three rupees. Once he reached the temple, he was thrilled and ecstatic and, threw away all his clothes, and entered the mandapam only in a small piece of loincloth. For the next several decades he sat in deep meditation in the basement of the temple with little food. Urchins used to throw stones at him. Snakes and venomous spiders mutilated his body - his body was covered with ulcers and pus. But nothing deterred Ramanar from his deep mediation. For the next twenty years or more, Ramanar lived in the many caves of the holy hills of Tiruvannamali - infested with wild beasts.

It was many decades later that his devotees built a small ashram for him to live. Ramanar made no distinction of caste, color or creed. He was very fond of animals, and had many of them with him. He believed in the Adwait philosophy with its aim as self-realization. He wrote several books on self - inquiry and "who am I'.

At the age of seventy-one he fell victim to Cancer, and allowed the illness to run its course. He attained Mahasamdhi on 14th April 1950. Hundreds of people converged at Thiruvannamali saw a bright light
shooting from the hills towards the sky as the Maha rishi attained his samadhi.

SRI AROBINDO GHOSH 1872- 1950

Arobindo was born on August 15, 1872 in Calcutta. His parents were highly westernized and sent Arobindo to England for higher education. Returning to India, he joined the Baroda College as a professor. Here,
he jumped in to politics, secretly planned an armed struggle to achieve complete independence as the final goal of the Indian freedom struggle. He was jailed for his political activities. It was in jail that he started to practice Pranayam- a form of yoga- and study of Upanishadas, which led vast horizons of spiritual awakening and new realizations. After his release from jail, due to a divine

command he went to the former French colony of Pondicherry in 1910. In 1926, he withdrew himself in to a solitary room and cut himself from the outer world. It is believed that it was during this period that he attained many Yogic and Siddhic powers. It was during this time - November 23, 1926, and the day Sathya Sai Baba was born - that Arobindo was reported to have seen a huge ball of bright light racing from the sky towards the earth.

Arobindo developed new understanding and an idea of the supermind. He wrote " The supermind is in its very essence a truth consciousness, a consciousness always free from the ignorance which is the foundation of our present natural or evolutionary existence and from which nature in us is trying to arrive at self knowledge and world knowledge and a right consciousness and the right use of our existence in this world.

Arobindo met the 'Mother' - a French lady - who would become his spiritual companion. Together they founded the Arobindo Ashram in Pondicherry. The Master laid aside his mortal body on December 9th1950.

YOGAR SWAMI 1872-1964

It is a pity that Eelam Tamils -especially Jaffna Tamils- neither understood nor utilized the immense spiritual potencies of Yogar swami. He was born in 1872. His parents were from the historic town of
Maviddapuram. To date no one knows his childhood name He had his early education at St. Patrick College in Jaffna, where he was known as John. After his secondary education, his father - who ran a business in Maskeliya- took his son to help him with his business. Finding that his young son was not at all interested with his work , he sent him back to Columbuthurai. After some time he joined as clerk at the Iranamadu tank scheme in Killinochi. In 1897, when Swami Vivekananda visited Jaffna, Yogar swami participated in the religious procession.

It is said that Yogar swami's baptism in to the religious life began when he met his guru Chellapa swami opposite the famous Nallur temple. Chellapa swami lived on the streets and ate with dogs, and was considered as a psychotic by most of Jaffna people - what a shame that Jaffna Tamils again missed to identify a great saint.

Yogar swami established his ashram in Columbuthurai. It is believed that he belonged to the Kailasa Paramparai (the order begins with Thiumular, Rishi, Kadi Swami (1804-1891), and Chellapa Swami
(1840-1915), Yogar swami, and Subramanya swami (American born, the present head, who has his ashram in Kauai, Hawaii).

Yogar swamy was a highly evolved spiritual soul. He was omnipotent, omniscience and omnipresence. When the Tamils complained to him about the 1958 riots, he is believed to have said, " what is this beating? Wait for 1983." Though outwardly he appeared to be tough - he was famous for scolding and chasing people out of his ashram- inwardly he was loving and caring for his devotees. He wrote several books in Tamil, the famous one being the ' Natchintanai '.

Yogar Swami left his mortal body in 1964 after having being ill for some time.

PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANADA 1893- 1952

Mukunda Lal Gosh was born January 5, 1893 in Gorakapur to a well -to-do-Bengali parents. He had his education at the Serampore College in Calcutta. At the age of seventeen, he met and became the disciple of a great Yoga master, Yukteswar (Yukteswar's guru was another famous god man, Yogavatar Lahiri Mahasaya. Lahiri's guru was the famous Babji -known as the deathless guru, and estimated to be more than 1000 years
old. There have been many sightings of Babaji, especially at the famous Kumbha Mela festivals. The next festival will take place in Allhabad in 2001).

In 1920, Yogananda established the Self- Realization society to disseminate worldwide the ancient science and philosophy of Yoga. He practiced and preached the 'Kirya" Yoga. In the early twenties, he met the deathless guru, Babaji - Yogananda met him only twice- who personally requested Yogananda to go to west and spread the 'Kiriya' Yoga. He established the Self -Realization church in Los angles in 1924.
Some of his western devotees included horticulturist Luther Burbank and poet Edwin Markham.

Yogananda was the author of several books, the famous one being the ' Autobiography of a Yogi'. He entered Mahasamadhi on March 7th, 1952 in Los Angles. It is said that even twenty days after his death - no embalming was done- his body showed no sign of decay.

BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA 1896- 1977

The founder of the Hare Rama Hare Krishna movement was born as Abhay Charan De on September 1, 1896 in Calcutta in an aristocratic Bengali merchant family. Even as small child, Abhay, was enamored with the Ratha-Yatra festival of Lord Jaganatha, held yearly in Calcutta.

Abhay had his education in Calcutta. In the class one year ahead of Abhay was a spirited nationalist, Subaha Chandrabose - who would later become the leader of the Indian National army, calling for an armed struggle to throw out the British. Abhay was attracted to the Indian freedom movement and was aligned with Mahatma Gandhi 's party for some time. He was married while still at college. He then obtained a job as a phamarceutical salesman.

His life changed when he met his guru, Bhaktisiddnta Saraswathi in 1922, who asked Abhay to spread the Krshna consciousness. There were constant misunderstandings between him and his wife over his religious life style. He continued to maintain his wife and his children. The final break up came at the age of fifty-six he found out that his wife of more than thirty years had exchanged his beloved Bhagwad Gita book for a few evening biscuits. In 1950, he moved to Vrndavana- place where Krishna was supposed to have played with the Gopis'. He published three volumes of Bhagavata Purana.

At the age of seventy, he arrived in New York (1965) on a cold day with one suitcase, an umbrella, and a supply of dry cereal, and penniless, to fulfill his guru's wish - to broadcast Vedic knowledge in English in the west. Initially he attracted the hippies and the drug addicts who were

wandering the Hyde Park. A year later, with greatest difficulty he established the International society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). He taught them simple songs of Lord Krishna. Slowly the his movement attracted a large number of followers. To day, The Hare Rama Hare Krishna movement could be found all over the world with more than 350 missions.

After a few years in the west, He moved back to Virindavan .He gave up his mortal body on November 14, 1977.

SR CHANDRASEKHARENDRA SARASWATHI SWAMI OF KANCHI 1894 -1994

Swaminathan was born on May20, 1894 in Villipuram in Tamil Nadu to a pious Kannada Brahmana family. He had his early education at the American mission school in Tindivanam. He had his upanayanam in 1905.
In February of 1907, one of his cousins was installed as the 67th head of the Kanchi Mut (established by Adi Sankara). This 67th chief died a few days after assuming duties and Swaminathan was then appointed as the 68th head at the tender age of thirteen.

He was very well versed in all the Hindu scriptures. He walked the length and breadth of India -like his guru, Adi Sankara- and until his death never once used the modern transportation. He took a keen interest in the social well being of the poor. Unlike the present head, he never got involved in the ' Hindu ' politics.

A small made man, with luminous eyes and wisdom of a guru, he lived simply, commanding respect from not only Hindus, but also from people belonging to other religions. His life spanned the greater part of the twentieth century. He lived for 100 years and attained Mahasamadhi on January 8, 1994.

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA 1887- 1963

Sivananda was born on the 8th September, 1887 in Tamil Nandu. After having graduated as a Medical doctor, he went to Malaysia to practice. He was the editor of a health journal and wrote extensively on health problems. Returning to India after some time, he gave up his lucrative medical practice, and took a life of renunciation to qualify him for ministering to the soul of man. He settled down at Rishikesh in Himalayas in 1924, practicing intense austerities and shone as a great sage.

In 1932 he started the Sivanandashram. In 1936 he started the Divine Life society. In 1950 he visited Ceylon. He is the author of over 300 books and has disciples all over the world. On July 14, 1963 he attained mahasamadhi.

SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA 1916 - 1993

Balakrishna Menon was born on May 8, 1916 in a noble aristocratic Malayalee family in Ernakulam, Kerala. At the age of five, he lost his mother, and his father re- married. In 1940, he joined the Lucknow University where he studied English literature and Law. Following this, he joined the Indian independence movement, spending several months in the prison. After the

independence, he joined the editorial staff of the National Herald paper. Menon soon discovered the 'emptiness' of the so-called good life he had while in Delhi- expensive clothes, late night parties and fancy goods.

Disillusioned with life, he traveled to Rishikesh in 1947 and met Swami Sivananda of Divine life society. In 1949, he became a monk under its order, assuming the name, Swami Chinmayananda. For the next eight years on the advise of his guru, he would study GNANA YOGA under Sri Swami Tapovan - a strict disciplinarian and a demanding teacher -in the high Himalayas in Uttrakashi. After this he traveled the length and breadth of India wandering as an enunciate, living as a beggar.

In 1951, with the blessings of Swami Tapovan, he started his mission to bring the rich and forgotten Vedantic philosophy to every corner of the world. His primary aim was "To convert Hindus to Hinduism". For the next forty-two years he traveled around the globe, facing many difficulties to achieve his mission. He never stayed in one place for more than a week. His mission motto was' Give maximum happiness to the maximum people for the maximum time". Giving special attention to the children, he established the Bal Vihar classes.

To day, the mission sponsors sixty-two schools in India, and Bal Vihar Sunday schools in every major metropolis in US. Swami Chinmayananda left his bodily form in San Diego on August3, 1993.

SRI NARYANA GURU 1854 - 1928

Narayana Guru was a social reformer, who transformed the fabric of the Kerala society. He is credited for the enviable position of Kerala in the field of social development.

He was born on August 20, 1854 in the suburbs of Thirvnanathapuram in an' Ezhavas ' family. Kerala at that time had the worst caste system in the whole of South India. Even Swami Vivekananda described Kerala as a lunatic asylum of class bigotry. Nambudiris were the dominant section of the Brahmins. Non Brahmins ranged from most untouchables to the least touchable. Ezhavas acted as a buffer group between the touchable and the untouchables. Malayalee Brahmins practiced the most heinous crime of keeping woman of a certain section of the Hindu community as concubines without having the obligation of a responsible husband or father.

He had his early education at Karungapally. He married his uncle's daughter in 1882- she would die after some years. His quest for absolute truth began at this stage, and wondered for many years doing penance in caves. He had the privilege of meeting both Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi.

Sri Narayana Guru fought hard to end the heinous cast system in Kerala. He fought against the widely practiced animal sacrifice. He preached that consumption of liquor was evil. He fought for the entry of all men and women in to the Hindu temples.
Naryana Guru attained Maha Samhadi on September 20, 1928.

SRI SATHYA SAI BABA 1926 -

Sathyanaryana Raju was born in Puttarpathi in Andra Pradesh on November 23, 1926. It is said that when the boy was born, the musical instruments in the room started to play on its own, and a cobra was found under the bed. Even at a child, Sathya was supposed to have performed many miracles, which surprised the poor villagers. At the age of fourteen, he renounced his family, saying that he does not belong to them any more, and he has come to serve the people.

Since then, Sathya Sai Baba had lived among his devotees. He moved to his present abode- Prashanthi Nilayam- in 1950. Year by year his devotees grew in number, and today he has followers from all faiths, and from every single country on this earth. Even his ardent critics - this included some of India's top scientists- have become his followers. He is believed to have performed thousands of witnessed and not witnessed miracles - including giving life those who were presumed to be dead, curing incurable illnesses, and appearing in person to help his devotees all over the world.

Today, the once small village of Putarpathi has his own airport and a super specialty hospital- where some of the India's top rated doctors work voluntarily for the benefit of the poor patients. Sathya Sai Baba has predicted several things to happen in the future. Some of them are: 1) He will live until ninety-six years of age- he will celebrate his 75th birthday next year.
2) Muslims will be the last one to accept his divinity -eight years before he leaves this world.
3) His previous incarnation was Shridi Sai baba - a great saint who lived in the early part of this century in Maharastra. He will take his third and final incarnation - Prema Sai - eight years after he leaves his present body. Prema Sai will be born in a village near Mysore in karnataka.

Sai Baba's teachings revolve around peace to all, and ' love all, serve all'.

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Glory that was Kalinga
Arun Kumar Panda
http://www.organiser.org/09apr2000/deal.html

Kalinga is mentioned in the ancient scriptures as Kalinga the Braves (Kalinga Sahasikha). This is evident right from the famous Kalinga War to the victory of Emperor Kharavela from North to South and from the martial arts of Bhoumakar and Soma Dynasty rulers. Similar evidence is also gathered from the military expeditions of achievements of Ananta Verma, Brajahasta, Devendra Verma and Kamarnaba Deb regarding the bravery of the Kalinga warriors.

During the 3rd century B.C. the Greek ambassador Megasthenes in his tour of India had mentioned about the military strength of the Kalinga army of about one lakh which consisted of 60 thousand soldiers, 1700 horses and thousands of elephants. Kalinga was also powerful in the naval force. The vast military strength of Kalinga was the cause of jealousy for the Magadha empire. According to the historians the Magadha Emperor Ashoka invaded Kalinga in 261 B.C. Nearly one lakh soldiers lost their lives in the Kalinga War and one and half lakh soldiers were captured.

During Ashoka's invasion the capital of Kalinga was Toshali near Dhauli. The vast wealth, military power and the maritime activities of the Kalinga was the cause of jealousy for the Magadha empire. Though both Emperor Chandragupta Maurya and Bindusar wanted to conquer Kalinga, neither ventured a war with Kalinga.

The Kalinga war was the first and last war of Ashoka where he himself declared that the conquest through dharma was the real conquest than the conquest through violence. The terrible killings and bloodshed in the war converted him from Chandasoka to Dharmasoka and led Ashoka to become a Buddhist.

After the death of Ashoka, the Great Kharavela became the emperor of Kalinga. He was the monarch of the Chedi Dynasty. The inscription found in the Elephant Caves of Khandagiri and Udaigiri mountains near Bhubaneswar describes in detail the reign of Emperor Kharavela.

Towards the end of the 1st century B.C. there was a sharp decline in the Kalinga kingdom and no remarkable achievements was noticed. This period is known as the Dark Age of Kalinga.

Kharavela adopted Jainism and spread Jainism not only in Kalinga but also in the conquered kingdoms. But after the death of Kharavela Kalinga was converted into a weak empire which lasted about 300 years. During this period rulers of Mathars, Basistha, and Bigraha dynasty ruled Kalinga.

After this, there came the golden period of Kalinga. From 5th century AD to 8th Century AD the emperors of Saila Bhaba dynasty ruled over Kalinga. Like Kharavela, King Sailendra also reorganised the Kalinga army and converted it into a valourous army.

During Sailendra's reign, the business through sea-route reached its height. The merchants of Kalinga went to Sri Lanka and many islands of South-East Asia and established business empire there.

During the rule of the Mathar king Vijayavardhana Kalinga witnessed tremendous progress in the field of education and economic developments. The famous Panchatantra was written by Pundit Vishnu Sharma, a courtier of his time.

After Sailendra occupied the throne, the progress and developments gained momentum. As a result of which the brave Oriya merchants sailed from Dantapur port of Kalinga (now Palur) and from the Mahanadi Coast to Java, Sumatra, Bali, Borneo islands and established cultural kingdoms there.

Indonesia being a Muslim dominated country and Islam being the principal religion the effect of Hinduism and the Ramayana was prevalent. The former Presidents Sukarno and Suharto, and the present vice-President Megawati, although having Sanskrit names, are all Muslims by religion. Ramayana Festival is the national festival of Indonesia and its airline company is named as Garuda Air-ways. A tribe named Kling is settled in the Bali islands. It is understood that the Kling tribe is the immigrants of Kalinga.

The tradition of boat worship and boat sailing on the fullmoon day of Kartik throughout Orissa awakens the memory of brave Kalinga merchants sailing to the distant islands. Each year the famous Baliyatra celebration is held for seven days starting from Kartik Purnima on the Baliyatra field near the famous Barabati fort, Cuttack. According to the historians the Baliyatra is celebrated to commemorate the sailing expedition of the brave Kalinga merchants.

The people of Indian origin in the whole of South-East Asia are known as "Kunsun" (inhabitants of Kalinga). According to the famous historian R.C. Majumdar, the Hindus of Kalinga and the Muslims of Gujarat spread the Indian culture first in Java and then in the west of South-East Asia. The people of Java and Bali Islands have high regards for Indian epics and they recite the slokas and mantras the way we Indians do. The use of the word Jaganath is seen in their slokas and many Sanskrit words are also used in their languages.

The Chinese ambassador Huan Tsang had visited Kalinga in the 7th century AD Huan Tsang's travel-account shows that during that period the Kalinga kingdom was divided into three parts namely Udra, Kangoda and Kalinga. Also during that period Buddhism spread far and wide. The universities at Puspagiri Vihar, Udaigiri and Dhaulgiri were established to teach Buddhism.

Kalinga came under the Bhouma dynasty kings after the reign of King Sailendra. Kalinga was given the name Utkal by Bhouma Dynasty king Sibarkar Deb in 8th century A.D. In 1055 AD the Soma Dynasty monarch of South Koshala took the reign of Utkal. Biraja Khetra (Jajpur) was the capital of Bhouma royal dynasty and later it was shifted to Suvarnapur. Soma dynasty monarch Jajatikeshari again established the capital of his kingdom in Jajpur (Jajati Nagar). The territory of Utkal again expanded during the reign of Maharaja Jajati. His reign witnessed the establishment of Lingaraj temple and many Shiva temples in Ekramakhetra. He recovered and restored Sri

Jagannath relics stolen by Raktabahu and at the same time performed Ashvamedha ceremony in Jajatinagar.

The Ganga dynasty ruled Utkal after the fall of Soma dynasty. Ananta Vardhan Chodaganga Deb had ruled Utkal for about 70 years from 1078 AD to 1147 AD. The famous Jagannath Temple was built during his reign. The other two monarchs of the Ganga dynasty who had proved their calibre in administration were Anangabhima Dev-III and Narasingha Deb-I. Anangabhima Deb did not accept the Moghul supremacy and for this he was attacked by Banga Nawab, which he won at last. It was during his period that the construction of the famous Jagannath Temple at Puri (in 1230AD) was completed. It was during the period of Narasingh Deb-I (1236-1264 AD) the military power of Utkal reached its zenith and its territory expanded further.

After the fall of the Ganga dynasty, the Sun dynasty King, Kapilendra Deb ruled Utkal. His fame spread far and wide in the 15th century and he was regarded as the greatest conqueror next to Kharavela. After the death of Kapilendra Deb in 1446 Gajapati Purusottam Deb and Prataprudra Deb ascended the throne of Utkal. During his reign Sri Chaitanya Deb came from Bengal and settled in Puri and this resulted in the wide spread of Vaishnab cult in Utkal. After the demise of Prataprudra Deb, the last king of Sun dynasty, Utkal lost its glory and grandeur in military power. A Muslim ruler from Bengal gained control over Utkal in 1568 AD after imprisoning Mukunda Dev.

From Gajapati regime to British rule in 1803 in Orissa, the people of forest, urban and rural areas reorganised themselves in martial skills to encounter the plunders. During this period Orissa came under the rule of the Afghan, the Moghul and the Marathas. Instead of giving them a good administration they oppressed and looted the people of Orissa. Many revolts raised their head against these oppression.

The sculptural and artistic skill of Konark, Puri and Lingaraj temple of Bhubaneswar, Jayadev's Gitagovinda, Samant Chandra Sekhar’s astro-physics gave recognisation to Orissa in the whole world.

It is only in the Jagannath cult where equality, friendship and secularism prevails. Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists also worship Lord Jagannath as their Supreme God. The car festival of Sri Jagannath is celebrated through out the world by the Krishna devotees.

Orissa was declared a separate State on April 1, 1936, by uniting the scattered areas of Orissa under the British rule. Some Oriya-speaking areas remained with Bengal, Bihar, Madras and Madhya Pradesh. Those Oriya leaders who had strived hard for the unification of Oriya-speaking areas and for the development of Oriya language are paid homage on April 1 every year on the eve of Orissa day celebration.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Ayurveda -By Karla Cook
STAR-LEDGER - Tuesday, August 4th 1998

It's an approach to medicine that, like other Asian medical systems, looks at the individual, addresses diet, lifestyle and spirit, and strives for balance in each person, It focuses on prevention, and sees, many illnesses not as a collection of symptoms but as imbalances within the body, mind or spirit that, once balance is restored, eats disease at its root.
It's called ayurveda - a 3,000- to 5,000-year-old holistic healthcare system trickling westward from India with its emigrants, as did Chinese medicine with workers who came to build the railroads here early this century. And while it's not widely available in New Jersey, some people are seeding it out as word about it spreads as the alternative medicine of the moment.

One such person is Marie Pizarro-Ferrante, 40, of Belleville. She had experienced some health problems eiidometriosis and lupus - but a difficult pregnancy with lingering side effects from medication and hospital procedures pushed her from self-administered, alternative health care into the office of a Western-trained and ayurvedicary trained physician. "I'm able to live a normal life because of him," says Pizarro-Ferrante, who now takes her 4-year-old daughter Mariah to Scott Gerson for ayurvedic care, though she depends on a pediatrician for immunizations and other Western health care needs.Westerners find ayurveda through any number of philosophical, New Age or alternative lifestyle venues. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi touts it, along with his mind-focusing Transcendental Meditation. Dr. Deepak Chopra, the Harvard-trained endocrinologist, reinvigorated interest in ayurveda by preaching his blend of Western medicine, meditation, diet and exercise in public appearances and various books.

Gerson came to it after becoming interested in Eastern philosophy and spiritual issues while growing up in Sayreville. He liked the healing aspects of it, went to India, mastered Sanskrit and graduated from an ayurvedic university there. After returning to the United States with a bachelor's degree in ayurvedic medicine and surgery, he graduated from New York's Mount Sinai medical school and completed his residency in internal medicine. He's passionate about ayurveda and its potential. He calls his practice a ministry.

"I was not interested in getting the medical degree at first," says Gerson, who, to his knowledge, is the only Westerner to hold joint degrees. "But it was pointed out to me by a very wise advisor that, for at least the next 50 years, in order to best propagate ayurveda out of India, it would be best to couple it with the prevailing medical training of the west. In that way, I could create the reliability and confidence that people will need to enjoy ayurveda.

"There is a need to demystify the central concepts of ayurveda and put them into terms that the Western mind can understand." At Gerson's New York office, patients are likely to receive pulse,

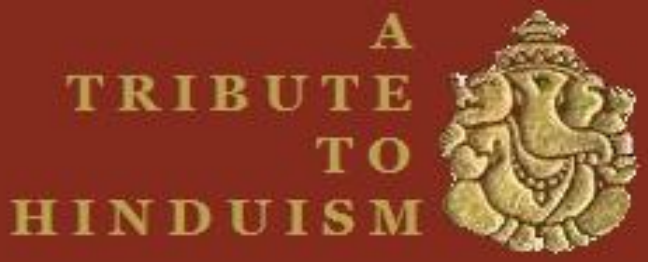
tongue and a urine diagnosis in the ayurvedic tradition. If necessary, they undergo X-ray, EKG, stress tests and other conventional medical diagnostic tests." Ayurvedic medicine does not compete with or replace modem medicine, but rather completes it," says Gerson, who attends and participates in both conventional and ayurvedic medical conferences, and is conducting pioneering scientific research on medicinal properties of herbs used for ayurveda. His practice is pulling in many people with stress or chronic disease - disorders for which Western medicine has no answers. In Ferrante's case, Gerson spent about an hour with her for the first appointment, interviewing her about her lifestyle, diet and problems. In subsequent visits, she began an herbal regimen to control the lupus and, at one point, underwent panchakarma (deep tissue massage and other cleansing techniques).

John Platt, 50, of Bloomsbury, says he lives a healthy lifestyle, but Gerson has helped him with occasional minor problems - bursitis and a shoulder ailment. "He is excellent with pharmaceuticals and herbology," says Platt. "He knows when I should take a pharmaceutical and when I can replace it with an herb, and when not to nix one with the other." And, says Platt, Gerson knows how to mitigate the side effects of drugs and how to rid the body of to3dns through panchakanna. Most practitioners of ayurveda feel that, ideally, it works as a complement to Western medicine. Western (allopathic)

What are the elements of ayurveda?
Doshas: There are three basic constitutions, vata, pitta and kapha, in the body. When they are out of balance, it can cause disorders or disease in the body.
Diet: The foods you eat help to keep the body balanced, or could create an imbalance. Some foods work better for vatas, some for pittas and some for kaphas.
Lifestyle: Ayurveda, khich means the knowledge of life, offers many conimon-sense suggestions on quality-of-life issues - not eating unless you're hungry, sleeping when you're tired, staying warrn and out of drafts if you have the flu, regular exercise and meditation.
Herbal medicines: Usually, these are a combination of dried and powdered herbs taken in capsule or brewed into a tea, and used to enhance everything from relaxation to liver function. They also are used in "panchakarma," a blend of massage, sweating and purging for detoxifying the body. The herbs are classified as dietary supplements and are sold without prescription in the United States.

There's also the mystical, spiritual side of ayurveda, which sees all intelligence and wisdom as flowing from one source.

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articles on hinduism

Sikh-Hindu Similarity

http://hinduism.about.com/religion

Hindus are conditioned to regard Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism as *panths* or sects. Says celebrated columnist **Varsha Bhosle**, **"Hinduism is a generic name given to all the faiths which have roots in India and believe in *Parmatma* (God), *Prarthana* (prayer), *Punerjanma* (reincarnation), *Purushartha* (Karma) and *Prani Daya* (kindness to all living beings)."** Sikhism believes in all of these.

Bhosle cites the speech of one of the greatest modern Sikh leaders, Master Tara Singh, at a meeting in Bombay on August 19, 1964, who declared:

"Sikhs and Hindus are not separate. Sikhs will survive only if Hindus survive. Sikhs are part and parcel of the Hindu Society. Guru Govind Singhji brought in Gurumukhi the wisdom and philosophy from our scriptures and Puranas. Are we going to give up this heritage?"

Unlike Hindus, Sikhs do not worship idols. But, argues Bhosle, few people understand that Hinduism is monotheistic as well as catholic. Sikhs worship the Granth Sahib and pictures of the Gurus - she questions - aren't they icons?

Bhosle further cites some stanzas from the Gurus and the *Guru Granth Saheb* to drive home the Hindu-Sikh affinity:

- *Taha hum adhik tapasya sadhi*
  Mahakal kalika aradhi
  ~ Guru Govind Singh
  (There I worshipped and did penance to seek Kali.)
- *Ram katha jug jug atal*
  Sab koi bhakhat net Suragbas Raghuver kara
  Sagri puri samet Jo en Katha sune aur gaave
  Dukh pap tah nikat na aave
  ~ Guru Govind Singh
  (The story of Ram is immortal and everyone should read it. Ram went to heaven along with the whole city. Whoever listens to or sings His story, will be free of sin and sorrow.)
- *Kahaiya Hinduan daro na ab tum*
  Im likho pathon dil sain Guru Nanak ki gadi par
  Ab hain Tegh Bahadur Unko jo Muhummadi kar lihoon
  To ham hain sab sadar Arya Dharma rakhak pragatiyo hain
  ~ Guru Tegh Bahadur
  (Hindus, do not fear, Guru Tegh Bahadur is Guru Nanak's successor. If Muslims bother

you, I'll take care of them. For I am the protector of Hinduism.)

- *Tin te sun Siri Tegh Bahadur*
  Dharam nibaahan bikhe Bahadur Uttar bhaniyo, dharam hum Hindu
  Atipriya ko kin karen nikandu Lok parlok ubhaya sukhani
  Aan napahant yahi samani Mat mileen murakh mat loi
  Ise tayage pramar soi Hindu dharam rakhe jag mahin
  Tumre kare bin se it nahin
  ~ Guru Tegh Bahadur's reply to Aurangzeb's ordering him to embrace Islam.
  (In response, Shri Tegh Bahadur says, My religion is Hindu and how can I abandon what is so dear to me? This religion helps you in this world and that, and only a fool would abandon it. God himself is the protector of this religion and no one can destroy it.)
- *Sakal jagat main Khalsa Panth gaje*
  Jage dharam Hindu sakal bhand bhaje
  ~ Guru Govind Singh
  (The Khalsa sect will roar around the world. Hinduism will awaken, its enemies will flee.)

Sumer Singh Chauhan in his essay on the common heritage of the Sikhs and Hindus - *Divide & Conquer* - states:

"Many scholars have stated that the Granth contains specific references to Hindu gods such as Rama and Krishna. The gurudwaras, or Sikh temples, have always been decorated with pictures of Hindu devas and devis. The first desecration of these pictures was in 1906 at Harmandir, and this was the first action taken by separatist Sikhs. Other gurudwaras also had them removed as recently as 1984, this occurred after the attack on the Golden Temple. This was not an attack on religion but was justified for reasons of national security.

"Thakur Das, the author of Sikh Hindu Hain (Hosiarpur, 1899), Bhai Randhir Singh of Punjabi University, Patiala, Hari Ram Gupta author of History of the Sikhs (Lahore, 1944), Sardar Jimiyat Singh Gill, founder of the Shiromani Sikh Society of Toronto, Joseph Davy Cunningham, author of A History of the Sikhs from the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Sutlej (Calcutta, 1849), to name a few have all stated that the Dasma Granth was an authentic part of the Granth. If the Guru Granth Sahib were to be examined, there is no difference between Hinduism and Sikhism because the Granth is based on the Hindu scriptures and beliefs.

"An authority on modern Sikhism, Dr. Gopal Singh, indicated in his translation of Shri Guru Granth Sahib that the worship of Rama and Krishna is found in the Granth. It should also be remembered that the Tenth Guru had designated the word of the Granth as the final word of authority binding on all Sikhs. In this the Granth functions as the Guru for all Sikhs. This makes the significance of the Tenth Guru, in two traditions, stand out. It was Bhai Mani Singh who compiled the Dasma Granth. On June 24th, 1734, under the orders of Zakaria Khan, Bhai Mani Singh was executed for not embracing Islam.

"Guru Arjun, who compiled the Granth Sahib, writes in the fifth Granth 'O God you are as great as you adopted the form of Vamana [fifth incarnation of Vishnu], you are also Ram Chandra [seventh incarnation of Vishnu] but you have no form or outline'.

"Reference is made to the avatars of Vishnu in the Granth Sahib. The Dasma Granth deals with all the avatars beginning on page 169. Volume two of the Dasma Granth is exclusively based on Krishna. It is accepted that Guru Gobind Singh was a staunch believer in Durga Mata (Mother Goddess). In the entire Guru Granth Sahib, the Vedas are respected and referred to as sacred. Guru Gobind Singh states that the Vedas originated from Brahma and the path of the Vedas is the only path for the people to follow. Sikhism heavily bases itself on Karma yoga (the science of actions) and states that if an individual acts only on good deeds, selfless acts with a pure devotion to God, they can achieve the ultimate state of existence."

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

India - The Immortal

" There was a time when at the sound of the march of big Greek battalions, the earth trembled. Vanished from the face of the earth, with not even a tale left behind to tell, gone is that ancient land of the Greeks.

There was a time when Roman Eagle floated over everything worth having in the world; everywhere Rome's power was felt and pressed on the head of humanity; the earth trembled at the name of Rome. But the Capitoline Hill is a mass of ruins, the spider weaves its web where Ceasars ruled.

There have been other nations equally glorious that have come and gone….
But we live, and if Manu came back today he would not be bewildered, and would not find himself in a foreign land. The same laws adjusted and thought out through thousands and thousands of years, customs, the outcome of the acumen of ages and the experiences of centuries, that seem to be eternal. It is the same India, which has withstood the shocks of centuries, of hundred foreign invasions. It is the same land, which stands firmer than any rock in the world, with its undying vigor, indestructible life. Its life is the same nature as the soul, without beginning and without end, immortal; and we are the children of such a country."
(source: '**Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda**')

Stanley Wolpert says:

"Indic civilization has endured for more than 4,000 years as an empire of ideas rather than territorial boundaries. Often nebulous and self defeating, conflicted and fragmented, the rambling bullock-cart continent called India is at once the oldest and most sorrowful as well as the happiest and most beautiful civilization on earth. Her very weakness at times has been her greatest strength, since for sheer endurance India is unique. Bowing low before the onslaught of armies and elements, India has survived every invasion, every natural disaster, every mortal disease and epidemic, the double helix of her genetic code transmitting its unmistakable imprint down four millennia to no less than three-quarters of a billion modern bearers. Indians have demonstrated greater cultural stamina than any other people on earth. Old as she is, India continues to grow and flourish, transmuting her ancient forms into innovative modernity, adapting her past to suit the present, overcoming Death itself by creating such ingenious concepts as reincarnation, yet welcoming individual extinction as the ultimate goal of Salvation through "Release" – *Moksha.*

Indic Civilization has enriched every art and science known to us. Thanks to India, we reckon from zero to ten with misnamed "Arabic" numerals and use a decimal system without which our modern computer age would hardly be possible. Ancient Indians were the first humans to spin and

weave cotton into cloth that continues to provide our most comfortable summer attire. Indians taught us to domesticate and eat chicken, to play chess, to gamble with dice, to love mangoes, and elephants, to stand on our heads (yoga) for good health, and to believe in the coexistence of contradiction, and to appreciate the beauty and universal possibility of nonviolence. India is the birthplace of Hinduism as well as Buddhism, motherland of Sikhs and Jains, the abode of more rishis, sadhus, mahatmas, and maharishis than any place on earth.

India pulsates, vibrates, scintillates with such a plethora of human, animal, botanical, insect, and divine life that no camera or recording device, no canvas, pen, or cassette can fully capture the rich design of daily "ordinary" existence."

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Frenchman who made India a passion in West

By AFP

http://www.rediff.com/news/2000/jul/19france.htm

Indian and French scholars are working to revive the memory of Alain Danielou, who singlehandedly popularised Indian music, culture and religion in his native France and large parts of the Western world.

A fresh flurry of activity is focusing on the works of the Breton, who translated the Indian love text, the *Kamasutra*, helped promote the poems and novels of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore and made Indian classical music universally popular at a time when it was unknown elsewhere.

Born into a patrician family in 1907, Danielou's circle of close friends in his bohemian youth included poets Jean Cocteau and Max Jacob, the famed actor Jean Marais and composers like Stravinsky. But his life was to change in 1935 when he and his companion Raymond Burnier, a scion of the family that owned the Swiss chocolate and dairy products empire Nestle, decided to travel to India from France by car.

It heralded for Danielou the start of a lifelong love affair with India, a country he described in his last interview before his death in 1994 as "my real homeland."

Upon his wishes, Danielou, who spent 15 years in the holy town of Benares studying Hinduism and Sanskrit and took the name of Shiva Saran (the protege of the Hindu god Shiva), was cremated in Hindu fashion.

Dilip Padgaonkar, editor of *The Times of India* newspaper, told AFP he was in talks with Danielou's heir Jacques Cloarec for an exhibition of photographs taken by Danielou of ancient Indian sculptures.

"The time and the circumstance for Danielou to re-emerge is extraordinarily opportune and comes amid a renewal of interest in India among young French people," Padgaonkar said.

"Danielou has done more than anybody else to promote India in France with the possible exception of Andre Malraux," he said, referring to the acclaimed writer and former French culture minister. "He straddled the eastern and western worlds with equal ease."

Samuel Berthet, a French scholar in Shantiniketan, the university town set up by Tagore in eastern India, said Danielou's volumes on India were being translated into three Indian languages -- Hindi, Bengali and Tamil.

"We are also planning to exhibit a musical instrument, called the 'semantic musical', developed by Danielou along on the lines of classical instruments of ancient India and Greece, in India by the end of this year," he said. "It is somewhat like an organ."

Danielou was one of the first Westerners to visit India's famed erotic temples in the village of Khajuraho. His stunning photographs of the ancient temple complex launched the site internationally. "The first-ever photo exhibition at New York's Metropolitan Museum were those of Khajuraho taken by Danielou," Berthet said.

Danielou took some 7,000 photographs of ancient and medieval Hindu temples from obscure places in central and eastern India and the desert state of Rajasthan, in the first such exercise of its kind. In the 1950s, he made recordings for UNESCO of classical Indian singers such as the Dagar brothers, paving the way for this musical genre's popularity the world over, and published several volumes on India.

Renowned Indologist Romila Thapar said Danielou had helped secure the future international success of Indian musicians such as sitar maestro Ravi Shankar. "He set the tone for the Beatles' discovery of Ravi Shankar," she said. "He was a cultural go-between who managed to evoke a lot of interest in Indian culture in the West at a popular level."

Padgaonkar said there was a political reason for the revival of interest in Danielou in India, which is currently ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party-dominated National Democratic Alliance.

Danielou had been sharply critical of the Congress which led the country to Independence from British rule in 1947. Padgaonkar said although Danielou enjoyed a warm friendship with India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, he was extremely critical of the Western-educated Congress leadership.

"This anti-Congress tirade is music for them," Padgaonkar said, referring to the ruling Hindu nationalists.

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Myths surrounding Vasco da Gama

By Claude Alvares

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Those of us who did our schooling in the fifties and sixties may recall being taught that we were discovered in 1498 by a Portuguese adventurer named Vasco da Gama.

The history book I recall was written by a Jesuit historian who had come to India as a Christian missionary; it succeeded in conveying the idea that we here in our part of the world began to exist only after (and perhaps because) Europe discovered us and gave us significance. For this singular act off creation, Vasco da Gama was made an Admiral by a grateful Portuguese crown.

However, as Sanjay Subrahmanyam points out in his new and scholarly book titled 'The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama' (Cambridge University Press, 1997) the European "myth-building enterprise around Gama" has been so successful that even a recent title by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) on the man - that too, in Hindi - actually accepts and propagates many of the Eurocentric myths surrounding him.

Earlier histories were restricted in their reach and influence to specific cities like Mumbai. But the NCERT text has helped disseminate these very same myths across the entire subcontinent, with corresponding large scale damage to children's minds. Such myths have helped fuel the present controversy regarding whether or not we should participate in the celebrations to mark the arrival of Vasco da Gama outside Kozhikode (earlier Calicut) 500 years ago.

Subrahmanyam is no doubt a first-rate scholar who obviously finds a great deal of pleasure in his work. But he concedes his book carries no new radical interpretation, no new facts, no major revision on Vasco or his journey. It is based instead on a "careful sifting of a mass of tangled materials....."

Subrahmanyam does not have the astonishing abilities or flair of Sardar K. N. Panikkar, for instance, or even the latter's mature sense of history which Asia and Western Dominance manifests. Though the latter book was written more than forty years ago, there is not much to fault it. It remains one of the classics of history.

Some tantalising questions that remained are however answered. For instance, Subrahmanyam provides sufficient evidence to positively confirm
that Vasco da Gama did visit Goa - a controversy that continues to rage off and on in Goa even today. He also does a fairly conclusive job of
demolishing the myth of the Muslim pilot Ibn Majid who is alleged to have shown Vasco the route from the East coast of Africa to Calicut.

Decidedly, Subrahmanyam has not produced an hagiography. In fact, the fresh reporting of gory details associated with the adventurer - he would
take captives, chop off their limbs and string them in pieces on the masts of his ships to intimidate others - have considerably upset the Portuguese who wish such descriptions are better interred with Vasco's bones and not brought up for periodic airing, certainly not in the 500th year!

Vasco da Gama's first sea voyage round the Cape of Good Hope to India was not the result of some grand human inventiveness or due to any inherent Portuguese genius. On the contrary, our adventurer was unable to provide a demonstration of even elementary civilisational endowments on his arrival at Kozhikode.

This is not because he had left them behind in Portugal but because these were in short supply within Portugal itself. The tawdry gifts he brought
with him in his caravela were those of a pauper civilisation and the Samudri Raja of Camorin and his advisers looked at them in scorn. In these
circumstances, it was necessary to create a legend and invent a myth.

Portugal did this consistently over the past five centuries. As the myth expanded, not only Vasco, but Portugal too improved its prospects. Today,
Portugal is all too keen to exploit the quincentennial for a glorious reassertion of its place within the European Community which has kept it at
the margins for centuries. Subrahmanyam reconstructs this myth in great detail and with considerable finesse.

The Portuguese for themselves have never doubted they could have done with a better hero. Even today - 500 years later - Vasco continues to give the Portuguese a headache for they must explain how his arrogance, tactlessness and plain barbarism were not also traits of the society that sent him. It is difficult even in the best of circumstances to view his personality with any kind of affection. Unlike heroes (or heroines) he evokes neither awe nor admiration, but pure consternation.

But despite all this, he remains a Portuguese hero, probably the only real hero modern Portugal ever had and through him her only claim to recognition of worth in the European community.

An NRI historian lodged in Europe dependent upon Western bosses and grants from Portuguese foundations - would be anxious to respect such
sensitivities. The question left to ponder is whether, for these reasons, Subrahmanyam has carried forward the myths associated with Vasco, or worse, added some of his own.

Subrahmanyam has not hazarded an opinion of what he thinks of the subject of his study, the bizarre chain of consequences he unleashed and the political context of these new developments.

In the end we come across a view of Vasco da Gama that is embarrassingly close to that acceptable to official European history.

This version argues that it is not really necessary to adjudicate the past (which is best forgotten). We should dwell instead on the more positive
outcomes, like the introduction of potatoes, tomatoes, cassava and chillies; as if our adventurer set out from Portugal with the seeds of
these in his pocket and as if Europe had created them. They are actually the contributions of the peasants of South America. The bone of contention is whether an Indian should not feel ashamed to write history as Europeans wish to see it today; to turn a blind eye to the brutal exercise of power and substitute in its place an apolitical sequence of events, however elaborately detailed.

Curiously, we read no discussion of the Treaty of Tordesilhas: the insouciant division by the Pope of the globe into two parts, one for Spain,
the other for Portugal and the unilateral, overnight declaration of ownership over unknown lands and peoples.

Neither is there, any allusion to Europe's pathological drive to power, its demented urge to intervene and impose itself on the lives of others.
Instead, we are introduced in minute detail to the petty preoccupations and intrigues of the kings and courts of Portugal and Spain and to the titles of Vasco or his newly acquired properties or the religious order to which he belonged.

The mentality which Vasco carried with him then and which he continues to symbolise even now has not been discarded: it is all too readily apparent in unrepentant Portugal's refusal to apologise for the imposition of this arrogance, arbitrariness and violence, the disruption of local cultures, and her stubbornness in upholding his "heroism".

Here again a comparison of Subrahmanyam's work with Sardar Panikkar's is instructive: Panikkar generated a new paradigm in historical writing,
inaugurating and placing history written with an Asian perspective on an exalted plane as an equally valid - and rival - body of knowledge.

Panikkar advised us that if we are to live by myths (since man does not live by facts alone), then it is far better we used our own myths rather
than ones borrowed from others. Subrahmanyam's myth - Europe's as well- suggests Vasco can be understood without engaging what he and the Europe he represented stood for. Such a proposal is not only an affront to history;
I suspect it is self-serving as well. - TWN

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Temples are not enough!

Balamurali K Ambati and Jayakrishna Ambati with Ambati M Rao and Gomathi S Rao

http://www.rediff.com/news/2000/jan/20us4.htm

Recently, His Holiness the Shankaracharya of Kanchipuram chided Indian-Americans for the exuberant proliferation of temples in the US while neglecting the decrepitude of temples in India. Indeed, there may be more temples per Hindu in America than in India.



He bemoaned that many Hindu temples in America are principally ostentatious vehicles for flaunting the wealth of their rich benefactors rather than hallowed ground for community worship. Sadly, this charge is largely correct. Many temples here have lost their sense of purpose and direction; worse yet, some came into being for the wrong reasons.

The *raison d'etre* of a temple should be to provide a place for spiritual realization and worship. Temples can also serve as centers of community gathering, relief for the downtrodden, and development of youth.

The commitment that a community invests in a temple should be to preserve and transmit cultural values and ideals, not just the erection of yet another edifice. By any measure, a great number of our temples in America fall short.

There is a deep-seated malaise, a crisis of the spirit, which besets many Indian households. Perhaps it is symptomatic of the larger American cultural malaise as well. Our community has made great strides in the professional and academic arenas; materially, Indian-Americans have the highest median income of any ethnic group. Clearly, we have succeeded in large part in achieving the 'American Dream.'

Yet many first-generation Indians feel that their successes are for naught if they do not pass on their culture to the next generation, or so they say in the lip service they give at the ethnic conventions that are even more numerous than new temples. Many Indians lament that their children are so Americanized; perhaps some try to atone for their guilt by building temples.

But this quest for redemption is based on a false premise and therefore turns into a quixotic

pursuit. Temples per se do not guarantee cultural transmission; stone and marble are merely vessels and not the culture itself. No matter the majesty of the architecture, making our cultural ideals a reality and keeping our heritage alive requires people with the skill and determination to teach.

Culture and heritage is kept alive by parents and community leaders taking the time to tell, to show, and to explain to the next generation the meaning, the significance, and the essence of our traditions. That is the point that our community's army of temple builders is blind to, the key element that in its absence brings down all the rhetoric, chest-thumping, and spending sprees of would-be temple builders like a house of cards.

An even more disturbing phenomenon is that of temples being used for personal advancement. Many individuals seem to build temples only to have their names listed as benefactors or office-bearers. Only a warped psyche and a diseased spirit would seek to curry divine favor through self-aggrandizement. Why else have plaques displaying the names of the donors?

Further, in some unfortunate situations, temple management staff have treated the temple as their private fiefdoms. Witness the pathos of the nation's first temple in its largest metropolis: a president, unencumbered by elections, wedded to perennial power locked in legal combat with a shadow board of trustees bent on her ouster. This internecine conflict is neither the first nor will it be the last. It is a tragedy when temple affairs become the subject of court proceedings, but it is inevitable when egos take precedence over purpose.

Most Indian temples are also conspicuous in their absence in community outreach and uplift. How many temples feed the hungry or serve the poor? How many temples offer programs to enrich children's education, academic or spiritual? How many temple leaders teach what the meanings of the different rituals and services are, or discuss the many religious texts and scriptures with ordinary people? Too often, our temples are grossly underachieving.

We must realize that religion alone cannot bind our community together in this country in this millennium.

While we would be delighted to see the myriad temples flourish, it is more likely that many of them will shrink to hollow shells of their current state within a couple of generations. Current temples were built by first-generation immigrants who have done well.

The continued migration of educated Indians to this country is far from certain. While today's America is the shining economic star, it is foolish to think it will be so forever. The current computer influx will soon ebb. As economic parity draws closer, fewer professionals will migrate, and while the economic pilgrimage will continue, how many newer immigrants have the wealth to sustain the temples? Many of these temples may suffer the fate of the silkworm which dies of its wealth.

Is this too pessimistic a prophecy? Consider the following. The sustenance of temples depends on youth. Increasingly, it seems that one of the fruits of assimilation is loss of identity. How many of our teenagers and young adults attend religious services, let alone become committed to temple proliferation and management? Even many of those who do have a spiritual inclination have an intellectual rather than a religious attraction. Just go to any temple and witness the dearth of youngsters participating in any puja.



Despite the high-sounding claims of combining the best of both worlds, most are woefully ignorant of and oblivious to traditional religious services and teachings. What is more, they could not care less. Whether this is good or bad is for the reader to decide. But the root cause is that our community did not emphasize traditional ways in the home. Too many parents did not teach their kids their native language, did not insist that they remain vegetarian, did not explain the meaning of the Mahabharata, Ramayana, etc. Even an armada of temples cannot reclaim those lost battles.

As a faith, Hinduism is not dogmatic, but rather vague and indeed amorphous. We possess neither the bond of persecutory fear nor the glue of zealous fervor that binds other religious groups.

What to do? Education and guidance about our culture and heritage must begin at the home; by trying to offload that responsibility onto temples, Indian-Americans breach a sacred trust. The temple can serve to foster spiritual growth and development.

But to view temples as one's legacy to posterity is a sad testament on the state of our community affairs.

If we are to successfully pass the baton in the relay race that is life, it will be through *vidyalayams*, and not *devalayalams*.

Temples are not merely places to congregate and worship; academic achievement has classically fallen within the purview of temples. In ancient times, they were also havens of scholarship from which emanated grand literary, dramatic, and philosophical work.

Modern exercises in excessive opulence betray the ideal of a temple as a fountainhead of the sublime. We advocate not the creation of elitist enclaves, but rather the establishment of institutions of excellence that preserve and perpetuate our collective heritage, foster excellence in professional arenas, and nurture spiritual growth. Our culture is not solely the province of religious institutions; such a parochial worldview is in sharp dissonance with the traditional role of temples in nurturing knowledge and learning.

In the half century that Indians have been in America in substantial numbers, there is not a single college or university, or even to our knowledge, a high school to our name. By stark contrast, American Jews have built 2 medical schools and a phalanx of colleges, universities, schools, and hospitals. Catholics and Muslims have also been very active in these areas.

Educational institutions are a powerful engine to promote cultural values and transmit heritage. They can provide an environment devoted to educational excellence in a landscape littered with academic decadence. Ensconcing our culture in a cocoon of temples insulates our community; harnessing our heritage to educationally-oriented institutions can energize it. Surely, our community can channel enough financial and managerial capital to accomplish such an endeavor. The potential rewards would be enormous.

Long unmindful of the folly of abdicating culture at home, the first generation has turned to the wrongheaded approach of constructing temples to restore their birthright. But the *punya* attained by building temples is outweighed by the *paapa* of abandoning them. In many towns in India so many temples go untended that people are eagerly solicited by monetary considerations to take care of abandoned temples!

Do we really want our legacy to be scores of missionless and abandoned monuments? It behooves us to try to refocus the purpose of our temples and to rededicate ourselves to building institutions that will be fonts of dynamism for years to come.

The Ambati family has conducted the Educational Excellence Program for more than a decade for middle and high school students. More than a dozen of these students have become National Merit Scholars. These free classes are conducted every Saturday at the Swaminarayan Temple in Flushing, New York. For more information call 718 464-9391.

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Hinduism and the Vedas: misconceptions

T.R. ANANDAN

http://www.indiaserver.com/hindu/stories/13050903.htm

AN OPEN letter, published in a newspaper, even if ostensibly addressed to a particular individual is in effect addressed to all readers of the paper and is perhaps intended to be so. Thus an open letter addressed to Mr. Bangaru Laxman in two parts by Ms. Gail Omvedt published in this paper on October 10 & 11, could be construed as aimed at a wider readership than the individual to whom it is addressed.

For a practising Hindu, considering the Vedas, the Upanishads and the epics as the most sacred scriptures of Hindus in general and this writer in particular, any comments in poor taste on those would be a deep hurt of the religious sentiments. It is therefore necessary that certain points germane to the subject be discussed in detail. Judging from the comments made, it could be inferred that the author's knowledge of Vedas, acquired after a cursory reading of its translation, is sparse and inadequate to comment on a subject which has deep spiritual and cosmic importance. The tone and tenor are palpably unrestrained and hostile.

Palpable ignorance

In the practice of religion and its tenets Hindus never considered other religions as inferior nor held any as hostile. If anything, it is the Semitic religions which consider those outside their fold as infidels or unworthy of God's sympathy or even as sinners. The writer in the article had raised the question ``why is there so much fixation on the Vedas.'' The question betrays a palpable ignorance of the Hindu religion, its scriptures and its practice. Even a schoolboy would proclaim the Vedas as the sacred scripture of the Hindu religion in much the same way as the Bible is for Christians and the Quran for Muslims.

India is a country of continental size inhabited by a huge population of over 100 crores professing several faiths, chief ones being Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism. The present culture of the country largely relates to the respective religions and the predominant one belonging to the Hindu religion has absorbed during the course of the past two millennia certain ideas from other religions. This is principally due to the close intermixing of members of other religions at social level. Then there are variations from region to region mainly due to local practices, thinking and interpretation of religious tenets by different thinkers. But just as a thread holds together several flowers in a garland, the core of the culture of Hinduism remains intact and is manifest in all regions with local variations.

There have recently been some questions posed as to the basis of calling Hinduism as a religion and whom all it encompassed in the social setup. Religion in the strict sense of the term would

mean the practice of a definite system or form of faith and worship, distinctly different from other systems with codes of conduct, do's and don'ts for the followers and even procedures for settling civil and criminal issues arising from social interactions. Barring Hinduism, all the rest believe in one book, one prophet and one God. These have emerged in India as a result of spiritual evolution and certain conflicts in the prevailing system. Even before the advent of the Semitic religions, two distinct streams of thought different from the prevailing one had taken shape after being propounded by thinkers like Gouthama Buddha and Mahavira. Before the formation of these there were no specific religions in the strict sense of the term and the people followed what was called the `Vedic path' and called it `Vedic religion.'

Horizonal spread of the practice had given a certain pan-India character to the system. Only after the formation of new indigenous religions and introduction of the Semitic religions what remained of the population came to be called the Hindus and their religion, essentially the Vedic religion, got specifically identified as Hinduism. In fact, Hindu religious text do not refer the religion as Hinduism but as Sanatana Dharma - Universal path as distinct from others having names after the prophets who propounded them. While the Hindus consider their country - Bharath - as holy land in much the same way as Christians hold Jerusalem and Bethlehem and Muslims Mecca, and their religion identified as Indian, they do not consider others professing Hinduism elsewhere as not equals. At a certain point of history, Hinduism was very much in vogue even in distant countries such as Indonesia and Bali, and the inhabitants were considered as Hindus.

Irreconcilable differences

The conflict between Hindus and the followers of other Semitic religions occurs not because the latter profess foreign religions but because of irreconcilable differences in certain tenets of the two religions, repudiating important beliefs of Hinduism and even ridiculing some of what Hindu religion emphasises. For example, in Hinduism the country, Bharath, is considered as a form of the goddess which is vehemently rejected by another religion. Similarly Hinduism places emphasis on idol worship whereas other religions do not approve of it. The differences in religious beliefs are not extended to other spheres such as nativity and belonging as suggested by the author.

Americans consider Bethlehem and Jerusalem as their holy land and that does not make them less patriotic Americans. But the point is that while holding Bethlehem and Jerusalem as their holy land, Americans do have their own individual American culture which they hold dear to their heart. Even racial differences are passionately maintained. The apartheid i.e. considering American negroes as less American though they were in that country for centuries, professing the same religion is an example in point. So if the followers of the Semitic religions while considering Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Mecca as their holy land are asked to adopt Indian culture as in the case of Americans that should not be confused with patriotism.

The Indian culture does not mean Hindu culture or worshipping Hindu Gods. Identification of a religion with a particular section of the earth's geography is different from identification of the culture of the particular section of the earth's geography. Asking to respect the culture of their land does not by any stretch of imagination amount to suspecting one's patriotism to his or her country as stated in the article.

The Hindus believe Rama and Krishna as avatars (incarnations) of God on earth (God taking

earthly life for specific purposes) and as such consider them as Gods and worshipped. No true Hindu will ever take objection to considering Rama and Krishna as divine. For example, disciples of Sri Sai Baba consider him as incarnation of God. If someone other than a Hindu should have objection in considering Rama and Krishna as divine it should be due to ignorance of Hindu religious texts and beliefs. None including the Hindus would consider Jesus Christ or Prophet Mohammed as mere social or historical personalities but only as supremely divine.

Composite philosophy

Hinduism as stated earlier is considered as a religion only in the context of indigenous and Semitic religions of identifiable groupings; otherwise it is what had existed from time immemorial and continues to exist to the present. The Vedic and the later Upanishadic teachings have only imparted distinct character and philosophic thought and prescribed specific result-oriented rituals for various purposes, temporal and spiritual. It's a composite philosophy of various schools of thought, which had taken shape at various times of history. To say that Shaivism or Vishnavism does not form part of this composite philosophical conglomerate would be to betray ignorance of the evolution of Hindu religiosity and spirituality through the years. It contains even such streams as narcissism, nihilism and agnosticism advocated by some savants. If one does not take to the study of Hindu philosophy and its spiritual content in all its different aspects and schools and their birth at various points of time no idea could be got about the depth and width of its magnitude and the way it held sway over various sections of its practitioners over thousands of years of history even after invasion by foreigners and introduction of their religions even up to the present time.

Mere study of the history or geography of this country or sociology or anthropology of the inhabitants over the past thousands of years would not yield knowledge to appreciate the greatness of Hinduism and its influence on the vast masses who had taken to the following of its various systems and their intricate nuances.

The birth of several indigenous religions and the respectful place offered to Semitic religions in the country on their arrival are themselves proof of the catholicity of the original religionists of this country and the value they attached to different religions, indigenous and foreign.

To understand the greatness of Hindu scriptures, one should understand the basic and fundamental point of what a mantra is. It is a garland of letters composed in such a way as to acquire for one chanting the same, power from the cosmic realm. Such power can be put to use for achieving mundane objectives or spiritual advancement. Basically, the Vedas and other scriptures are mantras for chanting for various applications. The Vedas are for the conduct of various yagnas (Vedic sacrifices) for propitiating the devatas. They also cause purification of the mind and rapid spiritual advancement. In the Hindu pantheon, everything is looked upon as a form of God (Supreme Power).

The Hindu scriptures are all mantras for propitiating devatas. For what purpose such propitiation is put to is for the person who uses them to decide. In the normal context, they are chanted to acquire higher states of spirituality by cleansing the person of all bad qualities. If one looks upon the Vedas with the above basic knowledge, the purpose of the Vedas and other scriptures becomes clear.

Mischievous insinuation

The writer again questions the ``need to claim that Aryans originated in India". It is a mischievous insinuation that the claim that the Aryans originated in India itself started ``from 1930s after the Dalit movements throughout India claimed an identity as original inhabitants". There is as yet no hard evidence to say that Aryans had indeed come to India from outside. The most recent view of historians and researchers is that the Aryans were original inhabitants of India. In a scholarly article ``Are the Vedic Aryans aliens to India?" Dr. M. Gopalakrishna Sharma of Hyderabad has stated that the theory of alienism of Vedic Aryans is cooked up by some European savants. States he: ``by the concoction of this theory they achieved tremendous success, beyond their hope which served the double purpose as with two birds with one shot. The first one is to create suspicion in the Indian mind about their own nativity, and the second one is to inject a strong and permanent feeling of natural distrust and dispute caused by the various racial genesis." Dr. Sharma further says ``and another factor, to be accounted here is that if at all the theory of alienism of Vedic Aryans is taken for granted as correct, why did they not mention at least the name of their motherland anywhere in the Vedic literature or in other ancient scriptures?"

In the light of overwhelming opinion of experts the statement of Ms. Omvedt, the author of the article that ``however that they came from outside is hardly challenged by any objective scholars" betrays total lack of even a rudimentary exposure to the findings of researchers as stated above. The author has spewed ridicule and contempt in describing the Vedas of which only a translation has been read by her according to her own statement. Considering the Vedas as holy is questioned on the ground that they contain verses about ``success in war," ``cattle stealing," ``lovemaking," etc. Since chapter and verse have not been quoted but a sweeping statement is made it is not possible to discuss the rationale or context of anything contained in the said verses or the Vedas as a whole. All that one could say is that the statements made about the Vedas are positively blasphemous and scurrilous to the extent of causing deep hurt to the religious sentiments of the Hindus who consider them as the holiest of scriptures.

A punishable offence

The author apparently does not know that hurting the religious sentiments of anyone is a punishable offence in this country. Take for example the statements ``some of the hymns are positively pornographic", ``actually the Vedas can be fun (including the Atharva Veda with its fascinating spells for winning lovers, preventing child birth and so on)..." etc. The Hindus do not go into the literal meaning of the scriptures of other religions but revere them as sacred in much the same way that their own scriptures are held sacred. The author might have read reports of a fatwa issued by a Muslim country for making certain references to the prophet considered as blasphemous in a novel by a writer. The Hindus do not go to such extents, nay, even invoking legal provisions for making disparaging statements about its scriptures but would feel sorry for a person for not adequately equipping himself/herself about the depth of the wisdom contained in the scriptures before making sweeping remarks.

It is felt that a conscious attempt is on to drive a wedge between the so-called upper castes and the lower castes and the Dalits and to establish that the latter is despised by the former - to wean them away from the mainstream Hindu religion. Some recent writings by some authors had even tried to establish the tribals as not belonging to Hindu religion and had justified their conversion to other religions. If one suspects that the attempts could be to make a ``harvest of faith" by conversions of the Dalits one could not be faulted.

Caste hierarchy

Existence of caste hierarchy and social ostracism, based on caste in the Hindu religion, is a development which has taken place during several millennia due to the dynamics of social change, play of vested interests, deep economic disparity, illiteracy and superstition and a woeful absence of adequate leadership in spiritual, religious and social milieu.

Even in the Twentieth century, one of the most developed countries of the world, America, had practised racism in its worst form. As for India, serious attempts are on at governmental and social levels to obliterate caste differences and these will soon be a thing of the past. It can be asserted that neither the Vedas nor other Hindu scriptures lend any authority for creation or perpetuation of castes in the present hierarchical form. Any objective study of them would prove this.

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Dr. APJ Abdul Kalaam's speech

in Hyderabad makes interesting reading;
Quote: I have THREE visions for India.

In 3000 years of our history people from all over the world have come and invaded us, captured our lands, conquered our minds. From Alexander onwards. The Greeks, the Turks, the Moguls, the Portuguese, the British, the French, the Dutch, all of them came and looted us, took over what was ours. Yet we have not done this to any other nation. We have not conquered anyone. We have not grabbed their land, their culture, their history and tried to enforce our way of life on them. Why? Because we respect the freedom of others.

That is why my first vision is that of FREEDOM. I believe that India got its first vision of this in 1857, when we started the war of independence. It is this freedom that we must protect and nurture and build on. If we are not free, no one will respect us. My second vision for India is DEVELOPMENT.

For fifty years we have been a developing nation. It is time we see ourselves as a developed nation. We are among top 5 nations of the world in terms of GDP. We have 10 percent growth rate in most areas. Our poverty levels are falling. Our achievements are being globally recognized today. Yet we lack the self-confidence to see ourselves as a developed nation, self- reliant and self-assured. Isn't this incorrect? I have a THIRD vision. India must stand up to the world. Because I believe that unless India stands up to the world, no one will respect us. Only strength respects strength. We must be strong not only as a military power but also as an economic power. Both must go hand-in-hand. My good fortune was to have worked with three great minds. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai of the Dept. of space, Professor Satish Dhawan, who succeeded him and Dr. Brahm Prakash, father of nuclear material. I was lucky to have worked with all three of them closely and consider this the great opportunity of my life. I see four milestones in my career:

ONE: Twenty years I spent in ISRO. I was given the opportunity to be the project director for India's first satellite launch vehicle, SLV3. The one that launched Rohini. These years played a very important role in my life of Scientist. TWO: After my ISRO years, I joined DRDO and got a chance to be the part of India's guided missile

program. It was my second bliss when Agni met its mission requirements in 1994.
THREE: The Dept. of Atomic Energy and DRDO had this tremendous partnership in the recent nuclear tests, on May 11 and 13. This was the third bliss. The joy of participating with my team in these nuclear tests and proving to the world that India can make it, that we are no longer a developing nation but one of them. It made me feel very proud as an Indian. The fact that we have now developed for Agni a re-entry structure, for which we have developed this new material. A Very light material called carbon-carbon. FOUR: One day an orthopedic surgeon from Nizam Institute of Medical Sciences visited my laboratory. He lifted the material and found it so light that he took me to his hospital and showed me his patients. There were these little girls and boys with heavy metallic calipers weighing over three Kg. each, dragging their feet around. He said to me: Please remove the pain of my patients. In three weeks, we made these Floor reaction Orthosis 300 gram calipers and took them to the orthopedic center. The children didn't believe their eyes. From dragging around a three kg. load on their legs, they could now move around! Their parents had tears in their eyes.

That was my fourth bliss!

Why is the Media here so negative?
Why are we in India so embarrassed to recognize our own strengths, our achievements? We are such a great nation.
We have so many amazing success stories but we refuse to acknowledge them.
Why?
We are the first in milk production.
We are number one in Remote sensing satellites.
We are the second largest producer of wheat.
We are the second largest producer of rice.

Look at Dr. Sudarshan; he has transferred the tribal village into a self-sustaining, self-driving unit. There are millions of such achievements but our media is only obsessed in the bad news and failures and disasters. I was in Tel Aviv once and I was reading the Israeli newspaper.
It was the day after a lot of attacks and bombardments and deaths had taken place. The Hamas had struck. But the front page of the newspaper had the picture of a Jewish gentleman who in five years had transformed his desert land into an orchid and a granary. It was this inspiring picture that everyone woke up to. The gory details of killings, bombardments, deaths, were inside in the newspaper, buried among other news. In India we only read about death, sickness, terrorism, crime. Why are we so NEGATIVE? Another question: Why are we, as a nation so obsessed with foreign things? We want foreign TVs, We want foreign shirts. We want foreign technology. Why this obsession with everything imported. Do we not realize that self-respect comes with self-reliance? I was in Hyderabad giving this lecture, when a 14-year-old girl asked me for my autograph. I asked her what her goal in life is: She replied: I want to live in a developed India. For her, you and I will have to build this developed India. You must proclaim. India is not an under-developed nation; it is a highly developed nation.
Do you have 10 minutes? Allow me to come back with vengeance. Got 10 minutes for your country? If yes, then read; otherwise, choice is yours.

YOU say that our government is inefficient.
YOU say that our laws are too old.
YOU say that the municipality does not pick up the garbage.
YOU say that the phones don't work, the railways are a joke, the airline is the worst in the world, mails never reach their destination. YOU say that our country has been fed to the dogs and is the absolute pits. YOU say, say and say. What do YOU do about it? Take a person on his way to Singapore.
Give him a name - YOURS.
Give him a face - YOURS.

YOU walk out of the airport and you are at your International best. In Singapore you don't throw cigarette butts on the roads or eat in the stores. YOU are as proud of their Underground Links as they are. You pay $5 (approx. Rs.60) to drive through Orchard Road (equivalent of Mahim Causeway or Pedder Road) between 5 PM and 8 PM. YOU comeback to the parking lot to punch your parking ticket if you have over stayed in a restaurant or a shopping mall irrespective of your status identity. In Singapore you don't say anything, DO YOU? YOU wouldn't dare to eat in public during Ramadan, in Dubai. YOU would not dare to go out without your head covered in Jeddah. YOU would not dare to buy an employee of the telephone exchange in London at 10 pounds (Rs.650) a month to, "see to it that my STD and ISD calls are billed to someone else." YOU would not dare to speed beyond 55 mph (88 kmph) in Washington and then tell the traffic cop, "Jaanta hai sala main kaun hoon (Do you know who I am?). I am so and so's son. Take your two bucks and get lost." YOU wouldn't chuck an empty coconut shell anywhere other than the garbage pail on the beaches in Australia and New Zealand. Why don't YOU spit Paan on the streets of Tokyo? Why don't YOU use examination jockeys or buy fake certificates in Boston? We are still talking of the same YOU. YOU who can respect and conform to a foreign system in other countries but cannot in your own. You who will throw papers and cigarettes on the road the moment you touch Indian ground. If you can be an involved and appreciative citizen in an alien country why cannot you be the same here in India. Once in an interview, the famous Ex-municipal commissioner of Bombay Mr.Tinaikar had a point to make. "Rich people's dogs are walked on the streets to leave their affluent droppings all over the place," he said. "And then the same people turn around to criticize and blame the authorities for inefficiency and dirty pavements. What do they expect the officers to do? Go down with a broom everytime their dog feels the pressure in his bowels? In America every dog owner has to clean up after his pet has done the job. Same in Japan. Will the Indian citizen do that here?" He's right. We go to the polls to choose a government and after that forfeit all responsibility. We sit back wanting to be pampered and expect the government to do everything for us whilst our contribution is totally negative. We expect the government to clean up but we are not going to stop chucking garbage all over the place nor are we going to stop to pick a up a stray piece of paper and throw it in the bin. We expect the railways to provide clean bathrooms but we are not going to learn the proper use of bathrooms. We want Indian Airlines and Air India to provide the best of food and toiletries but we are not going to stop pilfering at the least opportunity. This applies even to the staff who is known

not to pass on the service to the public. When it comes to burning social issues like those related to women, dowry, girl child and others, we make loud drawing room protestations and continue to do the reverse at home. Our excuse?

"It's the whole system which has to change, how will it matter if I alone forego my sons' rights to a dowry." So who's going to change the system?
What does a system consist of? Very conveniently for us it consists of our neighbors, other households, other cities, other communities and the
government. But definitely not me and YOU. When it comes to us actually making a positive contribution to the system we lock ourselves along with our families into a safe cocoon and look into the distance at countries far away and wait for a Mr. Clean to come along & work miracles for us with a majestic sweep of his hand. Or we leave the country and run away. Like lazy cowards hounded by our fears we run to America to bask in their glory and praise their system. When New York becomes insecure we run to England. When England experiences unemployment, we take the next flight out to the Gulf. When the Gulf is war struck, we demand to be rescued and brought home by the Indian government. Everybody is out to abuse and rape the country. Nobody thinks of feeding the system. Our conscience is mortgaged to money.
2nd Portion of the speech has been on the net for a long time.

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In the footsteps of Ram

Sethukarai: Myth, mystery and magic in the land of the Ramayana

By GITA ARAVAMUDAN

http://www.the-week.com/23mar16/life12.htm

Along Tamil Nadu's east coast lies a stretch of land known as Sethukarai or the bank of the bridge. Travelling through this 70-km-long coastal stretch between Ramanathapuram and Rameswaram is almost like walking through the pages of the Ramayana. Along the Sethukarai, myth and history combine seamlessly to give legend new dimensions through its ancient shrines, mystic bathing spots and majestic temples, which attract thousands of pilgrims.

My journey began at the huge Tirupullani temple, 10 km from Ramanathapuram. It is a Vaishnavite temple; its antiquity is authenticated in the songs of the Alwars, poet-saints of Tamil Nadu who lived between the 7th and 9th centuries. The ancient Tamil Sangam work Akanaanooru also refers to it.

According to legend, Pullaranyam (grass forest) was a marshy land full of the sacred dharba grass. Under a peepul tree here, Vishnu appeared before Pula Maharishi in the form of Adi Jagannatha and told him he would be reborn as Ram to cleanse the land of evil. Many years later, when Ram arrived here in search of Sita, he came upon a seemingly impassable barrier: the ocean. Tired, Ram lay down on a bed of dharba and sank into deep meditation for three days. Adi Jagannatha reappeared and blessed him. Inspired by this, Ram requested Varuna, the sea god, to make a path for him.

The Tirupullani temple has a mysterious grandeur about it. Thousands of childless couples do nagaprathishta (installing statues of the snake god) at the peepul grove where Adi Jagannatha is supposed to have first appeared. They also flock to the temple to drink the payasam (sweet dish), which is believed to have the same magical properties as the one which Ram's father, King Dasaratha, gave his barren wives. The most striking shrine in this huge temple is the one with the exquisitely carved figure of Ram lying on a bed of dharba.

Adi Sethu, the primary sacred bathing spot along this coast, lies about 3 km from here. Ram is believed to have bathed here before starting work on the bridge and again on his return. Legend also says Ram and Sita paused over the temple while returning in the pushpaka vimanam (aerial chariot).

Devipatnam is another little coastal town close to Ramanathapuram linked by the legend of Ram. Just off the coast, and 1 km into the sea, is an unusual shrine of navagrahas, which are nine huge ancient stones representing celestial bodies sacred to Hindus. They are supposed to have been installed by Ram when he prayed to Shiva and Ganesha before embarking on his expedition to Lanka. Until recently, this rather unique shrine could only be reached by boat or by wading through the water. Now a small walkway connects it to the shore.

Along the coast to Rameswaram are many other small shrines. On a remote beach near Ramanathapuram, an ancient and meditative Hanuman stands in a dilapidated shrine gazing at the placid bay. The priest here said that the waters of the bay never rise beyond a certain point even during a cyclone.

Closer to Ramanathapuram, right on the highway, is a recently-built small temple called Midhakum Parai (floating stone). The priest here demonstrated the property of the stone that Ram is believed to have used to build his bridge. In a big vessel, a huge chunk of coral floats on water while another piece, which the priest throws in, sinks to the bottom.

Legend says Neela, the architect monkey who built the bridge, was cursed in his youth by a sage for throwing his things into the water: nothing Neela threw into water would ever sink again. The curse proved to be a boon. Bits of the floating stone were brought to this spot a couple of years ago and enshrined in the temple. Sadly, the priest dispelled some of the magic when he offered to sell me a piece. "There is plenty where it comes from," he said nonchalantly when asked what would happen if he sold off such a valuable thing.

But it is at Dhanushkodi, a point 18 km from Rameswaram, that all the elements of myth, legend and fact combine to form a truly mysterious amalgam. At this point the Bay of Bengal meets the Indian Ocean. Hanuman took his famous leap from here to Lanka. And it is the point from which the monkey army built the bridge to Lanka. It is called Dhanushkodi because at the request of Ravana's brother Vibheeshana, Ram broke off the bridge with his bow.

The most intriguing element here is the ancient underwater sandbank known as Adam's Bridge, which connects India to Sri Lanka. Geological evidence shows that an isthmus, which, according to temple records was breached by a violent storm in 1480, once bridged the gap. Some new pictures taken by a NASA satellite show this "bridge" in all its glory. The 30-km-long connection, which stretches across the Palk Strait, is actually a narrow and shallow ridge of sand and rocks connecting Mannar Island in Sri Lanka to Pamban Island in India. The Sri Lankan archaeology department has said the connection could be two million years old.

But is it natural or manmade? A cyclone, which devastated the area in 1964, has compounded the confusion by washing away many ancient landmarks in the area. In fact, today Dhanushkodi is almost inaccessible.
About 8 km from here stands the Kodandaramaswamy temple-the only one which survived the havoc. It was here that the final chapter of the Ramayana was played out. When Vibheeshana surrendered before Ram and asked his forgiveness, Ram crowned him king of Lanka at this place. Close by is another little temple known as Gandhamadhana Parvadham. Devotees believe this rocktop temple enshrines the footprints of Ram.
My final destination was the Ramanathar temple at Rameswaram, which contains a lingam believed to have been made by Sita out of sand. According to legend, Ram came here to wash away his sins and perform a puja to Shiva after killing Ravana who was a Brahmin. Ram asked Hanuman to bring him a lingam from Mount Kailash at an auspicious time. When he did not return, Sita quickly made a lingam and Ram installed it.

When Hanuman returned, Ram told him he could remove the other lingam if he wished and replace it with the one he had brought. Hanuman tried in vain to dislodge it with his tail. Even today, the lingam bears marks believed to be left by Hanuman's tail. Finally, when he gave up, Ram installed the one Hanuman brought beside the main lingam.

Temple records show that Parakrama Bahu, the king of Ceylon, constructed the sanctum sanctorum in the 12th century. Over the years, the temple expanded into its present size. There are 22 tanks within the temple, each with its own legend. A little further away is the Jatayu theertham (bathing spot), where the bird Jatayu fell fighting Ravana. Another important bathing spot is the Jatta theertham where Ram washed his hair before he commenced his prayers. And so the legend of Ram lives on in this ancient coastal region: intriguing, mysterious and magical.

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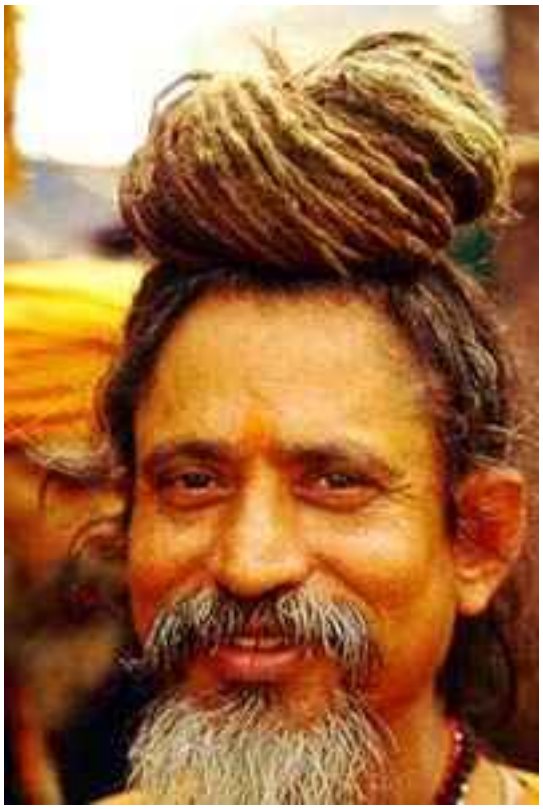
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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

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India's Gift to the World
By Robert Arnett - author of the book India Unveiled

India's spiritual heritage is legendary. Throughout the millenniums, India has been blessed with more masters (rishis) - persons who during their lives on earth have merged their souls with God - than any other country in the world. There are many well-documented stories of their miracles.



The famous master Trailanga Swami, who lived in Banaras during the late 19th century, displayed miraculous powers that cannot be dismissed as myth. Until recently, there were living witnesses to his amazing feats. Many persons witnessed him drink the most deadly poison with no ill effects. thousands of people saw him levitating in a sitting position on the surface of the Ganges for days at a time. He would even disappear under the waves for long periods, finally to reappear unharmed. Though Trilanga seldom ate, he weighed over 300 pounds. The yogi never wore any clothing and was arrested by the police for his nudity on several occasions, and locked in a cell. Each time, even with posted guards, he unexplainably escaped and could be seen walking on the prison roof, his cell still locked. The police had no clue as to how he did it.

For over 2,300 years, travelers from the most powerful countries on earth have come to India in search of her priceless spiritual wisdom. When Alexander the Great returned to Persia after his unsuccessful invasion of India, the most valueld treasure that he brought back was not gold, jewels, silks or spices - but his guru (spiritual teacher), the yogi Kalyana, callled "Kalanos" by the Greeks.

On a designated day in Susa, Persia, the sage Kalanos gave up his aged body by entering a funeral pyre in view of the entire Macedonian army. The soldiers were amazed that the yogi had no fear of pain or death and never once moved from his position as he was being consumed by flames. Kalanos embraced many of his close companions before leaving for his cremation but refrained from bidding farewell to Alexander, to whom simply remarked: " I shall see you later in Babylon." Alexander died a year later in Babylon. The Indian guru's prophecy was his way of saying that he would be with Alexander both in life and death.

When the Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang attended a huge religious gathering, the Kumbha Mela, in Allahabad in 544 A.D., he recounts that Harsha, king of Northern India, gave away the entire wealth of his royal treasury to monks and pilgrims attending the event. When Hiuen Tsang prepared to return to China, he declined Harsha's offerings of jewels and gold. Understanding that his spiritual development was more valuable than worldly wealth, he accepted, instead, 657 religious manuscripts. Likewise, through the science of yoga, India has given the West a far more valuable gift than all the material wealth or technology the West could give in return. Even today, India offers great inspiration to those persons who are seeking a oneness with God, and through yoga anyone can find the direction he or she needs to succeed.

That is India's gift to the World

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articles on hinduism

Bamiyan Buddhas fall prey to Taliban's lust for power
By *Claude Arpi*
http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/mar/12spec.htm

In 1965, André Malraux, the French philosopher, author and minister for culture, told an audience at Benares Hindu University about a conversation he had had with Jawaharlal Nehru. The French writer had asked the Indian prime minister, "What, according to you, is the reason Buddhism was lost to India, after India had given Buddhism to the world?" Nehru did not have an immediate answer, but later said he thought India had gradually made Buddha into one its gods and this had led to the disappearance of Buddhism from India.

Today, though, it is an accepted historical fact that the main cause for the disappearance of Buddhism in the sub-continent is the destruction of the great *viharas* by the Muslim invaders. The fact that Buddhist life was concentrated in these great centres of learning made it an easy prey for the hordes coming in from Afghanistan and Central Asia. The decline of Buddhism had nothing to do with the 'deification' of Buddha; this, in fact, indirectly bequeathed humanity with some of the most marvellous art pieces that Malraux loved so much.

The historian R C Majumdar quite rightly wrote: "Individuals, or even small sects, directly or indirectly professing the religion, might be found in the country for centuries to come and may be said to exist even now, but Buddhism as a force in society vanished from India since 1200 AD never to return."

A Tibetan monk, Dharmasvamin, who visited Nalanda in 1235 AD leaves us a very sad picture of the plains of Bihar where the Buddha had earlier propagated his message of compassion and non-violence. He saw only destruction at Nalanda and could not recover a single manuscript from the once-rich library. Finally, he met an old monk in his nineties who could teach him some Sanskrit. Dharmasvamin studied for some time with the old monk and, on hearing that the Muslim troops were approaching again, he carried his old master on his shoulders to safety until the raiders had gone. It is this enduring image that symbolises the end of an era.

One would have thought the barbarian destruction of the remnants of a rich culture could not happen again in this new millennium. But, for the past couple of weeks, we have seen similar events occurring all over again in Afghanistan, where the Taleban mullahs have decreed that all "idols of the infidels" should disappear. The most famous amongst these 'false gods' are the giant statues of the Buddha in Bamiyan, in central Afghanistan.

"Now that we are destroying false idols, the world has made a drama out of it. The Muslims in the world, particularly the Afghan Muslims, should use their common sense," declared Taleban chief Mulla Muhammad Omar. He tried to prove his common sense by saying: "I would like to ask you

-- do you prefer to be called statue-destroyers or statue-sellers?" Ordinary human beings would find it difficult to see the logic of the fanatic Afghan leader.

Afghanistan was not always like that.

I remember with nostalgia when, as a young student, I was travelling in Afghanistan. At that time, all the backpackers knew the Afghans were 'cool guys.' Yes, they were Muslims -- in fact, we could see them going on Friday to the exquisite blue mosques of Herat or Mazar-il-Charief -- but never before a cup of light green tea was poured from their ever-smoking samovars.

I also remember being told in Kabul that the 'coolest' place in this extraordinarily peaceful country was one day away by bus from the capital. All those who have visited Afghanistan will remember their colourful buses. I could not stop clicking the unbelievably detailed kitsch frescos decorating the Afghan vehicles. But these buses only had a few seats and most of the travellers -- including sheep, chickens and human beings -- had to sit on a sort of wooden platform. If you were not happy with this arrangement or were uncomfortable, you always had the choice to climb on to the roof and negotiate with your fellow travellers for a seat on some stuffed bags.

One day, I decided to take the plunge and, after a difficult journey, verging on torture for French buttocks, I reached Bamiyan at sunset. It was magical. At the end of the valley stood two unbelievable statues of the Buddha. Though some fanatics had disfigured them, the Buddhas's bodies were so majestic, the proportions so perfect, that it seemed to me a mirage after the nightmarish bus journey.

The next day I visited the site of the statues and I climbed to that head of the Buddha by way of several stairs and galleries. There were still hundreds of caves where, once upon a time, *bikhshus* had meditated on the great suffering of this world and the way to alleviate it.

Today, 30 years later, Bamiyan reamains -- thanks to the statues -- the most stunning and peaceful place I have ever seen. And, today, those statues do not exist anymore! It was reported on March 8 that, using 'large amounts of explosives,' the Taleban militia had managed to destroy the top parts of the statues.

One question comes to mind, "Why this senseless destruction?" Can a religion which is supposed to take its followers to God, direct them to destroy something which, in a way, represents the pinnacle of humanity's art and genius?

A few years ago, I was working on a book on the *Karma Of Tibet* and, in this connection, I nterviewed a respected Tibetan lama. He was explaining to me what he and his fellow countrymen had to go through in Tibet during the Cultural Revolution and he kept repeating, "Why this destruction? Why this destruction?" His question remains unanswered till today.

Another image comes to my mind: teenaged Red Guards sent by Mao Zedong entering in the house of Lui Shaoqi, the President of the People's Republic of China and destroying every single art object after having insulted and beaten him. And all this for what? Because a leader (Mao) wanted to remain in power and could not accept another direction for Red China. In the process, several million Chinese and Tibetans died, a generation was traumatised forever.

In many ways, the events in China between 1966 and 1976 are similar to what is happening in

Afghanistan today. The triggering of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution by Mao had nothing to do with the proletariat. Yet Mao, after the catastrophic Great Leap Forward, had to re-establish his supremacy over Lui Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, his rivals in the politburo. To achieve his political goals, he realised that the most convenient (and efficient) way was to use a mad ideology and the most extreme elements. His wife, Jiang Qing, and her colleagues (the Gang of Four) were promoted as cultural tsars. They had only one motto: to wipe out a thousand year old culture and replace it by a 'proletarian' one.

Today, according to some reports, Afghanistan is witnessing a power struggle between the more moderate factions -- which would be happy to hand over Osama bin Laden, resume contact with the rest of the world and eventually start rebuilding Afghanistan -- and Omar's faction which, like Mao 35 years ago, unleashed terror to stick to power. It was recently reported that a fight broke out between the different factions during a meeting to decide on bin Laden's fate.

One should not forget that, when the Taleban took over the Bamiyan valley from the Northern Alliance in 1997, they had threatened to destroy the statues. Later, the same Mullah Omar vowed to safeguard them. Today, he has destroyed them.

One must also keep in mind Bamiyan's strategic location; it controls the way to the north. Located on the east-west road along the central mountain range which divides the country, the valley is of extreme strategic importance, which explains why, every spring, the Northern Alliance forces try to regain control of the valley.

Symbolically, having destroyed the Buddhas as well as statues of the saints of the local Islamic sects (as reported in the Russian press), the extremists led by Omar can restate their supremacy by thwarting every possibility of opening negotiations with the West.

Some commentators wrote that, because the Taleban leadership had not been accepted by the international community, they had no alternative but to destroy the statues to attract the world's attention (In much the same way, Vaijaylakshmi Pandit had declared in the UN in November, 1950, that communist China was forced to invade Tibet because the Western powers did not accept them in the UN). This is nothing if not nonsense. It is probably the other way around: because a section of the Talebans want to reintegrate into the international community that the extremists have acted swiftly to stop them.

But, like in China, extremist views cannot last for long. The reasonable elements are bound to return. After Mao's death, for example, Deng returned to power with his theory, "It does not matter if a cat is white or black as long as it catches mice." However, for the Afghan nation and for humanity as a whole, something will be lost for ever.

Was this necessary?

PS: We should not forget that the Taleban is a creation of the Western powers, particulary the CIA, which, at the end of the eighties, promoted and armed the militia for its own selfish reasons.

Claude Arpi is author of The Fate Of Tibet (HarAnand), which has also been translated into French.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

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Manu Smriti

(contributed by **Prof. G.C.ASNANI, MSc., Ph.D. (United Nations Service, Retd**.)

Selections from Hindu Scriptures, Series No.1, "SMRITIS"

IN India, particularly **after Independence in 1947, the younger generation of Hindus has been ignorant and indifferent about the teachings of Hindu religion.** There has also been **persistent effort from some quarters to speak ill of Hindu religion.** This has had the natural effect of younger generation developing indifference towards and even **ridicule of Hindu religion** in India**.** The Constitution of India encourages non-Hindu youngsters to be given education about the teachings of their respective religions in the Govt**.**- aided educational institution of India**,** but Hindu youngsters cannot be given such education about Hindu religion in Govt**.**-aided educational institutions**.**

Outside India, the **Christian missionaries** have consistently worked for over three centuries to **paint Hindu religion as demonic barbarism.** These missionaries collect huge amounts of money and recruit large number of persons from outside India **to remove Hinduism from the surface of the earth.** This type of propaganda against Hinduism has affected and is affecting the political policies of foreign governments towards India**.**

By now, we have also become familiar with Taliban Movement in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It correctly represents Islam without any hide-and-seek game. Government-aided Madrasas in India become factories for Talibanism inside India, for destruction of Hinduism.

It is time that **we Hindus assert ourselves** and place the basic teachings of Hinduism before the whole world**,** for the people to read for themselves and come to their own conclusions directly without interference from those who have been profiting by hurling abuses at Hinduism**.** This is the **first in the series** of publications which we propose to publish**.**

We are sure that a **better knowledge about Hinduism** inside India will strengthen the Hindu society**,** give it the self- confidence to understand**,** practise and propagate the noble teachings of Hinduism**;** this shall be for the benefit of the whole world which is being engulfed by inter-religious warfare under various pretexts**. Religion is essentially a matter of self-discipline, self-culture, enriching of one's inner self, realisation of divinity which lies dormant in every living being and the manifestation of this divinity in our daily conduct of life.** Religion cannot be used and should not be used as a weapon in our hands and mouths to conquer and subjugate others**,** to win political power and destroy other religious communities**;** that would be barbarism and not religion**.** Religion should bring peace**,** tranquility and happiness to everyone on this earth**.**

In this first book of the series, we are presenting Selections from some of the Smritis like Manu Smriti and Vasistha Smriti, and Smritis of Yagnavalkya, Apastamba, Gautama, and Baudhayana. In this collection, we have taken help from the following publications :

a) Sacred Books of the East, edited by Max Muller, published by Motilal Banarsidass, Vols. 1 to 50.

b) Publications of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune. **Smritis are the Rules of conduct** framed by Rishis at various stages of history of the Hindu Society. While there is some apparent diversity in these rules, it is not difficult to trace the underlying unity of **self-discipline** and the object of **welfare of the society.** With this underlying unity, there have been changes in rules from time to time, and **no one would be right in picking up a sentence here and there and making much noise about it.** We should look at the underlying structural basis of the Smritis. It may not be out of place to mention here that the **Constitution of India framed by Independent India in 1948 has had 75 Amendments upto the year 1995.** If in the course of less than half a century, the law makers of India have found it necessary to have Amendments at the rate of **more than one Amendment per year,** some changes in the rules of conduct suggested by Rishis into the sacred books of the Hindu society, **over a period of several hundred centuries,** should not be a cause of complaint by any rational reasoning. And then there is also the **Grand Principle of Freedom of thought, belief and action** given to every Hindu by the Hindu Scriptures:

"For choosing your course of conduct at any time and place, keep in view the instructions given first in Sruti(Vedas), then in Smritis, Itihaas(History of great personalties) and finally you act according to your conscience." **(Manu Smriti, II, 6)**

This Grand Principle of Freedom given to an individual by the Hindu religion will, in course of time, form the basis for ending inter-religious and intra-religious conflicts. I have great pleasure in acknowledging the help given in this Collection, Compilation and Computer typesetting by Shri N. Madhavan, Shri Sudhindra Mujumdar and Shri Sanjay Chakane, without whose constant support, it would not have been possible at all to bring out this booklet. All of us have worked together with a common objective of rendering a little service to the Hindu Society, and our ***Sanatana Hindu Dharma***. May the message be transmitted further and further.

There has been too much public criticism against Manu Smriti, which criticism is not based on sound reasoning and thoughtful study. Before criticising Manu Smriti, we should consider the following points:

i) Manu Smriti was compiled several thousand years back during which interval, social, economic and political conditions have changed in Hindu society. If Indian Constitution has required more than one Amendment per year, how many Amendments would be necessary in Hindu Constitution compiled several thousand years back?

ii) There were no printing presses and standard reference editions several thousand years back. Naturally, the current edition of Manu Smriti has suffered from many interpolations for which Maha Rishi Manu cannot be held responsible and for which criticism of Maha Rishi Manu will not be justified.

iii) Further, as has been seen the practice of Hindu religion, there is enormous, almost complete freedom for an individual to believe or to disbelieve any dogma, to accept or to discard any instruction written in any book, and to use one's own intelligence and conscience before adopting any course of action. This is the beauty of Hindu religion.

vi) Maha Rishi Manu himself says that if there is anything in his Smriti which is not acceptable to the conscience of any person, that person should reject it and act according to his/her own conscience. Then, where is any reasonable ground for criticising Maha Rishi Manu? Rather, he deserves our respect for his giving us instructions to reject what is against our conscience even in his Manu Smriti.

Which other religious scripture in the world outside Hindu religion and its branches gives such freedom?

MALIGNING HINDUISM

(i) Communalism:

Proselytizing religious like Christianity and Islam are rabid communal religions which have created and continue to create inter-religious and inter-communal warfare. While indulging in activities of such perpetual inter-communal warfare, any resistance from Hindu society in India is termed by them as "Communalism! Communalism!". It is like a thief shouting "Thief, Thief" and getting away!

(ii) Caste System:

These proselytizing religions also accuse and nearly abuse Manusmriti for caste system. The underlying spirit behind Hindu religion codified by Maharishi Manu is that **Religion is essentially a matter of self-discipline, self-culture, enriching of one's inner self, realisation of divinity which lies dormant in every living being irrespective of creed, colour or caste and the manifestation of this divinity in our daily conduct of life.** Anything found in Manusmriti contradicting this spirit is a later interpolation and manipulation for which we cannot blame Maharishi Manu. We can easily identify such manipulations. If somebody does not care to find out this truth, then also the great Maharishi Manu has clearly stated in his Manusmriti, which statement fortunately remains inside Manusmriti till today, that if there is any statement in Manusmriti which is contrary to your conscience, please reject it outright and follow your own conscience. Then, where is the justification for decrying Maharishi Manu as is customary for critics of Hinduism? Maharishi Manu tells you to follow your conscience inspite of whatever is written in this or that Book. Our salutations to this Maharishi Manu for this freedom! Anti-Hindu fanatics call Hindus as "MANU-VADIS". Have they cared to read and understand Manusmriti, or they are just parroting what anti-Hindu missionaries have taught them to repeat and repeat? "Above every Book, follow your conscience" is the watchword of great Maharishi Manu; hundreds of salutations to Maharishi Manu who gave this freedom of thought, belief and action**.**

Superiority by Birth or by Conduct ?

Also, Maharishi Manu made it clear that superiority is not by birth but by Conduct. This Principle was further emphasized later by Maharishi Veda Vyasa in Mahabharata; relevant extract from

Mahabharata Vana Parva, Section 179 is also given below. (Unfortunately, some selfish politicians in India are now taking a retrograde steps by giving superior positions not on merit but by birth caste-certificates).

CASTE IS BY CONDUCT, NOT BY BIRTH

* The Seniority of Brahmanas is from Sacred Knowledge, that of Kshatriyas from valour, that of Vaisyas from wealth in grain, but that of Sudras is from age alone. **(II, 155)**

* A man is not therefore considered Venerable just because his head is gray; him who, though young in age, has learned the Veda, the Gods consider to be Venerable. **(II, 156)**

* As an elephant made of wood, as an antelope made of leather, such is an unlearned Brahmana; those three have nothing but the names of their kind. **(II, 157)**

* Just as a eunuch is unproductive with women, as a cow with cow is unprolific, and as a gift made to an ignorant man yields no reward, likewise is a Brahmana worthless, who does not know the ***Richas*** (Vedic Verses). **(II, 158)**

NON - IMPORTANCE OF CASTE

* He who possesses faith may receive pure learning even from a man of lower caste, the highest law even from the lowest, and an excellent wife even from a base family. **(II, 238)**

* Even from poison, nectar may be taken; even from a child, good advice; even from a foe, a lesson in good conduct; and even from an impure substance gold. **(II, 239)**

* Excellent wives, learning, the knowledge of Law, the rules of purity, good advice, and various arts may be acquired from anybody. **(II, 240)**

POSITION OF WOMEN

* Women must be honoured and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law, who desire their own welfare. **(III, 55)**

* Where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honoured, no Sacred rite yields rewards. **(III, 56)**

* Where the female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes; but that family where they are not unhappy ever prospers. **(III, 57)**

* The houses on which female relations, not being duly honoured, pronounce a curse, perish completely as if destroyed by magic. **(III, 58)**

* Hence men who seek their own welfare, should always honour women on holidays and festivals with gifts of ornaments, clothes, and dainty food. **(III, 59)**

IS EVERY BRAHMAN TO BE ADORED ?

* Manu has declared that those Brahmanas who are thieves, outcasts, eunuchs, or atheists are unworthy to partake of oblations offered to gods and ancestors. **(III, 150)**

KILLING OF ANIMALS

* He who injures harmless creatures from a wish to give himself pleasure, never finds happiness, neither living nor dead. **(V, 45)**

* He who permits the slaughter of an animal, he who cuts it up, he who kills it, he who buys or sells meat, he who cooks it, he who serves it up, and he who eats it, must all be considered as the slayers of the animal. **(V, 51)**

* There is no greater sinner than that man who, though not worshipping the gods or the manes seeks to increase the bulk of his own flesh by the flesh of other beings. **(V, 52)**

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articles on hinduism

Rig Veda Samhita

(contributed by **Prof. G.C.ASNANI, MSc., Ph.D. (United Nations Service, Retd**)

Rig Veda is the oldest surviving religious record of the human race. Much before the printing press came into existence, Rig Veda was transmitted from one generation to another by word of mouth. Naturally, question would arise about interpolations and mutilations during this transmission.

There is a true story, almost unbelievable, to answer this question of interpolations and mutilations in respect of Rig Veda. In his book "**India ¾ What can it teach us?"** (**1882,** Second Indian Edition published in 1961 by Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, Nai Sarak, Delhi-6), **Max Muller writes :-**

"Entirely by Memory :- This may sound startling, but-what will sound still more startling, and yet **is a fact that can easily be ascertained by anybody** who doubts it-at the present moment, **if every MS. of the Rig-Veda were lost, we should be able to recover the whole of it- from the memory of the Srotriyas in India.** These native students learn the Veda by heart, and then they learn it from the mouth of their Guru, never from a MS., still less from my printed edition, - and after a time they teach it again to their pupils.

"**I have had such students in my room at Oxford,** who not only could repeat these hymns, but who repeated them with the proper accents (for the Vedic Sanskrit has accents like Greek), nay **who, when looking through my printed edition of the Rig-Veda, could point out a misprint without the slightest hesitation.**

"I can tell you more. There are hardly any various readings in our MSS. of the Rig-Veda, but various schools in India have their own readings of certain passages, and they hand down those readings with great care. So, instead of collating MSS., as we do in Greek and Latin, I have asked some friends of mine to collate those Vedic students, who carry their own Rig-Veda in their memory, and to let me have the various readings from these living authorities.

"**Here then we are not dealing with theories, but with facts,** which anybody may verify. The whole of the Rig-Veda, and a great deal more, still exists at the present moment in the oral tradition of a number of scholars who, if they liked, could write down every letter, and every accent, exactly as we find them in our old MSS.

"Of course, **this learning by heart is carried on under a strict discipline;** it is, in fact, considered as a sacred duty. A native friend of mine, himself a very distinguished Vedic scholar, tells me that a boy, who is to be brought up as a student of the Rig-Veda, has to spend about eight years in the house of his teacher. He has to learn ten books: first, the hymns of the

Rig-Veda; then a prose treatise on sacrifices, called the Brahmana; then the so-called Forest-book or Aranyaka; then the rules of domestic ceremonies; and lastly, six treatises on pronunciation, grammar, etymology, metre, astronomy, and ceremonial. "These ten books, it has been calculated, contain nearly 30,000 lines, each line reckoned as thirty-two syllables.

"A pupil studies every day, during the eight years of his theological apprenticeship, except on the holidays, which are called "non-reading days". There being 360 days in a lunar year, the eight years would give him 2,880 days. Deduct from this 384 holidays, and you get 2,496 working days during the eight years. If you divide the number of lines, 30,000, by the number of working days, you get about twelve lines to be learnt each day, though much time is taken up, for practising and rehearsing what has been learnt before. "**Now this is the state of things at present, though I doubt whether it would last much longer** and I always impress on my friends in India, and therefore impress on those who will soon be settled as Civil Servants in India, the duty of trying to learn all that **can still be learnt from those living libraries. Much ancient Sanskrit lore will be lost for ever when that race of Srotriyas becomes extinct".**

Generally, Srotriyas are Brahmins by birth and by caste. **Profession used to be by birth generally and caste was by profession. Also, caste implied certain discipline and code of conduct. The higher the caste, the greater was the discipline required. Through professional status, each caste used to have its own status in society in ancient times. Now that status by birth has lost its validity. Gradually, Hindu society is losing caste-consciousness and also related status by virtue of birth.**

Intermingling of castes in Hindu society and hence irrelevance of caste-status by birth had been recognised in India even some 5,000 - 8,000 years back from today. The date of the Mahabharata is placed some 3,000 - 6,000 years before Christ i.e. 5,000 - 8,000 years back from today. In Mahabharata, the eldest brother amongst the five Pandavas,

Yudhisthira, was asked by Yaksha to give correct answer to his question, if the former wanted his brothers back to life. Yaksha's question was, "**Is caste-status by birth or by conduct ?**" Yudhisthira's answer was on the following lines: "In ancient times, there was purity of blood and hence caste, profession and status, by birth. Subsequently, intermingling of blood has taken place by intercaste marriages to such an extent that caste, profession and status by birth have no meaning now. **One's caste and status are by one's conduct and not by birth.** A Brahmin's conduct is characterised by truthfulness, charity, forgiveness, nobleness, benevolence, observance of appropriate rites and mercy. If these qualities are not present in one who is born in a Brahmin family, then he is not a Brahmin. If, on the other hand, these qualities are present in one who is born in a Sudra family, then he is a Brahmin". (**Ref : Mahabharata, Vana Parva, Section 179**).

Caste and Social Status by birth have no religious support in Hinduism now. **It is the conduct, not birth, which should command respect, according to the principles of Hindu religion.** This idea is emphasised in "**Manusmriti**" also. This meant discipline of body, mind and intellect, from childhood onwards, generation after generation, **for more than 200 generations** among a class of Hindus who preserved this Vedic heritage for us up to the present century. **Is this a joke? Can we even comprehend what all this means?** Caste system produced and preserved this sacred and brilliant tradition of professional specialization. Undoubtedly, over many past centuries, there have crept in, aberrations of the caste system in the

Hindu Society and interpolations in some Hindu Scriptures, but aberrations are not to be found in the basic principle of caste system. We must respect and accept what is right and unequivocally reject what is wrong.

Again, it must be emphasized that it is Hindu society itself which has been fighting against the aberrations of caste-system, and Hindu society itself has largely eliminated the same. **What have non-Hindu critics of caste system contributed? They have mostly contributed abuses on Hinduism and attempted to destroy Hinduism itself, without recognizing its merits,** saying that Hinduism has caste system.

No human community ever existed in the past, nor does it exist now which does not have caste system in one form or the other. Let non-Hindu critics talk anything claiming casteless and classless society of their own religions. We know a little of every religious community making such claims. Information Technology has thrown light on the goings on inside every non-Hindu community. **Sitting in glass houses, let no one throw stones at Hindu community.**

Is Hinduism other-worldly ?

At many places, Rig-Veda Samhita reflects the attitudes, aspirations, and prayers of Hindus living their normal life. That is the Hindu view of life. In Hindu view of life, there are four objectives of a successful human life :-

1. **Dharma :** Righteousness. 2. **Artha :** Wealth; prosperity. 3. **Kama :** Fulfilment of normal worldly desires. 4. **Moksha :** Liberation from worldly desire; attainment of enlightenment; God-realization; Self-realization. The life of an ideal Hindu is divided into four stages, each for a period of a quarter century:

1. **Brahamacharya :** Unmarried Studentship.

2. **Grihasta :** Married householder's life.

3. **Vanaprasta :** Living in a forest as a recluse, along with one's spouse.

4. **Sanyasa :** Renunication of all family conn-ections, and moving from place to place as an ascetic. (This type of Sanyasa appears to have got introduced at a later stage in the History of Hinduism. Most ancient Rishis were living in the forests along with their spouses).

There are several variations, particularly of the last two stages ¾ Vanaprasta and Sanyasa. Normally, Vanaprasta and Sanyasa stages of life have to be embraced by a person after going through the stage of Grihasta. As such, **the teachings of a recluse were firmly rooted in his experiences, aspirations and prayers as a house-holder,** a citizen who had actively participated in the life of society in various capacities including even having functioned as the ruler of an empire. This class of men and women had passed through the battlefield of life, had tasted all pleasures and pains of life and then taken to solitary contemplative life. Their teachings and compositions in prose or poetry, bear **a stamp of wisdom** born out of real experience of life and then deep contemplation.

The composition of hymns of the Rig-Veda was done by Hindu recluses, ascetics, Rishis and Sages rooted in the realities of life inside the society. **Vedic hymns were not composed by cowherd boys and shepherds while they were grazing their flocks of cattle, cows and**

sheep in the grass fields. The **hymns are couched in chaste Sanskrit of their times,** observing **strict rules of grammar and metre.** Some scholars have deciphered these Vedic hymns as **capsules** containing**,** in cryptic form**, formulae** of various branches of **mathematics,** astronomy**,** chemistry and other **sciences.** The hymns of these Vedas appeared before ancient sages of the Hindu race after their prolonged period of strict discipline**,** austerity and deep contemplation**.** The ideas locked inside these Vedic hymns are supposed to be divine revelations to these Sages**,** Rishis of yore**.** The names of the **407 Rig-Vedic Sages or Rishis (men as well as women)** who composed particular Hymns or to whom the same were revealed**,** are faithfully recorded in the original texts**.**

For the same reason**,** feelings and aspirations expressed in the vedic hymns are regarded as divinely approved and consistent with the Laws of Nature**;** the observance of these Laws in one's life will bring the fulfilment of the four religiously sanctioned objectives of human life**,** viz**.** Dharma**,** Artha**,** Kama**,** Moksha**.** Hymns are classified as "**SHRUTI**" ¾ the "**Heard**" ones-as heard by the Rishis**,** the Sages**,** in state of deep contemplation**,** and transmitted for the good of society**.** For example**,** the desire for material prosperity**,** good health and honoured long life of 100 years so often seen in Vedic hymns is not to be regarded as unworthy of an elevated person**;** such aspirations are consistent with the Laws of Nature and should be respected**.** Genuine renunciation will come and a pilgrim on the path of religious life will make solid**,** substantial and sound progress when**,** through experience accompanied by thoughtful analysis and contemplation**,** he feels an inner urge for retiring from the pursuit of worldly pleasures**.** Otherwise**, pre-mature renunciation with worldly ambitions still lurking in the mind of a religious pilgrim will result in downright hypocrisy,** that will bring blockades in the pilgrim's progress on the path of God-realization**.** Not only an individual himself but also his family**,** community and his country will come to grief when the noble principles of renunciation and selflessness are proclaimed on the public platforms or exhibited through one's dress but an under-current of selfishness and narrow-minded worldly aspirations are dragging the man or the woman in the opposite direction**.** We have to get our desires for worldly pleasures and possessions washed out clear before we walk on the path of renunciation**.**

In rare exceptional cases**,** skipping the householder's stage of life and going straight into the life of sanyas is permitted but not encouraged**.**

4. <u>Worship of God in many forms</u> :

The reading of the hymns of Rig-Veda Samhita will show that a Hindu has inherited the following view of worship of God **:- A Hindu believes in one and only one God, but he does not believe in one and only one form of manifestation of God. A Hindu sees and adores God in a hundred, thousand and many more forms.** He sees and worships God in everything**,** particularly where there is manifestation of life**,** energy**,** beauty**,** strength and valour. He worships the Sun**,** the Moon**,** the Earth**,** the Sky**,** the Rivers**,** the Stars**,** the Days**,** the Nights**,** the Forests**,** the Animals**,** the Plants and what not**,** as manifestations of one and only one God**.**

This has been sometimes mis-understood and even mis-construed that Hindus do not believe in one God but in many Gods**;** this is wrong and misleading**.** It must be emphasised that **Hindus believe in one and only one God,** but having manifestations in millions of forms**,** shapes and even in abstract qualities and emotions**.** For example**,** a mother's love for a child is a manifestation of God Himself**;** devotion of a chaste wife to her husband in the face of

difficulties and dangers is the manifestation of divinity in a woman; art of exquisite dance and music during worship of God is a manifestation of divinity. The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Rivers, the Ocean, the Rocks, the Trees, everything is worshipped by a Hindu as a manifestation of God. A Hindu accepts Omnipresence of God and does not deny His presence anywhere. God is also Omniscient; hence He sees the sincerity of Worship of a devotee in whichever form the devotee worships Him.

Hinduism does not recognise existence of anything outside God, anything without God; even Satan does not exist outside God. There cannot be God **and** a Satan outside God.

Einstein's Equation $E = mc^2$

expresses that mass is made up of energy. How many shapes and forms of mass do we see? solids, liquids, gases, yellow, red, green, heavy, light, etc. These are all manifestations of **one and the same energy;** so also are **infinite number of forms of one and the same God.**

Einstein and other scientists penetrated through **diverse forms of mass** and brought us into the realm of **one energy.** Still **space-time continuum** remained separately. The Sages of the Vedas had penetrated deeper than the realm of **energy, space and time.** They had discovered the deeper realm of **ONE REALITY** with quality of **Consciousness, Spacelessness, Timelessness** and **Blissfulness,** in which the entire universe exists, although having the appearance of vast diversity, multiplicity and opposites. The path traversed by the Rishis, the Sages, the Mystics was not one of modern physics, but one of deep contemplation and experience. This experience of blissfulness at the bottom of everything seen in Nature is expressed through their Hymns given in the Vedas. Many of them, at various times and places, have declared **: "I have seen THAT".** Some have gone further and declared **"I AM THAT".**

Descriptions given by different Rishis at different times and at different places are tallying, one with the other. This confirms the objectivity of these subjective experiences. We cannot just dismiss these away as fictions of mind. We must face and acknowledge the Truth and give credit where it is due. This is the wonderful treasure we have all inherited as members of this blessed human race on this Earth. Let us appreciate it, live it and spread joy and blissfulness all around.

A Hindu does not confine limitless God within the walls of a temple or a church. A Hindu does not accept the authority of any person on the earth-in the past, at present or at any future instant of time-as the sole exclusice authority and mouth-piece of God. **A Hindu is free to think, to feel, to believe, to disbelieve.**

Even in respect of religious Scriptures, a Hindu is supposed to listen to and contemplate on what is written in the **Shruti** (Vedas), **Smritis** (Coded laws of life), **Itihas** (History of great men), but **finally he should follow the dictates of his own conscience. This is the freedom given to a Hindu by the very Scriptures which he is to follow. This is the uniqueness, the broadminded open-ness of Hinduism. That is why Hindu religion has survived and shall survive as long as human race survives on this sacred Mother Earth.**

How many of the Scriptures of other religions of the world give this freedom to their followers **?**

5. <u>Worship of NATURE</u> : A Hindu is particularly fond of worshipping **NATURE.** At the time of daybreak, the twilight of the Dawn sends a Hindu into raptures of ecstacy. What a beauty**!**

What a grandeur! The Sages who composed the hymns to the Dawn seem to be swimming and dancing in the river of ecstatic joy. You see this, you feel this, when you read the Hymns addressed to the Dawn. The compiler of this collection has exihibited his weakness for this grandeur by giving a large number of verses under "Dawn". So also his weakness for Clouds, Winds and Rain; he is a meteorologist who has enjoyed the sight and lessons learnt from viewing the clouds in the sky.

The Sun evokes a feeling of joy, strength, valour and heroism. The moon is the personification of sheer beauty. The rivers nourish the land. The rains are a nectar poured from the heaven. Clouds are the Chariots of Wind god. Words fail to correctly convey the joy and feelings expressed by the Hindu Rishis and Sages when they saw the wonders of Nature, the wonders of **LIFE.** They had a joyful, healthy and positive outlook on life. The reading and repeated recitation of these hymns will pump life, strength and courage into any one who cares to read and/or recite the same. These constitute the **precious heritage bequeathed by the Hindu Rishis and Sages to the whole human race for the good of the whole human society on this earth.**

The Hymns give energy and power which should also be handled with suitable care and discipline. Just as nuclear energy or the nuclear fission material should be handled and used with appropriate restrictions and discipline, so should the Vedic Hymns be.

6. Samhitas and Upanishads :

There have been some variations in nomenclature about what constitutes a Veda, e.g. Veda Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads, etc. are sometimes all taken together to constitute a Veda. However, it is generally accepted that **Samhita is the principal component** while other components are specialised treatises to elaborate specific ideas which are contained in the Samhitas; e.g. Brahmanas give ritualistic procedures for worship (yajna, sacrifice); Upanishads elucidate the philosophical ideas contained in the Samhitas. During the last two centuries, the Vedas have been introduced to the western world particularly through the medium of German and English languages. In the western world, the Upanishads have received maximum acceptance and appreciation. However, it may be stated that the **philosophy expounded in the Upanishadas is contained in the inspired, revealed, mystic poetry of the Samhita.** One may even venture to suggest an analogy that Samhitas are the milk; taken to the forest, this milk ferments and turns to form curd (Yoghurt); the Rishis churned the curds and separated butter from the buttermilk. The

milk, the curds, the butter as well as the buttermilk are beneficial for the body system of the society. For convenience and with some sort of justification, the Upanishads may be considered as the butter. For brevity, however, we shall refer to the Rig-Veda Samhita as Rig-Veda.

7. Positive Attitude towards Human Birth on the Earth.

Reading of Rig Veda gives a very clear impression of a **buoyant, vigorous and joyful attitude towards life on this earth.** The Hindu Society appreciated, enjoyed and aspired for a full life of 100 years, lived with righteousness, honour, prosperity and austerity. The same impression is carried through Valmiki's Ramayana as well as Mahabharata.

When we come to Hindu literature of later times, we find a marked tilt towards attitude of pessimism, negativism. Aspiration for honour and prosperity came to be regarded as a sort of undesirable worldly weaknesses and inferiority of mind. The spirit of strength and valour started declining, giving place to a sort of disgust with life, ready and even anxious to quit this earth, harping on miseries on the earth, transitoriness of worldly things, praying to God never to give us another birth on this earth, etc. Political history of later times also shows marked socio-political deterioration. The country which was once buoyant and bold, became weak, meek and miserable; consequently, the Hindus started getting beatings from many sides; their prayers also started showing attitude of helplessness and disgust for life.

When we do not value and respect the beauties and bounties so abundantly given to us by **NATURE,** from sunrise to sunset and during the night, and also from season to season, year after year, how can we expect to be happy on this Earth? Let us respect and appreciate elements of **NATURE,** the very manifestations of God in a hundred thousand forms, as did our ancient Sages who sang the **songs of Rig-Veda, filled with ecstacy and adoration, bursting with energy and enthusiasm for life,** and aspiring to fill the whole surface of the earth and space around us, with vigour and joyfulness, health and prosperity, long life and desire to live and be born again and again on this Sacred Mother Earth. To regain the lost glory and vigour, prosperity and happiness, to fulfil our destined role of spreading real joy and spirituality in the whole human race, let us sing with the Rishis of Rig Veda :

"Tell me, amongst so many immortal divinities of the universe, who is the Self-radiant, and whose glory we should meditate on? And after having lived a full life, who will deliver us back to this living world so that **we may be born again** to see a father and a mother?" **(1.24.1)** "The supreme God, the foremost adorable, whose auspicious name we meditate on, will deliver us back to this world so that **we may be born again** to see a father and a mother". **(1.24.2)**

The selections are made from **Rig Veda Samhita.** These are based mostly on **13** volumes **published by Veda Pratishthana, New Delhi,** on behalf of Narendra Mohan Foundation, Pusa Road, New Delhi, India.

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articles on hinduism

Temple of excellence

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http://www.hvk.org/hvk/

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) was founded in 1916 by the great nationalist leader Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya with the co-operation of great stalwarts of Indian history such as Dr Annie Besant who dreamt of BHU as the great University of India.

BHU was created under the Parliamentary legislation - BHU Act 1915, with a view to promote higher learning, and the creative and innovative instincts of students by providing them with quality academic education.

BHU, set up in the holy city of Banaras played a pivotal role during the Independence Movement. Today , it has
evolved as a great centre for teaching.

It boasts of having nurtured several prominent freedom fighters and builders of modern India.

It also has the distinction of contributing in terms of its academic excellence in the progress of the country.

The University comprises of three institutes, 14 faculties, 124 departments, four interdisciplinary centres and three constituent schools, offering scores of subjects pertaining to varied branches of humanities, social sciences, sciences, technology, medicine, fine arts and performing arts.

It boasts of six centres of advanced studies, 10 departments under the special assistance programme and a large number of specialised research centres.

Four degree college of the city are affiliated to the University.

The University also has a renown and sacred Vishwanath Temple that is revered as the spiritual centre of the University.

BHU also has a sprawling campus of 2,700 acres in the district of Mirzapur 90 km away from Varanasi, known as the Barkachha Campus. At present, the campus has a Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) of the Institute of Agriculture, a Guest House, a post-graduate hostel, a cow shed and a large number of agricultural research farms. Demonstrations are given by scientists and technologists.

Technical know-how, hybrid seeds, plant protection chemicals, fertilisers etc are provided by the

Indian Council for Agricultural Research, New Delhi. Students of the Institute of Agriculture, BHU periodically visit the KVK Centre for training.

The Barkachha Campus boasts of sylvan surroundings that include hilly ranges, water falls, streams, springs and greenery.

BHU is one of the first few universities in the country to have established the academic Staff College in the later part of 1987.

The academic Staff College has been engaged in multifarous activities relating to the professional development of the academic staff.

It provides the requisite exposure to the university and college teachers to enable them develop their interests in their respective fields of specialisations by conducting orientation and refresher courses. BHU also has within its campus three constituent schools aimed at offering value and culture based education at the primary, secondary and senior secondary levels.

The faculty of visual arts at BHU is one of the leading institutions of fine arts in India. The faculty encourages on optimum interaction with the centres of art all over the country, it organises art fairs and exhibitions with an aim to encourage talents and get students their due recognition..

The Faculty of Science comprises of 13 departments covering almost all branches in modern science. Two vocational courses, Industrial Microbiology and Electronics Instrumentation and Maintainance have been introduced recently at the under-graduate level.

The School of Biotechnology possess a Bio-informatics User Centre. The Department of Chemistry has been conducting research in frontier areas of subjects like nuclear and radio chemistry, organo-metallic chemistry and biosensors. The Department of Geography offers a highly specialised course in satellite imagery interpretation. The Department of Statistics has two major research projects sponsored by the Rockfeller Foundation. the Department of Botany along with that of Statistics, have introduced self-financed courses in population studies and environmental sciences. The Faculty of Sanskrit Vidya Dharam Vijnan imparts ancient learning in traditional as well as modern aspects.

The main objective of the Faculty is to preserve and develop the ancient and traditional treasure of knowledge. It consists of eight departments and has a publication wing of its own.

The Institute of Medical Sciences is the only tertiary medical institute of its kind in India which imparts education in all the disciplines of modern medicine and Ayurveda at the under graduate and the post-graduate levels.

The main campus is spread over an area of 1,300 acres and is bestowed with buildings that are architectural delights and verdant surroundings.

There is an air field at the campus as well, started for military training and flying during World War II. The campus also possess a museum, the Bharat Kala Bhavan which is a veritable treasure of rare collections. The university consists of about 15,000 students and 2,000 teaching and nearly 5,000 non-teaching staff.

Quite true to its motto which says: The end of all knowledge is the attainment of immortality,

BHU has not only striven to promote higher learning and quality academic research it has at the same time emphasised on building the character of the youth by making religion and ethics a part of the education process.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

A real life hero, not figment of a poet's imagination - **By Saroj Bala**
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Date: October 12, 2003

The story of Shri Ram's life was first narrated by Maharishi Valmiki in The Ramayana, written after he was crowned as the king of Ayodhya. **Valmiki was a great astronomer because he made sequential astronomical references on important dates related to the life of Shri Ram indicating the location of planets vis- a-vis zodiac constellations and the other visible stars (nakshatras). A similar position of planets and nakshatras vis-a-vis zodiac constellations has not been repeated in thousands of years. By entering the precise details of the planetary configuration of the important events in the life of Shri Ram, as given in the Valmiki Ramayana, in the software named Planetarium corresponding exact dates of these events according to English calendar can be known.**

Pushkar Bhatnagar, of the Indian Revenue Service, had acquired Planetarium from the USA. It is used to predict the solar/ lunar eclipses and distance and location of other planets from the earth by the scientists and astronomers. He entered the relevant details about the planetary positions vis-a-vis zodiac constellations narrated by Valmiki and obtained convincing results, thus almost determining the important dates starting from the birth of Shri Ram to the date of his coming back to Ayodhya after 14 years of exile.

Valmiki has recorded in Bal Kaand Sarga 19 and shloka 8 and 9 (1/18/8,9) that Shri Ram was born on the ninth tithi of Chaitra month when the position of different planets vis-a-vis zodiac constellations and nakshatras (visible stars) was as under :- 1 Sun in Aries ii) Saturn in Libra iii) Jupiter in Cancer iv) Venus in Pisces v) Mars in Capricorn vi) Lunar month of Chaitra vii) Ninth day after no moon viii) Lagna as Cancer (Cancer was rising in the east) ix) Moon on the Punarvasu (Gemini constellation & Pollux star) x) Day time (around noon)

This data was fed into the Planetarium software. The results indicated that this was exactly the location of planets/stars vis-a-vis zodiac constellations on January10, noon time in the year 5114 BC. As per the Indian calendar, it was the ninth day of Shukla Paksha in Chaitra month and the time was around 12 to 1 noontime. This is exactly the time and date when Ram Navmi is celebrated all over India till date.

Shri Ram was born in Ayodhya: This fact can be ascertained from several books written by Indian and foreign authors before and after the birth of Christ e.g. Valmiki Ramayana, Tulsi Ramayana, Kalidasa's Raghuvansam, Bodh and Jain literature etc. These books have narrated in great detail the location, the rich architecture and the beauty of Ayodhya which

had many palaces and temples built all over the vast kingdom. Ayodhya was located over the banks of Saryu River with Ganga and Panchal Pradesh on one side and Mithila on the other side. Normally 7,000 years is a very long period during which earthquakes, storms, floods and foreign invasions change the course of rivers, destroy towns and buildings and alter the territories. Therefore, the task of unearthing facts is monumental. The present Ayodhya is shrunken in size and the rivers have changed their course about 40 km north/south.

Shri Ram went out of Ayodhya in his childhood (13th year as per Valmiki Ramayana with Rishi Vishwamitra who lived in Tapovan (Sidhhashram) and from there he went to Mithila, the kingdom of King Janaka. Here, he married Sita after breaking the Shiv dhanusha. Researchers have gone along the route adopted by Shri Ram as narrated in Valmiki Ramayana and found 23 places which have memorials existing even as on date to commemorate the events related to his life.

These include Shringi Ashram, Ramghat, Tadka Van, Sidhhashram, Gautamashram, Janakpur (now in Nepal) and Sita Kund etc. **Memorials are built for great human beings and not for fictitious characters.**

Date of exile of Shri Ram: In Valmiki Ramayana it is mentioned in Ayodhya Kand (2/4/18) that Dashratha wanted to make Shri Ram the king because Sun, Mars and Rahu had surrounded his nakshatra and normally under such planetary configuration the king dies/or becomes a victim of conspiracies. The zodiac sign of king Dashratha was Pisces and his nakshatra was Rewati. This planetary configuration was prevailing on the January 5, 5089 BC. It was on this day that Shri Ram had to leave Ayodhya for living in the forests for 14 years. He was 25 years old at that time (5114-5089) and there are several shlokas in the Valmiki Ramayana which indicate that Shri Ram was 25 years old when he left Ayodhya for 14 years of exile.

Valmiki Ramayana refers to the solar eclipse at the time of war with Khardushan in latter half of 13th year of Shri Ram's living in forests. Valmiki has also mentioned that it was Amavasya that day and planet Mars was in the middle. When this data was entered, the computer software indicated that there was a solar eclipse on October 7, 5077 BC (Amavasya day) which could be seen from Panchvati. On that date, the planetary configuration was the same as has been described by Valmiki i.e. Mars was in the middle, on one side were Venus and Mercury and on the other side were Sun and Saturn. On the basis of planetary configurations described in various other chapters, the date on which Ravana was killed works out to December 4, 5076 BC. Shri Ram completed 14 years of exile on January 2, 5075 BC. That day was also Navami of Shukla Paksha in Chaitra month. Thus, Shri Ram had come back to Ayodhya when he was 39 years old (5114-5075).

Ram Avtar, who had done research on places visited by Shri Ram during 14 years of exile and sequentially moved to the places stated as visited by Shri Ram in the Valmiki Ramayana, started from Ayodhya and went right upto Rameshwaram. He found **195 places which still have the memorials connected to the events narrated in the Ramayana relating to the life of Shri Ram and Sita.** These places include: Tamsa Tal (Mandah), Shringverpur (Singraur), Bhardwaj Ashram (situated near Allahabad), Atri Ashram, Markandeya Ashram (Markundi), Chitrakoot, Parnakuti (on banks of Godavari), Panchvati, Sita Sarovar, Ram Kund in Triambakeshwar near Nasik, Shabari Ashram, Kishkindha (village Annagorai), Dhanushkoti and Rameshwar temple.

Recently, the Sri Lankan government had expressed a desire to develop Sita Vatika as a tourist spot. Sri Lankans believe that this was Ashok Vatika where Ravana had kept Sita as a prisoner (that was year 5076 BC). An American company engaged in exploring the oceans had put pictures on the Internet of a curved bridge, the ruins of which are lying submerged in Gulf of Mannar between Rameshwaram and Sri Lanka. The age of the stones used has been estimated at 17 million years, though the period of the construction of the bridge has still not been estimated.

Indian history has recorded that Shri Ram belonged to the Surya Vansh and was the 64th ruler of this dynasty. The names and other relevant particulars of previous 63 kings are listed on in Ayodhya Ka Itihas written about 80 years back by Rai Bahadur Sita Ram and the ancestors of Shri Ram have been traced out as under: Shri Ram, S/o King Dashratha, S/o King Aja, S/o King Raghu, S/o King Dilip and so on ——-)

From Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Bengal to Gujarat, everywhere people believe in the reality of Shri Ram's existence, particularly in the tribal areas of Himachal, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and the North-East. Most of the festivals celebrated in these tribal areas revolve around the events in the life of Shri Ram and Shri Krishna.

During Ram Rajya, the evils of caste system based on birth were non-existent. Valmiki is stated to be a Shudra. Sita lived with him as his adopted daughter after she was banished from Ayodhya and Shri Ram's children Luv and Kush grew in his ashram as his disciples. Valmiki was, perhaps, the first great astronomer and that his study of planetary configurations has stood the test of time. Even the latest computer software corroborated his astronomical calculations, proving that he did not commit any error. Shabari is stated to be belonging to Bheel tribe and the army of Shri Ram, which succeeded in defeating Ravana was also formed by various tribals from Central and South India. Facts, events and other relevant details relating to the life of Shri Ram are the common heritage of all the Indians.

source: URL: **http://www.tribuneindia.com/2003/20031012/spectrum/main6.htm**

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The Tradition of Lamps in India

By Chitra Balasubramaniam

http://www.indiagov.org/perspec/nov99/lamps.htm

Lamps are an integral part of Indian culture. They weave their, own magic irrespective of whether they are in the, form of a mere candle or the traditional oil filled wick lamp. The poetic beauty of the flickering flame cannot be described in words.

The origins of the lamp clan probably be traced back to the time fire was discovered. fire holds an irreplaceable place in man's life. In India, it came to, be associated closely with the Hindu religion and form of worship. Therefore, it is but natural that the objects in which ceremonial fire - was lit or kept also ,aroused feelings of reverence. These objects were, therefore, considered equally important and were made with the utmost care. In the beginning, natural substances such as stones, shells, tree7products etc., must have been used. These paved the way to their present beautiful shapes, with craftsmen giving "the, lamps more depth and meaning.

We find in India a gamut of beautiful lamps made of all sorts of material - clay, terracotta, porcelain, brass, bronze, silver and at times even dough. There is literature on lamp making. Norms exist regarding its size, lighting and measurements. Festivals of lamps are celebrated and rituals are prescribed for their worship. Even dances center around lamps.

Most importantly, there are different types of lamps used for different purposes. The lamp is considered a woman and is symbolic of Goddess Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) and is referred to as Deepalakshmi.

The earthen lamp or "mitti ka diya is the most common, easily available and seen lamp. Made on the potter's wheel from clay, thousands of these are turned out every year for use by people. A good diya has to be soaked in water before use. The single diva is the most common lamp. However, the potter often lets his imagination run riot to churn out different types of diyas. Some are just attractive domes with openings to hold the lamp so that only the slight flickering can be seen while the dome protects it from wind. Some are a bunch of five diyas - one in the middle, surrounded by four others.

Porcelain lamps shaped like diyas are also made these days, as are the ones in terracotta and clay. Designer diyas hold a place of their own. They come in all sizes. The diya is held atop an elephant or a bankura (horse); there are hanging lamps in the shape of pigeons or birds wherein the chain is hooked onto the bird's beak and the body of the bird houses the place for filling oil or wax.

The place of pride is taken by lamps made of various metals. Lamps in olden times were made of commonly available metals including gold and other precious metals and stones. The tradition

continues in the temples, where exquisitely made lamps can be seen. Temples in South India have an amazing diversity of lamps. Gujarat also has its own repertoire of lamps. Some temples have niches in the walls where lamps can be placed. Others have rows of brass lamps placed on the exteriors Many of them also have huge lamps at the entrance. The lamp is in the form of a huge pillar, carved intricately. Plates at equal intervals hold the oil and the beaks of the wicks. The circumference of the plates is the widest at the bottom and gets progressively smaller as one moves up. The top is decorated with a lion or a peacock. The base has figures from Hindu mythology. Such pillar lamps or deepstambbas are mostly cast in bronze.

Different lamps are made for different purposes. An aarti deepa, used at the time of prayer, is different from the one used to light the sanctum sanctorum. The aarti deepa usually has a handle attached to it for holding it.

The arrangement of the lamps is also artistic and varies according to place and occasion. These are either placed in circles or in rows.

Lamps thus play an important role in everyday life in India. Lighting a lamp near a Tulsi plant is a ritual followed by people almost all over the country. Diwali, essentially a Festival of Lights, is all about lamps lighting up life and chasing away darkness. Lighting a lamp in a house is believed to bring prosperity, plenty and abundance to the family. Electricity has not been able to replace the traditional and emotional significance of a humble lamp in the lives of the people of India.

The author is a freelance writer.

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PROUD OF ITS CALLING -RSS

By Victor Banerjee

http://www.telegraphindia.com/editoria.htm#head3

Seventy five years ago, to this Bijoya Dashami day, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was formed. Today, its relevance, in a society that is still caste-ridden and consumed by the subliminal brainwash of multinational commerce and globalization, is questioned by everyone that suffers under the hilarious delusion that Nehru and Gandhi were responsible for making Hindus "secular".

Distinguished editors write caveats that are always full of insight and well researched. Although by definition a caveat is a caution or warning that the notifier be given a hearing, yet it usually helps stall rather than alter a situation. Laid back individuals like myself who love to read newspapers over scrambled eggs and percolated coffee at breakfast and review it during a paid-for lunch at work, seldom act beyond discussing it while stirring the soup to cool it. In the evening, lulled by the callousness of another day of sameness, we cast the issue upon a stack in a proscribed corner of our homes, for consignment to the *kabariwalla* at the end of the month.

Eminent columnists can justly claim to know more about and have greater insights into all the problems that our societies confront. But they are not the sole proprietors of commonness. The knock at K.S. Sudarshan of the RSS and the simplistic interpretation of what the man said makes you wonder if columnists address the same people as Sudarshan does everyday. In other words, those who, in the name of a ludicrous "democracy", are conned to put a stamp on a cow or lantern or bicycle or rose to elect goons and hoodlums to Parliament, to the utter disgrace and disgust of the rest of the nation. As for the sop we continually offer missionaries, it would take no major journalistic scoop to unveil some of the detestable activities of modern-day Christian missionaries, in the name of Jesus who, given half a chance, would probably cast them out of his temple.

My cop out with such political incorrectness, like yours, is that some of my best friends are Christian or Muslim. Ask them sincerely, and they too will endorse the hypocrisies of today's evangelism and mismanagement of church properties and funds. Our leaders and the press, paranoid about the foot-in-mouth disease, are forever on the defensive: shameful of our pantheistic heathenism and caught on the self-righteous backfoot. Bollywood, for the moment, desists from depicting all Christians as deeply religious alcoholics and all Muslims as secular saviours of the community.

There is no such pussyfooting in China, England or in the United States when it comes to defending the faith in their countries. It is not considered prejudice, nor bias. However, the West

also has the proprietorship in a specific definition of "human rights" that the eastern bloc, Africa and Asia are fast learning to incorporate into their ethos if they want their bogies attached to the economic gravy train: our only priority. One never needs to condemn a faith but nor should one shy away from pointing a finger at an individual who uses it for the wrong ends or whose means of achieving an end are honestly questionable. I have publicly condemned our politicians' *rath yatra*s and their pathetic disacknowledgment of any responsibility for the destruction of the Babri Masjid, for the same reason. I also think Mulayam Singh's shooting down of unarmed rowdies was a horrific example of how little we value life.

If one flips through the pages of **Madhavrao Golwalkar's (Guru*ji*'s) *Bunch of Thoughts***, the RSS handbook so to speak, one might be pleasantly surprised to discover that most of the work is simple commonsense and morally upright. Something you can safely hand to your children. Golwalkar's book is not, and the RSS ideologies are not, nearly as inflammable and fundamentalist as is popularly dished out by respectable intellectuals to an impressionable public which has also been taught to believe that Gandhi and Nehru and other imports and clones from the British educational system are the ones responsible for making us xenophobic Hindus "secular".

Every Hindu, Christian, Muslim and Buddhist who lives below the poverty line and at the mercy of floods, droughts and cyclones will tell you that the RSS is more sinned against than sinning. I know from personal experience in Orissa and Uttarkashi that while governments were still sleeping, tucked under the warmth of ill-gotten wealth and sycophantic worship from acolytes, the RSS was out in a matter of hours, if not minutes, with organized rescue operations. Even when the fashion of "relief work" has moved on to newer calamities, the RSS continues its work silently. Every international agency, whose Christmas cards we charitably purchase and distribute, will vouch for the fact that the RSS does more work in devastated parts of India than any government agency, from Arunachal to Dwarka and Kashmir to Kanya Kumari.

Today the RSS is cursed. It is responsible for the Babri Masjid and *Hindutva* and every other item on the Bharatiya Janata Party's "covert" agenda. Anyone, who has known the RSS, will tell you that it never needed the BJP to give it muscle. On the contrary, the members of the RSS are the ones who lent *their* muscle to the BJP, when the party came begging for it in pursuance of its "nationalistic" ideals and an *akhand Bharat.* Atal Behari Vajpayee was an RSS member first and a Jan Sangh man later. Just because he writes and speaks Urdu, as most of his generation do, a language quaintly associated with Muslims to the sad cultural detriment of the Hindu Hindi-speaking belt, Vajpayee is given the stamp of approval for being a liberal and not a fundamentalist Hindu. Claims he can justly endorse in spite of his longstanding allegiance to the RSS that we consider a plague.

Shyamaprasad Mookerjee and Vallabhbhai Patel are fondly referred to as "great nationalists" that Sudarshan has no business identifying with because they had nothing in common with what is preached now. Shyamaprasad was a close friend of the family and I know different. The fact is if Patel had toed the line then and not spouted much more than Sudarshan dares utter today, Nehru would not have become prime minister. Perhaps Sudarshan should have referred to Veer Savarkar who led the Hindu Mahasabha and was the first to define the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 as a "war of Independence" but was also manipulatively shunned by those aspiring to govern a partitioned India. He was later prosecuted by the Congress and tried for Gandhi's murder, for his was a "cult

of violence", like Aurobindo Ghosh's and Subhas Chandra Bose's. To get Savarkar and the rest of the accused, the government extended the "Bombay Public Security Measures Act" (yesteryear's TADA), with retrospective effect, to cover Delhi, before constituting the special court. That the partition of India killed more people and caused more bloodshed than the tragic holocaust in Europe is something seldom talked about or remembered, even though its ramifications shed innocent blood to this day.

So what about our favourite whipping boy, Nathuram Godse? A small quote is bound to leave you thinking. After his retirement, **Justice Khosla,** who presided over the appeals after the high court had passed its sentence, wrote the following: "The highlight of the appeal before us was the discourse delivered by Nathuram Godse in his defence. (He made no appeal against his conviction under Section 302 nor against the death sentence.) The audience was visibly and audibly moved. There was a deep silence when he ceased speaking. Many women were in tears and men coughing and searching for their handkerchiefs. I have no doubt that had the audience of that day been constituted into a jury and entrusted with the task of deciding Godse's appeal, they would have brought in a verdict of *"not guilty"* by an overwhelming majority."

The history of the 20th century will soon be researched and history books revised and it won't need the BJP or the RSS to do it. A century later our great grandchildren shall have a better perspective on what is happening in India today. They shall judge us fairly and squarely. God knows we must try and develop a greater understanding amongst the peoples who constitute "the wonderful mosaic that is India", if we expect to receive a pat on our dead backs for having moved the country forward and made the right choices.

Yes, we can all get hot under our collars and argue over this piece like the seculars we profess to be. We can call ourselves nothing else for fear of its colour sticking to us. Eventually, we shall collapse on our steaming sofas with a Rooh Afza on-the-rocks to nostalgically contemplate Balmoral's reaction to Diana's affairs and Charles' greying temples or ruminate over a ubiquitous cigar and a night in the Lincoln Bedroom.

Let us stop throwing stones at the Missionaries of Charity one day and the RSS the next, when we don't lift a finger ourselves to serve humanity. Donating money is easy, giving time a whole different ball game. **Wheareas the RSS may stick in your throat every time you mention it, find an alternative for all the good work it does.** Try and create an army of disciplined selfless social workers, like it has, in a world where the ladies of the "Time & Talents Club", the "Spastics Society", the "Friends of the Trees", the "World Wildlife Fund" and the "Calcutta Foundation" flounder for support and membership even though they are embryonically connected to all the moneybags that buy and sell India's future every day.

I know I am sticking my neck out by writing to remove some of the misgivings that we nurture about the RSS, but as Nathuram said to the jailer before he was hung, and I quote, "I must have a cup of coffee before I swing". So it's on to breakfast and today's headlines. Death tolls? Mere statistics; our nation's caveat? Ignore it.

And, by the way, for those who might be interested, I am not, nor was I ever, a member of the RSS.

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articles on hinduism

Indian Chess: From Origin To Fame

By K. R. Banerjee

http://www.newsindia-times.com/sports05.htm

It is believed that the game of Chess originated in India about 500 A.D. and was popularly known as "Chaturanga". Literally, "Chaturanga" in Sanskrit, is a combination word of "Chatur" meaning four and "Anga" meaning parts or divisions representing "Ratha, Gaja, Turaga, Padadi" (Chariots, Elephants, Horses, Foot troopers or Infantry etc.), which were the four divisions of the Army of Indian Kings. From India "Chaturanga" moved East to countries like China along with Buddhism before it traveled West to Persia (Iran) where it was called "Chatrang". From there, through Arabs, who called it "Shatrang" it entered Western Europe via Spain by 9th or 10th century. The details of its transformation to the modern Chess are not known. In olden days mainly the elite in India played Chess.

The Nomenclature and some of the rules of movement such as for Pawn and King's special Knight move and Pawns' promotion rules of Indian "Chaturanga" seem to have been retained in medieval Chess played in various countries especially of the East.

The modern Chess spread to India during the past 60 or 70 years. Until then, the people in the villages and the towns played the traditional Indian Chess. The nomenclature and rules might have varied slightly from one part of India to the other because of the different languages spoken in different parts of the country.

Chess Board: The Board is the same as in Modern Chess. In modern game the Chessboard is placed in a manner such that, the right hand corner is white. In Indian chess there is no such rule and the board can be placed in any way.

Placement of Pieces: In modern Chess the White Queen has to be placed in White Square and the Black Queen needs to be placed in Black square i.e., both the Queens face each other and both the Kings also face each other. In Indian Chess the White King and White Queen can be placed either on d1 or e1 and the Black Queen faces White King and black King faces White Queen. The rest of the pieces are placed as in modern Chess.

Movement Rules: Rules of movement of Queen, Rook, Knight and Bishop are identical with those of modern chess. The King has the privilege of one knight movement i.e., the King can move once like a knight before it is forced to move under check. This privilege will be lost even when the King is under check. However, if the King moves on its own, the King retains this privilege. In another variation of this rule, the King loses this privilege if it is checked even once, though it may not move.

Castling: The Kingside and Queenside castlings of modern Chess are totally absent in the Indian Chess. The special privilege of the King to make one movement of Knight is used for castling on King's side resulting in " King Indian Defense'.

The two-step initial movement of a pawn is totally absent in Indian Chess i.e., the Pawn always moves only one step in Indian Chess. Consequently "En Passant" is also totally absent.

Promotion of Pawn: When the Pawn reaches 8th or 1st rank it can get promoted only into the corresponding piece e.g. Pawn reaching a8 or h8 or a1 or h1 can become only a Rook etc. Pawn reaching d8 or e8 or d1 or e1 can become a Queen. But the number of pieces on the board at any time cannot exceed the original number i.e. two Rooks, two Knights, two Bishops and one Queen. Also if the white Bishop is live, pawn cannot be promoted to get another white Bishop and similarly one cannot have two black Bishops. Pawn reaching 8th or 1st rank remains there immovable till a corresponding piece is killed and the pawn is converted into that piece. Pawn in d or e files are, therefore, more valuable than Pawns in other files. The rest of the rules are as in modern Chess.

A King left with only Pawns cannot be checked. The implication of this rule is that the weaker party with only King and Pawns can dodge defeat by not moving Pawns and moving only the King. The stronger party has to completely restrict the movement of the King, force the pawns to be moved and when a pawn gets promoted try immediately to mate the weaker King.

When a King is left with only one piece that piece is called "Mastu" and that single piece cannot be killed. So the single piece goes on attacking and killing opponent's pieces with immunity. This is a situation, which has to be avoided by stronger party. If the single piece happens to be Queen or Rook, the weaker party becomes all too powerful. " Single-piece situation" with Queen or Rook has to be avoided at all costs. So pawns in d or e or a and h files reaching 8th or 1st ranks have to be stopped by blocking their advance and forced into c or f or b or g files by sacrificing a piece if necessary and blocking King's movement before hand.

The Indian game also has two basic variants called " Maddat mari" and "Mara Mari. In the former version any piece having a support cannot be killed and therefore the game can take days to complete. In second version a piece can be killed even if it has support like in modern chess.

Conclusion: The development in Indian game is slow because of the absence of two-step initial movement for Pawns. The development into traditional King Indian defense is also slow compared to modern Kingside or queenside castling.

In modern game the stronger party becomes even stronger and therefore the weaker party resigns without fighting to the end. In Indian Chess the end game rules give the weaker party many privileges to fight back and even win against the stronger party and it is a "Dharma Yudham"(or righteous battle). It definitely needs more mental skills to win or defend in Indian chess.

The prohibition on checking the King if it is left only with the Pawns and the "Mastu" situation are worth examining quite seriously by research minded chess players for future modification and incorporation in modern chess.

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DISTORTED HINDU CULTURE VS. RELIGION

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There has been a confusion, in the general people, about Hindu culture and religion. The Hindu culture (in fact, a distorted Hindu culture) is generally regarded as Hindu religion. This idea is prevalent, in both the Indian community, as well as the Europeans. We have also seen neo Hindus, many of whom call themselves Vedantist, wearing sari and dhoti. Culture is defined, in the oxford dictionary as the custom and civilization of a particular group of people. Religion is defined as belief and worship of a superhuman controlling power, specially a God or gods. The Hindu religion can be divided into two parts, one the philosophical and the second spiritual. The philosophical part influence more upon the common people where as the spiritual part influences more on the ascetic people.

Hindu religion has generally been seen as one, which advocates, caste as per birth, untouchability, sati, disdainful look at others as mlechha, self imposed superiority, cocoonification of the society, by creating a myth that crossing the seas, would make their member impure, worshiping many gods (said to be polytheistic) of different shapes (multiple limbs) and forms, and worshipers of animals, including cow and worshipers of idol. It is also said, not to support charity work. Dowry is regarded as part and parcel of Indian culture. We will discuss about these later. Those who have read the higher scriptures and are impressed by them, like to detach themselves from the 'problems' associated with the above list and call themselves Vedantist, as mentioned above. While on the one end, we have some Hindus, who have read the scriptures and think that the philosophy and spirituality it entails, is the highest of the high, and are proud of it, on the other end, they at times come, face to face, with the members of other religious groups, who consider the Hindu religion, not more than a culture. This concept of Hinduism being a culture, rather than a religion, is especially prevalent, in the hungry Christian Missionaries. It is clear from the above fact that the disparity is simply because of a communication gap.

CULTURE IN GENERAL

Culture is nothing, but an agreement, by majority of its members, to follow certain pattern, in the form of social standards, which in essence could be right or wrong. Because it is agreed upon, by the majority of people, it tends to stick to itself, unmodified, and goes on, from generation to generation. This does not happen, in just any society, it happens in intellectual groups like the scientific community, as well. If you take a new theory to the scientific community, and if it is against the norm of their scientific belief, then they will more likely reject it. The new theory will be accepted only after 10 years or even more. Culture changes according to the new knowledge available. Culture is affected by the following factors

1. Prevalent philosophy and spirituality.

2. The prevalent knowledge especially of science and technology.

3. Prevalent customs- As handed down by previous generation, which has not been challenged, because its members, rightly or wrongly, believe that it is the right thing to do, hence follow without questioning. It thinks that it is good for the society at large and tries to resist any new ideas.

4. Imposition a. From within- while some members of the culture may know that, what they are practising is wrong, but do continue to practice it, because it suits them. Some of the members, may add to the culture to benefit themselves. b. From without- in this the culture is imposed, from other

culture, by means of worldly power. In case of India the imposition of Islamic and Lord Macaulay's western culture are good examples.

When the factors affecting the culture changes, the culture has to change. Culture is often affected by, what I would call a madness of purity. When a culture gets refined to a certain extent, its members think that it is the best and its members great. This feeling of greatness is also seen in the form of the members believing themselves to be pure and descendents of great people or god. The madness of purity, could extend into its own people, with some members in the culture, thinking that they are better or purer than the others, or their group is purer than other group in the society.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES IN INDIA
A. Islamic influence-

Ever since the Afghani Muslim King invaded India in the early part of the second millennium; Islam has had a tremendous influence over the Hindu culture, to the extent that it deprived Hindus of their past. As taught by their religion, and as recorded by Muslim historians, the devout Muslims tried to do away with the practices of Hindus and tried to convert them to Islam. In this process, while many Hindu temples were ransacked and destroyed and those who did not agree to convert, were killed or shunted out in the form of slaves. Those who agreed to convert became second class Muslims, with the Arabs being the first class. Sadly they also destroyed the educational institutions and burnt thousands of precious books. This later act has resulted in a virtual cut-off of the present with the past, leading to great difficulty in understanding the pre Muslim Hindu culture. The other problem is that we do not know much about the progress in science and technology that Indian had achieved, before the invasion. It is surprising to have the copies of books by the great Aryabhata and few others. It can perhaps safely be said that Islam had some influence on Sikhism.

B. European influence

During the British raj, Lord Macaulay introduced British education, which was specifically designed to denigrate Hindu culture and make the Hindus pro British. When the British arrived, the Hindu culture was already in a distorted form. Lord McCauley's programme was very successful. Because the Indian civil service was made glamorous, and a sort of gold standard, the Hindus went crazily after this materialistic gain and did not bother to study their past. The most obvious example of change, is the change of dress of Hindus from dhoti to trousers. While the Indians learnt about liberty from the colleges and perhaps that helped in the liberation of India, the education system created a group of Intellectuals, who refused to study their own culture and philosophy. Because the language of study and communication was English, the Hindus forgot about Sanskrit. While it is said that this language unified Indians, in the fight against the British, I wonder, what happened to the unifying effect of Sanskrit, specially from the point of view that Adi Sankara, used that language, to argue the cause of Hinduism, with the religious teachers, from Kathmandu and Kashmir in the north, to the tip of India, in the south. It has to be mentioned here that Hindus did have a system of civil disobedience against the rulers who were not giving them their rights. They did not need to rely on the teachings of the west. The dowry system is regarded as an import to India from Europe, during the Raj.

HINDU RELIGION-

It is difficult to define Hinduism or a Hindu. But it is safe to say that who ever believes in the authority of the Vedas and worships the Hindu deities, is a Hindu. This means that any teaching, which is against the teaching of Vedas, is not Hindu teaching and therefore not Hinduism. Any teaching, which does not believe in God, can be regarded as a philosophy and not a religion, because the very definition of religion, as stated above, says that religion means belief in God. Some atheistic Indian philosophies are only philosophies and not religion.

Taking subjects from the list of impressions given above, I will try to explain about them to show their reality-

UNTOUCHABLITY-Hinduism says that God lives in every human being, in the form of atman (soul) and

not only that, in animals as well. In fact the whole creation is an extension and emanation of God and God is present in every living thing. A gnani sees the same soul in man, woman and animal. There is no difference between these for a gnani, because they are all divine. Of course Hinduism strives to produce gnani. Because a divine being cannot be untouchable, a person who believes in untouchability can never be gnani. From this, it is clear that in the eyes of a Hindu, there should be nothing called untouchablility, Whichever book teaches against this is not teaching Hinduism. There are only 4 vernas described in Hinduism the 5th 'varna' (untouchables) is not Hinduism.

EDUCATION OF WOMEN According to Ashvalayana Grihya sutras, wives have to recite Vedic verses along with their husbands. Vedic text mentions a female rishi Visvara. Panini mentions Kathi, Kalapi, and Bahvici as intellectuals. So whichever book says women do not have access to Vedas is not teaching Hinduism. During the Vedic period there was equality of sexes.

Hinduism says that women also have to strive for salvation i.e. mokcha. Mimamsa Sutra (chapter 6, Pada 1) says that women are entitled to the performance of Vedic Rituals, even independently of men, and to the best of their ability, because they also have a desire to attain salvation, just like men.' There are four paths of salvation i.e. the path of karma, gnana, bhakti, and finally the path of yoga. In order to acquire gnana, one has to study books or get knowledge by other means. From this point of view alone, there should be no restriction to the education for woman. These women did not have any restriction to education. In the Upanishads we find the great women intellectuals like Gargi and Maitrey debating with the famous Yagyavalkya. We have Tamil saint-poetess Auvaiyaar, whose aphorisms (Aatichchuvadi) initiate Tamil lessons for children at the earliest stages The poetess Aandal of Tamil Nadu, who was one of the intellectual of her time, who among others, wrote "Tiruppaavai", which is sung at every Vaishnava temple in TN. The great intellectual Bharati, a women, was the JUDGE when Adi Sankaracharya debated philosophy with Mishra. So any book which claims that women should not have access to the scriptures is against the Vedic practice, as well as the reality and hence not Hinduism. Hindu society is the only society in the world which can show women intellectuals like the ones mentioned above. Other religions only show, dedicated but not intellectual women, as women did not have the opportunity to be teachers or indeed have access to higher knowledge. In fact the British parliament passed a resolution in 1543, not allowing ordinary women to read the Bible. Even in this modern era the catholic Church refuses to give recognition to their ability.

VARNA/CASTE - Caste is the word created by Portuguese missionaries, in the 16th century, to describe the Hindu society and denigrate it. It has nothing to do with varna, which divides society into 4 functional classes, which constitute the 'colours' in the spectrum of society.

It is difficult to imagine a world without class. People are divided according to money or property they have or according to what they do, like doctors, lawyers, engineer, minors etc or by other parameters. In the modern society education is given priority and who ever attains higher education, is given more respect. In fact society has always believed in that concept. The varna system is similar. It is designed to give knowledge the most importance. It is not surprising that knowledge of spirit is given more importance because, the religion believes that spiritual salvation is the ultimate human goal. It has to be noted here that when I am talking about importance, I am talking about importance in normal circumstances. In exceptional circumstance a sudra doing a physical work may be more important than the learned one, like the digger in Mahabharata. Time is the most important factor. At times same action of a person may be important, while at other time it may not be so.

A brahmin means that he is able to think rationally and hence is able to teach what he has learned, including religion. Since, he is the one, who knows and teaches spirituality and since spiritual salvation is given the first priority, it is no wonder that brahmins were given highest respect.This is only so long as he does that function. If he fails to do that then he looses the respect. People in any society, in the past, have tended to follow the training and profession handed down to them, by their parents, like the black smiths, goldsmiths etc. The influence is so strong that despite access to free knowledge nowadays, we can still find doctors children opting to become doctors. Because the siblings of brahmin, kchhetriya, vaishya and sudra opted for their fathers profession, it was taken for granted by the distorted Hindu society that the sons would become what the father had become and were said to be of that cast. This is simply an assumption, and the distorted Hindu society got so carried away that it automatically took

the son of a brahmin, as a brahmin and son of a kchhetriya, as a kchhetriya and so on. Though in its undistorted form, especially in Mahabharata, a son of a brahmin was called brahminputra and not a brahmin. Krishna himself gives several reasons why Arjun was a kchhetriya. Though birth was one of the factors, and we cannot ignore genetic and environmental influences, it alone, did not make him a kchhetriya. It is foolish to think that a son of a brahmin, will think rationally, without qualifying and if that happens then it is a distorted Hindu culture and not real Hindu culture. The varna of a person almost entirely depends on training and circumstances. A brahmin's son or daughter does not entirely become a brahmin just by birth; he or she has to go through training to become one. According to the training received, the person becomes a member of whatever varna (like the being a member of a group of doctors, layers etc.) varna changes according to training. We can site several examples. Narad rhishi was a son of a maidservant, which essentially means that he was a sudra but he became a brahmin. Similarly Biswamitra became a brahmin from the so-called sudra. The Nanda kings were sudras, they became kchhetriyas later. Parsuraam became a kchhetriya by action. Karna was socially a sudputra but by his training and action he was a kchhetriya. More over these varnas are emotions and qualities which are expressed in different forms in different circumstances by the same individual We are all made up of the 3 gunas the satwa (brahmin) the rajak (kchhetriya), the tamas (sudra) or mixture of these forming vaishya. Because of aptitude and training, one of these gunas are exhibited and the person is identified accordingly. A single person becomes a brahmin when he imparts knowledge, he becomes a worrier when he defends, he becomes a vaishya when he is dealing with money and sudra at other times when he is doing a laborious work. Say for example the brahmin acharyas acted as a kchhetriya during mahabharata war. They showed their rajas guna there.

It is not right to equate social class determined by economics, to varna, which is determined by action and training, rather than financial status. In a society governed by economics there are two categories of people, one is the governing group and the other is the working (governed) group. The governing group, which is the privileged one, forms the higher class and the working group, which do not have the privilege and the money, but help the governing class attain privileges, forms the lower class. Since the governing class does not want to come into contact with the working class directly, because of various reasons, a group of people come in the middle, to make contacts, between the above mentioned two groups and transmit messages, akin to pimps in the sex industry. This group constitutes the middle class. So the functioning of an economic society in practice should give only 3 classes. When a society promulgates 4 class of people, then its reason should not be taken as economic. Rather this curious misfit should be studied deeply to understand it.

The distorted caste system of India, fitted into the concept of, class struggle and exploitation, of the communist philosophy, whose followers were heavily influenced by, the European Karl Marks and along with it, the propaganda of the non existent, Aryan invasion of India. The later in an interesting way, fitted more into the concept of divide and rule, which became an effective armamentarium used by the British to rule the vast and diverse land of India, despite the Indian followers of Karl Marx, believing that the cast system, was because of social exploitation of the Dravidians by the invading and victorious Aryans. The enigmatic 4 classes instead of 3, as discussed earlier, was somehow explained. It was suggested that the Aryans of central Asia already had brahmin, kchhatrias and vaishya and they got sudras from the Dravidians. It is difficult to imagine the central Asian society being developed and victorious without labourers. Varna system of Hinduism has nothing to do with class struggle, as its origin. It is wrong to say that brahmans were rich and they were the exploiters. The fact is that many brahmins were living in poverty right from the Mahavharata period (Guru Drona). Prof Elst makes it clear when he says 'They assumed that the Brahmins commanded the same authority and power as the Christian clergy did in their own time in Europe. The reality is that the Brahmins in India never commanded the authority and power of the Christian clergy. They controlled neither the economy nor the army, both of which the clergy did in Medieval Europe'.

EQUALITY- I am yet to see a society, which is equal in every respect. If the communists tried to create that sort of society, they created some people, who were more equal then others, effectively creating an unequal society. There are always people who have privilege while others simply don't. The members of soviet politburo, who have power and privileges, like the tycoon in the west, is nowhere equal to the labourer in the cold Siberia, who is not different from homeless vagabond in the capitalist west. Giving a word comrade and feeling contented that we are all equal, simply defies intellect. If every human being

was equal then what is the use of education to be somebody in the society? What is the use of hard labour we do to make ourselves trained in certain fields? What is the point in competing to be better than others? If everybody was equal then surely there would be no stimulus for education and training to be exceptional. There would be no concept of respect because respect comes out of being exceptional. People work hard to be doctors layers and engineers partly to be respected. If they are seen as no more then labourer than what is the point in going through all that training? Mao tried to do just that during his cultural revolution and failed miserably. It is clear from above that it will only lead to social malaise.

Equality under law has two expects, one is the equality in proving people guilty, the other is giving equal punishment. The modern society follows equality in proving people guilty, it does not always follow equality in punishing people. A person who is learned or who is supposed to have protected but did the opposite will almost certainly get worse sentence than other. Hindu society believes the same principle as exemplified by Yudhisthira's decision to punish the brahman the most when he commits the same crime, as the uneducated sudra. People expect good conduct from learned people, if they do not show that they get worse punishment. When we talk in terms of equability in training we must talk in terms of equality in basic training and not advanced training. Say for example a doctor cannot demand an equal treatment to compete in postgraduate engineering training nor the reverse. When I say basic training I mean equality in basic education. When the education branches, there is nothing called equal opportunity for every one in general term as shown above. Equal opportunity means the opportunity available to all people irrespective of class, race, sex etc after certain basic criteria are met. Those who are outside the criteria cannot claim for equality of opportunity in that particular field.

IMPORTANCE OF VARNA- The Verna divides people, in a society into 4 broad categories. It only attempts, to divide people into certain categories, sharing some common ethos, establishing an identity, like division of students into several houses, in school, which gives them their added identity. In the class we also find students in different groups, like group A, B, C etc according to their achievements in the class. If a society in a school can be comfortable, with that classification, why cant the general society? I am sure the reds would not suggest, even with their jaundiced views, this is exploitation. Identity is very important, that's why the African Americans, are searching for theirs. Some of the Indian natives, who believed they were made civilised, by the Europeans, unlike proud Hindus who refuse to be called natives, who believe that they were already civilised in the past, are getting a jolt in the west, and are looking for their identities. A person with a lost identity is not very healthy to the society. Being in a group creates a bond between the members of that group, which leads to stability in society. Intermingling of people of that group, makes understanding easier and the bondage stronger, at the same time each group compliments other group as part of a spectrum- in fact that is the meaning of varna. There is no society in the world, which has not got different groups of people, according to function for example, the western society also has, the teaching group, the defender group, the business group and the labourer group. What Hinduism has simply done, is recognised those groups and emphasised their function, in the form of duty, so that they do not deviate from that duty. It is something like the fact that members of the diverse animal kingdom were always there along with their unique characteristics, it is only the scientist, who came and divided them, into different species and genus and other groups, according to their characteristics, so that the animal kingdom could be understood properly. I don't see any harm in doing that. I think the Hindus should deeply study this concept of varna.

The teaching, which says that one becomes of certain cast by birth, is not what Hinduism teaches.

SOCIAL (CHARITY) WORK- It has been said, by the propaganda machine of the missionaries that Hinduism does not support charity work, and that only they do. This is a myth, because niskaam karma, which essentially means, charity work is not only recognised as a good work, but one of the very works to attain salvation. Considering whether Hindu society ever had that principle, one can look at the writings of the Chinese traveller, Hsuan Sang, who says that there was a lot of charitable work in ancient India. The charitable work by the Hindus, in India, are plenty but are not seen, because, unlike the likes of mother Teresa, these, not so fortunate Hindu charity workers, do not have excess to the media. Since the Internet has given the privilege of a voice, the pious activities of Hindus, will not remain unnoticed all the time.

Whereas, with the renaissance of Hindu society to the undistorted Hindu society, gives privilege to the born Hindu sudra, to train and become a brahmin, the converted Indian Muslim always remains a second class Muslim, because he has to be born, as an Arab, to be a first class Muslim and because of the modified Catholic religion made, not so long ago, by the Pope, by his infallible power of Vatican authority, the converted sudra always remains a Vatican sudra.

ACCESS TO TRAINING- While Manu smrity denied born Sudras as well as women access to higher training, we all know from the above examples that Narad, and Karna did have excess to education and training in the past. Yes Hinduism gives excess to training to all people if they want to. The fact that many of the poets in India came from the humble class does say something.

SATI- The Vedas don't mentioned about it. It did however come as a part of Hindu culture. It is a sacrifice made by a woman for her dead husband. There are several expect of sati-

1. A sacrifice 2. A suicide 3. Form of suicide. 4. Social gold standard 5. Direct compulsion 6. ? Male sati. Let us discuss about them.

Talking about sacrifice, we also think in terms of soldiers sacrificing their lives for the sake of the nation, and the Islamic Jihadists sacrificing their lives for the sake of God (Allah). We have also come across, glorified and romanticised stories, of Romeo and Juliet, Hir Ranja and others who sacrificed their lives, for the sake of their respective loved ones. It seems that when we are looking at sacrifice only, then anybody who wants to sacrifice what ever they have, cannot be said to be bad. The cause of sati seems to be love and devotion to husband and spiritual gain. While sati is definitely a suicide, does it fall in the category of right to suicide? There is a hot discussion in the west, about euthanasia, in which a person having an incurable disease is allowed to die, with the help of a doctor. This is a painless suicide by a patient, who has incurable disease and does not want to live any longer. Other form of suicide is, when pious people feel that it is time for them to go to the spiritual world and fast onto death. Since the later two types of suicides, are not violent, they do not generate so much of mass hysteria as sati does. Looking at the mode of suicide, we see that fire has always been very important to the Hindus. It seems to be a connector or a medium between the materialistic world and the spiritual world. In a religious sacrifice butter and rice are thrown into the fire, which constitutes a Homa. In sati the woman throws herself into the fire. This in a way could constitute Homa and may have certain spiritual benefits. The act however looks very violent and scary. The indirect compulsion manifests, when this practice is regarded as a gold standard, of a pure society, and those who don't attain that standard are at risk of being frowned upon. It should not be a social standard because, as stated above, that creates an invisible compulsion to reach that gold standard, which many may not wish to. If a woman is directly pressurised, to do that, then it is totally unacceptable and has to be condemned. The other thing to look at is, is the sati in the right state of mind to decide what she is doing is right, when her husband has just died? Even though the act of Sati may have some spiritual benefits; because of the violent nature of the action, it cannot be accepted as a gold standard in a society, simply because, there are other far less violent and less painful actions which will give, equal or even more, spiritual benefits and one also should not forget the fact that the two souls are two entities, with their own karmas, and don't unit even after a combined death, however the depth of love. She could express her love and devotion to her departed husband, by doing special pujas or other pious activities to further the spiritual journey of her husband.

When we are talking about sacrifice, what about a male sati? A sacrifice by man for a woman. We have some instances where males have sacrificed for females e.g. king Edward of UK abdicated his throne for the sake of his love for Edwina. We also have love stories like Romeo and Juliet and others in which males have sacrificed their lives for females. These deaths have been glamorised and in a strange way have been accepted.

MLECHHA- In the past the distorted Hindu culture, regarded people outside India, as mlechha- meaning dirty. There are instances, when the Indian priests refused to teach the British people, how to learn Sanskrit and the local king had to order them to teach. Hindus regarded, crossing the seas, would make them impure and who ever crossed the seas and came back, had to go through a process of

purification. This is all a part of madness of purity and cocoonification, which Manu, mistakenly proposed. In fact he has recommended his people to live in certain areas, even of India. This is against the principle of Basudhaiba Kutumbakam, which means world is a family. It can therefore safely be said that this teaching of Manu was against Hinduism.

The culture becomes part of a civilisation which thinks that their civilisation is the best and are proud of it. However every refined culture, had this sort of feeling, for example the Japanese and the Europeans, which in its turn, is basically due to lack of communication and a rather disinterest in learning about other cultures. In fact as recently as 30-40 years ago this was seen in the UK, when the local whites did not wish to learn about the Muslim people and their culture because of arrogance, which made intercultural understanding difficult. Some of them now say, that it was their mistake, not to learn from the other culture.

CHILD MARRIAGE- The practice in ancient India was swayambara, which essentially meant that the women selected her husband of her choice. This, in its turn, meant that she showed liking for the opposite sex, making her a grown up woman. There seems to be no room for child marriage. It seems that child marriage started as a compulsion in the Hindu society and followed as a culture thenceforth. It has perhaps rightly been suggested, that this custom started, during the Muslim invasion, when it was fraught upon by families to have an unmarried adult woman in the house, less she be sexually abused. Since this child marriage does not involve the concept of swayambara this is not according to Hinduism hence anti Hindu.

ANIMAL WORSHIP (RESPECT)- While looking at it straightforward, it seems rather strange and even dumb, but it behoves a great philosophy inside. Greatness of Hinduism relies amongst others, on the fact that it teaches us to respect. A civilisation cannot develop without the concept of respect. The simple social phenomenon is, the more we bow to respect, without arrogance, the more we are called gentle, wise and civilised. It is the wise people who create civilisation. Arrogance and hatred lead to war and hence is not part of a great civilisation. There is absolutely no harm, in respecting any thing or any body, but there is a great danger to the society, if we disregard animals calling them beasts, specially when the present civilisation, recognising the potential of monkeys, and have started asking for special rights for them. Before I go any further, I would like to say that there are two forms of puja that Hindus do; one is that, we do it, to show respect, which the Hindus are duty bound to do and don't ask for favours and the other is puja, in which, we ask for favours from the higher soul which we adore and have an awe of (Please read the article Is Hinduism a polytheist religion?). While respect is a mark of civilisation, Hinduism not only limits that respect to humans, its greatness goes even further, to show respect to the animal as well as the plant kingdom. Looking at it from the above point of view, this Hindu civilisation looks very much advanced, wise and caring While an insensitive and uncivilised person, may not see the deeper side of this phenomena, a sensitive and civilised person, who goes deeper than the superficial layer, can easily discern the depth of the philosophy. If the beholder cannot see the beauty, it is not the fault of beauty. One of the animals we show our respect, by doing puja, is the cow.

Why do the Hindus specially respect the cow? They respect the cow because it gives milk and its products, which is necessary for our existence. It’s mowing sounds exactly like the sound of Om. The sound of Om is extremely important to the Hindus because the Om is the ultimate mantra and through it the universe emanates. The cows dung has been used to clean the floors of the house without any ill effect. Its urine has medicinal value. Its hide is used in many ways. It is like a mother who always gives. The reason why we don't eat beef is simply out of respect towards this motherly figure, as a mark of civilisation. It is something like the western people not eating dogs flesh. While we know the importance of dog in the modern family and how it is almost regarded as a member of the family, giving rise to huge problems during divorce, Hinduism has always respected it’s quality and respected it in the form of puja. It has to be clearly said here that these animals are shown respect for as a part of a duty of members of a civilised society, but are not done to achieve anything-material.

WORSHIP OF MANY GODS WITH SEVERAL LIMBS-Hinduism has becomes defensive in two issues, one is the caste system and the associated untouchability, as discussed above, and the other is that, it is identified as a polytheistic religion, like the Greek and the Roman religion, which in the past were thoroughly denigrated and conquered by Christianity. Since Hinduism is regarded as polytheistic, by the

Abrahaminic faiths, it is not studied deeply and hence not taken seriously. It rather erroneously is believed to be inferior, by being polytheistic, and hence inviting a compulsion, in the eyes of the missionaries of the Semitic faith, for a change akin to the Greek and Roman beliefs. The sense of past victory gives them further impetus.

Because of the many gods (deities) in Hinduism, it has been taken for granted that Hinduism is a polytheist religion. Hinduism is not that simple nor is Christianity. As suggested in my article 'Is Hinduism a polytheist religion?' Hinduism is a monotheist polydeitic religion, where as Christianity is monotheist bideitic religion. The study of Hindu monotheism is unparallel in any other religion. To regard Hinduism, as the Greek and Roman polytheism, is a big mistake, which underscores the need, for a deep study of this great religion.

The Hindus believe and worship the all-powerful and infinite God, who is the 'creator' (emanator), sustainer and destroyer of, everything in this universe, including evil, hence truly omnipotent. This should be enough to reveal the monotheist part of Hinduism.

Every human being is after material or spiritual gain. A person may be lucky enough to progress and get materialistic gain, (not spiritual) and may rely on themselves for further progress and decry external help, majority of the people in the world are however not so lucky. People need help for both material and spiritual gain. This leads them to seek help from somebody, who has the power. Help is so important in people's lives that even Muslims have been going away from their rigid beliefs and coming to take both material and spiritual help from some Hindu gurus, who have been bestowed with spiritual powers and it is also well known that Christians, both in India and in the west, have been taking the help of Hindu Astrologers for material gains, even though decried by their religious institutions. Deities (gods) have that power to change our lives. People pray to these deities because they have an adoration for the deity and have a feeling of awe about it. While Christianity has 2 deities (Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost), Hinduism has many. This is because many of these deities lived in Satya yuga and others attained power through the techniques of yoga and meditation which is only available in Hinduism. This simply gives Hindus the chance to choose their deity according to their temperament.

People seem to be surprised by many hands of these deities, because we human beings normally have only 2 hands. It is very important to note that they are not bare hands, in the sense that each hand is carrying something. These objects, which they carry, have some meanings. There are two ways to look at it; one is that these hands are symbolic in nature, while the other is it being, real spiritual anatomy. While we know an expert surgeon can modify an anatomy of a person, so much that he effectively creates a new organ (e.g. sex change operation) it is not surprising that these deities, who have supernatural powers, and who can change our destiny, being able to extend their spiritual anatomy, to create new limbs. Not understanding the depth of message it contains and labelling it devil worship, is simply ignorance, hence darkness. People can only be enlightened, for that matter get out of darkness, as we have been taught in our school days, by proper study of the matter or through yoga and meditation, which is available only in Hinduism.

DEITY WORSHIP VIA IDOL/ICON- The statue of Jesus Christ is said to be icon and the statue of deities in the eastern religions are said to be idols. While the Christendom believes and dislikes, the eastern religion worshiping idols, they themselves worship statues. In fact Muslim worship the stone in Kaba. The stone building of Kaba has got so much religious importance to the Muslims. Almost all people worship deities or the invisible via the statues or figures made from non-living matter. There is no point in denigrating just Hindus for that. It is better we understand why we all do that.

As suggested in my article, 'Image worship: right or wrong?', visual stimulus is very important for us. It is said to be better, if one is deaf rather than blind. If we see figure of someone that we know, it makes us appreciate the whole personality of that being represented by that statue or figure. In Hinduism there are 3 ways in which we worship the deity via the statue or the figure.

1. We worship the deity via the statue which has got shakti (power) embedded in it which, could be natural e.g. Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu, or shakti impregnated by Gurus who have shakti.2. We make a special call (abahana), during the puja, to the deity to come to the statue and then we pray

to the deity.3. The statue acts as a powerful and symbolic representation of the deity concerned. (Please read the article Image worship: right or wrong?) While Christianity uses the 3rd method for its prayers, Hinduism uses all 3.

DOWRY- It has become apparent now that this was imported by the Indians from the Europeans rather than being endogenous to India.

WHO WINS? - As we have noted above, society is very much influenced by the development of science and technology as well as other branches of knowledge. Science progresses in A+B+C fashion, it does not progress in geometrical progression. For it to progress it needs communication between minds, for which freedom of expression is essential, otherwise one will reach the fate of Galileo, in the hand s of Catholic church. Once this is provided, other thing it needs is, eccentricity of thought i.e. people, who want to change the prevalent rule, rather than follow it. Once these two forces are provided, along with the means of communication, then discoveries are the norm rather than exception. This is what is happening, all around us, every day. A society, which asks its people to follow strict social rules and not to transgress them, will not develop, where as the cultures which allows, free thought and expression, always wins. Whichever society, which facilitates change, wins. The distorted Hindu society, following Manu, opted for status quo with purity, as a theme and gave importance to moral codes and going further, even limited international travel, creating followers rather that eccentric inventors. Looking at the history of India, the inventors seem to be concentrated in the first millennium, despite the above factor, which perhaps loudly says that one cannot stop geniuses, and not much in the second, because of subjugation. In the second millennium the number of European inventors is far more than Indian. This is because of several factors coming into play, including; 1.The Indian discoveries were transmitted to Europe, via the Arabs, during the first millennium, forming a good base for further progress in Europe. 2. When Europe was enjoying the discovery of Guttenberg's printing press, which increased the number of thinkers and increased communication between them, the Indians had their books burned and were under subjugation, effectively making it a dark age. In addition, in that period, there was a rise in free thought in Europe, specially with the French revolution, which triggered a process of eccentric thoughts, challenging the orthodox beliefs and the society went against the dogmatic church, which in its turn facilitated invention and progress, as per A+B+C... A culture or a society needs a stimulus. Like the European culture received a jolt from the Protestants and the French revolution, the distorted Hindu culture got the intellectual jolt from the British raj. When the Hindus got the jolt, they were under the British. As second class citizens, they could not produce ‘Hindu’ scientists, of their own because they were taught in western methods, consequently they could not learn about the Indian philosophy, science and technology, including Vedic mathematics. Yes, this mathematics is so easy that if there were no computers, this science of mathematics would have made the life of student of maths, so easy. Sadly despite the so-called Indian independence, the Indian science and technology of the past, has still remained unread. It is even hopeless, when people from the west sincerely ask the Indians to do research, on the ancient Indians scientific achievements, like the Pushpak Biman, and the Indians don’t.

Indian people eat with their hands. It is said that it is European culture, to eat by knife and fork and it is Indian culture, to eat by hand. Many Indians may not know, but the fact is that the British used to eat with hand, before 16th century, essentially meaning that before that century, the culture of Britain and India was the same, as far as method of eating was concerned. The only difference is that while Indian faithfully followed its culture without question, the British culture opted for a change. Everybody knows how the cultures all over the world, including the British culture, has been changed over the last 200 years, with the development of science and technology. Since culture just represents patterns of human activities, now the number of activities have increased so much that even culture is divided into many branches, like the culture of travelling, the culture of reading, the culture of eating, playing etc. And these cultures change so much.

Dress -- The suit has become an international standard. It is not that the British made the dress overnight; the present suit is the end result, of so many changes in the dress of the British. This can be appreciated if one visits the museums. This is because they followed the concept of change. While India did not change its common dress, dhoti, for the last 5000 years and suddenly changed to trousers and shirt during the Raj, without much thought and continued post independence. It is true that despite

Ambedkar being educated in USA, hence being moulded by the American civilisation, he did not have the power to influence the constitution of India. Indians regarded USA, as uncultured as opposed to the British, who were regarded as cultured and the latter's constitution was followed, instead of the American. While America was regarded as uncultured, just 50 years back, now the Indians are following the Americans and it is not surprising that now the Indians want to change the constitution of India. The only reason USA is the world leader, and the centre of philosophy, is because it followed the concept of change in every sphere of life. If it had resisted the change it would not have been what it is today.

The world has started to recognise the fact that Indians are intelligent people. This is evidenced by the success of Indians in the west, especially in the USA where Indians are competing, almost neck to neck, with the Jews. Why did not these intelligent people produce more scientists like the other groups of people? I think the answer is that they did not have a suitable environment, to show their talent, because of subjugation before independence and political misadventures, pseudo intellectualism and emotional decision making, in the not so free India, post independence. It is important to note that the Indians who were called natives in the past, after coming to the suitable competitive environment of the west, have come a long way to prove, and be part of, the cream of the western countries, in some ways. It is not surprising, that the ancestors of these intelligent people could produce such great civilisation. On the other extreme, it is rather surprising that some western scientists, especially in Scotland, want to do research on, inferiority in intelligence, of naturally tanned people, compared to white people.

MANU'S LAWS- It is difficult to say, who Manu was historically. What is however important is, his book or at least the book identified by his name, contains things, which go along with the teachings of the Vedas, as well as against it. It is difficult to assume that a leaned figure like him, could agree to things which are are against the teaching of the Vedas. He seems to be regarded as an authority, in sociology and religion. Some of the passages of the book, give reference to other authorities, which clearly shows that he was not a divine figure. Like all authority figures, he has made mistakes, if not in writing them himself, agreeing to the rules. It has been said that some passages in the book have been added during the Islamic rule. This is open to research. This is the first time; perhaps in the history of India that hard working Indians have got billions of dollars. I am sure some of this will go to research of Indian history.

His book had an everlasting and powerful influence over the Hindu culture. It has been followed without question. Why did it have such a powerful effect continuously since a long time? Hindus have basically been divided into ascetics, who are in search of God, who did not have a cast out of birth and accepted that all are equal and who tried without much success, to change the society, and others who lived a family life, who enjoyed the social privilege given to them by the Manus laws, and who did not want to change their ways and the law. While freedom of expression given by the religious philosophy was used to give rise to different sects (schools of thoughts) which concentrated on spirituality, the society at large, did not utilize that freedom, hence did not change much, but rather followed what was handed to them and asked others to follow. While some followed the laws, thinking it to be right, other were more concerned about purity who made further changes to the law making it further strict.

WHERE MANU WENT WRONG-His teaching of untouchability, varna according to birth, confinement of women to house not allowing them and the born sudras, to study higher scriptures, advocating his people to live only in certain areas of India and disrespect to foreigners, was distinctly against the values of Hinduism.

What Manusmrity did was, to create followers with rigid laws, giving them the concept of purity. Hindus adhered to it and cocooned themselves both physically and metaphorically. This went against inventions, which needs people to come out of the cocoon and think differently. In Europe people came out of their own cocoon, in the second millennium and thought differently; that is why we have so many scientist in the west. It is said that India has changed more in the last 5 years, than in the last 5000 years. Yes India has actually become freer only after it recently opened its gates. Because of this second jolt, India is in a confused state, at times, not knowing how to deal with the young generation.

PURITY-It is a very relative term and hard to define. Pure gold could be an impurity when you are trying to eat with the hand, which has got gold dust. You have to wash the hand before you can eat. Purity is something, which is useful to us at that moment of time. We know that after we eat, the food goes

through a chemical reaction in our alimentary tract and it comes out as stool. This we regard as dirty, because it has a bad smell and the rest. Where as the honey produced by the bee, goes through the same process and comes out, but it is called pure because of its taste and other value.

Man cleans his skin and thinks that he is pure. He simply cannot be pure because he has what he considers impure faeces in his rectum just 2 inches from his anal skin. So if a Manu's brahmins body, for that matter anybody's body, is laden with faeces, he has to be impure. If he says that he is pure and the untouchable is impure and should not touch him, on that account, is simply wrong. The Manu's brahmin touches his faeces everyday and after simple washing of his hands he becomes pure. He on the other hand, if touches an untouchable, has to do a process to purify himself. This is illogical and nothing but madness of purity and not Hindu at all.

WHAT TO DO WITH CULTURE-A culture should be no bar to change. A culture that resists change and cocoonifies itself cannot develop. A culture should produce new editions, to follow, all the time. USA is producing a different culture, every decade. The old culture has to be put in museums and libraries, with respect. It should be respected, because by doing so, we are respecting our forefathers. Secondly, it will be available for later research, leading us to understand our past generations and learn from theirs as well as our mistakes and correct them; effectively constituting a process of audit.

WHAT TO DO WITH MANU SMRITY- Now the Hindus have come out of the cocoon, they have to think rationally. They have to take the authoritative books like the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita, compare their teachings with that of Manu smrity and see the difference, in their teachings. If Manu's teaching is against those books, then they have to be excluded from Hindu religion. In fact Hindu religion considers, individual to act according to his own dharma, determined by his own circumstances, therefore the rigid rules of Manu which is for population at large should be done with. While it is clear from the above discussion, is that, Manu was not a divine figure and that he has gone beyond the teachings of Hinduism, his prescription of result, both positive and negative, as per action, cannot be trusted to be divinely sanctioned; therefore have no importance. In fact his teachings has given the untouchables so much of problems, which led these innocent souls, to live a secluded and a measurable life, over the centuries. It has done enormous damage to the cause of Hinduism, in terms of society and religion. In fact, in this cruel world, the identity of Hinduism has been the Manus laws, rather than the Vedic and the upanishadic philosophy. It is only, some great thinkers in the west, including professors, lawyers and doctors, who went beyond Manu, to study the Vedas and the Upanishads and realised this great religions, true spirit and converted to Hinduism.

MODERN CULTURE-Over the last 200 years there has been three factors, which has had, and is having the greatest impact on every culture- 1. Tremendous progress in science and technology- which gives both knowledge and better amenities, including better communication tools for tele and travel. 2. Education of women-- giving rise to change of the accepted role of them, in every culture. Women's education has had a huge impact, in the change of cultures, of the world, in which the laws had to be re written. People are now, only gradually realising, the power of women. Some intellectual men are openly saying that they want to be a woman, in their next life. Sex is given so much of importance, woman are in demand. Religions like Christianity and Islam, which did not advocate education of woman, are having a tough time, because women are asking for their rights, including the right to lead the religious masses. Though it is called post feminist period, I would still call it a transitional period. Women power is yet to be seen. When its power is fully manifest, men will have to work harder otherwise their suicide rates will be much higher.3. Freedom of thought and expression- this has given a huge impetus to research. While in its traditional form i.e. newspapers, magazines and journals, one may not be able to express ones views at times because of big brotherly attitude of some, Internet on the other hand has provided the most effective tool for expression and propagation of views. This will lead to explosion of inventions and true interpretation of facts, both historical and others.

Now the concept is more of a global culture - a youth in the USA may be affected by the same Internet culture, as a Japanese or for that matter an Indian. The science and technology has helped to create a global culture. Global effect of stock market crash in one part of the world is another factor. The chicken tikka mashala has become the most popular food in the UK. This shows that the culture is exchanging and learning from one another. In practice, however, the most important factor guiding the present

civilisation, seems to be finance. Yes this is a finance-governed civilisation. By this I mean, money associated with patent rights, which gives rise to the craze for research and the importance given to countries with totalitarian regimes, with huge resources, but less then good human rights record.

The things which may not be known to the general people, about Hinduism in the west, are the following-

1. It does not support slavery like the Semitic religions.
2. It believes in the all-powerful, timeless and infinite God, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of this universe (its monotheist part).
3. There is not only the pathway of belief and bhakti in Hinduism, for attaining salvation, as in the Semitic religions, but other pathways as well, like the pathway of yoga, the pathway of knowledge and the pathway of karma. As is clear from the above statement, people have more choice of pathways to salvation in Hinduism, and people are free to choose any one of the pathways, according to their affinity and temperament. It has been erroneously believed that to attain salvation, in Hinduism, one has to leave his/her family. Rather, as mentioned above, people can remain with their families and attain salvation by doing niskaam karma, which basically means karma dedicated to the cause of general people and not to one self.4. Belief does not play a major role in Hinduism. The followers are encouraged to use logics and the technique of yoga and meditation, to recognise the truth, rather than take things according to belief and follow the dogma.5. It is the only religion in which, for attaining material or spiritual gain, there are several deities to choose from, according to the temperament of the person. These deities at times in effect become like a very close companion, which is very much needed in the present time.6. It is the only religion, which provides paranormal evidence to assess the reality, by the person him/herself, in the form of yoga and meditation. Yes it is the only religion that gives us a chance to feel God IN THIS LIFE. People don't have to wait for after life, like in the Semitic religions, to have that access.7. It is the only religion, which prays for, not only peace in the human society but peace in vegetation and the space as well.8. It is the only religion that respects the animal and plant kingdom for their qualities.9. It is the only religion, which recognises the importance of ecological balance and identifies, respects and protects individual beings, which play part in that balance.10. It is the only religion, which says the Truth (God) is one, but people call and pray to it by many names. This ever so inclusive philosophy, which contributes to peaceful coexistence, in the world, is very much lacking in the Semitic religions. One only needs to ask the Jews, who have been peacefully living in India, since centuries. The above statement is wrongly interpreted, as all religions are the same. This is not what it means. It simply means that all religions are, attempting to reach the same God, by calling it by different names but the attempts are not the same or even similar. Some of the methods, used by some religions, are simply abhorrent. 11. It is the only religion, whose time, since creation of the universe matches the scientific view in terms of billions of years. 12. It is the only religion that has brought forward women intellectual like Gargi, Maitry and others. 13. It does not confine the sex of the omnipotent God, who can create asexual to hermaphrodite beings, to male. It is difficult go fathom, a God with penis and testes without a complimentary vagina, even in a spiritual sense. Hinduism understands God, the omnipotent, to be male, female, hermaphrodite and asexual at the same time. 14. Hinduism is the only religion that does not treat God, something like a pop idol star, believing it to be untouched by evil and not the creator of evil. Hinduism believes that everything in existence, is created by God, including evil, and also the fact that any evil, that comes in contact with God, automatically becomes pure. 15. Hinduism is the only religion that teaches us not to use extremely destructive weapons like Dibyastras, akin to Atomic bombs. It gives respect, to person, who doesn't use it despite provocation, and denigrates who uses it carelessly. 16. Hinduism is the only religion, which talks about relative difference in time at different places, similar to theory of relativity. 17. Hinduism is the only religion, which does not condemn people of other faiths, to everlasting hell. Hinduism says that every body is the creation of God and cannot understand Him condemning His own creation, in the other faiths, to everlasting hell and still continue creating people in those faiths, many of whom have no idea that the Semitic faiths exist. Hinduism is the only religion, which says, if people of other faith do niskaam karma, then they too will attain salvation. 18. Hinduism is the only religion, which does not only rely on prayer for material gain. It is the only religion, which has got the technique of Homa, to achieve many worldly necessities. 19. Hinduism is the only religion which gives us the glimpse of the future, make people aware of danger and prescribe remedies in the form of astrology. 20. Hinduism is the only

religion, which teaches us the holistic method of treatment of disease, in the form of ayurveda. 21. Hinduism is the only religion, which does not condemn its people, to everlasting hell, but gives chance for people to learn from their mistakes and still continue their further progress towards divinity. It gives us the profound concept of karma and reincarnation. 22. Hinduism is the only religion that does not, even logically, blame God for human misery. 23. Hinduism is the only religion, which provides astronomical data of more than 10.000 years ago. 24. Hinduism is the only religion, whose God is ALL POWERFUL, hence truly omnipotent, because everything in this universe, even evil, is his creation. 25. Hinduism is the only religion, whose God does not have any enemy, like the Devil or the Satan. There is no concept of hostility and hatred in the divine. Since insecurity is inherent in hostility, there is no concept of insecurity in Hinduism (there is no concept of attack of the believers of God, from devil or Satan). 26. Hinduism is the religion, which does not recognise certain race (e.g. Arabs) to be a first class member or the chosen people (Jews) like in some Semitic religions. Hinduism believes that world is a family (Basudhaiba Kutumbakam). 27.Hinduism is the only religion which gives, civilised rules governing war and the treatment of prisoners of war. 28. Hinduism is the only religion, which has great similarities, with the modern civilisation and can contribute spirituality and philosophy to it, for the latter's further progress.

Because of the above factors, I am extremely proud to be a Hindu.

To call the religion, which supports the above mentioned great ideals, devil worship, is simply ignorance, which demands a deep study of this great religion, and also demands us, not to comment about something, which is not known, merely on impression, which in its turn, is taught to us in schools, during our childhood days The only difference between a Hindu and a non-Hindu, is that, the later has not had a chance, to read the Hindu scriptures. Where as, I understand, the things I use for my day to day living (tooth paste to dress), as well as my education, has been given to me by the west and I have respect for the west, I am very proud to be a Hindu, because I feel, as my ancestors did in the first Millennium, I can give the west, what my forefathers taught and practiced, as stated above and help the west or the world in general, attain world peace, understand the cosmos better, realise supernatural forces in this life through yoga and meditation, help respect the animal kingdom and the other players of the balance of ecology, decipher the encrypted knowledge in the Vedas including astronomy and mathematics and finally delineate the origin of mankind and its future course. I am sure, if I could do this, it will earn a great deal of respect, for, not only the people of my kind, which it will certainly do because the social law says one who gives is always respected by the receiver, but also for people of all races through the philosophy of Basudhaiba Kutumbakam.

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articles on hinduism

Is Hinduism a Polytheist religion?
By Shree Krishna Bastola -
Editorial for 4-12-2000
http://www.hinduunity.com/editorial.html

Traditional belief in the west is that the Semitic religions (Christianity, Islam and Zudeism) are the monotheist religions and the eastern religions including Hinduism and Buddhism are polytheist.
Oxford dictionary defines polytheism as, belief in or worship of, more than one god (please note that god is spelt with a small g). It also defines god as, "a superhuman being regarded and worshipped as having power over nature and human affairs" and the example it gives is "Mars was the Roman god of war". Monotheism on the other hand is defined as," the doctrine that there is only one God" (please notice that it has a capital G) and that it defines God as "the creator and the ruler of the universe in Christian Jewish and Muslim teaching". Please notice that there is no mention of Hinduism here.

The dictionary is 1995 edition and not 1930. The oldest book in the world ,Rig Veda, says that "there is one God but people call it by different names". While Adi Sankaracharya says that ekoh bramha dutia naasti which means there is one God and no second God. God is generally regarded as Omnipotent , Omniscient, Omnipresent, Timeless (no beginning or end) and Creator of the universe. The ancient Hindu seers agree to that; in addition they also tried to discus why God created the universe, coming to the conclusion that God is incomprehensible .From the above discussion it is very clear that Hindus have not yet been able to apprise their belief to the west or the west is deliberately suppressing the truth. I would not like to discuss it further because I believe truth will win satyameba jayate. In fact I would say the study of God in Hinduism is unparalleled in any other religion.

The dictionary defines monotheism as 'belief in one God' whereas polytheism is defined as 'a belief in many gods'. The ancient Greeks and the Romans had gods for various activities. They regarded one of those gods as greater than others, but they did not have what we understand now by God. Concepts of monotheism and polytheism arose when Christianity came as an alternative religion to the Greeks and the Romans, whose religion was rightly called polytheistic. Now when you come across a religion which has got both God the supreme being and various other gods (deities) i.e. Hinduism, it doesn't fit into either category so easily. To understand Hinduism..... Let us delve into human feeling and relations and how they progress from a lower level of friendship to the highest level of Moksha.

Assume that two people (souls) meet. This meeting, if goes positive, will lead to friendship or if

negative, will lead to hostility. Lets talk about the positive side here and say that they liked one another and the bond developed into friendship. If this friendship becomes deeper it become love. When love becomes deeper and respect is added to it , it becomes adoration. When adoration becomes deep and awe is added to it becomes a prayer (puja) in which the lower soul asks for favors from the higher soul. When love increases further the person continuously thinks about the higher soul and concentrates on the higher soul, this is called meditation. When meditation is very deep, various channels are open and it will lead to samadhi and then to final Moksha if God pleases.

Hindus know that every human being is the manifestation of God. Some Hindus say that Hindus pray to gods because they are the manifestation of God and that ultimately they are praying to God. A gnani can do that but for average people that would mean thet one person should pray to other, because all people are manifestation of God. This doesn't and should not happen. As I pointed out in the previous paragraph, there is certain criteria for that which has to be met before one prays or does puja.It is not essential to pray to God only. The above thought seems to stem from the fact that only God should be prayed (as some religion claim), which as we shall see later is not the case.

Before we talk about gods in Hinduism let us try to understand a little bit of Hindu culture and what praying is:

Hindu culture has always visualised living and non living things into those that have beneficial effect , which are called divine qualities and those that are harmful to us , which are called devilish qualities. Any thing that has divine quality is praised and respected to the extent of deifying it e.g. Cow (We do not eat beef because of respect of this animal, which has such divine qualities , contrast that with Muslims not eating pork which is out of devilish (negative) thoughts, that it is dirty), and Soma rasa. When a person says and does namaskar he is saying 'I salute the divine qualities in you'. This is also what we do when we are doing puja. The idea in puja or prayer is to praise the deity , along with Namaskar, so that the deity becomes happy and grants what the prayer wants.

Let us try to understand what god (deity) is in Hinduism and why they are so many of them:

The various gods are known as deities in Hinduism. These deities have done something good for the mankind when they were here in previous ages, now they live in their abodes. They were many of them because they lived in what we called satya yuga which is the age when beings were in exalted state, by virtue of their exaltation they had spiritual powers. Their action were divine in nature and were awe inspiring. Because of the exalted age they were many of them , that is why we have so many deities each deity has his or hers own temperament . There is nothing wrong with them being so many .Neither you have to know about all of them nor you have to pray to all of them. You can pick and choose any deity which suits your temperament. It is soothing to know that we had so many souls who did good work. Compare that with present age of Kali in which we are all in a debilitated state and have no spiritual power and have to struggle a lot to attain such power. They (deities) have the power to change people's karma (you will know that many Gurus who are sidhas do have the capability to change the peoples karma to some extent, so it is not surprising that the deities who lived in satya yuga to posses power to modify peoples karma).

It has to be clearly understood here that these deities are mere elevated souls they do not have the power to create the universe and they do not have the others powers of God e.g. omnipotence , omniscience etc. Therefore these gods (deities) are in no way equal to the God (permeshwore). It has been erroneously written 'Gods' instead of 'gods' while writing about Hinduism by many Hindu and non Hindu writers. God is singular, because there is only one God. It cannot be pleural.

Lets take an example of Lord Ganesha and see the status that he has:

When one goes through the puranas one will find that Ganesh has done a lot of good work for the people with his spiritual powers He has killed several demons, who were giving lot of trouble to the people at that time, creating a sense of awe in the people. He also is brilliant and he showed his brilliance (divine quality) to his father Siva and got the boon that he should be prayed first in a puja. He is also easily pleased . That's why he is so popular. Since he was of satya yuga he had spiritual power by which he could change our Karma. It is important to remember that he is not a God but a god (deity).

Since Hinduism have the distinctly monotheistic component and it also has many deities it should be called MONOTHEISTIC POLYDEITIC religion.

Let us see what Christianity and Islam really are:

In Christianity, there is Holy Trinity, in which there is God , Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It has been a problem in Christianity that people are mostly praying to Jesus and forgetting God. Here you'll find that the God in Christianity has the power to create the universe and is omnipotent , omniscient etc. but Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit do not have that power, but have created a sense or awe, and are therefore prayed , so they should be called gods or deities. So as per the above discussions Christianity should be called MONOTHEISTIC BIDEITIC religion. Now the colonial power is gone things should be defined as per logic and truth rather that force and arrogance.

One can wonder, why Jesus is more popular then God. I think one of the reason is people can identify themselves with Jesus, the man, and hence have developed a special bond with him. It is something like the appearance of a person from minority community in the TV who can be identified as a role model for the people of that community. This is why I say there is nothing wrong with worshiping deity despite some religions not allowing it. In Islam, there is a sura (Al-ahxab 33:56) in Koran in which Allah says "Allah and his angels are praying on the prophet, o believers pray on him(Mohammed) and send him utmost greetings" by which Islam should be called MONOTHEISTIC MONODEITIC religion, but because other Koranic passages which specifically dictates that only Allah is worthy of praying, the prayer of Mohammed either did not start or died in course of time. It should be noted here that while Muslim follow and live according to the rules of Koran to be near God and the Christians talk of quiet contemplation for the monks to be near God, the Hindus talk about deep meditation and realisation of the spirit (truth) when they are living at present and not only after death.. One can easily understand which is the greater form of worship as specified in passage dealing with progress of human relations, from low to high.

Is praying to a deity (god) a bad practice?

I don't think so. As human beings we are in need of things and therefore we ask for favors .This is a natural human reaction. We go to the person who has got the capacity to do things for us, to ask something (various lobbying groups). Similarly people go to church or temple to ask the deities to do us favors. It is amazing to see people bonded with their deities. This gives them a sense of security, peace and a feeling of someone with you, if nothing else. This itself is the very thing we need in this age because many people do not trust anybody, have nobody to rely on and feel so insecure, loosing their mental peace. In Hinduism you have many deities with various temperaments and nature, so you have the luxury of choosing and bonding with the deity which suits your nature. You don't have to know all of them and pray to all of them. While Christians worship two deities we worship several. Gita says that people can worship the deity they like; in fact the lord will enhance bond between the two. It also says that those who go to the deities abode after death will have to return while those who go to the permeshwors abode do not have to. It must be stated clearly that praying to the God is higher form of worship then praying to the deities (gods). One should strive for the former because that is the ultimate goal. I would again say that it is not essential to pray to God; people can pray their deity and be happy.

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Pagans celebrate as numbers soar

http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/uk/newsid_500000/500484.stm

As the UK becomes awash with ghosts, ghouls, tricks and treats on Halloween night, thousands of pagans will be celebrating a far more ancient festival.

The pre-Christian festival of Samhain, which falls on 31 October, is the biggest event on the pagan calendar.

Paganism, which embraces a variety of groups including druids, witches and followers of the Viking god Odin, is one of the fastest growing religions in the UK.

At Samhain - pronounced "sow-en" - pagans remember their dead and look to the future.

A study in 1997 suggested there were 100,000 practising pagans in the UK, an increase of 95,000 since 1990.

The Pagan Federation says it is currently getting 100 inquiries a month from potential new recruits.

It continues to grow despite widespread prejudice - often fuelled by the tabloid newspapers - and the mistaken belief of many that paganism equates to black magic and even Satanism.

Central to pagan beliefs respect for nature, the existence of both male and female gods and empowering individuals to fulfil their potential.

Kate West, vice president of the Pagan Federation and a practising witch, told BBC News Online Samhain markrf the end of their year and the beginning of a new period.

'Remember our dead'

It is the Celtic equivalent of New Year's Eve, and is regarded as "a time of positive celebration to be enjoyed".

She said: "It is when the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead is at its thinnest and we remember our dead."

Ms West said the way pagans celebrated Samhain varied from group to group, but a feast was central to most events.

But it might also involve singing, dancing and chanting around a bonfire.

She said: "We gather together and look into the future to see what is coming in the year ahead,

perhaps with tarot cards, but we also celebrate what has past.

"We celebrate the lives of loved ones and their achievements."

Fully clothed

She said the festival fell at "a time of plenty" and feasts developed in ancient times as pagans prepared for the winter.

They would use up excess grain and other food and slaughter old animals - not as sacrifices, but because they were not expected to survive the winter.

But unlike the May Day celebration of Beltane, their fertility festival, when some pagans shed their clothes, celebrations on Sunday night will be fully clothes: the UK weather is just not conducive to such behaviour, said Ms West.

She believes paganism is becoming more popular as people seek more freedom in their beliefs.

She said: "Spiritually, people want more than the paternalistic 'I will tell you what to think and what to do' attitude.

"As a race we are maturing. We want to make our own decisions about our own morality. We don't believe in indoctrination."

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A dip into spiritualism

Author: Pooja Bedi
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It is virtually impossible to recount in words the

experience of a lifetime. I wonder what led me there. I tend to see a spiritual dimension in every thing that touches my life and I wonder if my anchoring Denise Johnson's documentary film on the **Kumbh Mela**, titled Vision of Faith, was part of a greater universal master plan, a calling, or was it just the opportunist in me that jumped at the thought of an organised holy dip that would absolve me of all my past sins?

Whilst I do believe that organised religions have so much to offer us, I also accept that we are ultimately responsible for our own souls. And this sounded too easy. Jump in, you're forgiven. Jump out. I mulled over it till I realised it couldn't hurt. Best case scenario, I get a clean, fresh, new spiritual start. Worst case scenario, I come back with a cold and am still left with the daunting task of undoing all my bad karma with good karma. In both scenarios, I come back with money in the bank.

So there I was, at 4 am, at the tank in **Trimbakeshwar**, waiting to film the first group of 'akhadas'.

There had been much infighting as to who should have priority to bathe at certain times and dates, and the 10 Shaivite Akhadas had come to an agreement. Accordingly, we were handed neatly printed time tables by the police with a meticulous schedule of details.

The first group scheduled at 4.15 am comprised three akhadas. The Juna Akhada, which has the highest number of sadhus and mahants and over 50,000 naga (naked) babas all over the country, the Avahan Akhada, and the Panch Agni Akhada, which is the only Brahmin Akhada. The trio is referred to as big brother, middle brother and small brother.

As the time neared, there was growing excitement. The beautiful carved stone corridors were packed with police, officials and press.

The Kushavaratah (tank) was resplendent in the moonlight. The tranquil waters of the Godavari, albeit muddy, beckoned with a mysterious luminosity. In the distance we heard the beating of the drums and chanting, and as they got closer, a reverent hush descended over all those gathered.

And then it happened. Thousands of naga babas, sadhus dressed in orange, and their mahants burst into the courtyard, amidst loud trumpets, brandishing swords and their silver Chaddi Mubaraks which are associated with their akhada, chanting Har Har Mahadev, and swarmed the four sides of the holy water.

It was an electrifying, unparalleled moment. The magnificence of this visual, the colour, the intensity of their religious fervour and the soaring energy they exuded made my hair stand on end. It left me speechless and spellbound.

The senior most mahant entered with the Bhala. Each Akhada has its own Bhala, which is given its own Bhala name and is carried in an unusual and particular style. It is considered the “real God”.

In keeping with tradition, puja of the Bhala and deity, is followed by the puja of the Acharya Mahamandaleshwar or the Mahamandaleshwar. Once the prayers were over, the president gave the signal. With cries and roars, thousands leapt into the holy waters. I was mesmerised watching them.

Some swam while others waded and dipped. The Naga babas walked about unabashedly. Maybe it was the religious zeal they came cloaked with, but nothing about their stark “in your face” nudity seemed to bother or unduly excite anyone. This country is amazing. One can really get away with so much in the name of religion.

I must add that there was extreme order in the disorder. Through all the noise, commotion and apparent pandemonium, there was heavy and effective policing. Shrill police whistles kept the steady stream of devout bathers in constant motion, ensuring everyone got in and out in due time.

They even helped escort and hold the old and infirm while they took a dip.
And then all was calm once again. The three akhadas headed to the Trimbakeshwar temple for further prayers and their offerings in the Kushavartah were cleaned out to make way for the next akhada grouping.

The Niranjani Akhada, known as the most learned akhada with the maximum number of Sanskrit scholars, bathed next with the Sagar Anand Akhada.

I was told that this is the first time that groups one and two have bathed separately. Previously, all five akhadas bathed together.

Group two arrived in pretty much the same style. This time it was enthralling too, but the impact that the first group had on us was hard to beat. And then I spotted “Dukanji”. I had the pleasure of meeting this curious, rather entertaining individual earlier in the day.

He’s in the Guinness Book of World Records and the Limca Book of Records for his moustache dance, where he balances 10 candles on his moustache and dances with it. He also swallows live snakes and pulls them back out by their tails.

It was actually hard to miss him in the sea of devotees. He had on a two feet tall circular hat, and came in robed and wielding a sword that appeared to be 2 ft wide and 6 ft long with a curved tip. He proceeded to strike a theatrical pose at the corner while the prayers were performed.

He then strode around reveling in all the attention, and finally entered the waters with his oversized weapon and swam/waded around the tank with the sword sticking out of the waters like the fin of a shark.

He emerged and headed straight for the press stand and struck fearsome and dramatic poses for the benefit of the amused photographers. His theatrics had us all in peals of laughter. All said and done, he did create an impact, adding to the bizarre visuals that confronted us, and was extremely memorable.

Procession three comprised the Mahanirvani Akhada which, apart from their tribal development programmess, has an emphasis on education, culture, medication for the poor, and has various schools of Sanskrit all over India. They were the first to introduce the post of Mahamandaleshwari for women. They bathed together with the Atal Akhada which is known to be the oldest akhada. This group came in late and there was quite a stir when their tardiness was made known on the public loudspeaker.

As they gathered around the water, the announcer kept reminding them their dipping time was up and they should head to Trimbakeshwar temple as it was time for their puja. They stood around the tank, restless and relatively silent, and we were wondering whether they would dip or not, when they got the signal and jumped in. It was a lovely sight to watch them dip as dawn broke.

It was now 6 am and our timetable showed a two-hour bathing break.

However, I was told that this time was allotted to the rival three Vaishavite Akhadas, who would probably not show up, as they preferred to bathe at the Ramkund in Nasik.

A quick cup of tea later we returned to film the Bada Udasin Akhada. It is believed that the history of this akhada is timeless and that its creation dates back to the birth of the universe. Srichand Bhagwan is the founder who revived this akhada which has established over 50 temples of Vedas all over the world. Arunji, the editor of a Nasik daily, poetically summed it up for me, “Devotion, ‘bhakti’, was born in Gujarat, grew up in Maharashtra and matured in north India. That is why maximum number of sadhus are in north India and most of those who are sanyasis belong to this akhada.”

As they swarmed the place and readied for a dip, a couple of them struck up a conversation with me. On hearing that they were bhakts of Guru Nanak’s lineage I informed them that I was his 18th descendant, and they laughed and retorted, “Then you should join our akhada and dip with us”.

Everyone was most thrilled and insisted I dip.

I had prepared myself to jump in after we had finished filming the last akhada, but this caught me completely off guard. I did a quick visual scan. Most of them had gotten out of the water and there were no naked babas at my end. With due respect to them, the thought of being surrounded by naked men in water didn’t quite hit the right spiritual notes for me.

I entered the cold water and when I was waist deep I let my legs give way below me and allowed the experience to take over. As I sank to the floor bottom, I felt this incredible energy envelope me. I was weightless, cocooned, safe and loved. I was in a limbo, suddenly painfully aware of my little life riddled with mortal fears and desires and human shortcomings and yet it seemed banal to

ask for forgiveness. I was overwhelmed and humbled by the magnitude of what surrounded me. It seemed to last an eternity and I walked out elated, exhilarated, happy, and light.

Only to be told I had done it all wrong. I had to dip three times. A dip for each: the past, present and future. Ah well! At least I had settled my past accounts.

I watched the Naya Udasin Akhada in a haze, in a state of suspended bliss. I only remember being told that it was pre-determined in 1932 as to which side of the water they would perform their prayers.

The grand finale was the Nirmal Akhada, which is the youngest and richest akhada. It predominantly comprises Sikhs and Punjabis, and even allows Grihasthis (married sadhus) into their akhada.

It has been an indelible and heady trip… a complete riot and synergy of colour, sound, emotion, thoughts and visuals. I confess that I seem to have returned with my conscious and subconscious profoundly altered.

To quote Marianne Williamson: love is what we were born with. Fear is what we learned here. The spiritual journey is the relinquishment — or unlearning — of fear and the acceptance of love back into our hearts.
The magic of the Kumbh Mela turned me, a spectator, into a believer. I was meant to have been there. It was my awakening.

(PS): I could not resist. After the last akhada finished dipping I grabbed the opportunity and jumped in again for the appropriate three quick dips. Twelve years is a very long time to wait.

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Ganga
in Indian Mythology & Sculpture

By PRABHAKAR BEGDE

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We hold rivers in great reverence. The rivers are female divinities, food and life bestowing mothers. As such, they are prominent among the popular divinities represented in the works of art of the classical period.

The most holy of rivers, the best known and most honoured, is the Ganga or Ganges. She is personified as Goddess Ganga. The river rises from an ice bed, 13,800 feet above the sea level in the Garhwal Himalayas.

There are various legends associated with Ganga's descent from heaven to earth in the epics and *Puranas* such as the *Mahabharta, Devi Bhagavata* and the *Bhagawata Purana* etc.

According to the *Bhagavata Purana*, Ganga had its origin during the incarnation of Vishnu as Vamana. When Vamana measured the three worlds in three steps, the nails of his left feet were raised high. They caused a pore on the upper side of the universe. Ganga, starting from the finger of Vishnu's feet, fell in heaven and is therefore called *Vishnupadi*.

Taming of the Ganga by mythical figure Bhagiratha is beautifully depicted in the famous Besnagar sculpture, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. This sculpture belonging to the Gupta period is of about 500 A.D., from lintel of a temple at Besnagar. Here Ganga stands gracefully on the back of a *makara* whose mouth is held open by a small male figure who is depicted as taming the monster, symbolizing the taming of the Ganga by Bhagiratha. As always, she is portrayed as a beautiful maiden with lower half of her body resembling flowing water which reflects the myth that formerly the Ganga was a celestial river. The story of Ganga's descent to the plains should be viewed in this context.

Ganga is often identified with Parvati, consort of Lord Shiva, or one of the other forms of mother goddess like Annapurna, goddess of food and plenty. Ganga's form varies according to local tradition. Thus in South India she is represented as mermaid, swimming in water with folded hands, wearing a crown, and bearing on her forehead the *Saiva* mark in sacred ashes. In Bengal she is depicted as a woman, coloured white (denoting her cleansing and purifying qualities), crowned and seated on her *vahana*, a *makara*. In her right hand she holds a lotus, in her left a lute.

Ganga has always remained a symbol of purity and holiness. Even the remembrance of her name purifies devotees, a look at the river and a bath in her waters assure sanctity. According to legend,

the waters of Ganga flow into every river in India at a certain time each year; these streams then assume the great holiness of Ganga herself and the power to purify pilgrims.

The story of Goddess Ganga is one of the most important themes in Indian mythology which has inspired the artists and sculptors. The doorway of every temple in India is guarded by an anthropomorphic representation of river Ganga. In the South, Ganga usually appears on the both jambs, but in the North, Ganga is represented on one jamb and Yamuna on the other. On these portals Ganga is represented as a damsel holding a water vessel and standing on her mount, the tortoise. These celestial guardians are seen most frequently on sanctuaries dedicated to Siva. They are also often present in shrines to other deities and even appear in the Vakataka caves at Ajanta.

One of the most beautiful representations of Ganga and Yamuna flanking a doorway is from a Gupta temple in Dah Parvatiya in Assam. Indian museums have several such representations of Ganga and Yamuna personified on door jambs. Each river goddess is shown on her mount and is accompanied by attendants, one of whom raises a parasol over her head. The swans that flutter above, with garlands of lotuses or lilies in their beaks, suggest the cool fragrance of an aquatic environment.

Ganga has been represented in art and sculpture in various forms. She is seen as the celestial stream and as the triple stream, as a damsel, pride incarnate, who rushes down on Siva's head, and as the river mother feeding the children of the soil with her water of plenty.

At Elephanta, Ganga is seen on the locks of Siva Gangadhara, at Paattadakal she is depicted as a mermaid dancing on the locks of Siva which swirl as he performs the virile *tandava* dance. A beautiful sculpture of Sena period shows Ganga standing by the wish fulfilling tree, which is a symbol of heaven, with a pitcher in her hand, indicating prosperity through abundance of water.

Ganga acquired many names indicating her various incarnations, the geographical regions through which she flowed and personages with whom she was associated. These are: Visnupadi (flowing from the foot of Vishnu), Haimavati (flowing on Himavan's lap, daughter of Himavan), Alaknanda (from the 'locks of Siva'), Bhadra-soma (blessed drink), Abharaganga or Akasaganga (the celestal Ganga), Devabhuti (heaven born), Mandakini (gently flowing, the milky way), Bhagirathi or Bhagirathasuta (from Bhagirtha), Patalaganga and many more.

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Shri Maha Ganapathi Sthuthi
Contributed by M P Bhattathiry

SHREE GANESH VANDANA
SHUKLAM BARATHARAM VISHNUM
SHASHI VARNAM CHATURBHUJAM
PRASANNA VADANAM DHYAYET
SARVA VIGHNOPA SHANTAYE
AGAJANANA PADMARGAM GAJANANA
MAHIRSHAM ANEKA DANTAM BHAKTANAM
EKA DANT! AM UPASMAHE
Vakra thunda maha kaya soorya koti sama praba
Nirvignam kurume deva sarva kaaryeshu sarvadha

Gajananam, Bhootha Ganaathi Sevitham,
Kavitha Jambu Manasara Bakshitham
Uma sutham, shoka vinaasa haaranam,
Namaami Vigneshwara, paada pankajam

Agajaanana padmaarkam gajanana maharnisam
Anekadham dham bhakthanam ekadhantham upasmahe

Mooshika Vahana Modhaga Hasta
Shyamala Karna Vilambitha Sutra
Vamana Rupa Maheshwara Putra
Vigna Vinayaka Pada Namaste

LORD Ganesha,Vinayaka also known as Vighneswara the important deity riding a mouse - has become one of the commonest mnemonics for anything associated with Hinduism. This not only suggests the importance of Ganesha, but also shows how popular and pervasive this deity is in the minds of the masses.

The Lord of Success

The son of Shiva and Parvati, Ganesha has an elephantine countenance with a curved trunk and big ears, and a huge pot-bellied body of a human being. He

is the Lord of success and destroyer of evils and obstacles. He is also worshipped as the god of education, knowledge, wisdom and wealth. In fact, Ganesha is one of the five prime Hindu deities (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Durga being the other four) whose idolatry is glorified as the panchayatana puja.

Ganesh Chaturthi

The devotees of Ganesha are known as 'Ganapatyas', and the festival to celebrate and glorify him is called Ganesh Chaturthi.

Significance of the Ganesha Form

Ganesha's head symbolizes the Atman or the soul, which is the ultimate supreme reality of human existence, and his human body signifies Maya or the earthly existence of human beings. The elephant head denotes wisdom and its trunk represents Om, the sound symbol of cosmic reality. In his upper right hand Ganesha holds a goad, which helps him propel mankind forward on the eternal path and remove obstacles from the way. The noose in Ganesha's left hand is a gentle implement to capture all difficulties.

The broken tusk that Ganesha holds like a pen in his lower right hand is a symbol of sacrifice, which he broke for writing the Mahabharata. The rosary in his other hand suggests that the pursuit of knowledge should be continuous. The laddoo (sweet) he holds in his trunk indicates that one must discover the sweetness of the Atman. His fan-like ears convey that he is all ears to our petition. The snake that runs round his waist represents energy in all forms. And he is humble enough to ride the lowest of creatures, a mouse.

How Ganesha Got His Head

The story of the birth of this zoomorphic deity, as depicted in the Shiva Purana, goes like this: Once goddess Parvati, while bathing, created a boy out of the dirt of her body and assigned him the task of guarding the entrance to her bathroom. When Shiva, her husband returned, he was surprised to find a stranger denying him access, and struck off the boy's head in rage. Parvati broke down in utter grief and to soothe her, Shiva sent out his squad (gana) to fetch the head of any sleeping being who was facing the north. The company found a sleeping elephant and brought back its severed head, which was then attached to the body of the boy. Shiva restored its life and made him the leader (pati) of his troops. Hence his name 'Ganapati'. Shiva also bestowed a boon that people would worship him and invoke his name before undertaking any venture.

However, there's another less popular story of his origin, found in the

Brahma Vaivarta Purana: Shiva asked Parvati to observe the punyaka vrata for a year to appease Vishnu in order to have a son. When a son was born to her, all the gods and goddesses assembled to rejoice on its birth. Lord Shani, the son of Surya (Sun-God), was also present but he refused to look at the infant. Perturbed at this behaviour, Parvati asked him the reason, and Shani replied that his looking at baby would harm the newborn. However, on Parvati's insistence when Shani eyed the baby, the child's head was severed instantly. All the gods started to bemoan, whereupon Vishnu hurried to the bank of river Pushpabhadra and brought back the head of a young elephant, and joined it to the baby's body, thus reviving it.

Ganesha, the Destroyer of Pride

Ganesha is also the destroyer of vanity, selfishness and pride. He is the personification of material universe in all its various magnificent manifestations. "**All Hindus worship Ganesha regardless of their sectarian belief,"**

Myths & Tales: Curse of the Moon

Don't See the Moon on Ganesh Chaturthi Night!

It is said that anyone who looks at the moon on the night of the Ganesh Chaturthi will be falsely accused. If someone inadvertently sees the moon on this night, he/she may remedy the situation by listening to (or reciting) the story of the syamantaka jewel found in the Puranas.
Briefly, Satrajit, who secured a jewel syamantaka from Surya, did not part with it even when Krishna the Lord of Dvaraka, asked for it saying it would be safe with him. Prasena, the brother of Satrajit went out hunting wearing the jewel but was killed by a lion. Jambavan of the Ramayana fame killed the lion and gave it to his son to play with. When Prasena did not return, Satrajit falsely accused Krishna of killing Prasena for the sake of the jewel. Krishna, in order to remove the stain on his reputation, set out in search of the jewel and found it in Jambavan's cave, with his child. Jambavan attacked Krishna thinking him to be an intruder who had come to take away the jewel. They fought each other for 28 days, when Jambavan, his whole body terribly weakened from the hammering of Krishna's fists, finally recognized Him as Lord Rama.

As a repentance for his having fought Krishna, Jambavan gave Krishna the jewel and also his daughter Jambavati in marriage. Krishna returned to Dvaraka with Jambavati and the jewel, and returned it to Satrajit, who in turn repented for his false accusation. He promptly offered to give Krishna the jewel and his daughter Satyabhama in marriage. Krishna accepted Satyabhama as his wife but did not accept the jewel.
This festival is celebrated in the month of avani on chaturthi (4th) day

which comes after the new moon. It is celebrated all over India. People celebrate this day in a variety of ways. For anything to go well, we pray Lord Vinayaka. He is the first to be worshipped whenever we start anything. He relieves us from all our difficulties. He solves our problems.

Lord Vinayaka has got an elephant face and human body. He is worshipped by many names like Vinayaka, Ganesha, Pillayar, Vigneshwara, Gajanana, Ganapathy, Mooshika Vahanaa, Modhaga priya etc. He rides on an animal called mooshika(a large kind of rat).

In our houses we celebrate this pooja in a grand manner. We decorate the floor with kolams using rice flour. On that day we buy a new Vinayaka idol(made of clay). We also buy a decorated umbrella to place behind the idol. On a wooden plank, plantain leaf is placed and raw rice is spread over it. We place the idol on this and decorate with flowers and perform pooja.

Vinayaka likes a dish called mothagam(kozhukkattai). So different varieties of kozhukkattai are prepared and offered to the lord on this day. It is the special item on this day.

On the next day, punar pooja is done. This is the pooja which acts as an ending to the festival. After this we remove the idol from its place. On the next day after punar pooja, we immerse the idol in water in the sea, well or pond.

In cities like Mumbai, Chennai etc. large Ganesha idols (a bout 6 ft) are placed in common places and pooja is performed in a very grand manner. People all around worship the lord. Prasadams (Dish offered to the lord) are distributed to the people. After the pooja is over, the idol is taken in a grand procession and immersed in the sea.

For this pooja, different flowers are used. Erukkampoo(calotropis), thumbaip oo(white small flowers and arugampul(a type of grass) is very special for the lord. Different varieties of fruits are also offered.

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All About Lord Ganesha
contributed by M P Bhattathiry

All about lord Ganesha

Ganesha is revered as the son of the Universal parents Shiva and Parvati, and is always honored first in most worship services and rituals. Ganesha is also known as Ganapati, Vigneswara, Vinayaka, Gajamukha and Ainkaran.

The huge size of Ganapati represents the Universe (Cosmos), and his curled trunk, the symbol OM. The elephant's head is said to represent superior intellect while the snake around his waist cosmic energy. His broken tusk is symbolic of knowledge, as it is believed that it is with this tusk that he wrote down the Mahabharata, in the capacity of a scribe, when it was recited by the sage Vyasa. The mouse - mooshikam, his mount is said to symbolize the equal importance of the biggest and smallest of creatures, in the eyes of the infinity of creation Bhraman.

Ganesha is believed to have been the scribe who wrote down the text of the Indian epic Mahabharatam as it was recited by the sage Vyasa.

The Ganesa Pancharatnam of Aadi Sankaracharya in sanskrit salutes Ganapati. The tamil works of Tirumoolar and Avvaiyaar (of the 1st millennium CE), also bear hymns saluting Ganesha. So do the Tiruppugazh hymns of Arunagirinathar of the 1st half of the 2nd millennium CE. Several of the sanskrit kritis of the Karnatic Music composer Mutthuswamy Deekshitar salute Ganapati shrines all over Tamilnadu.

Several small temples dedicated to Ganapati adorn all towns and villages of south India. Most of these are modern temples. There are several shrines to Ganesha in all Saivite temples all over south India. Ganesha is taken out at the head of all processions in festivals celebrated in the Saivite temples of Tamilnadu.

Vinayaka Chaturti is a festival celebrated in honor of Ganesha, and it is celebrated as a community festival in the state of Maharashtra, where Vinayak is held in great reverence, especially in the 8 Ashta Vinayak temples in the vicinity of Pune and in the Siddhi Vinayak temple in Mumbai.

Perhaps the most ancient of Ganapati shrines in India, is the well known Karpaka Vinayakar temple in the town of Pillaiarpatti near Karaikkudi in Tamilnadu. This temple with a rock cut shrine, bearing a collossal form of Vinayakar, is over 1600 years old.

The Ucchi Pillaiyaar temple, on top of a hill defining Tiruchirappalli's (Tamilnadu) skyline, enshrines Ganapati, who is said to have been instrumental in enshrining Ranganathar at Srirangam nearby.

Ganesh Chaturthi In Maharashtra, Ganesh Chaturthi is the most popular festival. Ganesh, the elephant faced deity is the son of Shiva and Parvati and the lord of all auspicious beginnings. He is the remover of all obstacles and is to be propitiated before any other deity. Colossal images of Ganesh are built and carried all round the city before they are finally submerged in water. The city of Mumbai remains in a feverish pitch of excitement throughout this period.

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32 forms of Ganesha As with the 64 forms of Shiva, 32 forms of Ganapati are recognized in the Agamic scriptures.

1. Baala Ganapati - Red colored image of a four armed Ganesha

2. Dharuna Vinayakar: Red colored image of an eight armed Ganesha

3. Bhakti Vinayakar: Grey colored image of four armed Ganesha

4. Veera Vinayakar: Red colored image of 16 armed Ganapati

5. Shakti Ganapati: Red colored image of 4 armed Ganapati, seated with his consort to his left.

6. Dwija Vinayakar: White colored image of four faced Ganesha with 4 arms.

7. Siddhi Vinayakar: Golden colored image of four armed Ganapati.

8. Ucchishta Ganapati: Blue colored image of six armed Ganapati with his consort.

9. Vigna Vinayakar: Gold colored image of eight armed Ganapati

10. Kshipra Ganapati: Red colored image of four armed Ganesha bearing a ratna kumbham.

11. Heramba Vinayakar: Black colored image of ten armed Ganesha with five faces, seated on a lion.

12. Lakshmi Vinayakar: White colored image of eight armed Ganesha with two consorts.

13. Makara Vinayakar: Red colored image of Ganesha with a third eye, 10 arms, bearing a ratna kumbham, with his consort.

14. Vijaya Vinayakar: Red colored image of 4 armed Ganesha on the mooshika mount.

15. Nritta Vinayakar: Gold colored image of Ganesha in a dance posture.

16. Urdhva Vinayakar: Gold colored image of six armed Ganesha with his consort.

17. Ekakshara Vinayakar: Red colored image of Ganesha with a third eye, seated on a lotus.

18. Vara Vinayakar: Red colored image of 4 armed Vinayaka with a third eye.

19. Dhryakshara Vinayaka: Gold colored image of four armed Vinayakar, decorated with Chaamara ear rings.

20. Kshipraprasaada Vinayakar: Red colored image of six armed Ganapati.

21. Haridra Vinayakar: Yellow colored image of four armed Ganapati.

22. Ekadhanta Vinayakar: Blue colored image of four armed Ganapati.

23. Srishti Vinayakar: Red colored image of four armed Ganapati seated on his mooshika mount.

24. Utthanda Vinayakar: Red colored image of 10 armed Ganesha with his consort to his left.

25. Ranamochana Vinayaka: Crystal image of four armed Vinayakar.

26. Dundi Vinayakar: Four armed image of Ganesha bearing a tusk, a garland, an axe and a gem studded vessel.

27. Dwimukha Vinayakar: Red colored image of Ganesha with two faces and four arms.

28. Trimukha Vinayakar: Red colored image of Ganesha with three faces and six arms seated on a golden lotus.

29. Simha Vinayakar: White colored image of Ganesha with eight arms (with an arm bearing a lions face).

30. Yoga Vinayakar: Red colored image of Ganesha in the posture of a yogi.

31. Durga Vinayakar: Red colored image of Ganesha with eight arms.

32. Sankatahara Vinayakar: Red colored image of four armed Ganesha clothed in blue, seated on a lotus peetham with his consort to his left.

Ashta Vinayak

Ganesh Chaturti is celebrated with an extra measure of grandeur in the state of Maharashtra. The Siddhi Vinayak temple in Mumbai is visited by hundreds of thousands of devotees throughout the year.

Also in Maharashtra are eight temples dedicated to Ganesha, related to various episodes from the puranas and other legends - and these deities are collectively known as Ashta Vinayak.

Moregaon enshrines Ganapati as Mayureshwar (Moresh) or the peacock rider, who slew the demon Sindhu in response to pleas from the Gods.

Mahaganapati at Ranjangaon is believed to have come to the aid of Shiva in destroying the citadels of the demon Tripurasura.

Mahad enrhsines Varadvinayak (the bestower of boons), in commemoration of a legend related to Rukmangada.

Chintamani Vinayak relates to the legend of Kapila Muni and the Chintamani gem that he had obtained from Shiva.

Girijaatmaja Vinayaka is enshrined on Lenyadri Parvat, and is believed to be a manifestation of Ganapati as an infant.

Vigneshwara at Ozar is regarded as the slayer of the demon Vignaasura.

Ballal Vinayak at Pali, is associated with a legend where Ganapati is said to have come to

the aid of a young lad, who was a fervent devotee of Ganapati.

Siddhi Vinayak at Siddhatek is said to have come to the aid of Mahavishnu as he was engaged in a long battle with the demons Madhu and Kaitabha.

---

108 names of Lord Ganesha

Akhuratha : One who has Mouse as His Charioteer

Alampata : Ever Eternal Lord

Amit :Incomparable Lord

Anantachidrupamayam :Infinite and Consciousness Personified

Avaneesh :Lord of the whole World

Avighna :Remover of Obstacles

Balaganapati : Beloved and Lovable Child

Bhalchandra : Moon-Crested Lord

Bheema :Huge and Gigantic

Bhupati :Lord of the Gods

Bhuvanpati :God of the Gods

Buddhinath :God of Wisdom

Buddhipriya : Knowledge Bestower

Buddhividhata : God of Knowledge

Chaturbhuj : One who has Four Arms

Devadeva : Lord! of All Lords

Devantakanashakarin : Destroyer of Evils and Asuras

Devavrata : One who accepts all Penances

Devendrashika : Protector of All Gods

Dharmik : One who gives Charity

Dhoomravarna :Smoke-Hued Lord

Durja : Invincible Lord

Dvaimatura : One who has two Mothers

Ekaakshara : He of the Single Syllable

Ekadanta : Single-Tusked Lord

Ekadrishta : Single-Tusked Lord

Eshanputra : Lord Shiva's Son

Gadadhara : One who has The Mace as His Weapon

Gajakarna : One who has Eyes like an Elephant

Gajanana : Elephant-Faced Lord

Gajananeti : Elephant-Faced Lord

Gajavakra : Trunk of The Elephant

Gajavaktra : One who has Mouth like an Elephant

Ganadhakshya : Lord of All Ganas (Gods)

Ganadhyakshina : Leader of All The Celestial Bodies

Ganapati : Lord of All Ganas (Gods)

Gaurisuta : The Son of Gauri (Parvati)

Gunina : One who is The Master of All Virtues

Haridra : One who is Golden Coloured

Heramba : Mother's Beloved Son

Kapila : Yellowish-Brown Coloured

Kaveesha : Master of Poets

Krti : Lord of Music

Kripalu : Merciful Lord

Krishapingaksha : Yellowish-Brown Eyed

Kshamakaram : The Place of Forgiveness

Kshipra : One who is easy to Appease

Lambakarna : Large-Eared Lord

Lambodara : The Huge Bellied Lord

Mahabala : Enormously Strong Lord

Mahaganapati : Omnipotent and Supreme Lord

Maheshwaram : Lord of The Universe

Mangalamurti : All Auspicious Lord

Manomay : Winner of Hearts

Mrityuanjaya : Conqueror of Death

Mundakarama : Abode of Happiness

Muktidaya : Bestower of Eternal Bliss

Musikvahana : One who has Mouse as His Charioteer

Nadapratithishta :One who Appreciates and Loves Music

Namasthetu : Vanquisher of All Evils and Vices and Sins

Nandana : Lord Shiva's Son

Nideeshwaram : Giver of Wealth and Treasures

Omkara :One who has the Form Of OM

Pitambara :One who has Yellow-Coloured Body

Pramoda :Lord of All Abodes

Prathameshwara :First Among All

Purush : The Omnipotent Personality

Rakta : One who has Red-Coloured Body

Rudrapriya :Beloved Of Lord Shiva

Sarvadevatman :Acceptor of All Celestial Offerings

Sarvasiddhanta : Bestower of Skills and Wisdom

Sarvatman :Protector of The Universe

Shambhavi : The Son of Parvati

Shashivarnam : One who has a Moon like Complexion

Shoorpakarna :Large-Eared Lord

Shuban :All Auspicious Lord

Shubhagunakanan : One who is The Master of All Virtues

Shweta : One who is as Pure as the White Colour

Siddhidhata : Bestower of Success and Accomplishments

Siddhipriya : Bestower of Wishes and Boons

Siddhivinayaka : Bestower of Success

Skandapurvaja : Elder Brother of Skand (Lord Kartik)

Sumukha : Auspicious Face

Sureshwaram :Lord of All Lords

Swaroop : Lover of Beauty

Tarun : Ageless

Uddanda : Nemesis of Evils and Vices

Umaputra : The Son of Goddess Uma (Parvati)

Vakratunda : Curved Trunk Lord

Varaganapati : Bestower of Boons

Varaprada : Granter of Wishes and Boons

Varadavinayaka : Bestower of Success

Veeraganapati : Heroic Lord

Vidyavaridhi : God of Wisdom

Vighnahara : Remover of Obstacles

Vignaharta : Demolisher of Obstacles

Vighnaraja : Lord of All Hindrances

Vighnarajendra : Lord of All Obstacles

Vighnavinashanaya : Destroyer of All Obstacles and Impediments

Vigneshwara: Lord of All Obstacles

Vikat : Huge and Gigantic

Vinayaka : Lord of All

Vishwamukha : Master of The Universe

Vishwaraja : King of The World

Yagnakaya : Acceptor of All Sacred and Sacrificial Offerings

Yashaskaram :Bestower of Fame and Fortune

Yashvasin : Beloved and Ever Popular Lord

Yogadhipa : The Lord of Meditation

The Story of lord Ganesha's birth

Ganesha the elephant faced God is one of the most popularly worshipped forms of divinity - as a remover of obstacles and the embodiment of good luck, in the Indian system of beliefs and practices.

Ganesha is regarded as the son of Shiva and Parvati (Shakti), the Universal parents, and the brother of Skanda.

Legend has it that Parvati, created a beautiful boy from the dirt of her body, treated him as her son, and gave him the responsibility of guarding her home. Shiva, upon returning home was affronted by this lad, hitherto unknown to him. The lad, true to his word to his mother, refused to let Shiva into his own home.

An enraged Shiva sent his Bhuta Gana attendants to scare the lad and to obtain entry into his own home. The lad single handedly defeated the Bhuta Ganas in battle. A clash of egos followed, as Shiva sent several of the Gods, to fight against Ganesha and an equally enraged Parvati sent several of her attendants to fight them. In the resultant fight, the valorous lad's head was chopped off by Nandi deva, and the lad lay lifeless.

Parvati's grief knew no bounds, and Shiva sought to assuage her, by promising to bring the boy to life. Alas, his head could not be found in the battlefield. A quick fix was sought, and it was decided that the first available head would be used to bring the boy to life. Accordingly, the boy was fitted with the head of an elephant and brought back to life.

Even this did not placate Parvati, who sought that this boy (who successfully created obstacles to his father's mission) now fitted with the head of an elephant, should be regarded by one and all, as the remover of obstacles, and should be offered worship first, before any form of worship was offered to any other manifestation of divinity.

This boon granted, Ganesha, the lord of the attendants of Parvati, came to be regarded as Vigneshwara the remover of obstacles.

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Where there's no will to reform, there's extinction
By Varsha Bhosle
http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/nov/23varsha.htm

Project Saffron Dollar and The Campaign to Stop Funding Hate has been an eye-opener. Say what you like but I can't help feeling admiration for the single-mindedness with which the cabal of pinkos+Christians+Muslims relentlessly attacks Hindu activism. And that's how it should be: identify the enemy and attack, attack, attack till it exists no more. At this point of time, I'm certain that, sooner or later, this coterie will succeed in making Hindus a minority in India: If not the total obliteration of Hinduism, that has always been their aim. And I, for one, wish them luck.

Wish them luck...? Decidedly! Over the last four months, I've come to the conclusion that Hindus really aren't worth the trouble, and I have reasons to think so. From August 12 to September 9, I did a 5-part series on Towards Balkanisation, listing the various fronts on which Hinduism is under attack, and the various dramatis personae in that war -- including IDRF and the anti-Hindu cabal. However, compared to what I typically receive, the mail for all five parts was so scant that I finally had to inquire whether something was wrong with the mail server (nope). And what mail I got was mainly the abusive sort from pinkos and, especially, Catholics. The Great Hindu Readership had either tired of the topic or wasn't moved by it: One memorable message said, "nice article" -- as if I'd talked about the menu in some restaurant...

Then, I wrote on Dalits, attacked "upper caste" Hindus, and picked on Brahmins. And guess what, I received an unprecedented amount of email -- far more than the base of the MORI survey. Of those who wrote in, only 10 or so were non-Hindu; almost 85 per cent declared themselves Brahmin, of which, every second mail was from the brain-dead type -- the ones who:

- gave that same old asinine explanation about caste not being a Hindu problem since the form that exists isn't endorsed by the scriptures: "The Vedic varna was based on occupation and not birth. Some people chose to be warriors" etc;
- took umbrage at the reference to the Shankaracharya of Kanchi: "You seem to thrive in this country by writing wrong stories without facts and live on a moments' glory of clappings all around -- if you are a born Hindu -- there is One watching and He will sue you";
- whitewashed Hindus' rotten deeds by attacking other religions: "There is even a code of conduct for these slaves, eg, in Jewish religious books any person who gives shelter to a runaway slave has to face death. In Islam a person can have sex with or rape a slave girl...

On the other hand we do not find any such barbarity in Hindu religion";

- deemed me a "secularist": "I think you are just one of those bitchy hypocrites who wants to make a name for herself whipping up sentiments of people who can't think for themselves";
- defended their own ilk by abusing others: "The atrocities and acts of violence that you list have been carried out by Thakurs, Jats and other upper castes like Kshatriyas. However, none of these castes get a mention in your article. But the word Bram or Brahmin? It has the privilege of appearing six times in your article";
- slammed reservations: "I am an engineer and have seen the people who got lower marks but still got admissions to the college on the basis of their caste";
- denied that casteism exists: "It is a horrible custom and it is vanishing fast. Once it was the rule in all of India, and now it is exception. There were no 'dry latterines' in the places I lived and that usually were pretty low middle class localities";
- believed Hinduism is defined by the priestly class: "If a person like Shankaracharya (who has studied Hindu scriptures), says something on Hinduism, that is the true Hinduism";
- took a bovine to be holy: "And yeah Cow is not God damn animal, it's God blessed animal who serves the society like mother. If infant's mother dies cow's milk is the only substitute for the milk."

In short, half of the educated Hindus, also prosperous enough to access the Net, are living in a state of blessed self-delusion, with no interest in understanding the dire straits that Hinduism is in; with not a sliver of sensitivity to grasp the pathos of the Broken People; with no integrity whatsoever to look within themselves and at their own kind as they look upon others; with no intellect to appreciate the non-dogmatic characteristic of Hinduism -- the very antithesis of Semitic religions. Should such people last...?

The more I ponder, the more convinced I am that everything that made Hinduism survive centuries of aggression is waning fast. Where there's no will to learn, to reform and to adapt, there is extinction -- and no species has escaped that law of nature. "All things being equal" is a neat springboard for scientific speculation, but in the real world, things are never equal: Problems, arms, methods, attacks, assailants -- all change, and radically, within a decade. What helped Hindus survive in 1600 ain't gonna work in 2010 -- and that doesn't penetrate the thick skulls of these self-satisfied, self-deluding "upper caste" dorks.

One such novel attack is Project Saffron Dollar. Its result: Sun Microsystems stated that all donations to the IDRF have been placed on hold pending a directive from the IRS; Cisco has terminated all matching donations to the IDRF; and Intel has promised to "see that they do not commit the same mistake." And what are the IDRF's sins...? According to **Biju Mathews & Co:**

- Funnelling millions of dollars every year to be used by "violent, sectarian Hindu supremacist orgs."
- "The IDRF has funded numerous relief efforts in response to natural disasters, communal violence, and other social crises. However, the distributive mechanisms utilised by the IDRF have consistently discriminated against Muslims and other minorities in India."
- "The IDRF's relief efforts are frequently divisive and have supported the further communalisation of Indian society."

- "In recent times, the organisation has raised funds for Bangladeshi Hindu victims of communal violence, Kashmiri Hindu victims of terrorism, and relief efforts following the September 11 attacks in the US."
- "In contrast, to date, IDRF has not announced any relief for the victims of communal riots in Gujarat in February and March 2002."

If you read Chapter 4: Funding Hate of the "report," you quickly realise that the only aim of the campaign is to halt the funding of the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad, Vivekananda Kendra, Vanvasi Seva Sangh, Sewa Bharati, and Ekal Vidyalays -- ALL being educational institutions set up for the upliftment of Dalits and Adivasis. Those whom the vultures target...

Secondly, despite a long list of footnotes, almost all directing one to news reports from -- ha-ha! -- *The Indian Express, The Hindu, Outlook* and Human Rights Watch, there is not even a semblance of proof that any of these institutions are responsible for spreading communal hatred or indulging in communal violence. Was IDRF money used to pay the rioters in Gujarat or to finance any violent activity perpetrated by Hindu terrorists...? Not a word. Did students of Ekal Vidyalay commit murder...? Not a line. Only suggestions, insinuations and more insinuations! And yet, the chapter concludes with, "The documentation presented leads us to a simple and single conclusion -- the IDRF does fund hate."

Let's look at Biju Mathews -- promptly given so much space by Rediff's Josy Joseph. (Question: Why hasn't Joseph investigated Evangelical groups that collect money in the name of charity and spend it on printing tracts to convert Hindus...?)

Mathews is a fixed feature in pinkodom, often writing for puke-sheets like "Rethinking Marxism" and with a presence on every pinko website. So of course, the garden variety Hindu "secularist" has accepted him as an atheist/secularist with nothing but the good of oppressed humanity in his noble heart...

The Federation of Indian American Christian Organisations of Northern America has demanded a probe by the US Congress into IDRF and also asked the IRS to blacklist it and withdraw its tax exemption status. Meaning, World Vision, Southern Baptist, Seventh Day Adventists, and hundreds of other Christian missionary groups which seek to obliterate Hinduism from India can keep funding their nefarious activities here -- but IDRF can do nothing to offset it.

And guess who's the prime sponsor of the report: **Teesta and Javed Anand's Sabrang Communications**, of course! Take a look at their India-Pakistan friendship forum's logo on the Aman page: Observe the relative scaling of the two countries. Note the drawing of India -- with the State of Jammu & Kashmir lopped off. Not pushing towards Balkanisation...?

US corporations routinely match donations by their employees to all sorts of organisations, as long as these are registered as non-profit in the US. Such organisations include churches, temples, mosques, universities, etc. In fact, Guidestar lists 850,000 non-profits in the US, including

Evangelical organisations, and groups with links to outfits many would consider objectionable. Examples of non-profits in the US, donations to which are matched by US corporations:

- India Rural Evangelical Fellowship Inc, Park Ridge, IL -- dedicated to bringing Jesus to the illiterate masses of rural India.
- Quentin Road Ministries, Lake Zurich, IL -- "Our goal is to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to the world."
- Andhra Adventists Association, Hyattsville, MD -- "Adventist."

According to "Cisco Systems Foundation Awards Grants to Hometown Charities," the company has given grants to, amongst others, Catholic Charities Euclid Girls' Home, Jewish Vocational Services, and St Vincent de Paul Society of San Mateo County. Then, "Who Serves Sunday Dinner" at the Catholic Charities, Diocese of Santa Rosa? "Hewlett Packard Employees, Of Course!" So what's with the bar on funding a charity of and for Hindus...?

According to a report in europemedia.net, a survey taken after 9/11 found that "After the attacks, well over $120m (€136.7m) was raised online in individual contributions." Which prompted AOL, Cisco and Yahoo to launch an e-philanthropy portal called Network for Good. Are we to believe that Americans donated some of that money to Islamic charities post-9/11...?

According to Mathews, IDRF has raised funds for Bangladeshi Hindu victims of Muslim violence, Kashmiri Hindu victims of Islamic terrorism, and relief efforts following the Islamic terrorist attacks in the US. Er... what's evil about that? Does raising money for the victims of Islamist crimes amount to spreading hatred...?

In which case, why don't these dorks ask for a ban on all *madarsas* (which also receive foreign funds) for spreading hatred? Why aren't all "minority institutions" banned for spreading hatred? Just because Hindus are a majority, anything Hindus do for Hindus is tantamount to spreading hatred...? And what about the Islamists going around killing Hindus???

Such is the current attack -- one devoid of reason, bereft of honour and lacking in morality. But I still wish it succeeds! **For, if "upper caste" Hindus refuse to recognise their own perversions, they continue to shove Dalits and Adivasis into the rich and waiting arms of the missionaries. Such Hindus themselves accelerate not only the diminishing of Hinduism, but also the borders of India as we now know it. *Jaisa karo waisa bharo*...**

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Towards Balkanisation, V: Adivasis

http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/sep/09varsha.htm

Towards Balkanisation, Part I
Towards Balkanisation, Part II
Towards Balkanisation, III: Missionaries
Towards Balkanisation, IV: Catholics

On Friday, September 6, The All India Christian Council accused the National Commission for Minorities of adopting "double standards," demanded that it ban the RSS' Ghar Wapsi programme in tribal areas, and slammed Vice-Chairman Tarlochan Singh for demanding that missionaries halt their conversion activities amongst Sikhs. According to the council, "tribals belonging to Christian and other faiths are being forcibly converted into a militant brand of religion followed by organisations such as VHP. The move is designed to divide the tribals along religious communal lines and to create friction amongst them. In Gujarat, this directly led to large-scale violence against Muslims in tribal areas."

It's amusing to see how the council gets a bee up its duct when the converted tribals revert to their original way -- which way is debated not only by evangelists, but also brainwashed Hindus. The missionary panic is palpable; why else would they allege that Christian tribals are forcibly converted to Hindutva? Thing is, Hindutva reconverts the converted to Hinduism -- and that's why it is Enemy No.1 globally.

On Wednesday, September 4, *The Indian Express* published a report from Amritsar, in which the VHP's Ashok Singhal was quoted as saying, "Godhra happened on February 27 and the next day, 50 lakh Hindus were on the streets. We were successful in our experiment of raising Hindu consciousness, which will be repeated all over the country now." The report added, "Singhal also spoke glowingly of how whole villages had been 'emptied of Islam,' and how whole communities of Muslims had been dispatched to refugee camps."

Now, there are few people I loathe more than Ashok Singhal and Praveen Togadia. Therefore, the question of defending them does not arise. Nevertheless, I did find it extremely strange that not

PTI nor UNI nor IANS -- in fact, not a single independent news agency that hovers around these worthies for their quotable quotes provided reports against which I could verify the *Express* dispatch. Stranger still, the Chandigarh-based *Tribune* reported that Singhal "exhorted Hindus to unite to strengthen the roots of Hinduism," expressed dismay over the "discrimination" meted out to Hindus, and declared that "for the first time that the tolerance level among the Hindus had breached." No mention of "successful experiment" -- as in "Hindutva laboratory."

The Hindi *Amar Ujala*, a Delhi-based paper, had just one complex sentence on Gujarat, which had Singhal saying that after the Godhra incident, lakhs of Hindus united and nearly 4,000 villages were emptied of Muslims, and that for the first time, Muslims instead of Hindus had to go to refugee camps. No mention of "successful experiment" -- as in "Hindutva laboratory."

On Thursday, September 5, *The Hindu* and *The Pioneer* reported the Congress' demand for Singhal's arrest for his confession about the "experiment" -- which both newspapers attributed to "reports," ie, the *Express.* And then, the paper that's been conducting a witch-hunt against the BJP waited two more days before publishing an editorial based on its own report about the (unverifiable) "successful experiment." Something stinks big time...

I've no doubt that Singhal spewed his wishful, macho garbage against Muslims. But "Hindutva laboratory" isn't something these Einsteins could organise even if they wanted to. For, to accomplish that, malevolence ain't enough -- to work on that scale, one also needs intellect. Which some pinkos and missionaries do posses, and thus make legions of Hindu "secularists" swallow the "animism" shit and express shock at the tribal uprising in Gujarat.

Hindus -- not the don't-know-my-ass-from-my-mouth type -- do not accept the view that tribals are non-Hindus; and that Christians, Muslims and Hindus have an equal right to offer their religion to them, as then NCM chairman Tahir Mahmood claimed (*Hindustan Times*, Jan 28, 1999). Mahmood also cited census reports to support his claim: "Appendix C to the census report of 1991 gives details of Sects/Beliefs/Religions clubbed with another religion. According to this annexure, no tribal community has been clubbed with the followers of the Hindu religion in the report."

Whether Adivasis are Hindus or not has always been a question of great controversy.

The Niyogi Commission's *Report of the Christian Missionaries Enquiry Committee MP, Nagpur, 1956* (Vol I, Part I, Chapter I) states, "The Missionaries have throughout claimed that they are not Hindus. A continuous attempt has been made by these organisations to foster a sense of separateness amongst the Tribes from the rest of the Hindus. Speaking about the separation of the aborigines from the mass of the Indian population **Gandhiji** remarked:

'**We were strangers to this sort of classification -- animists -- aborigines, etc, but we have learnt it from the English rulers.**' To the question put by Dr Chesterman whether Gandhiji's objection applied to areas like the Kond hills where the aboriginal races were animists, the unhesitating reply was, '**Yes, it does apply, because I know that in spite of being described as animists these tribes have from times immemorial been absorbed in Hinduism. They are,**

like the indigenous medicine, of the soil, and their roots lie deep there'." (I wonder what our Gandhivadis have to say now.)

Whatever the Adivasis may have been originally, there's no doubt that they were gradually absorbed into the Hindu fold -- just like the pagans of Saudi Arabia and northern Africa were into Islam, but only many, many centuries earlier. So does that give Hindus poaching rights over Arabs...? The Niyogi Report states, "Where a tribe has insensibly been converted into a caste, it preserved its original name and customs, but modified its animistic practices more and more in the direction of orthodox Hinduism. Numerous examples of this process are to be found all over India and it has been at work for centuries."

Besides, what's the difference between Hindu forms of worship and the Adivasis' "animism" anyway? Don't Hindus worship trees on Vat Savitri, snakes on Nag Panchami, and cows everyday? In 1891, **J A Baines**, the Census Commissioner, considered as futile the distinction between tribals who were "Hinduised" and those that followed a tribal form of religion because, "every stratum of Indian society is more or less saturated with Animistic Conceptions but little raised above those which predominate in the early state of religious development."

Tell me, how many Hindu Gods and Goddesses can you name...? Even if you believe that each God is a mere form of the One Reality, how many forms of, say, Durga, can you name? Have you heard of Zanai? Well, She's a Bhosle *daivat,* and the tribals of that area of Satara district, too, worship Her. **Ms B Nivedita**, of the Vivekananda Kendra at Kanyakumari, writes, "The missionaries called the Gods and Goddesses of these [*north eastern tribal*] communities 'spirits'... First introducing and then popularising the use of 'spirits' for the *Devi-Devata* of these communities, the missionaries started their campaign for conversion. The people were told, 'You do not have God. You worship only spirits. What you have is only primitive ideas of religion and a bundle of superstitions. If you want to be saved then follow the Only True God'."

But why did the 1991 census make the anti-Hindu distinction...? Really, you shouldn't ask stupid questions when you jolly well know the will of a political class and bureaucracy steeped in Fabian socialism and manipulated by frankly-Red historians. Till 1901, all communities -- like *nagarvasi, gramvasi, vanavasi* -- were listed as Hindus. But in 1901, the census officers were directed by the British government to mention the religion of Adivasis as "animism."

Thing is, the census officers kept complaining that it was nearly impossible for them to decide who was an animist and who was a Hindu, since all worshipped God in many forms. Thus, in one census, a community was "animist" and in the next it was Hindu, or vice versa. Finally, the government directed the officers to enter the name of a community as the name of its religion. *Voilà*: the religion of the Santhals became "Santhal," that of the Nagas became "Naga," and so on. After that, deriding each "religion" became easier for missionaries following the policy of Divide & Convert.

But, no matter what manipulations followed, the British just couldn't distinguish between Hinduism and "animism." In the census of 1901, **Sir Herbert Risley** observed that

"Hinduism itself was animism more or less transformed by philosophy," and that no sharp line of demarcation could be drawn between them as the one melted away into the other (*The People of*

India, 2nd edition). In 1931, the census commissioner, **Dr J H Hutton**, admitted that the line between Hinduism and tribal religion was difficult to draw and the inclusion of tribals within the Hindu fold was easy (Census of India, 1931, India Report, Vol I, Part I). The deputy commissioner of Amravati, Mr Stent, sent a note to the census officer saying that the educated Indian officers maintained that Gonds, Korkus, Bhils, Gowaris and Banjaras were Hindus, and that he himself conceded that when members of these tribes settled in a Hindu village they became Hindus. He commented on the tendency of Hinduism to absorb the religion of other people, and also pointed out that the aboriginals returned themselves as Hindus... (Census Report, Central Provinces and Berar, 1931, Volume XII, Part I).

Then why did the British persist with the scheme? The Niyogi Report states, "It is not easy to find any sound reason for isolating the tribal people from the Hindus in view of the repeated admissions made that the animistic or tribal religion was hardly distinguishable from the Hindu religion. The mystery is solved when we come to examine the Missionary activities within these tribal areas." Those activities form a book, bits of which I'll give you some time.

How missionaries lull stupid Hindus can be seen from the census of 1941: That year, for the first time, heads were counted community-wise instead of on the basis of religion. That is, a tribal was classified merely as one who belonged to a scheduled tribe despite his being a Christian. Result, the all-India figures for Christians were shown as 6,040,665 -- which was less by 256,098 than the figure recorded in 1931. However, the Census Commissioner of India, Mr Yeats, made a note where he disclosed that about 1/20th of the total tribal population were Christian. Meaning, there was actually an increase of 3,474,128 persons among the Christian community during 1931-41.

But let's return to where we started -- Gujarat and its tribals. Davinder Kumar wrote in *Outlook* of July 1: "Of all the disturbing facts that have emerged from the post-mortem of the communal carnage in Gujarat, the most baffling and alarming is the large-scale participation of Dalits and tribals in the rioting... Even more shocking: tribals, who have little in common with mainstream Hinduism, brandished weapons, looted and killed as they violently avenged the 'attack on Hindus'."

From **Rajdeep Sardesai, to Barbara Crossette,** to Our Special Correspondent -- everybody needed smelling salts at this revelation. Quite natural. After all, what would those whose lineage has no bond with Hinduism except for, if at all, the occasional *phuljhadi* at Diwali, know about a Hindu memory...?

Identity is the result of the interactions among an array of phenomena that gather around a responsive core and induce its expression. Since the interactions are diverse, the relations that emerge, too, are diverse and thus prone to change. An individual is not just a biological entity; he also carries a memory imprint which, among others, accommodates the body's mental and spiritual needs against the external forces that protect or threaten his survival. The Adivasi or Vanvasi or tribal was and is a Hindu. And as a Hindu, he did not require "successful experiment" to rise in unprecedented anger at the unprecedented provocation of 58 Hindus -- men, women and children -- locked into a bogie and set on fire.

On the night of January 7, 1993, four women, three men and two girls were locked in a room, doused with kerosene, and set on fire. When the news of the Radhabai Chawl massacre spread, including how the attackers stood around shouting "Allah-o-Akbar," Bombay burned. When 68

Hindus suffer the same fate, why wouldn't Gujarat burn...? Did you really expect the Dalits and Adivasis of Gujarat to be as brainwashed by our "eminent historians" as you are?

The right or wrong of the Gujarat riots is not at debate here. I'm talking "Hindutva laboratory" and "animists." Neither exists. What does is vile human character -- as displayed by the Muslims in their unprovoked massacre, by the Hindus in their brutal retort, and by the Christians in their unceasing efforts to destroy Hinduism. Fact is, as long as "secularists" keep pinning Hindutva and condoning Islam and Christianity, there will be more Gujarats.

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Towards Balkanisation, IV: Catholics

http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/sep/02varsha.htm

Towards Balkanisation, Part I
Towards Balkanisation, Part II
Towards Balkanisation, III: Missionaries

In May, the UK-based Market & Opinion Research International published a poll which indicated that 61% Kashmiris wanted to remain Indian citizens while 6% wished to be Pakis. Although Lord Eric Reginald Avebury, the man behind the poll, has been known for his strongly pro-Pak tilt, Pakistan still called it India's "PR ploy" - which is a perfectly understandable reaction from the US's newly annexed territory. But, what would you call those Indian citizens who took umbrage at these findings...?

Take a look at these snatches: "Unfortunately, the unpublished fact was that only 9% of the people in Srinagar thought so, while 13% preferred a Pakistani citizenship. The happier figures came from Jammu... Many questions remain about the survey, including the one as to who financed it. Mori does not do things for free. Their interest at all times, it makes clear, are commercial... Interestingly, there is no record if Mori ever conducted a similar survey in PoK... [*MORI's Indian partner*] has reason to keep that matter confidential. The report sent by PTI and used by the India media patriotically, has larger dimensions than the ones published."

The question that pops up is: even if 80% of Srinagar*vasis* want to go with Pakistan, why is the non-publishing of that statistic "unfortunate"? Are we to understand that the people of a tiny part of Jammu & Kashmir must control the destiny of the entire State...? As my friend Subhash Kak put it: "Would it be right for the entire State of Michigan to be granted independence if the African-Americans of the greater Detroit region should agitate for it? Or, should just Detroit be granted independence if the African-Americans of the city start a violent campaign for it? Would it be appropriate for the US to grant independence to Miami, or allow it to become a part of a greater Cuba, just because it has a Hispanic majority?" Would any country in the world allow such a scenario to be translated into reality...?

Nope, the writer casting suspicion on MORI is not a pinko but an entity just as foul: John Dayal, national secretary of the All India Catholic Union and national convener of the United Christian Forum for Human Rights. Dayal's essay on the MORI survey is available on the website of the All India Christian Council and -- of course -- those of "dalitstan" and "khalistan." Such, then, is the role of the Catholic Church in India...

In truth, I'd have tackled a different subject this week -- but for the abusive messages from Catholic readers, who wanted it known that the Adventists, or Protestants, or Baptists, or Mormons, or whatever, are the bad guys. Which is quite hilarious. For, why would it matter to a Hindu which sect of Christianity was implicated in the latest act of poaching when ALL of them do it on a regular basis -- and Catholics, since before the others arrived?? In fact, John Dayal and his Catholic cohorts are the worst act I've ever seen! Far worse than the Muslim Board, which enters my crosshair only when its dicta on legal issues goes contrary to the Constitution. But Christian activists are a different breed - they aggressively seek to weaken Hindu society in terms of numbers as well as space.

Still, the emails went on and on about "the percentage of Christians in India still remains 2.5-3% of the Indian population" and why an 85% majority shouldn't be worried about conversion... I ask you, what's this "majority"?? Today, my mother, brother and I occupy a 3-bedroom apartment. Tomorrow, if Martians took over two bedrooms while one of them shared the single room left to us, we'd be a majority in that reduced space -- an artificially compressed majority. Once upon a time, Hindus were a majority in a far larger Hindustan. Therefore, today's "85%" not only means shit, but should also be an impetus to ensure that this space does not shrink any further. So stuff that "majority" argument where the sun doesn't shine.

Christian leaders in India have always gotten away with a lot: While Bukhari & Co get showered with scathing editorials for far less nonsense, various Bishops and Reverends don't get even a fleeting mention. Possibly because most writers come from Christian schools. Take, for instance, the July 2000 ruckus between the National Commission on Minorities and the Catholic leadership: The NCM had investigated relevant cases and affirmed that the attacks on Christians in UP and Haryana were isolated incidents, with commission member John Joseph saying that Christian militants, too, were active in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and the North-East.

Was that, is that, a lie? Or even an exaggeration? Yet, the Catholic Bishops Conference of India and the All India Catholic Congress demanded Joseph's expulsion for having "deliberately derogating Christian churches and threatening them." Truth is the one thing that our "secularists" cannot face. Hence, no op-eds.

The Parivar-atrocities-on-Christians bit, I thought, had worn thin by now. That is, before I read last week's mail on raped nuns. I don't get it: Did the "secularists" and Christian fundamentalists renounce newspapers after the initial reports on the rapes at Jhabua...?

- Investigations by the police -- controlled by the Congress government of MP -- revealed that all the 24 rapists of Jhabua were Bhils, 12 of them were Christian, and none was associated with the Parivar.
- While Jhabua was a half-truth, Jhajjar was a total lie. One newspaper, on the authority of our favourite Catholic propagandist, reported that nuns in Haryana had been raped by you-know-who. But investigations by another newspaper revealed that a mahila mandal had

shouted at them for interfering in local politics - and that is all. There was no case for the police.

- So also, the nun of Baripada, Orissa. Forget about signs of rape, the doctors couldn't find signs even of struggle -- the marks on her body were reported to be "superficial and self-inflicted." And guess what -- the police were told that all the clothes she'd been wearing were burnt immediately after the assault. How convenient.

Nevertheless, all these cases were circulated at the international level by the Church and thugs of the Sabrang/Sahmat variety. As were the bomb blasts that rocked AP, Goa and Karnataka: The Sangh Parivar was promptly pronounced guilty by the media, till the Bangalore police -- controlled by the Congress government of Karnataka -- found it to be the handiwork of the ISI-backed Deendar Anjuman.

It's plain as pike why pinkos and Christians have been taking these fabrications to town since 1998: "With the BJP in power, Hindu extremists are able to assert themselves more stridently than ever... For years, the VHP has been organizing 'reconversion' camps. That campaign has lately been stepped up in MP, which has a large, partly Christian, tribal community" (*Asiaweek*, October 30, 1998). For the missionaries and the pinkos, it was essential then -- just as it's crucial now -- to totally discredit any Hindu agency that works towards getting people back into the Hindu fold. Hence the attack on the IDRF at the Congressional Committee on International Religious Freedom. (BTW, do read Ramesh Rao's article on the conspiracy against the IDRF for details on fund distribution.)

Now for some Q&A that should shed more light on my stand:

Reader James: *"Do you actually think this is a laudable goal, to ensure that people do not attempt to stray from the groups into which they were born? To presume that all choices made by people in difficult circumstances are ipso facto the product of coercion?"*

I'm not against conversion *per se*. If people absorb and thus prefer another religion, by all means, let them convert. My objection is to the deceptions missionaries use to attract the poor of Third World countries: Bribery is not OK. As Yvette Rosser writes, "Many unethical methods have been used to 'save the souls' of these simple rural folk. One tactic is to throw a stone statue of the God Hanuman in a pond along with a wooden crucifix. The Adivasis are told that the Christian God is more powerful because he floats to the top and Hanuman sinks to the bottom." All those who've reconverted say the same things -- we were promised free education and jobs if we converted, but we followed the old way all along. What sort of "soul-saving" is this? Worse still, missionaries don't tend the flock forever: It's just a numbers game -- as in "Go 1 million."

"On a higher level, it is too bad that you seem to feel like Hinduism is not robust enough to survive the minor -- indeed 'trivial' -- challenges it now faces from Christianity. It has managed to survive thousands of years, despite VASTLY more concerted historical efforts by Islamic and Buddhist attempts to proselytize Hindus."

Hinduism's surviving the past is no guarantee that it can withstand the present (there were no pinkos then). For centuries, Pakistan and Bangladesh were a part of India; only in the last century, that changed. What's the guarantee that a "Christistan" won't be carved out over the next 50 years...? Technology, reach, market, ethics -- everything has undergone a quantum change. A new

age requires a different thought -- for Hindus, one VASTLY different from simply wishing troubles away. Why would I passively watch the way of my forefathers become a minority religion in the land of my forefathers?

Reader Soumya: *"Which individual does not want social equality, religious, social and economic freedoms? If the other Hindus would unite to help them obtain what should have been provided to them in the first place, the missionaries would take their business elsewhere. No sense in blasting the missionaries if we cannot clean up our own back yard first."*

I agree -- we should clean up our backyard first. However, when some of us begin to do that by opening schools and hospitals for and giving jobs to Dalits and Adivasis, the "secularists" raise Cain over "Hindutva laboratory." What else are "secularists" but pawns in the hands of pinkos and evangelists?

Secondly, is social equality granted to Christian converts? If so, why did John Dayal oppose the Census 2001 form with: "A Scheduled caste, or Dalit, Indian citizen is being forced to chose only between the Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist faiths, and is not allowed to claim that he belongs to the Muslim, Christian, animist, indigenous, agnostic, or no-faith categories." **If conversion to Christianity certifies social equality, why would there be a "Dalit Christian"?** As for guaranteeing economic freedom, don't make me laugh.

"Along with opening schools and giving jobs to the people (which is very commendable and should be supported), the Sangh Parivar has been known to promote Hindu pride by encouraging intolerance towards non-Hindus, and denigration of their religion. There is a big difference between promoting pride in Hinduism by educating children and raising people's awareness of the religion."

Your opinion has been formed by "facts" reported by the left-leaning media. "Secularist" opinions, I reject. And anti-Hindutva "reports," I verify. How many urban people have personal knowledge about this promotion of hatred? Why are the findings in the vernacular press different from those in the English counterpart? Instead of giving in to prejudice, it's better you ponder the cause and effect of such reports.

However, I must clarify: Since January 1, 2000 -- the day after Vajpayee, Advani & Co released Masood Azhar to the Pakis -- my support for the Sangh Parivar is entirely issue-based. The Parivar is suffused in some awful evils -- but "Hindutva laboratory," I'm afraid, is straight out of Antonio Gramsci. To wit: "Members and front organizations must continually embarrass, discredit and degrade our critics. When obstructionists become too irritating, label them as fascist, or Nazi or anti-Semitic... The association will, after enough repetition, become 'fact' in the public mind."

Alexander Solzhenitzyn, after his stint in the gulag, realised, "To destroy a people, you must first sever their roots." And Hinduism is the lifeblood of India.

Towards Balkanisation, V: Adivasis

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articles on hinduism

Towards Balkanisation, III: Missionaries
By Varsha Bhosle
http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/aug/26varsha.htm

On Wednesday, Tarlochan Singh, vice-chairman of the National Commission for Minorities, wrote to the presidents of the Catholic Bishops Council of India and the National Council of Churches in India, citing incidents in Punjab, Bhilai and Jharkhand where "Christian missionaries fully supported with medical teams have been going around in many villages alluring poor Sikh families to adopt Christianity." Directing the Christian leaders "to desist from this activity" he wrote, "I have been approached by a large number of Sikh organisations to take up this matter. I request you to... adopt a policy not to make further attempts of converting Sikhs through any means."

It's good to know the NCM supports a group that's opposing the Church's nefarious activity; and comforting that it's the Sikhs who are rejecting conversion. After all, if the pinkos' schemes succeed, the remaining Hindus -- as per Sikhism's foundation charter and Hindu "tradition" (read, cowardice) -- can once again fall at Sikh feet for protection.

Christians fanatically evangelize. Muslims aren't into conversion anymore but want Islam to rule all polities, and we know what that entails. Ditto, the Communists with their creed. Ask a Gay his thoughts on the "curing" of nascent homosexuals via psychotherapy, and he, too, will flare up in anger. But the Hindu is the *only* species that not only watches benignly as his own kind diminishes, but also blocks those who resist conversion...

As my friend Amberish Diwanji once put it: "If one converts because doing so accords him respect and gives him a sense of identity and belonging, where is there the question of forcible conversion. If one chooses to follow the faith of those who have helped and are helping him the most, as opposed to those who torment him, can he be faulted? If there are Hindus who are worried by conversions, they should try and redeem Hinduism, go out and serve the tribals and Dalits and the poor. Make the lowest believe that Hinduism too provides balm for the soul, for a poor has little else to ask for."

That was in 1996. And Amberish didn't question the "respect" and "sense of belonging" that "Dalit Christians" and "Dalit Muslims" feel. A minor oversight?

But observe the change of tune by "secularists" now: "There is a boy, orphaned since the age of five, who is housed, fed and schooled here just outside New Delhi, free of charge... The school is

part of a network of social service organizations that cater to indigenous people and 'dalits,' or those on the lowest rungs of the Hindu caste ladder... Across remote villages, it dispatches so-called barefoot doctors armed with first-aid kits and drugs to combat dysentery. It sets up orphanages for the abandoned and hostels for children who must travel long distances to go to school" (*The New York Times*, May 13). Actually, this article, "Hindu Right Goes To School To Build A Nation," written by a Bong, is one bashing the RSS for serving the tribals and Dalits and the poor...

But let's get back to the Sikhs, who've learnt from at least one part of their history: After the second Anglo Sikh war, the British exiled the boy Duleep Singh to Fatehgarh, in the care of a British guardian. Unlike previous British rulers, Lord Dalhousie wished to transform India, towards which end he promoted and supported the work of Christian missionaries: Fatehgarh just happened to be a mission. John Login and his wife, who had taken on the parental role in the boy's life, just happened to be devout Christians. Duleep was encouraged to have two English boys as his closest friends, one of whom just happened to be the son of a missionary. The textbooks he was given just happened to be full of Christian messages. His servant, Bhajan Lal, just happened to be a Christian convert. And Bhajan Lal just happened to read from the Bible to the boy every night. Duleep Singh was, in fact, totally dependent on the goodwill of his prisoners and limited to living in the centre of Christian missionary activity.

What happened next? Exactly what can be expected when missionaries shower the weak with their mercies: The last Sikh ruler of the kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was surreptitiously converted to Christianity, dispatched to England and resettled near Cambridge, thereby minimising all chances of his becoming a rallying point for the people of Punjab. Next, "A facade of a ceremony was arranged in which the young prince was made to present the famous Koh-i-Noor to Queen Victoria and 13 most valuable relics pertaining to Maharaja Ranjit Singh to the Prince of Wales. The remaining jewellery in the Toshkhana of the Maharaja was either taken over by the British officials or auctioned to public thus putting to an end the glory and grandeur of the mighty empire of a mighty ruler of Punjab" (*The Tribune*, April 8, 2001).

We know that the exit of British rule did not mean the exit of Christian evangelism - that remains a clear and present danger: "India also has vast areas of more unreached groups - people with no access to the Gospel - than any other country. One such area is the Punjab - home of the Sikhs... Today there is much opportunity for Christian outreach." So says the Maranatha Gospel Mission based in Bhilai. The same Bhilai that Tarlochan Singh mentioned.

Last week, a Christian dork wrote me, "Adivasis are being re-converted from funds that come in from NRIs and others... but, aren't they doing exactly what the Christians are doing? But, you seem to justify what the RSS does by saying that the Christians did it... what a hypocrite!"

Actually, I never have justified the RSS's actions by saddling them with those of the missionaries. Read my lips: I support reconversion and the dissemination of Hindu awareness because I want Hindus to remain Hindu, Jains to remain Jain, Buddhists to remain Buddhist, and Sikhs to remain Sikh. Secondly, because a blunderbuss is no match for a daisy-cutter, the RSS must use the same weapons that missionaries use. So, more power to its fund raising. Where's the hypocrisy in that?! Regardless of it not being a zero-sum game, I don't see why I shouldn't root for Hinduism. **Unlike the "secularists," I'm not ashamed of being a Hindu!**

But we all know the reasons for the "secular" anger, right? The synchronized "action alerts" of pinko groups worldwide; the constant slamming of "Hindu nationalists" by the "liberal" media -- again, worldwide; the appearance of Kanwal-Rekhi-with-a-Christian-wife before the US Commission on International Religious Freedom; Father Prakash's deposition against the funding of "Hindu terrorists"... **It's because the Sangh Parivar has been checking the tide of conversion:**

- "A Hindu organisation has re-converted 37 Adivasis who converted to Christianity, back to Hinduism, at a one-day Vishwa Hindu Sammelan held at Peth, the tribal dominant tehsil town in Nashik district. The sammelan, organised by a recently formed Hindu organisation, Dharmaraksha Samiti, was attended by over 9,000 delegates from all over Maharashtra and neighbouring states." (*UNI*, January 6, 1999)
- "The first-ever mass reconversion drive organised by the VHP in West Bengal took place in Malda district today as the Marxist government of the state watched helplessly. Amidst fanfare, 500 tribal Christians and 50 Muslims embraced Hinduism as priests chanted mantras and performed the *paraavartan yajna*." (*rediff.com*, March 25, 1999)
- In July 2000, seven families, belonging to the Mising community, were reconverted to Hinduism in Majuli. "The Satradhikar also said that originally 300 families had been converted to Christianity and it was likely that many of them would reconvert to their original religion." (*The Asian Age*, July 10, 2000)
- In February 2001, over 1,300 tribals were reconverted to Hinduism. The reconversion was co-sponsored by the VHP, and was named *Sanatan Ghar Vapsi*. "Rituals of reconversion began with recitation of hymns by members of 270 families who had earlier adopted Christianity." (*The Tribune*, February 13, 2001)
- "Hundreds of families who converted to Christianity over 100 years ago and were settled by the British in Haryana villages by giving them land are now shedding their Christian identity in a bid to join the mainstream of rural Haryana. Their younger generation has completely discarded Christian names and reverted to Hindu names... [*Joseph*] was also honest enough to admit that most of them continued to be Christians because they got preference for admissions to Christian educational institutions and jobs in mission hospitals and schools." (*The Tribune*, January 25)
- In April, over 20 Christian tribals near Malda re-converted to Hinduism on Baisakhi. "With this, the total number of conversions of the tribesmen to Hinduism from Christianity and other religions in Malda district stood at some 300. The ceremony was conducted at the VHP's Buddhikamach Chitrakut." (*The Tribune*, April 23)

In truth, I do not fear Islam -- for its attacks are open, direct and can be fended off with a bit of spine. But Christian evangelists are another can of worms altogether: Not only do they get unlimited financial and political support from the fundamentalists in the US and Europe, including the Vatican, but they also attack with stealth, cunning and persistence.

Take, for instance, the case of the Haryana constables: The state recruited 1,600 police constables in 1995, which recruitment was then challenged in the high court. Subsequently, in 2000, the Supreme Court ruled against the recruitment procedure and hence their services were terminated. Nevertheless, in August 2001, the vice-president of the Haryana Police Employees Union ("Union," "NGO," "academic," "professor," "documentary maker" usually indicate

you-know-what) announced, "If all 1,600 dismissed Haryana police constables were not taken back into service, all of them, who are Hindus, will adopt Christianity..." But that wasn't all; the sentence ended with: "...and in this regard they are in regular contact with Christian missionary people."

The British politician did not invent the policy of Divide & Rule, nor did the pinkos -- it was handed down to them by the Church. The 1954-instituted Niyogi Commission, while investigating the charge that Christian missionaries had instigated the movement for an independent State, noted in *The Report of the Christian Missionaries Enquiry Committee MP, Nagpur, 1956*:

- On the integration of the States, Missionaries became afraid of losing their influence. So they started an agitation, playing on the religious feelings of the primitive Christian converts, representing the Madhya Pradesh government as consisting of infidels... Some of the articles published in Missionary papers... were hardly distinguishable from the writings in Muslim papers advocating Pakistan before the 15th of August 1947.
- The demand for Adiwasisthan was accentuated along with the one for Pakistan in 1938. The Muslim League is reported to have donated Rs 1 lakh for propaganda work. With the advent of political independence in India, the agitation for Adiwasisthan was intensified, with a view to forming a sort of corridor joining East Bengal with Hyderabad, which could be used for a pincer movement against India in the event of a war between India and Pakistan.
- This attempt of the Adiwasis initiated by the Christian section thereof is a feature which is common to the developments in Burma, Assam and Indo-China among the Karens, Nagas and Amboynes... But the idea of change of religion as bringing about change of nationality appears to have originated in the Missionary circles... Thus while the Census officer isolates certain sections of the people from the main bodies, the Missionaries, by converting them, give them a separate nationality so that they may demand a separate State for themselves.

Nothing has really changed in India between now and then: The ethos of the politicians is about the same, so is that of the people, and Godse was a villain even then. Even so, the six members of the Niyogi Commission were not harangued and abused as "Hindu fundamentalists." The difference lies only in the media: Then, opinion makers aired the facts -- and not the leftist versions thereof.

Update: The day after I submitted this column, *The Hindu* reported that 250 villagers were baptised on Saturday by pastors of the Seventh Day Adventist Church at its South Tamil Conference in Madurai. The villagers were asked to affirm their commitment to Christianity and "to donate one-tenth of their monthly earnings for missionary work. Enquiries show that the villagers, mostly below the poverty line, had been brought for baptism with promises of 'economic emancipation.' During 2001, the Seventh Day Adventist Church here had converted 1,500 Hindus... **According to an organiser of the baptism, the president of Seventh Day Adventist Church, India, DR Watts, a Canadian, had set a 'tough target' for the pastors, titled 'Go 1 million.' The website, 'maranatha.org,' reveals the activities carried out by this congregation throughout the country... where thousands of Hindus were converted."**

No religion, no ideology, no government can guarantee anybody's "economic emancipation." If this is not a deceit only to diminish the strength of Hinduism, what is? Get

out your checkbooks, guys; we can do better than one-tenth.

Towards Balkanisation, IV: Catholics
Towards Balkanisation, V: Adivasis

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Towards Balkanisation, Part I

http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/aug/12varsha.htm

On August 2, the Supreme Court heard Solicitor General Harish Salve read out a 1992 question paper set for West Bengal's higher secondary Hindi examination under the auspices of its Communist government. Students were asked to write an essay on one of the following:

- National unity and integrity are false political slogans.
- In Hindustan, there is no place for Hindu and Hindi.
- Five-year plans are a sham.
- Statistics on national development are a fraud.
- Democracy is a conspiracy.
- National revolution is the only way for progress.

The students were also given a choice to précis the passage: "New Delhi is a heartless administrative seat, on which sit not elected representatives of people, but anti-social poisonous snakes coming out of the caste jungle. Progress has been destroyed by tradition, education by the English medium, religion by political secularism, human beings by greed, idealism by dirty consumerism..."

Or, expanding upon: "Red Flag in Red Fort is the demand of Hindustan."

Next came a question in the mathematics paper for the 1999-2000 annual examination for Class VI students in a higher secondary school: "Three friends, Pervez, Atal and Bill went on a picnic. Pervez bought 750 grams of meat at Rs 120 a kg; Atal bought other food for Rs 75, and Bill gave some money to Atal and Pervez, so that their expenditure was equal. How much money did Atal and Pervez receive from Bill?"

At which point, Justice M B Shah got the gist of it and asked Mr Salve "not to read any more."

Of course the papers are hilariously blatant examples of leftist indoctrination, variations of which are being hammered into Indian children since the prime ministership of Jawaharlal Nehru, he of *Glimpses of World History.* However, more hilarious and blatant are the comments in *The Telegraph's* report:

- Salve *dramatically* brought out a question paper...
- Justice Shah stopped the court room *drama*...
- Salve also attached *BJP propaganda material* against this question...

When the scribe -- or the copy editor -- couldn't avoid reporting material damaging to his ideological masters, he ensured that readers at least got the impression that the Solicitor General of India is no more than a loud actor, one carrying a Hindutva party card. No matter that the "propaganda" Mr Salve "attached" to his argument was: "Marxists, who have reached ideological bankruptcy, are now targeting young students through education in West Bengal. They are making an attempt to sow poisonous seeds, reflective of their low thinking, into the consciousness of the children in Burdwan district of West Bengal."

But even more comical is the impetus for Mr Salve's sins: The court is hearing a public interest litigation filed by social activist Aruna Roy, columnist B G Verghese and sociologist Meena Tyabji, challenging the revised national curriculum -- which is "saffron" and "impinges on the country's secular character," hahahahahaha...

And how reasonable was the pinko attack? Well, when their counsel repeatedly made disparaging references to Hindu castes and scriptures, the Bench shot him down with: "Do not abuse any caste, do not abuse the word 'Brahmin' as it has a wider meaning... How can India live without the Vedas and the Upanishads which are the essence of the spiritual heritage of the country? If you look at it with a coloured approach, it is coloured." Thank god for the Supreme Court.

"Islam and Christianity are the only religions which treated man with honour and equality," is an extract from a textbook for Class V in West Bengal. From the books written by our "eminent" historians, we learn that Veer Savarkar, Khudi Ram Bose and Hardayal were terrorists; Bengal's disparate revolutionaries, bound by their devotion to Ma Kali, were terrorists; Aurangzeb was a "*zinda pir*"; in ancient India, "people ate beef but did not take pork on any considerable scale"; Chhatrapati Shivaji's victories were a mere "growth of Maratha national sentiment"; Jats were "plunderers"; the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur "was due to the intrigues of some members of his family"; and Alauddin's attack on Chittor to get Padmini is a "popular legend."

Fortunately, my school curriculum was regulated by, what was known as, Senior Cambridge (yup, a thorough Macaulite). So I can discern why Prof Amartya Sen sees nothing wrong in "Red Flag in Red Fort is the demand of Hindustan," even as he claims an "organised attempt [*is*] on to distort history." **Or why Prof Irfan Habib is silent about "In Hindustan, there is no place for Hindu,"** even as he states that the Sangh Parivar wants to "present facts in such a fashion as to inculcate 'pride in the nation' which in turn is the India of their narrow imagination."

"India of their narrow imagination"? Not too long ago, Pakistani columnist Irfan Hussain wrote in the *Dawn*: "Recently, a very perceptive and learned Indian reader wrote me a long e-mail in which... he argued that over time, large groupings of disparate nationalities like India would break up into their component parts which would then be more vibrant entities, freed from the stifling stranglehold of the centre." Need we wonder about the ideological moorings of this Indian reader...? Especially in the light of "National unity and integrity are false political slogans"?

Did you, for instance, know that the thesis of a Sikh homeland -- propagated as "Khalistan" in the 1980s -- was propounded for the first time by the Communists in the 1940s, had its roots in the Soviets' *Thesis of Nationalities,* and was drafted by CPI-M's Harkishan Singh Surjeet...? Though the final draft of the Sikh homeland thesis was published in the name of senior leader Gangadhar Adhikari on behalf of the CPI in 1944 (the Punjabi translation was done by CPI's Avtar Singh Malhotra in 1946), Surjeet is the one to whom we owe the concept of Khalistan.

The creation of political instability is a key feature of the Left's politics. They neither believe in parliamentary democracy nor do they accept the existence of one Indian nationality -- their views on nationality inclining towards the balkanisation of the Indian state. During the 1940s, the CPI supported the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan and Gangadhar Adhikari became the self-styled spokesman of the League. The pinkos held that the country must concede the Muslims' "right to self-determination accompanied by the right of autonomous state of existence" -- prompting Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, himself a leftist, to say, "India was killed by the CPI, which provided the Muslim separatists with an ideological basis for the irrational and anti-national demand for Pakistan."

Even after Independence, the 1951 Madurai congress of the CPI, and the third party congress in 1953, endorsed the "right of nationalities and their right to self-determination." That spirit of balkanisation still exists in their concept of Indian nationality -- and is the mooring of the "learned Indian reader" who dreams of an India shattering into tiny pieces. Hindutva at least has an imagination of India; Communism wishes its annihilation.

Which is why India is touted as a "multilingual, multinational and multiracial subcontinent, and it was

merged into a single state under British rule by the British bayonet." Which is why *Adivasis* are "animists." Which is why "if India had a golden age before the coming of the Muslims, it was a Buddhist age." Which is why there's nothing like a Hindu period in Indian history. Which is why Ramakrishna Missions are attacked by the CPI-M's goons. Which is why a separate identity is legitimised as a "sub-nationality." Which is why the demand for the UCC is condemned as an attack on the existence of minorities...

Bottom-line: Should India's 85 per cent majority get a sense of pride in its Hindu identity, the Red blocks would swiftly come tumbling down.

Nevertheless, I must admit that pinkos think laterally. While the few proud Hindus who still exist in India are busy defending their religion in their own backyard, the leftists have embarked on an attack to weaken Hinduism's roots abroad -- among whites! Wow, I didn't even know about the threat of Hinduism entering mainstream America. **Ace pinko Vijay Prashad** brought it to my notice with his article, "Suburban Whites and Pogroms in India," in *Z Magazine*.

Overtly, this piece acts as a warning to whites to stop funding the Sangh Parivar for its supposed pogroms against minorities in India, and is the usual spit-and-bile trash pinkos regularly churn out. Normally, like the other 15-per-week of this genre, I'd have junked the piece after a scan. But this got my attention with its anti-Hinduism undercurrent -- one that subtly ridicules whites for being attracted to or being conned towards Hinduism. Thus:

- what do we do about the romantic entry of suburban whites into Hinduism
- "Asia" functions as an alibi for a politics to transcend the condition of the suburb
- Are "curiosity" and "respect" sufficient grounds for the entry of the suburban white into the theocratic fascism
- Those so-called "Hindu values" that would not accept the child's desire to live as a human being in a complex world
- The legacy and persistence of racism provides respect to any artifact or institution of color that is worn or frequented by whites
- Many came, mainly white women, who study various aspects of Hinduism and are... otherwise respected scholars of Indology. Eager for cash, they disregarded the role they played for Hindutva
- those whites who become Hindus in this day and age

Ok, let's take the funding of Hindutva pogroms. Prashad says, millions of dollars "finance right-wing activity in the subcontinent. This long-distance theocratic fascism was part of the destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya in 1992, the anti-Christian riots in Gujarat... in the state-engineered pogrom against Muslims in Gujarat." **Kanwal Rekhi claims, "recipients of their money are out to destroy minorities and their places of worship." Robert Hathaway adds, "monies so raised are used to promote religious bigotry."**

Yes, ok, we got all that. But could you please tell us, into what do the millions of dollars actually go? Have you heard of Uzi firings in Gujarat, or RDX blasts in Ayodhya, or Dara Singh's using Stingers? Do the worthies of the RSS zip around in private jets? No, na? Then where have these millions disappeared?? To make accusations as grave as these stick, they must be supported by evidence about the other end of the saffron-dollar channel. But there's none forthcoming! Except stuff like "Hindutva-style cruelty devastates the landscape" -- the kind of garbage spewed by a mediocre "secular" columnist.

In December 1999, **Thomson and Thomson (ie, Prashad and Biju Mathew) penned an "exposé" in *Himal* about saffron dollars.** In it, they claimed to have begun a "study of the Hindu Right in the US several years ago." They vilified the Indian Development and Relief Fund, they slammed the Vanvasi Kalyan Kendra, the Keshava Seva Samithi and the Hindu Heritage Endowment, all with the typical polemics against Hindutva. Point is, after the "several years" plus two years, they still can't offer a shred

of evidence on monies funding Hindu terrorism...

But we all know what the desperation is all about, don't we? It's the dreaded "A" and "D" words -- Adivasis and Dalits, groups which are being guided *back* to the Hindu stream by the Parivar. For instance, in January 1999, the Vishwa Hindu Sammelan re-converted 37 Adivasis from Christianity; in January 2002, 2 lakh Adivasis vowed to save Hinduism at a rally organised by Sewa Bharati at Jhabua. That's where the bulk of these dollars go: to educate the tribals and Dalits and make them aware of being constituents of Hindu society.

And that's what worries the pinkos, Rekhi-with-a-Christian-wife, Father Prakash *et al* -- an integrated Hindu populace. No wonder Arundhati Roy moans, "How else can you explain why Dalits in Gujarat, who have been despised, oppressed and treated worse than refuse by the upper castes for thousands of years, have joined hands with their oppressors..." (By the way, what "thousands" of years? But novelists earn via fiction. And bad novelists, via bad fiction.)

Since decades, Christian missionaries and Islamists have been pumping money into India. And what did that get Hindus...? Expulsion from Mizoram; massacres in Meghalaya; harassment in Nagaland; reduction to a minority status in J&K, as well as in many districts of Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Kerala; and subversive madarssas in every nook and cranny of the country. Do pinkos protest about any of this? Any testimonies before the US Commission on International Religious Freedom...?

Why would they?! Unlike the RSS' Adivasi programmes, those of Islamists and Christian fundamentalists take pinkos towards their ultimate goal -- the balkanisation of India.

Towards Balkanisation, Part II
Towards Balkanisation, III: Missionaries
Towards Balkanisation, IV: Catholics
Towards Balkanisation, V: Adivasis

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Towards Balkanisation, Part II

http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/aug/19varsha.htm

Towards Balkanisation, Part I

Responding to my previous essay, a furious "secularist" from West Bengal wrote, "nowhere did we come across the stuff you mentioned in the books. And neither do they appear today. If they [*Left Front*] had really called Khudiram Bose a terrorist they would have lost half of their seats in the assembly. I am sure like all air-headed media persons of present genre, you have either done scant research or very 'selective' research. And why sully Dr Amartya Sen's name? Has he endorsed that question paper that you mentioned?"

If this were a lone case, I may have ignored it. 'Twas not. You see, in the dorks' world view, not only are the distortions by our "eminent" historians God's Own Truth, but anybody who denudes these eminences, too, is an air-head, a liar and a bigot. So let me expand on what I had only fleetingly mentioned, in the misguided belief that "received wisdom" hadn't yet made the uncritical Bong an unparalled ignoramus.

Once upon a time, a group of school teachers from West Bengal sent Arun Shourie a circular relating to textbooks. Dated April 28, 1989, it was issued by the West Bengal Secondary Board, and carried the reference number "Syl/89/1." It said, "All the West Bengal Government recognised secondary school Headmasters are being informed that in History textbooks recommended by this Board for Class IX, the following amendments to the chapter on the medieval period have been decided after due discussions and review by experts. The authors and publishers of Class IX History textbooks are being requested to incorporate the amendments if books published by them have these *aushuddho* [errors] in all subsequent editions..."

Mr Shourie, in his serialised exposé on what can aptly be called pinko history, listed some 40 such amendments. I reproduce but two:

- *Bharatvarsher Itihash*, by Dr Narendranath Bhattacharya, page 89:
  Aushuddho -- "Sultan Mahmud used force for widespread murder, loot, destruction and conversion."
  Shuddho -- "There was widespread loot and destruction by Mahmud."
  (That is, no reference to massacres and forcible conversions.)
- *Itihasher Kahini*, by Nalini Bhushan Dasgupta, page 132:

Aushuddho -- "According to Todd, the purpose behind Allauddin's Chittor expedition was to secure Rana Rattan Singh's beautiful wife, Padmini."
Shuddho -- Delete.
(The British army officer and historian, Col James Todd, in his celebrated book, *The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, wrote about Allauddin's obsession with Padmini. However, to sustain the fiction of its being a "popular legend," such references, of course, had to be deleted.)

The disturbed teachers also furnished Mr Shourie with extracts from the textbook for Class V, *Bharut Kahini*, by G C Rowchoudhury. One of these was: "Islam and Christianity are the only religions which treated man with honour and equality..." Notice that not a single "eminent" historian has ever sued Mr Shourie for publishing these "lies."

The textbook for Class XII -- *Modern India* by Bipan Chandra -- assessed the entire National Movement and its leaders thus: "The speeches and writings of some of the militant nationalists had a strong religious and Hindu tinge. They emphasised ancient Indian culture to the exclusion of medieval Indian culture... They tried to abandon elements of composite culture. For example, Tilak's propagation of the Shivaji and Ganapati festivals, Aurobindo Ghose's semi-mystical concept of India as mother and nationalism as a religion, THE TERRORISTS' OATHS BEFORE GODDESS KALI, and the initiation of the Anti-Partition agitation with dips in the Ganga could hardly appeal to the Muslims."

Reader Subir is obviously ignorant of the connection between Bankim*babu's Anandmath*, Vande Mataram, the oaths taken before Ma Kali by Bengal's freedom fighters, and Khudiram Bose. Maybe that's because in the widely used textbook, *Sabhyatar Itihash* by Dr Atul Chandra Ray, Bankim Chandra is not mentioned at all. Also, in this pinko treatment of Indian history, Swami Vivekananda gets one line while Karl Marx gets forty-two...

Subir, in his eagerness to defend "secular" education, also says, "If they had really called Khudiram Bose a terrorist they would have lost half of their seats in the assembly." Hahahahahaha... talk about naïve. Here's what the CPI-M's Sudhir Ray said on March 30, 1993, during a debate in the Rajya Sabha on the SAARC Convention (Suppression of Terrorism) Bill: "Therefore, this Bill should be passed. At the same time, I also support Shri George Fernandes that there are two types of terrorism. Shri Khudi Ram and Shri Bhagat Singh were also terrorists..."

You'd think that George, too, had called Khudiram a terrorist. In fact, what George had said was: "I would say that there are two types to terrorism, one is international level terrorism and other is national level terrorism. In our country, terrorism does not mean merely whatever is happening in Kashmir and Punjab but, for instance, it also includes as to how terrorising treatment is being meted out by the Government..." That is, terrorism by the State.

Actually, the 1989 board directive ordering distortions of history was hardly a first. In 1982, the NCERT had issued a similar one on the rewriting of textbooks. Among its stipulations: "Characterisation of the medieval period as a time of conflict between Hindu and Muslims is forbidden." Thus, according to Bipan Chandra's *Modern India*, "To declare Akbar or Aurangzeb a 'foreigner' and Pratap or Shivaji a 'national' hero was to project into past history the communal outlook of 20th century India."

The hatred that pinkos and "secularists" have for Chhatrapati Shivaji is quite understandable - considering that Aurangzeb could never defeat the Hindupad Patshahi established by the Maratha and advance south of Golconda. Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and southern Karnataka have a lot to thank Shivaji for. However, the NCERT's Social Studies textbook for Class IX stated that Aurangzeb's empire extended all over Bharat and Afghanistan except Kerala and the northern hill regions of UP, Nepal, Bihar and Assam! [*The Deccan Chronicle*. June 22, 2000]

Chapter 91 of Jawaharlal Nehru's *Glimpses of World History* states, "So adventurers rose all over India, adventurers who were native to the soil... Each man or group played his or its own hand and was prepared to send all the others to the devil... there were frantic attempts to carve out kingdoms and get rich quickly, and to plunder..." The title of the chapter? "The Sikhs and the Marathas" -- in which, Shivaji is "a gallant captain, an ideal guerilla leader and adventurer"!

"Adventurer," according to the Merriam-Webster, is a soldier of fortune; "one who engages in risky commercial enterprises for profit"; "one who seeks unmerited wealth or position especially by playing on the credulity or prejudice of others." Yup, this tome is the fountainhead of every distortion present in our textbooks.

Thus, Prof Nalini Taneja of Delhi University, in her article "In the Name of History: Examples from Hindutva-inspired school textbooks" -- one faithfully propagated by organisations like secularindia.com, dalitstan.org, mughalstan.com, tamil.net -- slams the present government for restoring dignity to mediaeval Hindu rulers with, "Shivaji and Rana Pratap were fighters for national liberation. All the 'Hindu' kings who fought for their kingdoms against the Moghuls are presented as such... In the text books from Maharashtra, the medieval history of Maharashtra begins and ends with Shivaji. All other historical figures exist only in reference to him."

And lo and behold, the CPI-M's mouthpiece, *Ganashakti*, says in its own article, "Education BJP style: Saffronisation of Books," that "The medieval history of Maharashtra begins and ends with Shivaji. The text book of the fourth standard has 19 chapters and 75 pages exclusively on Shivaji. All other historic figures exist only in reference to him." Wow, that's some coincidental similarity of thought and expression between objective professors and the Communist party...

Just last year, pinkos raised a stink over the NCERT's deleting of certain offensive and unauthenticated assertions from history books. Among them:

- On page 21 of *Modern India*, the textbook for Class VII written by Arjun and Indira Dev: "The Jats, after establishing a state in Bharatpur, conducted plundering raids in the region around Delhi. They also participated in the court intrigues."
- In Satish Chandra's *Medieval India* for Class XI: Guru Tegh Bahadur "in association with one Hafiz Adam... had resorted to plunder and rapine, laying waste the whole province of the Punjab."

What are the results of such "education," you may ask. Well, apart from the ignorance radiating from "secularist" readers, such a curriculum becomes a breeding ground for dweebs of the foulest kind. Like one Anand Vivek Taneja, "a student of History of Ramjas College, Delhi University," who has recently been elevated to commentator status by *tehelka.com* and *The Hindu*. Among his pearls of wisdom about the Scindias: "They looked like a bunch of robber baron scumbags. Which isn't far from the truth, because the Scindias were originally plain Shindes, Maratha musclemen

who led the 18th century marauding hordes that terrified the hell out of the rest of India. The Marathas were no 'freedom fighters' that later historiography makes them out to be, but a bunch of unpleasant rampaging freebooters with more than the standard freebooter disregard for life and property. In classic robber baron style, they got themselves forts, and pandits, and became consecrated kings... Jerks."

This, about the dynasty of Ranoji Shinde, who seized the fortress of Gwalior, the notorious prison of the Mughals, in 1738. This, about the house of Mahadji Shinde, who defeated the army of the Honourable East India Company, forced it to accept the Treaty of Sabli, took control of Delhi, and secured Mughal recognition of Maratha overlordship. This, about the single most formidable Hindu power which made a successful attempt for the supremacy of the subcontinent. This, about the empire that covered practically all of central and northern India -- extending from Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu) to Attock (Pakistan). This, about the only empire whose rallying call was "*Hindvi swarajya, swadharma, go-brahman pratipaalan*" (Hindu self-rule, spiritual and social duty, protection of cows and Brahmins).

I won't be surprised if this obnoxious maggot -- I say this with force because his article contains a certain reference to the late Rajmata that is nothing less that libelous, so much so that *rediff* will not allow me to repeat it here; check out the paragraph preceding the one I've quoted -- turns out to be a relative of Nalini Taneja.

And, finally, why did I sully Dr Amartya Sen's name? Had he endorsed the question paper that I (and the Solicitor General of India) mentioned? Well... on Friday, the good professor released a report on the findings of the Pratichi Trust, which was established with his Nobel prize money, and whose major focus is the elementary education in India. Among the issues Dr Sen emphasised at the release: "The overarching need is to overcome the rigid barriers of class division," the need for parent-teacher committees, and greater responsibility shown by the teachers' unions.

In short, more pinko bilge. Not a single word about the Communists' intellectual fascism, not a word about the authenticity of historical data in the pinko curriculum (oh there are many quotes on "saffronisation" of history). Not a word even in the report by the Trust that the Leftist economist set up to investigate and improve upon facets of education...

"Scant research"? *Moi*...?

Towards Balkanisation, III: Missionaries
Towards Balkanisation, IV: Catholics
Towards Balkanisation, V: Adivasis

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A 3,000-year-old way to eat

The Ayurvedic philosophy comes to Legal Sea Foods' table

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/163/food/A_3_000_year_old_way_to_eat+.shtml

The spices are intoxicating, the flavors seductive, but that's not really the point. Or at least not the whole point..

For the next few weeks, Legal Sea Foods is exploring the very personal connections between certain spices and ingredients and good health in mind and body.

The philosophy is Ayurvedic science, a 3,000-year-old set of beliefs designed to balance mind, body, and soul. In Ayurvedic practice, each individual has one of three "doshas," and certain foods and spices are prescribed to keep energy up and balanced. Special menus at all 26 Legals - from Boston to Florida - include South Indian dishes such as shrimp and scallop tanjore in a spicy sauce designed to aid digestion; fish roasted in banana leaves that has been marinated in dill to lower cholesterol, and Mysore seafood rasam, a hot and sour soup with tomatoes, shrimp, and cod. The lentils in the soup are supposed to enhance stamina. One of the desserts is cardamom rice pudding; the spice cleanses the mouth and is thought to refresh the mind.

Bringing in these dishes was not a simple matter of devising recipes and typing up a menu. In a project more than a year in the planning, cookbook author and Salem resident Nina Simonds flew to India, met with U. K. Krishna, an Ayurvedic doctor and authority at a clinic in Mysore, collaborated with chef Suresh Vaidyanathan of the Bombay Oberoi Hotels, and consulted with organic spice farmers in Kerala.

After months of e-mail conversations among Simonds, who has been living in London; Vaidyanathan in India; and Legal's executive chef, Richard Vellante, in Boston, the team arrived here about 10 days ago. In a whirlwind four days, the chefs trained Vellante and the chefs from all the Legal properties up and down the East Coast. After cooking, roasting spices, tasting, and discussing the menu, it was rolled out first at receptions and then in the restaurants.

On the first day, more people ordered from the Indian menu than from the regular menu at the Park Plaza Legal, Simonds says.

To Vellante, who's accustomed to thinking of serving 70,000 diners a week, the Indian chefs' approach to cooking and eating was a revelation. "It clearly is very foreign," Vellante says. "They're really like chemists" in the way they roast spices and then mix them together to create very specific flavors and sensations.

Vellante tells of eating with Vaidyanathan and chef Babu Raj Sajipa. "We were having a pickle that I, at first, didn't find very appealing. Then when the Indian chefs mixed a very small amount with rice, I began to realize how the mixture should taste and why the proportions were chosen."

The Ayurvedic methods are "a very scientific approach to cooking," Vaidyanathan says. "You have to understand the chemistry of each spice and also understand your own body." Different spices and foods match not only personality types but ages, he says. Tailoring foods to each person is a way to promote good health.

If that sounds a little too scientific, the combinations of spices and fresh seafood make for wonderful flavors beyond the matching. At a reception this week, a rice dish, or biryani, was studded with fat chunks of saffron-flavored lobster, promoting digestion, yes, but also delicious. Shrimp and scallops had been rubbed with "chettindam," a 12-spice mixture, before being grilled tandoori-style. And steamed asparagus, bathed with cardamom-scented butter, probably did cleanse the breath and refresh the mind, as well as tasting great.

Vellante says that the Ayurvedic philosophy goes far beyond spices and preparing food. "They approach their meals in a very regimented way," he says. The diner should allow enough time to concentrate on the food. "Everything must stop. Americans rush, rush, but they don't set aside the time." It's not just a matter of time, however. Simonds stresses that there's not only much appreciation for food and the act of eating in the Ayurvedic philosophy, but also joy in the flavors and beauty of it.

Krishna, who advised the chefs on Ayurvedic properties, is both the chief consulting physician of the Indus Valley Ayurvedic Center and the assistant director of the Institute of Oriental Traditional Medicine in Toyko. Vaidyanathan has just finished 10 months researching the dishes of Southern India, going to villages to cook with elderly women. "To learn the food of a region, you must know the people," he says. He understands why people eat a certain way and how it helps them maintain good health in a particular climate and location.

Vaidyanathan is putting together a reference work on his findings and teaches in the Oberoi Centre for Learning and Development. Babu Raj Sajipa, who cooks at the Oberoi Hotel in Bangalore, also trains chefs in South Indian cooking and has worked with Vaidyanathan on the research project.

Their American venture didn't end with Boston. After presentations at the French Culinary Institute in New York, at a Smithsonian Institute-sponsored event in Washington, and food demonstrations in New York state and New Jersey, the Indian chefs, Krishna, Vellante, and Simonds, along with Legal's Roger Berkowitz, will cook at the company's Florida locations.

The challenge of putting these menus into place in all the restaurants was immense, Vellante says, but worth it as a way to understand another culture. It's the most ambitious project that Legal has undertaken, Simonds says, and fits in with Berkowitz's interest in alternative medicine. Simonds' next book, "Moonbeams, Dumplings and Dragonboats" (Harcourt), which she co-authored with Children's Museum official Leslie Swartz, will come out in the fall.

In this approach, there's always more to explore. Vaidyanathan is looking into what direction a diner should face for maximum benefit from the food.

"It's a little like feng shui," he says, the Chinese system of arranging a room for comfort and well-being. Maybe after three weeks of Southern Indian flavors and health-giving spices, the staff will move all the chairs and tables around.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

The Goddess in Hinduism (excerpts)

By Joseph Campbell

(source :A Joseph Campbell Companion: Reflections on the Art of Living -edited by Diane K. Osbon pg 216-218)

" The goddess alone knew of the all-moving, secret world energy which has helped the gods to victory; it was the power within them, of which they were unaware. They believed that they were strong in themselves, but without this force, or against it, they could not so much as harm a blade of grass. The goddess knew of the universal force, which the Vedic priests called ***Brahman*** *and which Hindus call* ***sakti****, for sakti, i.e. energy, is the essence and name of the Great Goddess herself, hence she could explain the mysterious being to the Gods, she could teach them its secret - for it was her own secret."* **- Heinrich Zimmer.**



In Hinduism, all power, sakti, is female. So, the female represents the totality of the power, and the male is imaged as the agent of the female. In that sense, the power that a female feels from the male - the animus, in Jungian terms - is a specification of the female power, a mode of application of the power.

Every being has a twofold aspect, reveals a friendly and a menacing face. All gods have a charming and a hideous form, according to how one approaches them; but the Great Goddess is the energy of the world, taking form in all things. All friendly and menacing faces are facets of her essence. What seems a duality in the individual god, is an infinite multiplicity in her total being.....She is the mute security of life in itself; from the ashes of burned forests she raises

eager fresh flowers whose decay is pregnant with new life, a new life which all around it sees only life in its transitions and transformations with no shadow of death, just as we ourselves, when we sink our teeth into a ripe fruit, or draw a living plant from the garden are without awareness of death.



Whatever you do, in waking or sleeping, consciously or involuntarily in the cycle of your flesh to the accompanying music of your soul; whatever you do as your body builds and destroys, absorbs and excretes, breathes and procreates, or bestows joy infringing on the limits of rage and pain - all this is a mere gesture of the Great Mother, ***jaganmayi*** *(consisting of all worlds and being), who unremittingly does likewise with her world body in endless thousands of forms.....To see the twofold, embracing and devouring, nature of the goddess, to see repose in catastrophe, security in decay, is to know her and to be saved....She is the perfect figuration of life's joyous lures and pitiless destruction: the two poles charged with the extremist tension, yet forever merging. - Henrich Zimmer.*

Also, in Hinduism, the sun is female and the moon is male; he is born of her, dies into her, and is born of her again every month. Shiva, this great power, is the moon god. Parvati, his consort, is the sun power. And although the worship in the masculine-oriented action systems in India is directly to Shiva, it's to the goddess Kali, that the worship finally goes. So that, actually, in India, Kali is the great divinity.



.....the Hindu goddess Kali...is shown standing on the prostrate form of the god Shiva, her spouse. She brandishes the sword of death, i.e., spiritual discipline. The blood-dripping human head tells the devotee that "he that loseth his life for her sake shall find it." The gestures of "fear not" and "bestowing boon" teach that she protects her children, that the pairs of opposites of the universal agony are not what they seem, and that for one centered in eternity the phantasmagoria of temporal "goods" and "evil" is but a reflex of the mind-as the goddess, herself, though apparently trampling down the god, is actually his blissful dream.

The Goddess
gives birth to forms
and kills forms.

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articles on hinduism

Hinduism
By Joseph Campbell

I imagine that when one thinks of Indian philosophy the first thought is of yoga. The great classical text of yoga is that of the sage Patanjali: the Yoga Sutras, "Thread or Guiding Thread to Yoga." At the opening of this amazing work, we find the following definition-and I want to start with this, because it is a very important point:

"Yoga is the intentional stopping of the spontaneous activity of the mind stuff." Now it was the idea in ancient Oriental psychology that within the gross matter of the brain, within the grey matter, there is a very subtle substance, which is in continuous activity, taking the shapes of whatever we behold. This subtle matter is in a state of continuous activity, like the rippling of waves on a stirred pool. And when you shut your eyes, the mind stuff continues to operate that way. If you should try to make it stop, you would find the process very difficult. Just try this some time. Take into your mind an image-somebody that you care for, some image that you would care to contemplate-and try to hold this image still in your mind. You will find that you are immediately thinking of other images , associated with the first; for the mind continues spontaneously to move. Yoga is the intentional stopping of this spontaneous activity of the mind stuff. It is an intentional bringing to rest of this continuous action. But why should one wish to do this?

A favorite simile used in Indian discussions of this subject is that of the surface of a pond with its waves in action-a wind blowing over the pond and the waves moving. if you look at the surface of a pond moving in this way you will see the many reflections-many broken forms; nothing will be perfect, nothing complete; you will have only broken images before you. Butif the wind dies down and the waters become perfectly still and clear, suddenly the whole perspective shifts and you are not seeing a lot of broken images, reflecting things round about. You are looking down through the clear water to the lovely sandy bottom, and perhaps you will see fish in the water.

The whole perspective changes and you behold, not a multitude of broken images, but a single, still, unmoving image. This is the idea of yoga. The notion is that what we see when we look around, like this, are the broken images of a perfect form. And what is that form? It is the form of a divine reality, which appears to us only in broken images when our mind stuff is in action. Or, to state the case another way: we are all, as we sit here and stand here, the broken images, the broken reflections, of a single divine perfection; but all that we ever see when we look around with our mind stuff in its usual state of spontaneous activity, is the broken rainbow-reflection of this perfect image of divine light. Let us now open our eyes, let the waters stir again, let the waves come into action-and we shall know that all these flashing sights before us are reflections, broken

images, of that one divine radiance, which we have experienced.

And it will now be delightful to see them moving in this way; for we are no longer at a loss to know what they are. we shall have seen the source; we shall know that the source is within all of these broken reflections-including ourselves; and there will come a wonderful experience of a harmonious system: all things inflecting in various ways this one perfection. This is the realization that underlies the whole thought and sociology and action of traditional India. Now since we are all broken reflections of that image, that image is present within us. However, it is impossible to describe it in terms of its broken reflections. How would you possibly describe its form to someone who had not seen the complete image itself? It cannot be described in terms of its fragments.

The first principle of Indian thought, therefore, is that the ultimate reality is beyond description. It is something that can be experienced only by bringing the mind to a stop; and once experienced, it cannot be described to anyone in terms of the forms of this world. The truth, the ultimate truth, that is to say, is transcendent. it goes past, transcends, all speech all images, anything that can possibly be said. But, as we have just seen, it is not only transcendent, it is also immanent, within all things, Everything in the world, therefore, is to be regarded as its manifestation. There is an important difference her between the Indian and the Western ideas.

In the Biblical tradition, God creates man, but man cannot say that he is divine in the same sense that the Creator is, whereas in Hinduism all things are incarnations of that power. There has been no "Fall." Man is not cut off from the divine. He requires only to bring the spontaneous activity of his mind stuff to a state of stillness and he will experience that divine principle within him which is the very essence of his existence. And this essence within is identical in all of us. We are, as it were, sparks from a single fire; and we are all fire. There is therefore an eternal revelation of the truth all around us, all the time, and we require only the proper focus of the eyes to experience this.

Now let me give you a couple of basic terms: The divine principle within each of us is called åtman. Åtman simply means "the self." And this "true self" is the same in all. However, each conceives of himself as being a special independent person, and this concept of oneself as an independent entity is called "ego," aham; also, aham-kara, "making the noise `I' ." "Making the noise `I' " is what we do when we set ourselves against each other. The name given to åtman when it is experienced, not only within, but also in the world, is brahman; and brahman simply means "divine power."

Brahman, the divinity immanent in the world, and åtman, the divinity immanent inyourself, are the same divinity; and so the great experience in Indian thought-indeed, the fundamental illuminating principle throughout theOrient-is this realization that all of these beings that seem so various are one. Now this realization that though we are many we are also one, is a magical realization. And what is the magic that transforms the one into the many? it is called måyå. Måyå means the force that builds forth form. And this måyåh as three effects. The first one is to cut off our vision of the perfect unity of the immanent world power. This is called the "obscuring effect" of måyå. The second is, to project all of these broken reflection that we see around us; and this is

called the "projecting effect" of måyå. But måyå holds the possibility of a third effect also; for by contemplating all of these forms with the feeling that they are one, and by going around with the thought in your mind that you are in essence one with all these beings, you may come to realize that this is true.

Måyå thus can reveal, through the manifold, the one; and this is called the "revealing effect" of måyå.I have said that it is impossible to talk about brahman-åtman. The goal of Indian religion, the goal of Indian philosophy, is to point people's minds toward the realization of this truth and then to let them suddenly have the experience in their own minds.

The images of Indian mythology and religion that we see on the beautiful Indian temples are called, in our language," gods." But they are not gods in the same way that the god of the Old Testament is a god. The god of the Old Testament is conceived to be the ultimate truth. There is said to be nothing beyond this god. But the Indian gods are only pointing toward truth; because it is impossible, according to the Indian view, to speak about truth or to picture truth, to personify truth. The personifications, the images, the forms, are only clues, merely guides. And now, to give you a notion of how some of these deities are pictured:
There are three very important deities in Indian worship, and they are Vishnu, Shiva, and Kålæ. Vishnu is pictured as the divine dreamer of the world dream. Vishnu sleeps on a great serpent, whose name is Ananta, which means "Endless." The serpent floats on the universal ocean, called the Milky Ocean. But this Milky Ocean and the Serpent and the sleeping God: these are all the same thing. They are three inflections of the same thing,, and that thing can be thought of also as the subtle substance that the wind of the mind stirs into action when the universe of all these shifting forms is brought into being. Vishnu, the God, sleeps, and the activity of his mind stuff creates dreams, and we are all his dream: the world is Vishnu's dream. And just as, in your dreams, all the images that you behold and all the people who appear are really manifestations of your own dreaming power, so are we all manifestations of Vishnu's dreaming power. We are no more independent entities than the dream figures in our own dreams.

Hence, we are all one in Vishnu: manifestations, inflections, of this dreaming power of Vishnu; broken images of himself rippling on the spontaneously active surface of his subtle mind stuff. Moreover, this sleeping god's divine dream of the universe is pictured in Indian art as a great lotus plant growing from his navel. The idea is that the dream unfolds like a glorious flower, and that this flower is the energy-or, as the Indians say. the shakti or goddess-of the god. I hope that some of you are recalling the counterparts of some of these images in the Biblical tradition. The waters that are stirred into action when creation takes place are comparable to those of the first verse of the Bible, where it is said that the wind or breath of god blew, or brooded, over the waters.

This metaphor represents the miracle of creation, bringing the world into being as a multiplicity out of the stillness of an unstirred sleep. And the bride of the divine being, coming forth in the Indian myth from the navel of a dreaming god, is drawn in the Biblical myth from the rib of a dreaming man. What was originally one has become two. And how delightful it is to see such an image-reflection of an aspect of one's own being-which was not present to consciousness before, and yet was there, nevertheless! So it is with Vishnu's dream. The god becomes aware of his own power and is delighted by the charms of his own power, as represented in the presence derived from him: the presence of his own dream, which is the universe. Thus, the universe is the

dream-bride, or dream-goddess, of God.

Another image that appears frequently in Indian art is that of the god Shiva dancing. Shiva has four arms in this manifestation, and he is dancing on a prostrate dwarf. His first right hand holds a drum; and this drum beats; and that beat is the beat of time, which sends a ripple of movement over the face of eternity. The tick of time, then, is the creating principle, and this first right hand , therefore, is the hand of creation. It is bringing forth the world-dance just by beating the drum. But on the other side of the god, one of his two left hands holds a flame: the flame of illumination ,which destroys the illusion of the world. This, then, is the hand of destruction. But destruction so conceived is rather paradoxical; because what w all want, surely, is to know the truth, even though full knowledge may come only with the dissolution-or stilling-of the activity of the world. And so, whereas we have a deluding creation in the one hand, we have an illuminating destruction in this other, and between the two, flows the enigma of the universe.

The second right hand of the god Shiva is held palm outward in a posture known as abhåya, which means, "don't be afraid." Nothing terrible is happening. Forms are breaking, your own form is breaking, death comes; yet nothing is happening. The eternal principle, which never was born, never will die: it is in all things: it is in you now. You are a wave on the surface of the ocean. When the wave is gone, is the water gone? Has anything happened? Nothing has happened. It is a play, a game, a dance. The second left hand of the god Shiva is held out before him in what is called the elephant posture. It is a posture suggesting the forehead and trunk of an elephant, and this is the teaching hand. For the elephant is likened to the teacher: where the elephant has walked, all animals can follow. It is a huge animal and where it has gone ahead, breaking down the forest, the other beasts can easily follow. This elephant or teaching hand points to the left foot, which is lifted; and that lift signifies release. Meanwhile, however, the right foot is driving down into the back of the dwarf, whose name is "Ignorance." This foot is driving souls into ignorance-that is to say, into the world, into creation, into this life that we are leading. But the other foot is lifted, yielding release. And so here is the god Shiva's image: one foot driving souls into life and the other releasing them, in a cycle of birth-into-ignorance and return-to-truth: Birth and illumination, One hand controls creation, another destruction, while a third is saying, "Don't be afraid; nothing is happening!" and a fourth, "Look at the cycle down there, and realize that your ego (aham) is but a wave rippling on the ocean of eternity, while your true self (åtman), what you really are, is the water, which endures."

A third figure commonly seen in Indian religious art is the goddess Kålæ. For if you wish to personify divinity (according to Indian thought), it is no less proper to picture a mother than to picture a father. Why, indeed, should one attribute sex to a divine being who is transcendent; that is tosay, beyond all attributes? If beyond description, why attribute sex? So it is optional: you may decide for yourself whether you prefer to think of the divine principle as a mother or a s a father, as a dreamer , or as a dancer. Any image will do, so long as it will help you to collect the main principles of this realization and hold them in your mind. God as the mother is pictured in a very strange way. She gives birth to beings but then eats them; and so, she is a terrifying, frightening mother, represented with a great tongue hanging out to lick up the blood of her slaughtered victims. She is a horrendous thing. And this may give you a notion of the realistic seriousness of Indian imagery. Life is not all goodness, it is also frightful. So that, if we are going to assign to the creator only the qualities of benevolence, how shall we account for these other aspects of

existence? Indian thought does not trouble itself as greatly as Western with the problem of evil; because there is no evil, really.

Forms come into being, forms go out of being. Of course they do; for time passes! And how do the forms go out? Some comfortably, some uncomfortably; but they all go. It is this passage and fluency of time that is the great thing: and if you realize that it is all divine, whether going or coming, there is then nothing to fear. The goddess, therefore, is depicted as a frightful consumer of all beings a s well as the mother of beings. She is the sow that eats her farrow, consuming her own children. Her upper right hand is in the posture of abhåya, " do not fear! "; the lower is outstretched in a boon-bestowing posture; the upper left hand holds a swordand the lower left a head, which the goddess has just cut off. She is the deliverer of both life and death. Horrendous yet fascinating, she is the very image of the dual nature of life. These deities, these supreme beings, are held before the mind as objects of contemplation because they suggest the mysteries of this created world. It hurts the dwarf to be tread upon; and the dancer himself hurts his feet, dancing. But anyone with the power of creativity, the power to live, is not afraid of life's hurt. Therefore, if our consciousness is saying aham all the time, saying, "I, I, I am hurt, I and my friends are hurt, I and the principles I care for are being hurt, we're not getting on, the world's going to pot!".....if we begin thinking that way, we are out of touch with the creative principle and dynamics of the world, and we are already, from the standpoint of Indian thought, dead things.

The notion of the universe, then (for I want to move on, now, from the god, down to the universe itself); the notion of the universe in Indian thought is that it is a great organism, manifesting this divine dance, or this divine dream, in a harmonious, magnificent display. And every one of us is apart of that organism. Every one of us has a role to play in it. In their sacred books the Indians commonly represent this cosmic organism as a Great Man, with each class of humanity compared to a part. Now, in the old agrarian societies-societies of the sort fundamental to Oriental culture-there were primarily four classes of human beings: four social strata. The most important of these in India was the brahmin or priestly class, whose function it was to know the divine revelation, to know the truth and how to teach the truth, how to instruct the community and its governors in the way of truth.

The Brahmins are compared to the head of thereat Being; and the second class-that of the rulers, or Kshatriya-to the arms and chest. It is the function of the ruling class to administer the truth that the Brahmins teach, maintaining the society in the way of the cosmic order. And then we come to the merchant and land-owning class, who represent the middle of the Great Man: his trunk and viscera. These, the Vashiya, constitute, so to say, the backbone and guts of the social order.

They are the community that we call the Middle Class. And finally, the members of the fourth class, the Shudra, the workers and craftsmen, are compared to the feet of the composite being. The notion is that everybody has a fixed and proper function, just as the different organs of the body have, and that by performing his functions, each keeps the divine society in harmonious health. Suppose the moon were to say one morning, "I'd like to be the sun." Or suppose the sun one day were to think, "I'd like to get up a little later this morning," The whole universe would go out of gear. The Indian idea of the social order is that all of us are just as tightly fixed to our ways and laws of life as the sun and moon. Furthermore, when one reads the old law books-the Book of Manu, for example -one sees how, in ancient India, the life rules became more and more

demanding as one proceeded up the social scale. The rules for the Brahmin are minute to a degree that can hardly be imagined; but the restrictions become less and less demanding as one goes down the scale to the Shudra level. For the notion is that there is a particular morality, or virtue, appropriate to each class, in accordance with its functions in the organism of the Great Man. For example, the morality proper to the worker, The Shudra, was simply to do as told. By doing as he was told he lost his sense of ego, and so was introduced to the great religious principle and experience of egolessness. He learned this on the simplest, crudest level.

And then, it was thought, after this experience of egolessness had been assimilated on the obvious level of physical service, he would have gained a spiritual character rendering him eligible to be promoted, in his next life, to the merchant or land-owning, Vaishya class. For here the duties were more severe; but, also, the honors considerably greater, so that there was a greater temptation to egoism. It is harder to be egoless, harder to learn
how to be selfless, on this level of wealth and comfort than on the lower levels of obedient toil. And since, for India, the goal of life is to learn selflessness, it is important that people should be graded properly according to their capacity. But the ruling, aristocratic, or warrior class, of course, has more temptations than even the merchant to become egocentric. The members of this class have the power to do as they will, and so here the disciplines were extremely severe . And then, finally, for the Brahmin, who was worshipped as a god, the temptation to ego was prodigious, and the rules of life were almost incredibly constraining, Now everything that is described here implies the idea of reincarnation, and this idea is fundamental to all Indian thought. It is believed that through our experiences of life, we are gradually clarified in our vision, so that we become less and less the victims of ego and its systems of hope and fear. We learn more and more how to become egoless.

In our Occidental, democratic society, we do not believe that people are born into precisely the social class for which their souls are ready. We believe in a loose social structure, with equal opportunities for all. The Indian view, on the other hand, has always been that people are born into the class for which they are ready, and so the system is designed to hold them there. It is important for us to realize, however, that the Indian system of caste is not associated primarily with wealth. People even of the very lowest caste may become wealthy; and a Brahmin priest in a little rural temple will almost certainly be very poor indeed. It is only on the level of the third, the Vaishya caste, that life is devoted primarily to the ideology of wealth. Hence the caste organization itself is not to be understood as an organization based on money, It is based on what is regarded in India as a spiritual principle: the idea that one must learn the lesson of life first on its lowest levels, and then return in later incarnations for more and more difficult lessons, until achieving, complete release from this school of rebirth.

Let me tell you a story, to indicate something about the nature of this Indian idea of the spiritual value of the performance of duty. It is taken from a very interesting Buddhist text, The Milindapanha, which dates back to perhaps the second century A.D., and it tells of the great Buddhist emperor Ashoka, who lived in the third century B.C., in the city of Pataliputra (which is now called Patna). The river Ganges flows past this city, and the river, according to this tale, was rising at that time with such force that it was threatening the city with a flood. The Emperor was greatly troubled, and everybody in the town was greatly troubled, and so all-the Emperor included-assembled on the bank of the river to watch the waters rise. Now there is an Indian

notion that if you have fulfilled your life duty to perfection, you may perform what is known as an Act of Truth. you can say (and this is magic now): "If I have performed my duty without any trace of ego, but, like the sun rising and the sun setting, have done just what I should have done, every hour of my life, then let such and such happen!" And such and such will happen. This is called an Act of Truth. For, since you are part of the organism of the universe, and perfectly so, you partake of the power of the universe. You have become a conduit of universal energy and can perform miracles.

And so now, this story tells us, when all the city had gathered along the bank of the river Ganges, the emperor Ashoka, perceiving the danger, asked: " Can no one make as Act of Truth and cause the waters of the Ganges to flow back upstream?" Apparently the Emperor himself could not do so; nor could any of the members of his court: they stood around and looked embarrassed. The Brahmins hung their heads, the nobles hung their heads,, and the merchants hung their heads. But way down the way there was an old prostitute, and her name was Bindumatæ, and she belonged to what was regarded as the abyss of the social structure. She was the lowest of the low. And yet she said to those around her, "I have an Act of Truth." The old woman shut her eyes and presently the Emperor noticed that the waters of the vast river were slowing down, backing up: there was a roar, and the waters of the Ganges began to flow upstream. You may imagine the action of the people. "Who," asked the Emperor, "performed this Act of Truth?" But no one around him knew. He looked about, and no one within range of his eye gave any sign of either being or of knowing the person whose virtue had saved the city. In a little while, however, the rumor reached him, and the Emperor proceeded to Bindumatæ in amazement. "You!" he exclaimed. "Wicked old sinner! Disgrace of the community! Do you mean to say that you have an Act of Truth?" "Your Majesty," she answered, "I posses an Act of Truth by means of which, if I so desired, I turn the world of men and the worlds of the gods upside down."

The Emperor requested to be told this act of Truth, and the old prostitute replied: "Whosoever gives me money, your Majesty, whether he be a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, or Shudra, I treat him as any other. I make no distinction in his favor if he is Kshatriya; and if a Shudra, I do not despise him. free both from fawning and from contempt, I serve the owner of the money. And this your Majesty, is the Act of Truth by which I caused the mighty Ganges to flow back upstream." The obvious part of this remarkable tale is that any way of life whatsoever is a way to God, if followed faithfully, selflessly, in perfect humility. This woman had power as no one else in the community, because she had performed to perfection the duties of her coarse and humble role. But the second lesson of the story is that she did not rise in the social scale for having saved the city: she remained Bindumatæ, serving the owner of the money. Which indicates an important thing about Oriental thought-namely, its distinction between moral and spiritual judgment and its ultimate dedication to the latter. This is something a little difficult for us to understand, since practically all of our own religious emphasis is moral. The religious interest of the Orient, on the other hand, though moral in large measure, is finally metaphysical; and its main idea is this: that by some act, some
experience, some realization, some knowledge, we should achieve an effective relationship to our essential being, which is identical with the being that creates, supports, and annihilates the world.

When one reads the Bhagavad Gætå, which is the most important single text of Hinduism, one comes across a very strange statement. The God there declares that he is the essence of all things:

of the lion, he is the power and the fury; of thieves, the thievery; and of cheats and the cheating. "I am the victory of those who conquer," he declares, "and of those who die, the death." In other words, since divinity is the essence of every being, we must not let our moral judgments obscure from us the fact that God is shining through all things, even those of which we cannot approve; yet this should not disturb us in the performance of our own duties, according to the terms of our own system of ethics. There is a very nice paradoxical principle involved here, which, though it may be difficult for us to appreciate, is fundamental to the Indian point of view. Moreover, there are many means, or ways, by which we may learn to shift our perspective from that of the multiplicity of this world to that of the unity of all things; and all these ways are called yogas. A number of apparently contradictory teachings have therefore been developed in the great domain of Hinduism.

Yoga, in the broadest sense of the word, is any technique serving to link consciousness to the ultimate truth. One type of yoga I have already mentioned: that of stopping the spontaneous activity of the mind stuff. This type of mental discipline is called Råja Yoga, the Kingly, or Great Yoga. But there is another called Bhakti Yoga, Devotional Yoga; and this is the yoga generally recommended for those who have duties in the world , tasks to perform, and who cannot, therefore, turn away to the practice of that other, very much sterner mode of psychological training. This much simpler, much more popular, yoga of worship consists in being selflessly devoted to the divine principle made manifest in some beloved form. One may dedicate oneself, for example, to the service of some god or goddess-one of those that I have just described-or any other, for that matter.

Bhakti Yoga will then consist in having one's mind continually turned toward, or linked to, that chosen deity through all of one's daily tasks. But since divinity is present in all things, one may devote oneself equally to some living person as an incarnation or manifestation of the divine-or even to some animal or plant. In the Hindu marriage the woman is to be thus devoted to her husband. He is god for her, just as the deity of his caste or craft-guild, the deity of his particular system of duty, is God for him.

There is an illuminating story told of the deity Krishna, who, in the form of a human child, was raised among a little company or tribe of herdsmen. One day he said to them, when he saw them preparing to worship one of the great Gods of the Brahminical pantheon: "But why do you worship a deity in the sky? The support of your life is here, in your cattle. Worship these! " Whereupon, they hung garlands around the necks of their cattle and paid them worship. This wonderful art of recognizing the divine presence in all things, as a ubiquitous presence, is one of the most striking features of Oriental life, and is particularly prominent in Hinduism.

I have seen very simple people out in the country, climbing a hill, who, when they became tired and paused to rest and eat, set up a stone, poured red paint around it, and then reverently placed flowers before it. The pouring of the red paint set that stone apart. The idea was simply that those people were now going to regard it, not as a stone, but as a manifestation of the divine principle that it is immanent in all things. The pouring of the red paint and placing of the flowers were typical acts of Bhakti, Devotional Yoga: simple devices, readily available to anyone, to shift the focus of the mind from the phenomenal aspect of the object as a mere stone to its mystery of a miracle of being. And this popular form of yoga, no less than the very much sterner and more

difficult discipline of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, to which I first alluded, is a technique to link consciousness to the ultimate truth: the mystery of being. The sense of the whole universe as a manifestation of the radiance of God and of yourself as likewise of that radiance, and the assurance that this is so, no matter what things may look like, round about, is the key to the wisdom of India and the Orient.

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Joseph Campbell Foundation
Joseph Campbell - author of several books.

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Through the Imperial Looking Glass – The Raj Syndrome excerpts

(source: **The Raj Syndrome: A Study in Imperial Perceptions - By Suhash Chakravarty**. Penguin Books.1991)

The Empire-building was a demanding responsibility was repeatedly affirmed. There was no lack of flamboyance and poets and publicists were eager to extol the abounding achievements and fruitful experiments of the 'pioneers' and guardians.' The pattern of imperial sensibility was thus nourished by falsified facts. Hypocrisy, which supplied this nourishment to false consciousness, found in the same consciousness its own moral justification and confirmation. In the process of the self-glorification of the Raj, the nebulous dividing line between faith and casuistry, admiration and worship, conscious deception and false consciousness was blurred. A confused reflection of reality, distorted insights and half-truths together with an officially sponsored organization of optimism and swagger tinged the imperial looking glass.

"There is too much Asia and she is too old. You cannot reform a lady of many lovers.' Rudyard Kipling propounded, 'and Asia has been insatiable in her flirtation.' She would never attend Sunday school or learn to vote or render habitual obedience to law without the show of the naked sword.

Everywhere the civilizing mission of Britain, the onward march of a 'masculine' and 'scientific' Christianity and the assertion of the superiority of imperial pride were discerned in the assault of imperialism. At all places it was made to confront barbarism, superstition and tyranny and everywhere an atmosphere of lawlessness of the native society was improvised and condemned for provoking an inevitable imperial retribution.

Kipling spelt out a well-circulated fable that the new acquisitions had been, before annexation, 'one crazy hell of murder, torture and lust'; a hysteria of blood and fanaticism.' Kipling spitefully recalled the gory days when Sudan was being 'reduced to sanity by applied death' on an unprecedented scale. In one day and night, he gibed, ' all those who had any power and authority were wiped out…till no chief remained to ask after any followers.' The imperial retribution in Khartoum, as elsewhere, was savage. One is also forced to recollect the blood-thirsty *ravanche* in India following the Revolt of 1857 which had covered a wide area from Delhi to Awadh. Flora Annie steel depicted the inhuman realities of the uprising in her flamboyant novel *On the Face of the Waters* in which the heroine Kate Erlton learnt to appreciate the assertion of her husband, Major Erlton, that he was a Christian soldier whose task was to become 'the happy instrument of rescuing his neighbor from eternal damnation' of Hinduism, the cult of the inevitable.' The triumphant movement of the Christian power had been violently challenged and the imperial deposition fashioned, by an unholy combination of obscurantism of various forms in 1857.

The Raj was the center piece of the British Empire and it experienced all forms of imperial experiments. Kipling's analysis of British initiatives in Egypt and the Far East applied equally to India. Together, they represented the exploits of an aggressive imperial culture. Defending the aloofness of the Englishmen in India, a writer in the Quarterly Review, dismissed the 'favorite caricature' of the Englishman in India as a hectoring, domineering, swaggering overlord, exacting salaams from every Indian who traversed his path. At home, Aldous Huxley wrote, the same Englishman was lost in a nameless crowed; he did not count because he was nobody. But in India, life satisfied the most powerful of all the instincts – that of self-assertion. For example, even the young man of Kipling's *Barrack Room Ballads* who went out from a London suburb in search of a career in India found himself a member of a small ruling elite surrounded by slavish servants, dark-skinned subordinates and millions of Indians from the coolie to the maharaja, from the illiterate peasant to the holder of an Oxford degree. Huxley, who shared in full measure British prejudices about India, wrote: 'Superiority in India is a question of epidermis.' Robert Byron who was equally sensitive on this point, stressed the foundations of British arrogance in his *An Essay on India*. White pigmentation of skin, he wrote, 'at first only a symbol of material efficiency assumes, and is paid, the homage of a divine attribute.' Every white man in Asia becomes an Apostle and is prepared to maintain his part in face of all opposition.

Flora Annie Steel compared the British experience in India with the repressive frustrations and exacting obligations of Babur, the Empire builder of the sixteenth century. The founder of the Mughal Empire, she thought must have found the Indian countryside 'ugly and detestable' and must have wondered, as did the British general subsequently, if he had better left India undisturbed only to allow it 'to stew in its own juice.' The people, she indicted, were not handsome and had no idea of the charms of friendly society or of social intercourse. They had little 'comprehension of mind', no 'politeness of manners' and no 'fellow feeling.'

To Kipling, Maud Diver, Flora Annie Steel, Sarah Duncan and even Edward Thompson, like Lord Curzon, Milner, Rhodes, and Kitchener, the imperial mission was an obsession and all of them became prisoners of their propaganda. They placed the Empire on a higher pedestal than the daily routine of the Government of India and the democratic uneasiness of the British Parliament. Kipling's 'burden' was an idealization of an aggressive and flamboyant Raj. Curzon went out of his way to applaud the Indian experiment as the highest achievement of their race. Kipling became the barometer of British interests in India. Civilians affirmed that they served Kipling's India. W.W. Hunter, who misjudged *Departmental Ditties*, exhorted the young Kipling to present to the world the British experiment in India which 'has never had an equal in history'. Ronald Wingate, like many others, felt the weight of the white man's burden.

After the announcement that the Noble Prize was to be awarded to Rabindranath Tagore, Western critics sought to establish the superiority of the 'Caucasian race' over the 'Indian race': to discover in the poet, a dreamer with a 'narrow Western outlook' and a dated Western sensibility who had been favored by preferential treatment that was, according to them, often meted out to 'colonials' for political exigency. They saw the award as something of a humiliation to which they were supposed to adjust themselves.

"It is the first time that the Noble Prize has gone to anyone who is not what we call 'white'. It will take time, of course, for us to accommodate ourselves to the idea that some one called Rabindranath Tagore should receive a world prize for literature. "

'We of the West do not want from the East poetic edifices.' *The Liverpool Post* declared, 'built upon a foundation of Yeats and Shelley and Walt Whitman. We want to hear flute of Krishna as Radha heard of it, to fall under the spell of the blue God, in the lotus-heart of dreams. As an Oriental poet Rabindranath Tagore, the *Queen* of London pronounced, had nothing to offer the West. Indeed, critics often crossed the frontier of sanity and moved into the realm of absurdity.

There was no paucity in Anglo-Indian fiction of examples depicting the liberating influence of Christianity. Nora E. Karn in her collection of short stories, *The Believer and other Stories*, identified Christianity with humanity. The Christian nun of 'The Bhaktani' spoke in the warm language of the East, another girl a child in her lap became a sadhni of Jesus, defied a cruel Hindu society and trudged all over religious India in the garb of a mendicant with the joy of St. Francis in her heart. Christianity, it was maintained, was the essence of liberty and unless a significant proportion of the whole community had become true Christians, self-government might become a sheer calamity. Christianity, it was assumed, could not co-exist with Hinduism and missionaries often called for exclusive official patronage. Over the years the sympathies of the Government had shaped and regulated a set of firm guiding principles. Basking under the warm glow of official care, Christian propaganda turned intensely intolerant. **'If Christ is to rule over India, wrote one of its active cadres, 'then Hinduism and all its various superstition must go. You can neither lessen His light nor illuminate its darkness by a process of assimilation.'**

As the prospect of Christian conversion loomed large in the eyes of the missionaries, they were often carried away by their unrestricted optimism beyond all reasonable proportion. Thus Henry Whitehead, the Bishop of Madras and G.W. Briggs of the Christian Missionary Society, reported gleefully that there existed in India enormous raw material ripe for instant conversion. Christianity, Briggs penned, was for the lower castes like the Chamars more than a social and economic gospel. Hinduism, he maintained, on its lower side was polytheistic and saturated with demonology. Bishop Whitehead endorsed this view. The first step towards any social progress in rural India, he argued, was to demolish this chaotic clutter of beliefs and practices, rites and ceremonies and clear the ground for the teaching and worship of the Christian church.

Henry Whitehead characterized Hinduism as 'a religion of fear and superstitions' finding its outward expression in mean symbols and 'in forms of worship that are to a very large extent disgusting and even immoral.'

The imperial mind questioned, in utter bewilderment, the queer imagination that had conceived 'these strange creatures.' It was overwhelmed by a creepy feeling which stood between it and Hinduism with its 'ugly gods', devastating 'evil eyes' and 'sure charms' – all shrouded in mysterious forces that were beyond any rational explanation. It shivered at the infinite and immense secrets of India. The Jain temples at Mount Abu rattled Edmund Candler. He was amazed by 'the miracle of elaboration' the diversity of compositions and the uncompromising 'severity of the details' of the shrines.

One fifth of humanity, the imperialists swaggered, lived here and the British could not have held the country for even a day unless ninety-nine percent of the people were stirred by them. Even Islam with its uncompromising monotheism, Valentine Chirol contended, made only a marginal impact on Hinduism. **As a political force, it was concluded, Islam had already become moribund and it was generally held in official circles that it owed its political existence**

largely to the British rulers who had resisted the political revival of Hinduism and had ever since held the balance even between all creeds and communities. In the antagonism between the two religions, it was argued, the deepest chasm in Indian society ought to be located and nursed.

It is small wonder that Katherine Mayo ingeniously appended Indian nationalism with the superstitions of a ritualistic Hinduism and fused them into a powerful anti-Indian demonstration. The impact of Katherine Mayo's (*Mother India*) was more than ephemeral. She rendered the racial arrogance of the exclusive clubs into a self-righteous assertion. There was a general agreement on the issue that there was no rational ground for the development of democracy in India and that there was little likelihood that one could discover any method by which a stable government could be established upon 'any other foundation than of British bayonets.' All their 'sub-human civilization', 'repulsive personal habits', 'amazing egocentric mania' and 'unparalleled sexual degradation' were exposed by Katherine Mayo and in the process she reduced 'India's claim for Swaraj to sheer nonsense' and 'the will to grant it' in some quarters to 'almost a crime.'

Katherine Mayo set the trend for a new branch of literature whose pre-occupation was to stretch the morbidity of Hindu customs, superstitions and rituals to a point of absurdity and invest it with a unique spiritual inhumanity.

W. A. Frazier's *Caste* was one of them. To Barlow (one of the characters of the book) the compelling voice of the Brahmin signified idols and a depraved materialism. The scientific and Christian West, Frazer underwrote, was incompatible with a 'barbarous ' and 'fanatic' Hinduism even if the West made the necessary adjustments and carried out effective surgery in its own value system in order to meet the East on its own terms.

There were many who were upset by the fact that the country had been suffering from abject poverty despite British rule. They considered it a disgrace to the British Empire that there should be any large body of citizens who were continually hungry. It was conceded that Arnold Lupton in his *Happy India*, a reasoned rebuttal of William Digby's *Prosperous British India*, found the roots of India's poverty and misery in the apathy of its callous upper castes and their peculiar social attitudes. Lupton lambasted the Hindu social system and its self-centeredness. Englishmen, Lupton bemoaned, could teach but if only the Indians would care to learn.

The balance sheet of British rule (the social insecurity of Britons in India and the life of gross humiliation led by educated Indians on the other hand) was, however, drawn up with a promising note. One of them announced: ' I am proud that our country should have been chosen by fate, nature, God or whatever you will it, to clear up the debris of the Moghul Empire and to unlock for India, the treasures of Western thought. I think on the whole we are worthy of it. The date for this self-righteous exhilaration is not 1917 but 1943, when the memories of the movement of 1942 were still fresh. The author was neither a swashbuckling champion of the Raj nor a poet laureate of the Empire. He was the modest Penderel Moon known for his sympathies for a new India.

Dwelling on the position of India in the British educational system, the India League, in 1945, came to an unfaltering conclusion that the children of the British school system had been over the years taught on the assumption that since they lived in a country which had for centuries held a great empire under control, they were peculiarly fitted to rule. Although this did not manifest

itself crudely in the same way as in the Nazi *Kerrenvolk* teaching, it was almost as dangerous in the underlying acceptance without question of all the implications of such a position. The teacher's committee of the League noted that although the British children had been encouraged to appreciate and assess the contribution of countries other than the Great Britain to world civilization, the curriculum was judiciously selective and misleading. The countries which were covered by the enquiry of the students fell into two categories: those which had contributed to the development of Christianity and to Western civilization in general and those which were fighting on the other side of the allies in the Second World War including the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

Most serious gaps occurred in the case of Japan, China and the Islamic countries while India, the brightest gem in the British crown, witnessed remarkable distortion. Thus while the caste system, child marriage and Sati as reprehensible institutions were heavily underlined, the absorptive capacity of Hinduism, the general attitude of tolerance, the role of Buddha, Ashoka and Akbar, the development of composite culture, the historic role of the Sufi and the Bhakti movements were either overlooked or pushed into a twilight of hazy information. Even the resurgence of India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was glossed over and the name of Rabindranath Tagore did not figure in the school textbooks although the works of American writers like Longfellow and Whitman found adequate representation and the work of Christian missionaries in India was emphasized on a disproportionate scale. The civilizing mission of Britain in India continued to dominate the minds of both the teachers and the students. In contrast, India's contribution in the spheres of art, literature, science, and politics as also its nationalist movement remained a well-guarded secret from the average Briton.

For the ideologues of the Raj, the human race was divided into two categories: that of the poor of the black and brown colonies and that of the rich which was restricted to a small white European stock. It was believed that in both these areas, men might attain salvation – but by different means. The road to freedom opened to the wretched colonies was conditioned by the nature of their subjugation to the white race. It was a traverse through a world of humility, patience and submission – a long and tedious journey to be undertaken with faith, conviction and cheerfulness. The Empire-builders, on the other hand, were to sanctify their superior ability, authority and honor by infinite mercy, and the result of their munificence was sure to meet the 'ungratefulness of the conquered race.' Thus the Indians ought to be forced, if necessary, to discern and acknowledge their cultural, social and religious and economic inferiority and trace their restrictive frontier of life. As Edmund W. said has conceptualized, the idea of 'Orientalism' has come to fashion an academic tradition. By its very definition, the perception inherent in Orientalism is racist, imperialist and ethnocentric. The white man's burden was thus placed even theoretically on force and it was to be buttressed by a constant exhibition of physical might. It was a sentiment, an attitude, a policy and a reality. The white man, as a consequence, was never to meet the East on equal terms.

(source: **The Raj Syndrome: A Study in Imperial Perceptions - By Suhash Chakravarty**. Penguin Books.1991).

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The Raj Syndrome - excerpts

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(The book is a study in imperial sensibility. The author has examined the nuances of British perceptions of India during the period, roughly, from the imperial assemblage of the Delhi Durbar of 1877 to the replacement of the Union Jack on the Red Fort by the Indian tricolor in 1947.The Raj was central to the formation of British imperial ideology and the syntax of imperial prose in India was candid and unambiguous.)

There was no dearth of Social Darwinists to draw up an argument from the natural sciences and to belabor the basic inequalities between the European and non-European peoples. Karl Pearson, for example, idealized imperialism as an essential part of 'natural history', as the inevitable struggle between races leading to the triumph and survival of the fittest. "The path of progress, he announced in 1900, ' is strewn with the wreck of nations; traces are everywhere to be seen of the hecatombs of inferior races…(p. 8)

Lord Curzon proclaimed that he had been called upon by Providence to devote 'the whole of his working manhood to the study and service of the Empire.'

He maintained that the physical expansion of Europe was prompted by the law of modern nations which stated that every nation must expand. Although initially Britain had launched on historic quest, her example soon inspired other nations to follow faithfully. The United States of America, it was pointed out, had been pushing ahead towards an imperial destiny. This lesson had also been grasped by France, Italy and Germany. Imperialism had become a respectable world phenomenon. Curzon insisted that the Empire should not be interpreted either as an upshot of national vanity or as the outgrowth of territorial cupidity. On the contrary, a noble commitment, he stressed, formed the point d'appui of imperialism.

In keeping with this perception, the expansion of the British frontier in India as elsewhere was presented as a spectacular march of civilization. Whether amidst the mango groves of Palasi or on the banks of the Sutlej, whether in the rugged Aravallis or in the fastnesses of the Maratha uplands, it was drummed into the ears of the prostrate population that British diplomacy and arms desired justice. In imperial literature British rule meant law and British force signified the protection of the weak against a barbarous bully.

The relentless service of the Raj to mankind was 'projected in every aspect of its endeavor. Englishmen in India were depicted as the most conscientious servants of God. Kipling faithfully sang these claims in his A Song of the English.

The elements of progress and loyalty, it was underlined, had transformed imperialism into a progressive force. This was not an assertion of an egalitarian worldview as it glorified a mercantile past, rhapsodized the brutal ascendancy of an aggressive military power and romanticized the liquidation of traditional societies.

Curzon ranted that despite human failings, the British Empire in India epitomized a happy combination of moral virtues, a spirit of humanity and a puritanical fervor.

The Boer War was admittedly the bloodiest military encounter since the days of Napoleon. It lasted 2 ½ years, and of 45,000 British and colonial soldiers on the front, some 22,000 were killed. To many, the spectacle of a big England bullying a little Transvaal was too unseemly and repellent a sight to be overlooked casually. Diplomatically, Britain had been cornered and her splendid isolation was more discomforting than her solitary magnificence. Yet England remained unrepentant. The war resulted in the creation of a reconditioned imperial idea. Imperialism was endowed with the halo of divinity. In fact, the Boer War made imperialism an effusive sentiment. Englishmen in the Empire as also the Americans in the Philippines were urged to:

Take up the white Man's burden-
Send forth the best of ye breed –
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait every harness
On fluttered folk and wild –
Your new-caught sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half child.

The imperial adventures were composed as measures blessed by the will of God.

The Yellow Peril:

The Russo-Japanese War was a relevant milestone in imperial history. Kaiser had coined for the imperial vocabulary an explosive phrase, ' the yellow peril' – denoting the danger from the Chinese and the Japanese. With regard to this alleged threat to European supremacy he had raised a clamorous outcry in the imperial citadels. It articulated a campaign for the recognition of a pretentious claim of racial superiority by all its necessary attendants. The rise of modern Japan seemed to have challenged the axiomatic supremacy of the white Christian race. Everyone fore glimpsed in it a frightening prospect.

All forebodings with regard to Japan spearheading a resurgent Asia against an imperial West were submerged by a vigorous assertion of self-confidence. It was noted with spiteful relish that in India popular ideas betrayed little enlightenment, that the awakening of China had been following a tardy process, that would have little impact on a resurgent India. Most Englishmen were certain that there was no danger of a nationalistic steam 'overpowering us in India.'

India formed the principal rampart of the British imperial system.

She was its halting place, its springboard and its central operation theatre. No one was willing to relinquish that 'divine dispensation'. The Raj meant much to the Empire. Early in 1870, Richard Southwell Brooke, the Earl of Mayo, had noted its conspicuous potential. Apprehending the

Russian designs towards the Indian frontier Mayo declared: **‘ We are determined as long as the sun shines in heaven to hold India – Our National Character – Our Commerce demands it.’**

Russia, he added, was ignorant of the mighty power that Britain wielded in India and of the ‘moral influence we could, if we choose exercise on our borders.’ To that intensely practical Viceroy, India had become the conduit of British prosperity and repository of her ‘national character.’ Recognizing the strategic importance of India in British imperial calculations, Lord Lytton in 1877 sought to actualize the nebulous imperial idea in the magnificent Delhi Durbar with the assumption of the title of Empress of India by the British Queen. Lord Curzon’s tenure as Viceroy was the high noon of the Raj. Both in terms of imperial vision and its fulfillment, ‘the Jewel in the Crown’ had become luminous, enterprising, domineering and extrovert. The numerical strength of the Indian subjects and the immense natural wealth of India actuated a sense of pride which came to be grafted permanently on the British imperial sensibility. The imperial pride of Britain was its chief political asset: it was both a moral and a material force. The loss of British power in India, it was believed, would have been a frank confession of Britain’s moral bankruptcy in a world dominated by concession, treaty ports, extra-territorial rights, buffer zones, client states and formal empires. Without India, the Empire was lost. ‘When India has gone, the great colonies are also gone. Valentine Chirol, said, with the loss of India, British position all over Asia, would be completely shattered. The severance of India from the Empire, Chirol argued with an air of prophetic insight, would be inopportune **for ‘the supremacy of the White Man’** all over the world. Japan had already shaken the faith of imperialism in its own sense of invincibility. Its confidence quivered at the sight of a resurgent Asia. The publicists of the Raj shuddered at the thought of the collapse of its principle hinge on which the whole system turned.

It was natural, therefore, that Indian loyalty could not be allowed to evanesce. **The British Empire of India was essentially based on force and it had to be maintained, if necessary, by brute force.**

England’s euphoria with regard to a ‘Greater Britain’ was a kind of ideological formulation. India was ubiquitous in the British imperial sensibility. It carefully contrived the fantasies of a modern Roman Empire and grafted the passion for unrestricted authority on to the viceroy, governors and administrators who were greeted as proconsuls and centurians. It was construed that the imperial obligation of Rome had been inherited by Britain and ‘in the discharge of the highest features in English character have displayed themselves. **Rudyard Kipling** hailed the ‘**Imperial Fire of Rome’ as a divine dispensation that had fallen ‘on us, thy son.’**

The Empire created its own captains. In thousands of classrooms children were taught to prattle the story of the nine little nigger boys and the importance of being a gentleman. They were also brought up on the exploits and legends of the old and new knights, of Peter Pan, of the Lost Boys in the Never Never Land and on the adventurous prince awakening the Sleeping Beauty and slumbering civilization of life amidst an unruly people. The Empire, they were taught, was the product of very imaginable variety of heroism and valor. There was no paucity of publicists and there was no dearth of improvisation. V. A. Smith, H. Rawlinson, Edward Thompson, G.T. Garrett, W.W. Hunter, Percival Spear, to name a few, buffed the imperial sculptures with their tutored skill and historical imagination.

The Empire called for physical expansion and a determination to defend, hold on to and

consolidate territorial acquisitions against all intruders. It demanded indomitable bravery, supreme sacrifice and unflinching patriotism. It sanctioned the conviction of the Light Brigade to ride on to the Valley of Death, underwrote the credo of Tennyson to hail 'once more to the banner of battle unroll'd and recommended W.E. Henley's prayer for a war 'righteous and true.' The imperial consciousness of Britain inspired Newbolt to implore:

So shall thou when morning comes,
Rise to conquer or to fall
Joyful hear the rolling drums
Joyful hear the trumpets call.

Empire building, it was asserted, was an uphill task. For Rev. Henry Inglis, it meant rough travel through tracts of scrubs, jungle and heavy forest, across riverbeds, up and down the slopes of hills carrying with him a few medical comforts 'to semi-savage people jungle tribes, poor, primitive souls and bodies as yet hardly higher than animals, owing to the cruel barriers of castes and customs.' **The claims of British mission was 'to lighten the darkness of these miserable beings' and give them 'spiritual and physical aide.'** Between the illusions and realities of English society in India, the myth of the white man's burden discovered a very large and attentive audience.

The ideologues of the Empire made no bones about the economic and financial impulses of expansion. Lord Curzon vouched 'that both our Indian and African dominion had an economic origin.' The search for a potential market and the raw materials of an Asian El Dorado were far too seductive even for the most circumspect stateman. With Indian resources tamely at the command of Britain, the expansive impulses were regulated and given a direction. 'There is nothing ignoble or selfish in seeking fresh markets for our produce and manufacture', Lord Curzon clarified: 'There is nothing wrong in establishing ourselves in an unsettled and derelict country with a view to bringing wealth to our people.' Yet he implored that the Indian Empire should not be depicted as an exclusive commercial concern. He entreated that imperialism must adopt a lofty vision. It must don on a gorgeous apparel.

In the past, it was held, that loyalty of India had been presumed as axiomatic because of her respect for the courage and fortitude of the Englishmen and for their commitment to justice and fairplay. India, by and large, had been reconciled to the British rule despite displaying an occasional delinquency for she was convinced, the publicists assumed, that the British connection had ensured for her a more honest, stronger and a more humane government that what she had herself developed and organized over the centuries.

There was a sanctimonious air in the fatuous exhortations of the Raj. A divine will, the social obligations of a superior race, the central position of India in the economic and strategic map of the Empire and the existence of a well-synchronized elite corps both in India and Britain in tune with much-publicized British mission had inaugurated an imperial paranoia.

India, according to the British statesmen, was a geographical expression, inhabited by various ethnic stocks and held together by British imperial hegemony. A Christian sense of superiority was grafted on to that imperial mission. Thus, one was faced with a paradoxical situation. While the exercise of despotism over the Christian and 'civilized' people of Cyprus was to be resisted, such a form of government was safely recommended to the people of India, Egypt and Singapore.

Christianity and progress, according to the imperial ideologues, were interdependent as a 'universal law for all times, all states and all societies.' This perspective was confirmed by the Simon Commission and the Lindsay Commission and largely adhered to by the Conservative and Labor parties during and after the Second World War.

The centrality of the Raj in the Empire rendered the Indian undertaking very attractive. Its possession reinforced British culture with a renewed interest in militarism, royalty, national heroes, cult of personality, racial ideas of superiority and a contrived sense of Christian mission. The determination to hold on to India at all costs led to the improvisation of a series of myths and legends. The providential character of British mission in India was upheld on grounds of lofty moral principles. Mastery of this enormous territory conferred on British character an inflated imperial pride as also a set of prejudices. Maintenance of an arbitrary rule over India, despite professed British traditions of freedom and justice, was sought to be cushioned by widely circulated racial stereotypes. **Kipling gave the Raj a wide ideological umbrella which sheltered a whole range of self-righteous exaltations, romantic images and contorted visions wrapped in a seductive phrase: 'white man's burden.'**

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Uncomfortable Claims: Untenable Positions – The Raj Syndrome - excerpts

(source: The Raj Syndrome: A Study in Imperial Perceptions - By Suhash Chakravarty. Penguin Books.1991).

The overpowering atmosphere of a cantonment was ubiquitous in official India. This was, it was believed, but a natural product of the interaction between a rational Western mind and the lurid customs of a spooky land full of snakes, cholera, superstitions and babus. The civil lines, the cantonment, the sadr, and, along with it, a lalbazaar provided the physical expression of an overbearing Raj on the outskirts of an Indian city. Of course, there was the inevitable buffer zone of 'fat Indians' as a reliable cushion.

A British establishment in India was situated outside the old walled town. It was generally divided into two parts, the civil lines and the cantonment. The former was spaciously arranged with lots of green between the bungalows inhabited by the *sahiblogs* and the latter was organized on severe military lines. The conspicuous feature of the life of the cantonments and civil stations was a disciplined unity **against an alleged native insubordination. As a ruling race it was not the friendship of the ruled that was to be sought after. They required no friendly overtures from the natives. On the contrary, they believed in the unswerving obedience of the Indians and cultivated a calculated detachment from them.**

While the 'hill stations' were acclaimed as an English spring superimposed on an Indian summer and the select clubs fashioned an odd world of make-believe.There were many hill-stations and hence plenty of choice. About eighty stations were established by the British as retreats from the heat and cholera of the plains. 'Like meat,' one of the memsahibs cribbed, 'we keep better up here.' Some of the hill resorts were purely escapism. Simla was, however, 'the abode of the little Tin Gods' as Kipling had put it. For several months in every year it was the capital of the Raj and the embodiment of the absolute power of the viceroy. Despotic power was frankly exhibited. There was also the imperial cathedral and the Gaiety. Together, they constituted the complex structure of an imperial hierarchy which **segregated** even the shopping center. The Mal was separated from the Lower Mal and both from the chhota bazaar. The hill-stations espoused the desire to recreate British atmosphere with exuberance which was always alien and incompatible.

By and large the British community in India lived its own life, ran its own shops and newspapers, entertained itself at exclusive halls and concerts, admired or criticized itself on Chowringhee Road and Connaught Circus, congratulated itself at the official receptions at the government houses and the viceregal palace, exalted itself at the Imperial Orchestra played **Rule Brittania** on the Mall at Simla or titillated itself down memory lane as a certain Mr. Cunningham performed Othello at the Gaiety Theatre. The Brahmins, **F.Yeats-Brown** put it bluntly, made a circle within which they

cooked their food. So did we. We were a caste, pariahs to them, princes in our estimation. The compulsions of imperialism negated all passions for democratic equality or Christian egalitarianism. Imperialism, by virtue of its very nature, was insular, racist and arrogant.

The whole range of historical novels on the Indian theme stoked the self-righteous imperialism in India. These works of fiction were the result of the imperial consciousness, and, in turn, they provided the emotional and material impulses for more rigorous actions and heroism.

Imperial stereotypes

Major General Agate of The Rains Came had been in India for half of his life and was a perfect Kipling general both in appearance and temperament. It was 'on his own solid shoulders', he reminded his over-awed neighbors, that 'he carried the burden for all dark races.' He remained smug in the belief that he was serving the British Empire in its grand tradition.

There was an orthodox Winston Churchill sneering at the 'naked fakir' (Gandhi) and refusing to preside over the liquidation of the Empire. Meanwhile imperialism got away with its inhuman ordinances, its broken pledges and the future of the Raj.

E. M. Forester, was disturbed by the social exclusiveness of the rulers. As Benita Parry puts it, almost all the historical, analytical, propagandist and fictional writings on India devised a way of presenting world history in such a way that British rule in India appeared a political imperative and a moral duty.

Charles Andrews would have concurred with Forester but for the fact that he had also desired to initiate a singular synthesis between the new India and the old and consecrate the imperial mission with Christian piety.

In 1934 Robert Byron echoed Forester's uncomfortable claims and untenable positions with regard to the demands of imperial partnership as well as his general faith in England's civilizing mission.

Edward Thompson having acclaimed the fulfillment of the British goal in India gazed remorsefully at the decline of the Raj. He had witnessed the pageantry and splendor of an arrogant Empire. It was as certain as Rome had been. He had for seen the last days of British rule as he helplessly watched a rising tide of opposition around the issue of partition of Bengal.

C.F. Andrews, E.M. Forester, Edward Thompson, Horace Alexander and Robert Byron tried to resolve the contradictions of imperialism by weaving a sense of obligation into the system. 'To see a great race given scope for the exercise of its greatest strength, to see it conduct the art of government on a scale and with a perfection accomplished by no previous race, is to achieve that sublime pleasure in the works of man, which, ordinarily, is conferred only by the great artists. This I saw in India.'

The Western man's assumption of racial superiority, Byron argued, had rendered him odious to the East. And the only means which the East devised of resisting this assumption were either to swallow the materialism whole and undisguised, or else, take a little of it and rebel against him forcibly. Japan tried the first course and was about to lose her soul; China opted for the second and relapsed into chaos. 'India remains', he said, 'holding in her precarious balance,

the residue of hope.'

In India the white man was always the ruler and the native was always the ruled. It could not have been the other way around. To put it in other words, the Englishman was painted as virile, bold, energetic, and masculine, while the natives were presented, with the exception of some Pathan tribesmen of the frontier, as effeminate, weak, cowardly and lethargic. Masculine Christianity was firmly established as the governing principle of imperialism and this perception continued almost unabated.

Jim Corbett, a hunter, a storyteller and a Christian gentleman, wrote: " Those who visit India for pleasure or profit never come in contact with the real Indian – the Indians whose loyalty and devotion alone, made it possible for a handful of men to administer, for close on two hundred years, a vast subcontinent with its teeming millions.

To most British, India was central to his concept of the Empire, and he tried to clothe imperialism with Christian virtues…

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By Chalomumbai correspondent
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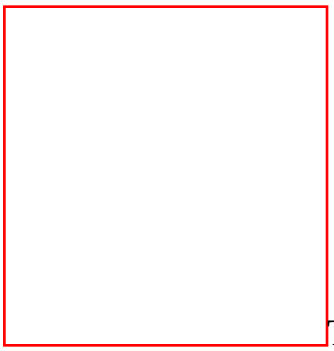
Ashta means eight and Vinayaka is one of the several names of Lord Ganesh. The Ashtavinaykas are eight Ganesh temples in Maharashtra namely Morgaon, Theoor, Pali, Mahad, Lenyadri, Ozar, Ranjangaon and Siddhatek, five of them being in Pune district alone.

The Ganesh idols in these temples are known to be swayambhu (born on their own, in other words, discovered, not constructed). That's why these temples have special significance. Devotees strongly believe that their wishes would be fulfilled if they visit these temples at least once in their lifetime. In fact, one would find very few Maharashtrian families that have not done the Ashtavinayakadarshan yatra once in their lives.

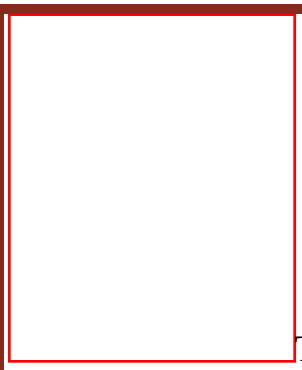
There are a number of travel companies taking pilgrims to Ashtavinayakas throughout the year. But one can go independently by Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation buses, private luxury buses or private vehicles too. Except for the two steep ones -- Ozar and Lenyadri, the other temples are easy to reach.

Let's set out on the journey

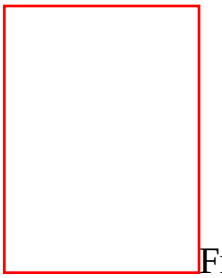
Moreshwar at Morgaon

 There are various routes to reach Morgaon from Pune but the most commonly taken one is Pune-Hadpsar-Saswad-Jejuri-Morgaon. Old-style construction marks the temple. With a silver cobra adorning its head, the Ganesh idol sparkles with radiant diamonds which make its eyes. Eight different statues of Ganesh, installed in eight directions attract attention in the temple compound. A huge mouse and a nandi bull (the vehicle of Lord Shiva) in metal catch your eye as they sit in front of the Ganesh idol.

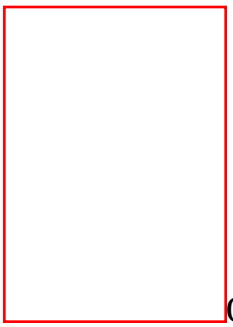
Girijatmaj at Lenyadri

 This is a tough one to climb. On Pune-Nashik highway, if one takes the Chakan-Rajgurunagar-Manchar-Narayangaon-Junnar route, Lenyadri mountain falls on the way. The 302 step climb is worth it. The cave temple and the stone statue are beautiful. But what's amazing about the place is that the cave which is 50 ft long and 60 ft wide does not have a single pillar! If this architectural wonder doesn't make you curious, there is a well on the mountain, storing chilled water which tastes good too!

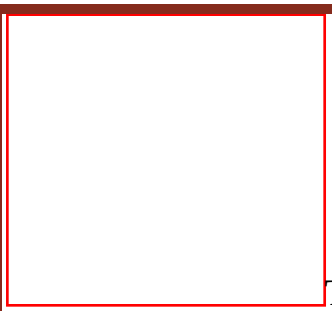
Chintamani at Theoor

 From Pune, when you take the Hadapsar route, 3 km away from Loni is the Theoor road. This temple is endowed with scenic beauty -- there is a river flowing behind the temple and the long temple passage is usually quiet in the evenings, making it a perfect place of worship. It's said that a saint called Morya Gosavi became enlightened here in the past. In the recent times, during the Peshwa rule, the temple was renovated as Madhavrao Peshwa was very fond of it. For Pune residents, the distance of 25 km is something that can be covered easily. As a result, the temple is always crowded.

Vighneshwar at Ozar

 On the same route but a little before Lenyadri is Ozar. Situated on the banks of Kukdi river, this temple has been surrounded by a solid stone wall. The huge shrine and the attractive idol inside it create a sense of grandeur. Nearby is the fort of Shivneri where the Maratha king Shivaji was born. Pilgrims make it a point to visit the fort more because of its historical significance than its proximity to the Ozar or Lenyadri temple.

Ballaleshwar at Pali

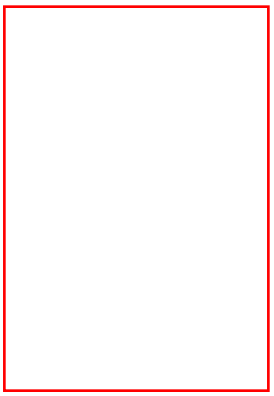
 This one falls in the Raigad district. The easier route is Mumbai-Panvel-Khopoli and Pali. Built in stone, this huge shrine has visitors throughout the year. But in the month of Magh, according to the Hindu calendar, there is a festival of Ganesh and many pilgrims from Mumbai, Pune make a beeline for the early morning darshan on Chaturthi (the fourth day). A huge metal bell at the entrance adds to the overall vastness of the structure.

Mahaganapati at Ranjangaon

 This one is close to Pune. On the Pune-Ahmednagar highway, one has to go via Pune-Koregaon-Shikrapur route. Ranjangaon is close to Shirur. The temple is built in such a way that when the Sun is in transition - moving from Uttarayan to Dakshinayan, its rays invariably fall on the idol.

It is said that the original statue which was found in the village was called Mahotkat and it had 10 trunks and 20 hands. But it has been preserved in the underground cell of the temple. The one which is kept for worship is different.

Varadavinayaka at Mahad

 One can take the same Mumbai-Panvel-Khopoli route since this one also comes in the Raigad district, except that 6 km before Khopoli, there is a turn which takes one to the Mahad temple. As such this temple looks like an old-fashioned residential structure. It has no grandeur that mark many other temples. But Varadvinayaka is supposed to be very jagrut (one who grants wishes, even gives darshan if worshipped sincerely). Another important feature of this temple is the lamp which has been burning here since 1892!

Siddhivinayak at Siddhatek

In Ahmednagar district, on the Pune-Solapur highway, one has to take the Pune-Hadapsar-Loni-Yavat-Chaufula-Patas-Daund route. Cross River Bheema or take a longer route to make it to the temple. Legend goes that Lord Vishnu became enlightened here. Hence this place is supposed to be appropriate for attaining siddhi (divine powers).

For the devotees of Ganesh, the Ashtavinayaka pilgrimage is an experience that is satisfying in itself. That it can also ward off any evil or fulfil their wishes is actually the secondary advantage.

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articles on hinduism

Ramayana tales told differently
By Nidhi Chaturvedi
http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon2.asp?cat=\fory14&d=Foray

The most popular epic Ramayana has been retold in various countries adopting the local flavor.

Dussehra and Diwali, the two greatest Hindu festivals revolve around the epic Ramayana and are all about Rama, Sita and Ravana.

The Ramayana has remained the perennial source of inspiration down the centuries not only in India but in the whole of South Asia. Valmiki s Ramayana is the oldest work of the legend.

According to a legend, when Narada departed for heaven, Valmiki went to the banks of Tamasa river, not far from the Jahnavi (ie Ganga). The Ramayana started its journey from this place.

The different regional versions of the Ramayana like Kambar's Ramayana in Tamil, Krittivasa's Ramayana in Bengali, Tulsidasa's Ramacharitamanasa in Awadhi, Eluttaccan's Adyatma Ramayana in Malayalam etc, are not mere translations. Instead, they also incorporate the local cultures and legends into the adaptions.

The **Tibetan** story says that Sita was Dasagriva s daughter (ie Ravana) and was abandoned on the advice of astrologers. She was brought up by the cultivators. Vishnu incarnated as Rama to kill Ravana. And as the plan, Rama abdicated his throne and went to the forest to allow Lakshmana to assume kingship.

In **Burma,** the legend of Rama goes back to the 10th century. Here, Rama has been described as a pious Buddhist king. Another Buddhist addition is that Rama and Sugriva met under the shade of Bodhi tree.

In **Malaysia**, most of the manuscripts discovered were written after the advent of Islam. And are thus, subsequently altered in the light of Islamic tenets and believes. In course of this transformation, many new episodes were included. An interesting example is that Allah sent Adam to Ravana, and Adam made the latter the lord of earth, water, nether world and the kingdom of Indra.

King Dasaratha was a great grand son of Adam. He had two wives, Mandudari and Baliadari.

Ravana asked Dasaratha to hand over Mandudari, who in turn assumed an illusory form named Mandudasi to become Ravana s wife.

According to the Malaya Rama stories, all chief characters such as Rama, Sita, Ravana, Valin and Hanuman are related to each other. Sita is Ravana s daughter. Laxman and Hanuman have been have illustrated as great characters.

According to the **Thai** notion, Valmiki s Ramayana finds its roots in Thailand. In fact, the Thai identify themselves so much so that they are not interested to know whether Ramayana was originally written in India.

They believe that Ramayana is their own creation and the **Thai Ramakien** is the original Rama story. Many places in Thailand have been identified with Ramayana episodes. For example, the city of Ayutthaya ie, Ayodhya has been mentioned as the capital of the kingdom. It is believed that Rama, on his return to Ayodhya after defeating Ravana, wanted to reward Hanuman for his services. He shot an arrow and where the arrow fell would be identified as Hanuman s capital.

The arrow fell at the town of Lopburi. The impact of the arrow made the soil white, that is why the soil of the place is white. There is a hill named chayanat, with a flattened top. It is believed that when Hanuman went out in search of certain medicinal plants to save the life of Laxman , he lay on the top of the hill and swept the nearby forests with his long tail for searching out the desired plants and herbs. It was then that the top of the hill was flattened by the body weight of Hanuman. Also included in the epic is a hill named Sarburi with an indent. Folklore has it that when Ravana, after abducting Sita, was driving his chariot very fast, the axle of the chariot dashed against the hill, creating the crater.

The residents of Chonburi attribute the red soil of the place to a bloody fight between Valin, the monkey king and Thorapi or Dundubhi, a mighty buffalow.

Another striking feature of Ramkien is the character of Hanuman. In India, we know Hanuman as a celibate (a bramhacharee). But in Ramakien, Hanuman s marriage has been described in great detail. He had affairs with many women celestial, demonic and human. He even had children.

There are many interesting deviations in the Lao versions of the Ramayana. Ravana is a nephew of king Dasrath. Rama, while roaming in the forest in search of Sita, ate the fruit of a particular tree in the forest and was transformed into a monkey.

He met a Nengsi, who originally a woman who had been turned into a female monkey. Rama married Nengsi and Hanuman was born out of this marriage. Rama, having killed Valin, married the latter's widow.

According to **Cambodian** Ramaker, Ram was Vishnu s incarnated and Akaingameso, doorkeeper of the God, was born as Rava, i.e, Ravana.

Sita, in her earlier birth, was the wife of Indra, when she was insulted by Ravana. With a view to avenge the wrong, she was born as Ravana s daughter. Ravana, as advised by his astrologer

brother Bibhek (ie Vibhishana), shut her in a chest, carried the chest to a distant land and burried it there.

She was later unearthed and discovered by king Janaka. Sugreeva and Valin are two sons of the wife of a sage, by Aditya and Indra respectively. When the wife s infidelity was disclosed, the sage cursed the two sons, as a result of which, they turned into monkeys. Hanuman was born of Svaha (sister of Sugreeva and Valin) and Naray, ie, Narayana.

The Ramaker, however, closely follows Valmiki s Ramayana episodes of Ram s friendship with the monkey chiefs, Hanuman s embassy to Lanka, construction of the bridge, invasion of Lanka by Ram and Laxman, Vibhishana s joining the camp of Rama, fighting with Indrajit and Kumbhkarna, slaying of Ravana, Sita s ordeal by fire and Rama s coronation as king.

There is only one difference that Sita gave birth to a son who was named Ramalaksa by Valmiki. One day, Sita went to the river for a bath with her son when the sage was engrossed in meditation.

When he did not see the child after his meditation, he created another child by his yogic power and he was named as Jupalaksa. The rest is as it is in the Ramayana.

But, the moral of the story is the same in all the versions victory of good over evil no matter what the deviations.

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VEDIC MATHS, A FORGOTTEN SCIENCE

By Sriranjan Chaudhari

The Times of India

Thursday, April 15, 1999

BANGALORE: It is being taught in some of the most prestigious institutions in England and Australia. NASA scientists applied its principles in the area of artificial intelligence. And yet, in the country of its birth it languishes as a forgotten science.

Vedic mathematics, which simplifies arithmetic and algebraic operations, has increasingly found acceptance the world over. Experts suggest that it could be a handy tool for those who need to solve mathematical problems faster by the day, especially in a system where the emphasis is on examinations.

The subject was revived lar gely due to the efforts of Jagadguru Swami Bharathikrishna Tirthaji of Puri Jaganath. Having researched the subj ect for years, even his efforts would have gone in vain but for the enterprise of some disciples who took down notes during his last days. That resulted in the book, Vedic Mathematics, in the 1960s.

Says P.R. Srinivas, who has taught the subject in some of the city's colleges: ``It is an ancient technique which simplifies multiplication, divisibility, complex numbers, squaring, cubing, square and cube roots. Even recurring decimals and auxiliary fractions can be handled by Vedic mathematics."

Vedic scholars did not use figures for big numbers in their numerical notation. Instead, they preferred to use the Sanskrit alphabets, with each alphabet constituting a number. Several mantras, in fact, denote numbers; that includes the famed Gayatri mantra which adds to 108 when decoded.

The bases of Vedic mathematics are the 16 sutras which attribute a set of qualities to a number or a group of numbers. Mr Srinivas feels that given the initial training in modern maths in today's schools, students will be able to comprehend the logic of Vedic mathematics only after they have reached the 8th standard. Among his students are Armymen and doctors in their 50s and younger students keen to make their mark in competitive entrance exams.

India's past could well help them make it in today's world.

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articles on hinduism

Ram Mandir is nation's agenda

By T. Mani Chowdary

http://www.organiser.org/24dec2000/cover1.html

It is astounding how people could be worked up about the Babri structure that was pulled down in Ayodhya in 1992. First of all, **Babar was not an Indian. He was an alien invader.** Secondly, in the year the General built the mosque, the Muslim population of the city could not have been more than a few hundreds, while the Hindu population would have been tens of thousands. Leaving aside whether the Muslim place of worship was constructed on the very site where there was a Hindu temple by pulling it down, was it necessary that the mosque should be very near to the place which is believed by millions of Hindus to be the birth place of their most venerated God Rama? Could it not have been a few furlongs away from the Hindus sacred place? The fact that it was built on the site or adjacent to the site believed to be Sri Rama's birth place is to assert the Muslim arrogance of their conquest of Hindus. How can a monument to the humiliation of Hindus constructed by an alien invader be tolerated by the people of this country? When they are not ruled by such conquerors? It is a historical fact that various Hindu organisations in Ayodhya have been repeatedly rising in revolt against Muslim powers to re-possess the site sacred to the Hindus. Also since 1947 there had been no worship or prayers of Muslims at the “mosque”. It is arrogance and fundamentalism and intolerance to question the belief of the Hindus that Lord Sri Rama was born at a particular site.

Hindus do not question the virgin birth of Jesus of prophet Mohammed going to heaven on a white steed from Al-Aksa-mosque. The Hindus' faith and belief about Rama's birth place cannot be less respectable than the faith of the followers of other religions. No law can establish the facts believed in by the Christians, Muslims and the Hindus. Let us be very clear about it. **Objective writers of history and the chroniclers of Muslim invaders of India have recorded the fact of tens of thousands of Hindu temples having been razed to the ground and in those very places or just by their side mosques were built by using the bricks and stones and other materials of the razed temples.** The stones with images of the Hindu gods have been used as steps on which the Muslims going to the mosques would be trampling. At many a place even today such desecration can be clearly seen.

Independent India has removed the statues of so many British generals and viceroys and even Queen Victoria because they are symbols of India's humiliation at the hands of the alien invaders. Many countries around the world have, after gaining independence from their colonial masters have removed the statues of the conquerers; have renamed their countries and their towns after their own historical persons and places and this is still going on. People who had been wronged like the Blacks and the native Indians in United States and Central American Republics and the

aboriginals of Australia are asking not only for apologies from the conquerors and colonists but are demanding reparations. The Japanese emperor apologized to the Koreans; the Federal Republic of Germany not only apologized but paid reparations to Israel for the inhumanity it inflicted upon the Jews of Germany; the Black majority government in South Africa has constituted a Truth and Reconciliation commission (TRC) before which if the White conquerors confess their crimes and inhuman treatment of the black natives for hundreds of years, they would be pardoned. It is natural that when the oppressed and the wronged people come into their own, become independent they would wage a struggle for righting the historic wrongs. It is stubbornness and arrogance and intolerance of the former ruling classes and communities not to acknowldge their guilt.

On the other hand, if they go on persisting in the belief that they did no wrong, the wronged people will not be forgiving until the symbols of the worst humiliation on their country and their faith are got rid of Rama, Shiva and Krishna, the most venerated gods of the Hindus irrespective of one's cast and region. In the very places of temples for these gods had come up mosques. How would the Muslims like that by the side of Al-aksa-mosque or the mosques in Mecca or Madina, the British conquerors had built churches? Wisdom and prudence require that the Muslims who have chosen to live in this country after getting it partitioned for creating an Islamic homeland for them should amicably settle the issue. If they persist in their stubbornness not to acknowledge that this is an independent country, that it is not an Islamic republic, that its people had been subjected to the worst humiliation for over 800 years, then there would be perpetual disharmony and suspicions about the true mind of the Muslim residents of this country. History and religion are very powerful in moulding the psyche of people.

It is for this that independent India restored Somnath, the shrine for Shiva in the first few years of independence itself. Somnath was three times razed to the ground by Muslim invaders. The so called secularists in the Congress and the perpetually anti-Indian political multi-national communists and other parties are doing a great disservice to the Muslim residents of India in stridently and repeatedly including them to separatism, fundamentalism and in supporting their stubbornness not to compromise on Ayodhya and the two other sacred Hindu sites. It is these who are more culpable than the Muslims themselves. As long as the Rama mandir is not built in Ayodhya the Hindu mind and Hindu people cannot be expected to be at peace. The Rama Mandir in Ayodhya is a national agenda. **If Moslims in India agitate for the safety and sanctity of Al-Aksa in distant Israel, can't they understand why the Hindus are agitated about Ram Mandir in Ayodhya?** History will condemn all those who are unwisely stocking the indefensible arrogance, stuborness in the remnants of those who have perpetrated inhuman crimes against the people of this country for centuries.

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They didn't start the fire
http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon3.asp?cat=\edit3&d=EDITS

Unkaa khoon khoon, hamara khoon pani? (Is their blood blood, ours merely water?) This melodramatic enquiry from a Hindi film protagonist championing the cause of the economic underdog in the 1980s sprang to mind as one absorbed media reactions, largely scripted by Hindu secular-liberal intellectuals, to the carnage that travelled from the charred Sabarmati Express at Godhra on February 27 to the streets of Ahmedabad the following day.

Gujarat was "burning", "innocents" were dying, there was "arson and loot" on the streets-all this on February 28; all references to the manner in which the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) fashioned its response to the carnage on Sabarmati Express. The singling out of Muslims is indeed unforgivable. But was the 2000-strong Muslim mob, which should forthwith surrender its membership to a club called human civilisation, "innocent" in its decision to attack a bogey-full of Ramsewaks because the latter committed the crime of singing bhajans on their way back home from Ayodhya?

Secular defendants of the Muslim cause in India promptly pronounced the Ramsewaks guilty of "provoking" **a bunch of miscreants** into medieval barbarity? Apparently the sewaks had committed a crime serious enough to invite a retribution that reminded some of us of the terrible days of Partition, of bogeys being locked from the outside as countless Hindus, particularly women and children, went up in flames. Then, February 28 brought news of attacks on Muslims, Muslim shops, Muslim restaurants, Muslim places of worship, etc, etc; not one report on Godhra the previous day even hinted at the fact that the 58 Ramsewaks, sent to their deaths in cold blood, were victims of Muslim violence; that it was a targeted attack on the Hindu community. Those who perpetrated the Godhra massacre were merely identified as a bunch of "miscreants" of a "particular community" who set a train afire, never mind if their impotent rage killed 25 women and 14 children out of a total of 58.

So much for media squeamishness when it comes to calling a spade a spade. Quite clearly, a nation obliged to preserve its secular credentials, on the basis of its august foundation, is often forced to do so at a cost unacceptable at least to some of us. Violence is condemnable. That is a trusim. But then simple truisms lend themselves to extremely subjective, prejudiced, and partisan interpretations when it comes to the question of communal tension in this country. If violence against Muslims is condemnable, so is brutalisation of Hindus. What was indeed the provocation for snuffing out 58 innocent Hindu lives in a gory carnage, an act that was bound to invite retaliation? If tears must be shed for the loss of Muslim lives, they must in equal measure be sapportioned for the Hindus. Certainly, action and reaction must both be judged by the same scale.

Those attacked on the Sabarmati Express were not masons carrying construction material to Ayodhya, in defiance of the law of the land. Even if they had been, they should have invited retribution from law-keepers, not lawless barbarians. The country's "secular" brigade, a section that Muslims of the kind who attacked the Sabarmati Express must remain eternally indebted to, lost no time in issuing indifferent "violence-is-condemnable" statements. Worth noting however were warnings highlighting the immense threat the VHP posed to the country's internal security and secular harmony. For this section, Muslims continue to be the victimised community, even if that "victimisation" stems from grave physical provocation of the Godhra variety. One section even extended a dangerous and patently subversive theory, of the kind the Pakistani President voices when an Indian aircraft is hijacked; that Godhra may have been a VHP subplot in the Ayodhya saga.

Would Gujarat have burned had the Sabarmati Express not been set on fire? The Hindu secular intellectual would insist Godhra was a result of the VHP's growing belligerence. **For this section of opinion it is as marvellously simple to flog Hindu fundamentalism as it is intriguingly difficult to identify its Muslim equivalent.** For others less committed, however, the manner in which the Muslim mob at Godhra chose to respond to the VHP's defiance over Ayodhya is not humanly, ideologically, socially or civilizationally justifiable. Strangely, in a world where opinion-makers are not shying away from talking about Islamic fundamentalism, in India voices are quick to rise against Hindu fundamentalism but not against the one which constitutes its Muslim equivalent. If the evil of fundamentalism is to be condemned, the condemnation must be honest, comprehensive and total.

Admittedly, the VHP's intransigence on the Ayodhya issue was waiting to step out into the open. In this, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) must take its share of the blame. It is after all the party that once rode the Hindutva vehicle, the mandir issue catapulting it to national recognition. Political expedience of the kind that arises out of running a coalition Government at the Centre subsequently dictated the BJP's move away from a regressive Hindutva agenda. The delinking, eminently desirable in a party that was to head a Government at the Centre, however ought to have been engineered in a manner the party did not lose control over a fringe like the VHP that always carried with it the potential of going berserk, in no small measure owing to a sense of alienation from and betrayal by its erstwhile political patrons.

The recently-concluded elections in Uttar Pradesh proved that the mandir has ceased to be an issue in the State. At the national level too, Ayodhya was hardly a concern. Given the dictates of a globalising world, the BJP successfully shed the negative connotations of being a "Hindu nationalist party" that the international media painted it as till the other day. What this metamorphosis did not take into account however was the fact that the mandir issue would fester and rear its head at a future date, a time when the BJP leadership would be expected to exercise the necessary control. However, not having carried the Ayodhya issue to its conclusion, logical or otherwise, the BJP is now left battling rebellion from the VHP, mounting criticism from its political allies and detractors alike, while facing an unfortunate test of its leadership's credibility, a leadership that is left "appealing" to the VHP, instead of ordering it, to desist from violence. The situation to say the least is grim.

It may take days for the fire in Guajrat to be doused. For the moment it has caused substantial damage to India's secular credentials. Only a month ago, one sat in Israeli Deputy Prime Minister

Shimon Peres' office at the Knessett in Jerusalem, savouring the veteran leader's compliments on how India was a model of secular harmony, a democracy which admitted a 140 million Muslim component in its billion-strong population. Secular India is under attack today. As much from Hindu fundamentalists who swear by a temple no one seems to particularly want, as from those Muslims who consider carnages like Sabarmati Express a fitting response to that fundamentalism.

Ironically for the country's leadership, the Gujarat carnage comes at a time when it was revelling in Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's discomfort over reining in the jihadis he had painstakingly nurtured till only a while ago. Deja vu?

***

"Salim Abdul Gaffar, vice-president of the Youth Congress, lead the frenzied mob".

"How come there were 2000 people awaiting outside the Godhara station waiting with Petrol at 8 am in the morning."

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Godhra and our double standards

http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon3.asp?cat=\edit4&d=EDITS

The reactions of 'secular parties' to the massacre at Godhra has once again exposed the double standards which define the contours of public life in independent India. The victims of the pre-planned and mindless violence were not criminals.

They were only 'guilty' of chanting 'Jai Sri Ram' and 'Jai Bajrang Bali' and such other socio-religious slogans. The opinion of people at large may be sharply divided on whether or not the Vishwa Hindu Parishad was right in taking up the temple agitation now. But none can contend the VHP's right to demonstrate for a cause that it considers right, regardless of what others might think. Democracy also allows every one to raise slogans in support of one's cause so long as it does not hurt anyone else. Nobody can claim that slogans in support of the construction of Sri Ram Mandir can be offensive to another community. Plurality of demands is the essence of democracy even when some of these demands might be in conflict with others.

Many 'secularists', including a top CPI(M) leader while expressing lip-sympathies with the victims, however, are practically trying to justify the gruesome incident. A former Governor of UP, a savvy Congressman, defined the incident as a 'but natural corollary of the VHP's temple movement'. According to these apologists, the behaviour of Ram Sevaks were 'provocative' and called for just retribution.

The CPI(M) leader's finding an excuse for the Godhra attack on the pilgrims is not surprising. For long Muslim communalism has found a niche in the lap of Communism and the two are intertwined. It was the undivided CPI that supported the demand for division of the country. The Communists have always held that India is a conglomeration of nations and not an integrated country.

In West Bengal, several discoveries of arms and ammunition in minority-dominated areas have been pushed under the red carpet by the CPI(M)-led government. The recent backlash when the Left Front Chief Minister called for the regulation of madarsas is another clear instance of this Communist-communalist collusion. The way the Marxists are going out of the way to cover up these communal incidents from Godhra to Kolkata is simply outrageous. Similarly, the endeavour of some other self-styled 'secularists' to whitewash the ISI's inroads into Indian society is dangerous.

The 1993 serial blasts in Mumbai and Coimbatore clearly indicate what such links can do. The ISI is depending heavily on this linkage to magnify its capacity to damage the Indian State. If political parties in India are prepared to turn a blind eye of this link to get some vote bank advantage, they would indirectly be serving the ISI's interests. Whether that will damage India is something I

leave to their conscience.

Less than three years ago, a father and his two sons were torched to death in the darkness of night in the jungles of Orissa. It attracted immediate countrywide condemnation. Secularists went all over town to paint it red. Without any evidence whatsoever, the heinous crime was attributed to the Sangh Parivar and the face of the country was painted black as an intolerant nation. **Why are they less than belligerent today in condemning the present carnage? Is it because the three were White, Christians, and were involved in the 'noble mission' of converting the 'rustic tribesmen'?** On the other hand the Ram Sevaks were local Hindus, belonging to the lower middle classes of the society and returning from a pilgrimage. There is no doubt that the assault was carried out by the same forces that were responsible for the fidayeen attack outside J&K Assembly on October 1, storming of the Parliament on December 13 and the recent slaying of journalist Daniel Pearl. **The attack at Godhra is a wake-up call for those who cherish the institution of civil society and believe in democracy.**

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Hindutva is Elst-where

http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon2.asp?cat=\opd1&d=Oped

According to a body of opinion, the handling of the KN Govindacharya affair by the RSS last week was symptomatic of a malaise that afflicts the Sangh parivar. True, a cadre-based political formulation demands that an individual be subservient to the organisation, but when this "cardinal principle" becomes overbearing to the extent that any voice of dissent is treated as rebellion, it must give rise to the larger questions: For instance, is there something fundamentally wrong with the ideology which claims to be the "inheritor" of this 5000-year-old civilisational ethos? Is "accountability" a non-issue for the political party which discovers its ideological moorings only on the eve of an election?

This "conflict of interests" (party versus government) has been captured by Koenraad Elst in his various works, beginning with his first book on the Ayodhya debate (Ram Janmabhoomi vs Babri Masjid, Voice of India, 1990). Elst, a Ph D from the University of Leuven in Belgium, recently came out with his "Decolonising the Hindu Mind". Predictably, with Elst's passionate advocacy of the Mandir cause, the RSS tried to portray him as "one of us". For Elst, however, disillusionment soon set in, and he blasted the RSS-BJP for abandoning the "cause" (read, the Mandir plank) in a three-part article in the now defunct The Observer of Business and Politics. In this interview, he tells Suman K Jha that the RSS is caught in a time warp: "While Hindu mobilisation is going on everywhere, the RSS cannot see beyond its shakhas".

Q: It's frequently heard that the debate-dialogue-dissent culture has been the biggest victim with the advent of the BJP as the pre-eminent political force in the country. It's more pronounced in the post-September 11 phase. Do you agree? And, is the situation here any different from the one prevailing in the West?

A: In India, as in the West, confusion reigns in the form of superficial relativism, that is the assumption that contradictory truth claims can be equally valid. In India, they call it secularism; in the West, it goes by the name of multiculturalism, but either way it amounts to crass superficialism and a refusal to evaluate competing ideologies and religions in accordance with facts and logic. **Hence, for example, the sour reactions by Indian secularists to VS Naipaul's dismissal of Islam as an imposition which estranges nations from their own heritage. Hence also the shrill condemnation of Silvio Berlusconi's claim that European civilisation is superior to Islam.**

That view is shared by over 90 per cent of the Europeans but not by the chattering classes. I readily concede that a lot is wrong with European civilisation, as also with Hinduism, but in comparative perspective, I think Islam comes out even worse. Just look how many Muslims settle

in Europe and prefer to practice their Islam in the fairly free atmosphere of modern democracies rather than under dictatorships in their homelands.

Q: My question however remains whether you agree with the view that the space for dissent has only decreased ever since the BJP came to power. The BJP-led Government's handling of the recent History textbooks controversy, for instance, amply proves this, according to its critics...

A: I don't have the impression that the BJP's coming to power has made much of a difference. Earlier, you had schoolbooks denying historical facts that Tipu Sultan forcibly converted thousands of Hindus. Now, you may get textbooks denying that the Vedic Rishis ate beef. Apart from that, not much has changed. In the media, and academia, Hindutva is still in the opposition. True, under the market system, dissent is marginalised, ridiculed, suffocated financially, or rendered ineffective in other subtle ways, but I prefer all that to being murdered or imprisoned in a Gulag camp. And if you want to know whether Hindutva poses a threat to freedom comparable to Communism, I don't think so.

Q: Let's put it this way. Going by your own thesis, why has this "Hindu civilisation" failed to produce scholars/intellectuals who respect the tradition of dialogue and accommodation? There is an impression that the RSS volunteers, the self-proclaimed "torch-bearers of this civilisation", are mostly inward-looking and even their "baudhik pramukhs" are found wanting as far as intellectual rigour is concerned. No wonder, we fail to produce an Edward Said, a Noam Chomsky or even a Huntington!

A: The Indians need not be so modest. **Allow me, as an outsider, to have a higher opinion of India's intellectual performance. Huntington's notion of a "Clash of Civilisations" was already used by Girilal Jain, who died the year before Huntington gained fame. Have you ever cared to read the works of the late Ram Swarup? He was soft-spoken and avoided hurtful language, yet his observations on the deeper issues underlying the communal problems in India were razor-sharp. The RSS reduces everything to the typical nationalist discourse of "the Motherland vs the anti-national forces". But there is more to Hindu revivalism than that.**

And I would trade Edward Said's books any time for those of your own Arun Shourie. Said's "Orientalism" wrongly dismisses criticism of Islam as a colonial ploy. In Belgium alone, there are plenty of Christian refugees from Turkey and Lebanon, and they know who chased them out. Said, however, has become the leading apologist for Islam in the West.

It is, however, true that the RSS has failed to produce great minds. But then that may not be the job of a mass organisation. On the other hand, it is indeed a glaring failure of the RSS that it never produced a serious analysis of the very problems which led to its creation, apart from some sweeping nationalist slogans about "anti-national forces". This has to do with a choice made by KB Hedgewar and MS Golwalkar against intellectual activity and in favour of mindless activism. But this mistaken party-line of the RSS matters less and less, because there is more and more Hindu self-organisation outside the Sangh Parivar framework. The "shakha" gatherings are becoming obsolete as a form of mobilisation. Hindu civilisation has always functioned in a

decentralised manner, and now the "Hindu awakening" (announced so often at RSS fora) is taking place through informal networks, for example, the internet. The movement is reverting to decentralised forms of mobilisation, after the RSS interregnum of boy scout-type uniformity and centralism.

Q: Lastly, if you noticed last month, the reception to someone like Noam Chomsky here is to be seen to be believed. How do you explain this? It was only the BJP's youth wing, the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, which saw in him a "threat" and tried to disrupt his public engagements...

A: I don't think Indian society is indifferent to debate. But while I have great sympathy for Chomsky, I don't think the warm reception he usually gets in India is the result of India's "debate-mindedness". Rather, his positions only reinforce the opinions of his hosts. Today, for instance, most Indians are very critical of the crude and mindless manner in which the Americans are conducting their so-called campaign against terrorism, and they are happy to recognise in Chomsky an American who thinks likewise. My impression is that he tends to see the world through the glasses which his hosts have selected for him, for example, by adopting the Indian Communist view of Hindu revivalism without getting to know it first-hand. We cannot study everything first-hand, so often we rely on the authority of contact persons whom we trust. That is perfectly understandable in the case of a non-specialist like Chomsky, who earned his laurels in other fields. More problematic is that the same reliance on biased Indian sources is found in the works of people who pass as experts on Hindu revivalism. Most of them don't really know what they are talking about.

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Verily consciousness is Brahman

http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon3.asp?cat=\opd2&d=OPED

From ancient times, seekers of truth aiming at emancipation (moksa) have hankered after the knowledge of the self (atman confined in the body) vis-a-vis the cosmic supreme Self (Brahman). That the two are same has been established by the mahavakya: Ayam atma Brahma (The self is Brahman). In Brihadaranyaka Upanisad, Yajnavalkya emphatically tells his wife-disciple Maitreyi, "Self alone should be heard of, should be contemplated and be meditated upon."

That being so, an inquiry about the nature of the self is natural. In Aiterya Upanishad, a seeker has posed the question: "What is that we meditate/worship as atman the self or the supreme Self, the Brahman? Also, which of the two (para-brahman or apara-brahman) is to be meditated upon? Is it that by which a living being sees (form), hears sound, smells (odour), utter words (speech) or that which he discriminates between what is sweet and what is not sweet (sour)?

The question aims at a clear understanding of Its real nature for the purpose of a proper meditation. The atman (Brahman) has been described as both with attributes (saguna with attributes, meaning Hiranyagarbha which can be attained and that without attributes (nirguna, which can only be realised). It is not unnatural that a non-indiscriminating mind lumps all activities of organs of sense-perception and collectively considers these as atman.

Each organ of sense perception responds to a particular sensation that leads to cognition. But one hears what is good and also what is not good, one smells what is pleasant and also what is fetid and also one sees what is worth seeing and what is not worth seeing. A close scrutiny reveals that since atman that is unborn, eternal which must be unchanging in its nature, cannot have a variable element as an integral part in its being. Thus, these could not be the self (atman) that is to be worshiped for seeking the knowledge that leads to emancipation.

The process of cognition has to be distinguished in terms of gathering the cognition, collectively from different senses, and that which enables a panoramic view of the external world. For example, eye only provides a visual sensation of an object. The process of seeing has to be coordinated with the mind. It is said, "one sees with the mind". Some time we may "see" an object but if the mind was not attentive, one would say, "I saw that but I was out of mind" - meaning I did not give any attention.

The verse continues: Does one worship consciousness as Brahma, Prajapati (the first born), other gods, etc., who are themselves evolved from the Brahman or the five elements of nature: Earth (prithvi); water (jal); fire (agni); air (vayu); and, ether (akasa), which are themselves insentient or the big and small men, animals and birds that fly and objects (as trees) that do not move?

One has to keep in mind that instruments of cognition that enable various functional activities, heart, mind and antahkaran are verily (names of) those which arise from consciousness, and hence enable knowledge. The sense, mind, antahkarana function only as long as the atman is in the body and provides to it the consciousness. Both are needed. Even when there is the self within, but when one is rendered unconscious, say by a head injury or on being administered anaesthesia, one does not have cognition of objects around him. Also, after the self has discarded the body as on death and there is no consciousness, there is no cognition or a knowledge of the objects around one.

It is the self within the body that is the cause of consciousness that enables functioning of various organs of sense perception and action, mind, antahkaran, prana, etc., as the effect. Thus consciousness (prajnana within) is the basis of all activities and has to be the object of meditation.

It is concluded that all these and the whole world, impelled by consciousness, is based on consciousness (prajna) within. Therefore, consciousness (at the body level) is verily the atman which at the cosmic level is Brahman. Thus is the mahavakya Prajnanam Brahman.

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Dig for truth

http://www.dailypioneer.com/indexn12.asp?main_variable=EDITS&file_name=edit1%2Etxt&counter_img=1

The Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court deserves to be congratulated for ordering the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on Wednesday to excavate the disputed site in Ayodhya to ascertain whether a temple existed underneath the demolished Babri Masjid. It has adopted a rational approach which seeks archaeololgical evidence, gathered with the help of sophisticated technology, on which to base its verdict. Besides, it has sought to prevent the excavation delaying matters by ordering the ASI to begin work within a week from Wednesday and complete it within a month, informing it on March 24 of the progress made.

Nor can there be any question about the competence of the Delhi-based Canadian firm, Tojo-Vikas International Limited, whose assistance the ASI has been asked to seek. It had earlier used the same ground-penetrating radar technology to survey the stretch between Delhi University and the Central Secretariat, for the Delhi Metro Rail project. Unfortunately, despite all this, a predictable clutch of historians have resorted to their familiar game of throwing red herrings. This time, the burden of their song is that, even if the ruins of a temple are found, one would still have to prove that it was destroyed by Babar's general Mir Baqi, that it was for the worship of Ram Lalla, and that the latter was born at the disputed site at Ayodhya. It is not difficult to understand why they have done so. A survey by the same firm, using the same technology and undertaken at the ASI's behest, in January, had established the existence underground of a structure with pillars at the Ram Janmabhoomi site. Though the survey has not said whether the structure was a temple, the 'secular' historians are clearly worried that it may turn out to be so and, hence, have started preparing for shifting the ground of battle. Their worry must be all the greater because, after the Babri Masjid was demolished, Hindu idols and fragments of a destroyed temple were found among the debris.

Needless to say, their discordant notes should be dismissed with contempt. It should be enough if the court, on the basis of the evidence unearthed by the excavation, concludes that a temple did exist at the Ram Janmabhoomi site. Even Muslim leaders have claimed that they would forego their claim to the latter if this indeed turned out to be the case. Foolproof evidence showing that the temple was indeed for the worship of Ram Lalla and that the latter was born at the place, would be impossible to find. To continue looking for it would only be to prolong a dispute which needs to be buried as soon as possible in the interest of communal harmony, of which the 'secular' historians claim to be the exclusive champions. If anything, there should be restraint and a desire for mutual accommodation on all sides. The Islamic Council of India, an umbrella body of Muslim clerics, has shown the way by urging Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to allow Hindus to start religious activity on the undisputed land. Organisations like the VHP should conduct themselves in kindred spirit so that a final settlement of the Ram Janmabhoomi dispute on the basis of a judicial verdict marks the beginning of a new chapter of communal harmony in the country.

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articles on hinduism

The Base of Social Order

By Alain Danielou

Excerpts taken from "Virtue, Success,Pleasure, & Liberation. The Four Aims of Life in the Traditon of Ancient India."

Today we hold up egalitarian democracy, equality of the sexes and races, and multiculturalism as our social and political ideals. We are constantly faced with constant propaganda and pressure to be assimilated into a mode of human existence consistent with the goals and values contained within the perception of reality and the imagination of Western progressive commercial society.

Wherever assimilation and adaptation to these goals and values are resisted, conflict, oppression, and exploitation occurs. The "First World," comprising only 20 percent of the world's population, enjoys 66 percent of the world's income. The inconsistency between our "ideals" and these horrifying world realities makes it imperative for us to investigate the prevailing Eurocentric world view.

Prior to its colonization, India was the most culturally diverse nation on earth. How is it that all its different races, cultural lifestyles, religious practices, deities, and languages survived for more than five thousand years to the present day? What is the nature of the social order that unquestionably produced one of the greatest and longest lasting civilizations know to man?

Elements of social Order

An ideal society must be based on the form of society that is natural to man and suited to his biological nature and collective psychology as a social being. From point of view of a systematic study of mankind's collective tendencies, it must be stated that most modern ideologies are mere abstractions – dreams corresponding to no possible form of real society. If biological facts and the differences between the sexes and races are ignored rather than harmonized and artificial society is created in which practice fails to match theory. As a result, society is constantly plagued by conflict and disorders, which can be fatal, and inevitably becomes unjust and inhuman, since the more cunning rather than the more deserving will often appropriate every advantage.

In the resulting social and political crises, entire civilizations can flounder and disappear unless an eventual reaction brings about a return to more normal social patterns. None of the founders of the political and social systems currently discussed in the West seem to have studied the patterns of stable human societies.

The Hindus assert that their social formula meets the requirements of man's individual and collective nature. The fact that the Hindu civilization has been able to survive over thousand of years, despite disorders caused by invasions, schisms, and internal wars, and has been capable of

constant renewal, as demonstrated by one brilliant period after another, merits all our attention in the study of a social system whose longevity is unique in history.

Prior to colonial intervention, the resulting corporative organization created a deep unity over a continent whose linguistic, racial, religious, and national extremes and divisions seemed to condemn it to perpetual discord. It created harmony in which differences of origin were attenuated by the unity of the occupational group. Clashes between the different peoples were reduced to a kind of folklore competition, in which each was proud of being different, and to tournaments between princes to win noble titles. These activities no longer affected the continuation of civilization and the right of each class of individuals and ethnic and religious groups to stay as they were, keeping their customs, religion, social life, and systems of marriage and inheritance without impeding those of others. In fact, the differences in dress, custom, and manners became a title of glory and interest instead of an object of scorn and ridicule by groups who considered themselves superior or more evolved.

The Castes

The institution we know as the caste system is called varna-ashrama for the Hindus, varna meaning color, and ashrama a refuge of peace and harmony. The aim of the system is thus the harmonious coexistence of the various races and different sorts of human beings.

From its very beginning, the caste system was envisaged as the expression and codification of the social and ethnic realities inherent in all societies. The Hindu lawgivers felt that no advanced society could exist without the recognition of certain facts, such as professional organizations, relations between the various occupations needed to maintain the economic, political, and social stability of the state, and the problems arising from the various degrees of development among peoples and individuals, their various aptitudes, and the drawbacks of intermarriage.

It should not be forgotten that the so-called equality in aptitude of the sundry human races takes only the capacities of the most aggressive races into account, and not of those that are unable to adapt to modern conditions, such as the Pygmies, the Australian aborgines, the munda populations of India, and many other groups.

For the Hindus, the caste system is not a man-made invention to justify slavery but the recognition of the Creator’s will, the codification of a state of fact, an attempt to harmonize human society in accordance with the general scheme of creation. It is easy to see that despite all the national and linguistic barriers, even modern Western society is fundamentally, like all societies, a caste system. From whatever position we view it, we see international corporations whose members have far more in common with each other than with the various professional or social levels of their own country. The problem with western society derive from the fact that while proclaiming the equality of men, it is entirely graded on a hierarchical system as far as the professions are concerned.

Under the pretext of equality, Western lawmakers do not let the various groups cooperate among themselves while keeping their different habits, ethics, and social life. Jews, Mormons, Muslims, Celts, Basques, Albigensians, Pygmies, blacks, or Inuits are accorded a relative equality on on condition that they conform to our customs, losing most of their social, national, and religious characteristics and in fact abandoning their own personality.

In order to cope with all the problems posed by a multiracial society, the Hindu lawgivers sought to establish rules making coexistence possible, resulting in the caste system which is still today solidly established in India despite all efforts to destroy it. In a country where populations of highly different origins and aptitudes live side by side, from men of the forest to refined Gangetic craftsmen and proud Aryan warriors, an equitable place had to be found for all. Each had to be able to continue in his ancestral way of life, governed by laws suited to him and with the form of social, religious, agricultural, intellectual, and moral life he preferred, without adversely affecting the rest of the community. This meant recognizing each group and each individual's right to be different which is in fact liberty's only valid criterion.

"The system of the four castes was created by me according to the difference in aptitude and occupation.
I created it, I who am inactive and immutable.

Bhagvad Gita, 4.13)

To some modern eyes, to be destined from birth to a certain profession is an injustice, to which it can be objected that all professions are indispensable and that one is good as another. However the selection is performed, there will always be a difference or inequality between professional groups. The real problem consists in making all professions honorable, rather than in opening to everyone certain professions considered more respectable than others.

Race and Racism

The respect accorded by the caste system to the various races and cultures is exactly the contrary of what the West terms racism. Racism, whose logical outcome is genocide, is the defense system of an oligarchy that claims to be superior and egalitarian. The naïve and romantic social ideas of Europeans who preach the equality of man but insist that equality must be on the level of their own beliefs, way of life, customs, clothing, feeding habits, hygiene, and so on can only lead to genocide or false assimilation, which will in the end destroy the society that fathered it.

To present the Pygmies or Mundas of India with the alternatives of becoming bankers, lawyers, or factory workers, or else of disappearing, is a sinister jest, which has unfortunately already justified the annihilation of many human races. In the whole of history, India has been the only defender of peoples who do not adapt to the industrial exploitation of the world. The nomadic gypsies, victims of racism in Europe, have never had problems in India since their expulsion from their original home in Gandhara (present day Afghanistan) by Islamized Arab, Turkish, and Mongol invaders. Anti-Jewish racism is first and foremost a struggle for economic and financial supremacy, directed against the only people in the West who resisted the imposition of Christianity. In India, the Jews form a caste and have never known such problems.

Duties and Privileges

It is certain that abusive caste practices were introduced when the administrative power ceased to be in Hindu hands, thus making the repression of abuses legally impossible.

Such abuses as there are have been greatly exaggerated in order to justify Western domination and are normally quite local. In most of India, the caste system functions today as always has: as a harmonious whole in which each tribe, family and religious group to live according to its customs,

traditions, and convictions is respected as it is in no other country and no other form of society. Even in modern India, the most humble artisan, like the craftsman of medieval Europe, is proud of his race, profession, caste and customs, which he would not want to exchange for anything in the world. Nor has he the slightest desire to impose his habits or ways of seeing things on others. Even, if like the Christian, he is convinced on the grounds of his religion, customs, and moral concepts, unlike the Christian he has no urge to proselytize.

Caste and Marriage

For the Hindu lawmaker, marriage is above all a social institution, whose exclusive purpose is the propagation of the species and preservation of the caste, community, even the nation itself. The Hindu makes a clear distinction between erotic enjoyment in all its forms, which is part of the harmonious development of the individual, and marriage whose sole aim is the family and the continuation of the species. Marriage results not from love but from careful choice, which takes account only of the heredity, stability, and happiness of the children.

Momentary pleasures do not require an institution such as marriage, which can only lose dignity if viewed in such a light. Marriages of love, chance, or accident, which can be broken by divorce, is countenanced today by many Westerners, are from the Hindu point of view absurd and immoral, a sort of legalized prostitution. The Western notion of marriage has no moral or social counterpart in Hindu society. Marriage is not merely the legitimizing of sexual relations but an important institution, whose exclusive purpose is offspring – the continuation of the species under the best possible conditions of heredity and environment.

Love with all its fantasies is an essential achievement for the individual, but marriage is quite different. The sexophobic fanaticism of the Christian world and its extraordinary taboos were needed to give a sacred character to a marriage in which the child's heritage is not even considered. The institution of marriage on such a basis has no meaning, and the consequent systematic mismatching of aptitudes is producing an ever-increasing number of ill-adapted beings in the modern Western world, lacking the basic virtues of the various groups.

Based on respect for the species as the work of the Creator, marriage as an institution concerns caste, race, profession, and nation, with which the individual has no right to tamper because it affects everyone else. If marriage restrictions are rigidly obeyed by all, the various castes or races can live amicably together, profiting by each other without endangering each other's customs, traditions, and progeny. Women in ancient India were never shut away as they were after the Muslim invasion and are even today, because they were respected by all, and marriage out of the caste was unthinkable. Hindu legislation is not puritanical and gives much leeway to human weakness, but marriage outside the caste is considered an antisocial act jeopardizing the entire structure on which society is balanced.

Caste and Conquest

There is no moral objection to a prince or a state conquering other territories or peoples, providing caste restrictions and the duties of the conqueror are observed. By upsurping the prerogatives of other castes, one becomes a tyrant. Such an empire will not endure, because conflicts will break out.

It was this error that led to the failure of all the Western colonial empires. The use of Christianity

spread by the missionaries as a means of assimilating conquered peoples had had disastrous results on every side.

"He must consider as law whatever the religion of the (conquered) peoples ordains."

(Manu, 7.203)

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Divide and Convert; Divide and Rule
http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/nov/22spec.htm

Majestic, fluid, quietly mighty! In many ways, the waters of the Brahmaputra encapsulate the North-East. We saw them only late October, after their summer fury had abated yet the great river's beauty still fills our eyes. Cutting open the Himalayas, bringing life and fertility to this huge valley, and providing a gateway to the rest of India, how hard it has worked through the ages.

On its banks stands the Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture, our first halt in Guwahati. Buzzing with activity, among other things it conducts considerable research and documentation on the North-East's ancient cultures and traditions. I had the honour of delivering there the Bhubaneswar Bharthakur Memorial Lecture, on the theme of **The Invasion That Never Was;** with the help of slides I presented recent archaeological and cultural evidence to show the falsity of the divisive nineteenth-century Aryan invasion theory -- a theory which, as we discovered a few days later, is still much misused in the North-East in order to convince tribals that they have no connection with Indian "Aryan" culture, no identity of their own, and would therefore be better off embracing Christianity.

Missionaries and others who have recourse to such perverse arguments really belong to the colonial dark ages -- for massive evidence from archaeology, anthropology and other sciences, piling up in recent decades, has thoroughly disproved the theory of an Aryan invasion of India. It simply never took place, nor was there ever any Aryan race or any Dravidian race. It is time these crude and unscientific distortions of India's past are laid to rest forever; they have done enough harm to the Indian people as it is. Do we really have to blindly perpetuate colonial myths in this 'scientific era'?

Science was also the topic of a talk and slideshow I gave at the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, about India's scientific heritage, highlighting some of the early -- and pioneering -- developments in mathematics and astronomy in ancient India.

Back in the city, this was followed by a well-attended public lecture organized by the Bharat Vikas Parishad, on the theme 'Is Indian Culture Obsolete?' Focusing on some essential roots of Indian culture, I explained why, in my view, the answer to this question can only be in the negative, and why India still has much to contribute to the world - perhaps even more today than in the past.

The next day took us to the Kamakhya temple with its impressive underground *garbha griha*. We

also enjoyed the sweeping view of the city from atop the Nilachal Hill, near the quiet Bhubaneswari shrine. After a flight to Dibrugarh, we left eastern Assam through Marguerita, braving the roads with a four-wheel drive jeep and an expert driver -- but "road" is too noble a term for these endless series of bottomless potholes and gaping mudpits, eloquent and back-breaking testimonies of State neglect. It was a relief to enter Arunachal Pradesh, where we remained at foothill level for a few days, during a teachers' orientation camp organized by the Vivekananda Kendra. This spiritually-oriented service organization based at Kanyakumari is well known in Assam and Arunachal for its 25 excellent schools and numerous balwadis.

History and culture were the central themes of the five-day camp -- and so the many distortions Indian history remains burdened with, from Harappan to colonial times. Again we touched on the discarded yet still widespread Aryan invasion theory, the many features of the Harappan civilizations that have survived to this day, the grossly unscientific race concept (still in vogue with our professional division-*walas*), the essential continuity of Indian civilization, also how the organic, polymorphic, assimilative, integrating entity called "Indian culture" succeeded in cementing the subcontinent, giving to, but also taking from, regional and tribal sub-cultures, without ever imposing itself on anyone....

We talked of science and technology, ecological heritage, the caste system, India's considerable and always peaceful contributions to world culture, but also how to make the teaching of history more living and relevant to a student. India has so much rich history -- tragedies but also achievements, wars but also peaceful expansions, advances in art, science, literature -- yet few countries have been so clumsy in projecting their heritage to their younger generations. A look at the drab and sad textbooks in use in various parts of the country is enough to put one off learning history, not to speak of the heavy ideological biases they often inflict on Indian students; Marxist historians have long been past masters at this game, which is why they are so loud against any attempt to alter their misrepresentations and provide a fair, ungilded, and unmuddied perspective of Indian civilization.

A few public programmes -- at Kharsang, Jairampur, Marguerita and Changlang -- brought into sharp focus some of those misrepresentations, together with the racial biases introduced by colonial scholars. Often, following my positive projection of Indian culture -- which evoked surprise, so deep the habit of self-denigration has gone -- there would be the usual objections: but look at the perverse caste system, look at the imposition of Aryan culture on the Dravidians, on the tribals, note how this region never had any links with India, was always separate culturally, linguistically, racially, see how Hinduism is now trying to convert the tribals....

It was not too hard to guess that most of the questioners were devout Christians or recent converts. Nor was it hard to show the incurable ignorance all such statements were founded on. For instance, the fact that the North-East, repeatedly mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, in Kautilya or Kalidasa, and of course in several *Puranas*, was always regarded as just one of the regions of Bharat, a fact confirmed by the existence of tribal versions of the Epics, also by archaeological finds from the 4th Century AD onward of established Hindu and Buddhist settlements (I am sure that more systematic excavations would push those dates further back). Or again the falsity of the racial concept and the non-existence of any so-called Aryan or so-called Dravidian race. Finally, the inherently non-aggressive nature of Hinduism, in contrast to the inherently aggressive nature of Christianity (recall the Pope's call for "a great harvest of faith from

Asia" during his state visit to India; can we imagine a swami visiting the Vatican and calling for Christians to convert to Hinduism?).

So when my questioners, subtly or not so subtly, tried to paint Hinduism in a bad light, they found the spotlight on Christianity rather uncomfortable, especially when I pointed out that not a single pre-Christian culture or religion of ancient Europe was allowed to live, or that Christianity's essentially non-rational, unverifiable, dogmatic foundation was the cause for its virtual disappearance from the West, where more and more people are now turning to yoga, meditation (as in America), or (as in France) to Buddhism. Such debates have of course been taking place all over India, but it is distressing to see how they stick to obsolete theories, discarded misconceptions, and unjustifiable strategies of systematic conversion and division of society.

The last point was brought to us in sharp focus during our interactions with a few tribals of Arunachal, who voiced the same distress at the methods used to secure conversions to Christianity: not only monetary allurements, but psychological pressure on the sick, promises of cure upon conversion, pressures to rope in the rest of the family when the promises don't materialize, and finally to throw out of the family those who continue to "worship Satan". In fact some missionaries and Christian educational institutions openly refer to tribals, Hindus, and Buddhists as Satan ka bachcha [children of Satan] while Christians are Ishwar ka bachcha [children of God]. We heard several heart-rending tales of teenage boys or girls having been thus expelled from their families when they refused to convert, accused by their own parents of being "Satan". Converted families are then instructed not to have contacts with the non-Christians, as a result of which they refuse to take part in traditional harvests and other aspects of the community's collective life; the centuries-old harmonious working of the community suddenly becomes divided, and indeed division is a great way to secure conversions: "divide and convert", until you can "divide and rule".

That ultimate step is already visible in the militant movements of the North-East, most of which are rooted in Christian ideology. Witness the conversions the militants secure at gunpoint in remote villages at night, a fact asserted to us repeatedly. I remembered a Don Bosco father in Tamil Nadu telling me a few years ago how "tribes have no future within the Indian Union" and explaining why he was exhorting them "to take up guns". It all fell into place.

The real tragedy is perhaps not the devious methods used by Baptists or Catholics alike -- for, after all, the whole of Christian history is full of them and tainted in deep red. Rather it is the failure of the government to fulfil its primary duty of protecting from aggression peace-loving citizens and endangered communities and cultures. And the failure of educated Indians ("miseducated" would be more correct) to ably project the specific values of Indian culture, such as the oneness of humanity, the essential divinity of man, or the complete spiritual freedom to choose one's path towards the manifestation of that divinity -- values that are conspicuously absent from Abrahamic religions (notwithstanding the hollow slogan that "all religions preach the same truths": unfortunately they don't). Surely, one may be critical of a few aspects of Hinduism or Indian traditions; but to throw away a gem because some mud has stained it is plain ignorance.

The flight from Dibrugarh to Guwahati followed the Brahmaputra, whose hundred branches meandered lazily around countless islets. The Himalayas glistened to the north, a perfect line of

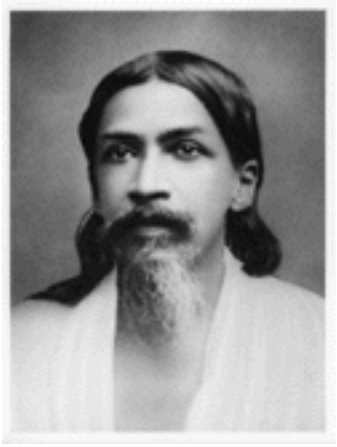
white peaks hovering over the clouds and kissed by the setting sun. Yes, that which has its roots beyond time cannot die. That which has countless forms will always be reborn.

French-born Michel Danino has been settled in Tamil Nadu for 25 years; he has given many lectures in India and is co-author of The Invasion That Never Was*. He is also the convener of the International Forum for India's Heritage.*

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A perennial quest
By Manoj Das
http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/08/15/stories/1315090c.htm

MANOJ DAS pays tribute to Sri Aurobindo on his 127th birth anniversary today.



If mankind only caught a glimpse of what infinite enjoyments, what perfect forces, what luminous reaches of spontaneous knowledge, what wide calms of our being lie waiting for us in the tracts which our animal evolution has not yet conquered, they would leave all and never rest till they had gained these treasures. But the way is narrow, the doors are hard to force, and fear, distrust and scepticism are there, sentinels of Nature, to forbid the turning away of our feet from her ordinary pastures.

Sri Aurobindo, Thoughts and Aphorisms

THE departing century leaves behind a vision of human destiny which is, probably, optimism.But can optimism be subject to scrutiny by our intellect? This depends on the scope we grant to intellect, heeding this warning: "We should take care not to make the intellect our god; it has, of course, powerful muscles, but no personality." (Einstein: Out Of My Later Years).

The intellect, tempered a bit by humility, can go a long way in appreciating Sri Aurobindo's vision. Indeed, the most significant discoveries of modern science instruct us to be humble. Take for example the grand unified theory of Nature, recreating for us the good old concept of the Brahman the one and indivisible reality: "Without electromagnetism there would be no atoms, no chemistry or biology, and no heat or light from the sun. If there were no strong nuclear force then nuclei could not exist, and so again there would be no atoms or molecules, no chemistry or biology, nor would the sun and stars be able to generate heat and light from nuclear energy. Even the weak force plays a crucial role in shaping the universe. If it did not exist, the nuclear reactions in the sun and stars could not proceed, and supernovae would probably not occur, and the vital life-giving heavy elements would therefore be unable to permeate the universe. Life might well be impossible. When we remember that these four very different types of force, each one vital for generating the complex structures that make our universe so active and interesting, all derive from a single, simple superforce, the ingenuity of it all literally boggles the mind." (Paul Davies: Super Force).

Does this the mind-boggling superforce at work in this universe have a scheme to execute on the earth through the process of evolution?

Sri Aurobindo's perception is, it has. The biological concept of evolution, of course, does not go further than stating a phenomenon. Sri Aurobindo reinterprets it in the Vedantic light: if life evolved out of matter, and mind out of life, it was because life was already involved in matter and mind was involved in life. If that is so, there is no reason why a principle loftier than mind but involved in mind, could not evolve, changing or transform mankind into a new race, the Supramental.

Mankind, at present, is going through an evolutionary crisis, he says. Mind has given man all it could in terms of knowledge, science, technology and has added as much as it could to his search for happiness. At the same time it has landed him in an impasse marked by paradox. Far from feeling that he had "arrived", man rather feels lost amidst his monumental achievements in technology and lifestyles, polity and politics.

The destination, at this rate, cannot but be the abyss, unless man is rescued by the intervention of a new consciousness.

For this man must cultivate an aspiration; he must liberate himself from his bondage to ego and ignorance from his animal inheritance of instincts and passions masked by civilization.



But man need not despair, for, in a sense, the process of evolution itself is a process of this liberation. The appearance of the earliest forms of life as plants out of the apparently lifeless matter was a step towards the liberation of the imprisoned consciousness. A far greater degree of freedom of consciousness - and an exercise of that freedom in infinitely different ways - was possible with the emergence of the primeval creatures, from worms, insects, butterflies and td the birds to the whales and the dinosaur.

Needless to say, man is the only creature who has never stopped growing. With relentless zeal not only has be adapted himself to the changing environment, but has also made the environment meet his demands. Emerging from the world of primeval Nature he has created for himself new worlds of art, architecture, literature, music, philosophy and of a perennial quest for the meaning of life.

Thus, if the process of evolution itself is a movement of consciousness realising its own freedom from its bondage to material and other limitations, the 20th Century has witnessed the most momentous events and ideas ensuring greater freedom for man in several fronts. It saw the collapse of imperialism, colonialism, monarchy and feudalism - all paving the way for man's social, political and economic freedom. Democracy, socialism, 'emancipation' of women from age-old taboos and discrimination, end of apartheid - all point in the same direction.

But the greatest of all freedom is yet to be achieved - our freedom from ignorance. Sri Aurobindo believes that this last freedom is not a mere possibility, but a certainty inherent in the very nature

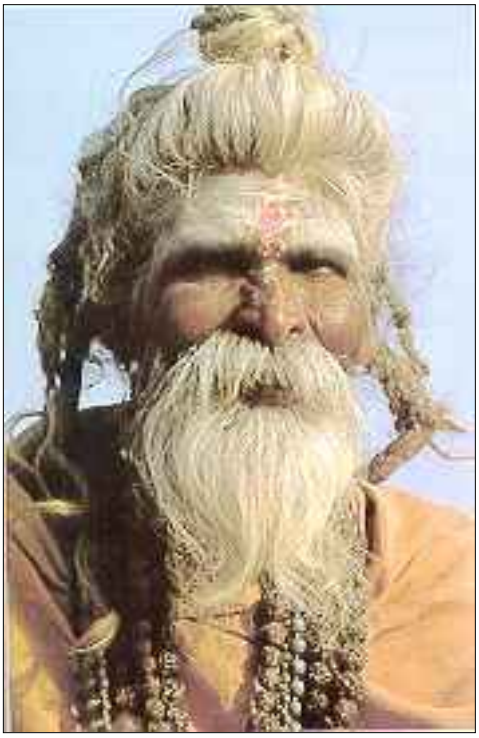
of the evolutionary process of human destiny.

**"ARISE, TRANSCEND THYSELF.
THOU ART MAN AND THE WHOLE NATURE OF MAN
IS TO BECOME MORE THAN HIMSELF."** **Sri Aurobindo**

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articles on hinduism

An American Odyssey
By Nandini Dasgupta
The Weekend Observer
November 27, 1999



Justin O'Brien is a well-known writer, theologian, philosopher and a long time explorer in 'wellness' and human consciousness. A former Catholic monk, he is also an ordained Pandit in the Himalayan tradition. He lived with Swami Rama - the master of yoga, spirituality, meditation and ayurveda - for over 20 years.

His latest book **Walking With The Himalayan Master** offers an exciting, powerful and delightful story of the 'extraordinary yogi' and the author's candid revelations of his own spiritual odyssey. The book, to be published in India by Full Circle early next year, has been well-received in the US and has been described as the 'real relationship of a sincere disciple to a great guru' by Swami Sachianand.

In a free-wheeling discussion with Nandini Dasgupta Justin O'Brien talks about his book and his association with Swami Rama.

Q. What As your latest book Walking with the Himalayan Mater all about?

A. It is a biography of how an American scholar reluctantly meets a saint, is inspired by his philosophy of life and a how new vista emerges for this century. It is an insight into two decade of my close association with Swami Rama. The book talks in detail about Swamiji's reasons for coming to the West and how he enlivened others scientifically, emotionally and spiritually. I describe the Swami as he was perceived by his disciples.

Q. How did you come In contact with Swami Rama?

A. It was in 1973, when I was 30 years old and a college professor at Chicago University, that I first came in contact with Swami Rama. For several days before I met Swamiji, I was dreaming about a gathering where a saint or a guru is sitting and talking to his disciples. And that I am sitting there as one of disciples. The dream kept on haunting me for several days and one day as I was walking through the streets of Chicago, I came across a poster which was advertising on some 'Healing Seminar.' I attended the seminar and to my surprise the saint (Swami Rama), the

room, the tree and even the discourse that was going on were similar to the incidents that I had been dreaming about. The entire episode left a strong impact in my mind and I knew that I had met my true guru.

Q. What are the reasons that Inspired you to write this book?
A. It was Swami Rama's philosophy of life that inspired me the most. Swamiji emphasised on the goodness of people and that one must ignore negative qualities. He stressed that one is not born with positive or negative attributes and that all the treasures are within one's self. Men have to study themselves and our job is to awaken them and channelise their energies in the right direction. One should focus in a particular direction which would determine your way of life. Very few people are aware of this philosophy and this book is an attempt to reach out to them.

Q. What Is the most Interesting feature of this book?
A. In this book I have mentioned how Swami Rama chose to shake up the West with his experiments which shattered the myth that science and spirituality are poles apart and that the two cannot be mixed. Swamiji provided a scientific approach to spirituality and human wisdom.

I have described how Yoga or meditation which has so far been regarded as 'spiritual' exercises have scientific connotations. The science of Yoga helps one to compare results of the past and aim for a better future.

Yoga is an experience of life and it is a path which offers dignity and sacredness.

Q. How have you described Swami Rama as a person?
A. I have described Swami Rama as the kind of person he was. He was just like any one of us. He liked to play cards with us at night, loved to eat Pizzas and loved to take care of dogs. He insisted on truth in life.

He was careful not to cultivate a cult around him and create any sensation by being in the limelight. Most people will term his experiments as miracles but he used to stress that it is all possible by harnessing the natural power that is present within one's self. Miracles are done for the benefit of others.

Q. How is Walking With the Himalayan Mater different from your earlier works?
A. My earlier book Wellness Tree is a six-step programme for rejuvenating health and creating optimum wellness. It challenges to transform ordinary health and ensuing decline into powerful possibilities for rejuvenation and awakened consciousness. Meeting of the Mystic Paths is about the principles of Yoga and how these can help Christianity discover new energy, retrieve lost wisdom and reexamine the mystical levels of life.

Walking With The Himalayan Master deals basically with human nature and how it was perceived by Swami Rama. By citing suitable instances from Swamiji's life, I have stressed that the body is within the domain of the mind. I have also challenged the myth that the body and mind work separately.

The guiding principle of this book is that -by following the right path human nature can be redefined.

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articles on hinduism

VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR

The Bogeyman

By Swapan Dasgupta

http://www.sulekha.com/hoppercomments.asp?cid=300069

On February 26, 1966, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar died in Mumbai at the age of 83. Two days later, distinguished CPI parliamentarian Hiren Mukherjee rose in the Lok Sabha after question hour to suggest that the House pay homage to Savarkar in recognition of his services to the nation. The Speaker agreed to write to the family, conveying the feelings of the House. Earlier, the entire political class joined President S. Radhakrishnan in paying homage to Savarkar. Prime minister Indira Gandhi described him as a "byword for daring and patriotism" and CPI leader S.A. Dange called him "one of the great anti-imperialist revolutionaries".

Last week, Congress President Sonia Gandhi boycotted the function in Parliament to unveil Savarkar's portrait. The leftist Delhi Historians Group, dominated by discarded textbook writers, dubbed Savarkar "anti-national" and the pro-CPI(M) Sahmat termed the installation of the Hindu Mahasabha leader's portrait a "disgrace".

What has changed in these 37 years? Politics. When Savarkar died, he was a fringe figure, out of active politics since 1948 when he was implicated but acquitted in the Mahatma Gandhi murder case. He had a reputation as a Marathi litterateur and was also honoured for first describing the upheaval of 1857 as a "war of independence". Even among the charmed circle of Hindu nationalists, he was peripheral. Savarkar had charisma but the Hindu Mahasabha was history.

It is different today. Hindutva, the term Savarkar first popularised from prison in 1923 is, by L.K. Advani's admission, "the ideological mascot" of the ruling BJP. Savarkar's definition of the Hindu as one who regards India as his fatherland and holy land, has moulded those seeking to extricate Indian nationhood from Nehruvian clutches. For the new generation of "political Hindus", impatient with the RSS' over-emphasis on organisation, the agnostic and rationalist Savarkar is a key inspiration.

The extent to which Savarkar's concerns of yesterday shape the discourse of today is remarkable. An extract from his 1937 presidential address to the Hindu Mahasabha in Ahmedabad has been cited by the Congress to suggest that he was the protagonist of the two-nation theory.

The claim doesn't withstand scrutiny. In that speech, Savarkar said, "The solid fact is that the so-called communal questions are a legacy handed down to us by centuries of cultural, religious and national antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims ... Let us bravely face unpleasant facts as they are. India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian and homogeneous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main: the Hindus and Muslims in India." Indeed, Savarkar spent much of the 1940s warning of the imminence of Congress capitulating to Muslim separatism. He spoke of the Congress' "pseudo-nationalism" just as four decades later the BJP was to sneer at its "pseudo-secularism".

Savarkar led a chequered life. As a daring revolutionary and prisoner in the Cellular Jail, he enjoyed iconic status between 1911 and 1924 comparable to Bhagat Singh in the 1930s. As leader of the

Mahasabha from 1937 to 1948, he earned the respect of many Hindus, but never secured their loyalty. Even this respect turned to notoriety after his close disciple Nathuram Godse killed Gandhi. In life, Savarkar was very famous but never very influential.

Power came posthumously. The attack on his reputation is actually a proxy battle against his ideas.

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comments -

The British were never worried about Gandhi and Nehru, they were mortally scared of revolutionaries such as Subhas Chandra Bose (who left India incognito to pursue his patriotic activities), Aurobindo Ghose (who settled in Pondicherry, then a French territory), and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (who preferred to stay, suffer, and struggle in India). More than the so-called public image, what matters with great nation-builders and patriots is their dedication, sacrifices, and love for the country. If the Government has decided to honour Savarkar, it has only atoned for the sins committed in the past.

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A Wonder of Ancient India: The Mahabharata - By Nhilde Davidson

http://www.halcyon.com/theosnw/world/asia/as-nhild.htm

Daunted by its size and a misconception that an intimate understanding of Hinduism was needed, I never considered taking the Mahabharata off the shelf. By accident I tuned into an episode of an Indian television production of the Mahabharata (subtitled in English) -- and I was hooked. Ninety-six one-hour episodes later (and many more hours of reading) I am still enthralled and continue delving into this fascinating epic. Its appeal is on many different levels and, through the ages, ascetics and scholars alike have dedicated their lives to studying, collating, and translating the varied and voluminous material. When the series aired on Indian television, railway schedules had to be adjusted as each week almost the entire country sat in front of a TV. Similarly, most things ground to a halt when the Ramayana was serialized. We all love a hero -- heroic action appeals to children and adults alike -- and these epics *are* heroic. On a deeper level it is the philosophical depth and the psychological profundity that endure, keeping the stories alive in the soul, drawing one back again and again.

The epic is about a Holy War fought on the fields of Kurukshetra at the junction between the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron or Kali Age. The Kali Yuga is said to have begun with the death of Krishna on February 17, 3102 BC -- thus dating the war to 3138 BC (in the epic Krishna died 36 years after the Great War). However, dating the epic is an ongoing debate. The extant written versions can be traced to the period 400-100 BC when the present form was settled on. The Mahabharata has eighteen major chapters or *parvas* which are, in turn, subdivided into many smaller parvas or sections. There are hundreds of different versions, adjusted by various sects to include their own individual religious biases (for example there are 300 known versions of the Adi Parva).

Krishna-Dvaipayana (also known as Veda Vyasa for his work in synthesizing the Vedas in their present form) is said to be the author of the original 24,000 slokas (verses). Sloka meter is characterized by 32 syllables divided into 4 pada or quarter verses of 8 syllables each, written in either 2 or 4 lines. It is the metrical form commonly used in Sanskrit epics. (1) The present form of the epic contains around 100,000 slokas, though it has been estimated that it may include as many as 150,000. Critical editions intended to discover the pristine material are only a few decades old, the best work having been done by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

While the accrual of additional material is ongoing, the age of the texts and questions about the historical accuracy of accounts in the epic are hotly debated. Many believe that the Mahabharata and also the Puranas give the history of not only the peoples of India but of humanity. Scholars have established that the parvas were written at different times -- some being much older than

others.

One of the parvas contains the Ramayana. According to Hindu tradition the Ramayana recounts the history of Rama and Sita, and is believed to have taken place at the beginning of the Treta or Silver Age, i.e., shortly after the end of the Satya Yuga (Golden Age) -- roughly two million years ago by Hindu reckoning -- thus potentially very old indeed. The current archaeological dating of the age of humanity prevents scholars from giving credence to the Hindu chronology.

The known history of India does not include verifiable records of a war where millions of soldiers fought and died, or the destruction of Dvaraka (the region governed by Krishna) by tidal waves and cataclysms of the proportions described in the Mahabharata. This leads some to believe that the epics may not be historical. However, corroborating evidence in texts from other sources and countries suggests that these writings are a blend of accurate history, myth, and soul memory, as well as ethical treatises.

The crux of the matter is that the entire Mahabharata has one obvious aim -- to awaken a love of truth and right action. The core story is the thread that ties together a profound philosophical content. Embellished by substories to clarify various ethical premises, the central theme always leads in one direction -- the ascendancy of right over wrong, justice over injustice, truth over untruth. In the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas it is made clear that the side of Truth (represented by the Pandavas) will ultimately win. The reasons for this war and the human aspects of the story are what make the epic ever fascinating -- its slokas are the mirror whereby we see into our own souls, and the consequences of actions, both gross and subtle, are laid bare for scrutiny.

The cast of characters is large, but one soon finds oneself relating to and caring about them: Draupadi, the virtuous, beautiful wife of the five Pandava brothers; Vidura, the wise younger brother of Pandu and Dhritarashtra; Kunti, the mother of the three eldest Pandava brothers -- Yudhishthira, Bhima and Arjuna; Madri, the mother of the younger twin sons of Pandu -- Nakula and Sahadeva. As all the characters come alive, the strange names and customs become familiar and comfortable.

The wisdom of the Pandava and Kaurava princes' tutors -- Bhishma, Drona, and Kripacharya -- enrich the text at every turn. Bhishma, patriarch of the families on both sides of the conflict, has a magnificence and stature which make him beloved and respected by all the characters, while his all-encompassing wisdom and virtue still earn him the love and reverence of Hindus today.

The central story concerns the rivalry for the throne of Hastinapura, where the ancient dynasty of India has its domain. As jealousy goes unchecked the dynasty is finally destroyed. Pandu, the second son of Santanu, becomes king because his elder brother, Dhritarashtra, was born blind and thus considered unfit to rule. However, when Pandu dies Dhritarashtra, already an able administrator of the country during Pandu's many absences, proceeds to reign. It is the line of succession that is the bone of contention. Yudhishthira, virtuous son of Pandu and eldest of the Pandava brothers, is heir-apparent, but Duryodhana, eldest of Dhritarashtra's and Gandhari's one hundred sons, wishes to be king. Gandhari has a gambler brother, Sakuni, living at court who helps inflame Duryodhana's jealousy and envy of the five Pandava princes.

Known as the Kauravas, the family and supporters of Dhritarashtra are spearheaded by

Duryodhana, his brother Dushasana, Sakuni, and Karna (a protege of Duryodhana whose lineage is mysterious and who, ironically, is finally shown to be linked to the Pandavas). These four try many ways to eliminate the five sons of Pandu. As Dhritarashtra and Gandhari fail to curb Duryodhana's hatred of the Pandavas -- and more especially of his birthday twin, Pandu's second son, Bhima -- the peoples of Hastinapura are inexorably propelled into war.

Through the popularity of the Bhagavad-Gita the third son of Pandu, Arjuna, is perhaps the best known of his five sons. This parva recounts the discussion between Arjuna and Krishna just prior to the Battle of Kurukshetra. Arjuna asks Krishna why he should fight. Krishna, having sworn not to fight himself but to steer Arjuna's chariot during the battle, explains to Arjuna his duty -- in reality the duties of all who seek for truth.

One may read the epic just as an excellent tale, for it has all the elements of good storytelling, yet it also includes the psychological dilemmas inherent in life, though the meaning behind some of the episodes is not always clear -- each reader must interpret the episodes according to his own insight and vision. Like a diamond sparkling in the sun, each time a passage or an episode is reread new illuminations and nuances come into focus.

The Mahabharata says that even before the Battle of Kurukshetra the caste system had effectively come to an end. No longer were people to be considered as being born in a particular class, miscegenation having broken the old ways and codes. With the advent of the Kali Age all reflect, by their own actions, what class each act belongs to -- the determining factor being whether the motive arises out of wisdom and truth, the passionate or emotional nature, or from ignorance and darkness (*avidya* or untruth).

The Kshatriya, or divine warrior class, as represented by Arjuna and his peers, died out in this Holy War on the fields of Kurukshetra and the unholy aspects of life during the Kali Age are prescient. It was incumbent upon these godlike men -- whose concentration was on *dharma* (duty), *artha* (right resolve or motive), *karma* (action), and *vidya* (wisdom/truth) -- to be just, benevolent, and charitable at all times -- always protecting and honoring truth. As the eighteen-day war drags on, all partake of unrighteous acts eroding the old codes of honor and ethics. Finally, at the end of the war, with the loss of the ancient value system and their loyalty solely to truth destroyed, the link with the past is broken. After Kurukshetra a limited age of justice was reestablished and the sun of truth shone briefly -- but the Kali Age had begun.

Fortunately for us the old truths remain accessible in this vast storehouse of wisdom from ancient India. The Bhagavad-Gita, the best loved of all Hindu writings, is a profound treatise on the causes and results of action and stands on its own, yet coupled with the entire epic, it acquires an additional lustre -- for the Mahabharata has much to say about the qualities and duties of every aspect of life. B.R. TV's Indian production of the Mahabharata shows the veneration that the Hindus have for this work and their understanding of its effect for good on individual lives.

Use this epic tale as an inspiration to solve your problems. The story is your armour and also your weapon . . . Be heir to Light, to Justice and to Truth. Turn the Kurukshetra of your heart into Holy Ground -- That is Salvation!

Whatever there is in th e World / Whatever this World is -- / Sage Vyasa's epic tale narrates all that the World is!

-- From B.R. TV English subtitles

(From Sunrise magazi ne, February/March 1997. Copyright © 1997 by Theosophical University Press) Mahabharata, produced and directed by B. R. Chopra and Ravi Chopra. Marketing Agents for India, J. Electronics, 258 Palika Bazar, Cannaught Place, New Delhi - 110001.

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Giving life to an epic

By V. R. DEVIKA.

http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/05/30/stories/1330067b.htm

The ten-year effort of a Finnish-Indian team materialised into the documentation of the Siri epic in Tulu. Comparable to the world's great epics, this has also been rendered into English with a transcription. An awe-inspiring work indeed, says **V.R.DEVIKA.**

``KEREYA Neeranu Kerege Challi varava padedavaranthe kaaniro ..." said the melodious voice in the background which brought home the poignancy of the situation, bringing tears to some in the audience. The verse, from a Purandaradasa kriti in Kannada which extols devotees to pour water back into the river to be blessed... was sung as the Ambassador of Finland to India, Mr. Benjamin Basssin opened the sandalwood box with three volumes of the ``Siri epic" and presented them to the singer Gopala Naika. Later, Naika was presented with a gold ring by the spiritual head of Dharmasthala, Veerendra Hegde.

Earlier, the casket was brought in a decorated palanquin in a procession led by an elephant with all the dignitaries following it. Did a book release merit such a grand function?

Consider the work. It consists of textualisation of the Tulu (a rich dialect of South Canara) Siri epic. The Finnish-Indian team that worked on the project has documented the 15,683 line (five lines short of Homer's Iliad) performance of the epic sung by Gopala Naika, a talented singer of oral epics in Tulunadu. This purely oral epic has been published in Tulu with an English translation and transcription. The cultural background, field work on oral composition and textural problems encountered in the transcription and translation of the Siri text and the nature of the ``oral text" in general are brought into focus in the brief introduction. The primary oral textualisation and the secondary written modification of the epic are described in a separate introductory volume. Several core problems of traditional research are discussed and new concepts such as ``mental text" and ``multiform" are introduced for the analysis of oral compositions in the work.

``Siri Sandhi," says Prof. Lauri Honko, ``is one of the two truly long epics of the Tulu speaking people, Koti Chennayya being the other. Where the latter glorifies male warriors and their violent battle for justice, the Siri epic epitomises Tulu womanhood in its emancipation and non-violent fight against male supremacy and injustice."

Describing the legend of Siri, Prof. Honko says, ``Siri is a woman of divine origin who undergoes in her human life, the typical ordeals of a woman in Tulu society with its particular mix of matrilineal and patriarchal kinship systems. Assuming the form of biographical epic, the story of

Siri expands to describe the fate of her only son, Kumara, and her female descendants in two generations. This epic ranks with the world's great folk epics."

What emerges at the end is a set of life models for Tulu women, constantly revived in possession rituals in which the woman belonging to the Siri cult participates. In these rituals, the Siri story is performed mostly indirectly, through prayer and recitation reflecting the intensive interaction and interpenetration of the divine and human worlds.

What did a Finnish couple find interesting in a South Indian coastal legend? Finland and India share a common folk tradition of epics. Finland's own oral epic, Kalevala, is a much-celebrated one. As described by ambassador Bassin, at the centenary of Kalevala, in 1930, a competition to collect proverbs and folk beliefs was announced by the Finnish Government. He says a population of three million people had come up with more than 1.5 million proverbs. Bassin wondered aloud that if such a small population could produce so much, the vast rural population of India must possess undocumented material.

Dr. Vivek Rai and Dr. Chinnappa Gowda constituted the Indian members of the team. Prof. Haridas Bhat, Director of the Regional Resources Centre for Folk Performing Arts, Udupi, had known of the great interest in oral epics in Finland and also of the folklore research being conducted there. He made it a point to visit Finland's Turku University when he was in Europe. He appraised Dr. Laurie Honko, Professoer of Comparative Religion and Folklore at the Kalevala institute of the University about the Tulu epics and invited him to Udupi. Prof. Bhat also organised a seminar on Kalevalal at Udupi in 1985, to mark the 150th anniversary of Kalevala.

The tripartite project (the Turku University, the Mangalore University and the Regional Resources Centre) got underway with a study of the Siri epic, the documentation of the Siri Daliya at Machar and the Siri festival, their documentation, the investigation of the remains of the Satynapura palace which reveal the legends of the Netravathi region, the place region of Nandolige, Urkitota and, finally, the taping of the 15,683 line performance by the Gopala Naika of the epic. The epic is generally sung only in parts during the rituals, and never sung completely as a performance. Gopala Naika had evinced interest in recording the epic and had dictated some portions to his student living in his house at Machar in 1985.

``The singing of the Siri epic took seven days," says Prof. Honko. ``Physically, the continuous singing was strenuous and taxing for the singer, but as a mode of performance it was most satisfying. Gopalal Naika obviously enjoyed the chance to sing without the limiting collateral action always present both at ritual performance and the work song context."

``Many modern researchers feel the text is outmoded," said Lauri Honko. ``But actually there is no context without the text." He spoke with humour about his experience of the new methodology in the seminar on oral epics the day after the release of the epic. ``In Europe, the oral epics are stone dead. They are alive in Asia and Southern India is a treasure trove of oral epics. People living in the treasure trove must realise the assets they have and folk scholars must concentrate within this reach."

``Documentation seems simple but it is quite hazardous. Good documentation means a perfect phonetic transcription too. Then the document becomes independent of the scholar. And will become open for study and analysis. Documentation of the epic is just one manifestation. It is the

personality and the experience of Gopalal Naika that has edited and presented the performance."

``If I were a dictator," says Dr. Honko, ``I would tell all scholars to listen to the folk voice. Scholarly ideas are nothing compared to the folk ideas. We should never be the tellers of wisdom but transmitters."

``Each epic has its own poetical structure and prosodic template. Refrain and the melodic artistry are very important here. This is the first time that the entire epic has been sung in one sitting and we are very happy to present it to the world of folklore."

The process of documentation, study, textualisation, transcription and translation and publication has taken ten years. Veerendra Hedge, the head of Dharmasthala said when someone exclaimed that it took 10 years, I said yes it only took 10 years.

So valuable and awe-inspiring is the work .....

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My Experience at the Kumbh Mela

By ROMESH DIWAN

http://www.newsindia-times.com/20010601/viewpoint01.htm

Thanks, to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayeeji's invitation for a goodwill visit, to Dr. Mukund Mody's kindness for including me among 20 plus Indian Americans, and Shri Ashok Singhalji's generosity, I, along with this group, had the good fortune to have a dip at Sangam during Kumbh 2001 on 27th January. I had not even thought of such an eventuality. Not spiritually advanced - have hardly walked few inches on the miles long spiritual path - I was not a pilgrim. It is a spiritual experience and Prabhu's gift of the highest order. The surprise therefore was unusually great and sweet. I was overcome by a sense of sheer gratitude and peace. As I sat in the British Airways plane, I couldn't help thinking about the enormity of this event. How much my late grandmother who had a pilgrimage to Hardwar during a Kumbh would have been pleased to learn about it. As I reflect further, it becomes clear that this is THE event of 21st century, which can't be repeated in the next 100 years. Yet its enormity and significance has been missed in public discourse.

It is easy to understand its enormity. 100 million people - 10 % of India's population - attended this 40 days event. The size and magnitude of the attendance alone is mind-boggling. All related material statistics, such as number of tents, ashrams, street lights, patroon bridges, are unmatched. There are far deeper issues. People came by their own will; no one sent them an invitation. Almost 99.9 percent came with the clear understanding that it is a pilgrimage involving body and material sufferings; crowded trains, buses, uncomfortable places to stay, at best - most slept in the open and in cold - limited food, many a times going hungry, unusually long crowds. Yet they came in all shapes; old, young, sick, children, babies, families, communities; Hindus in all varieties, so-called untouchables, non Hindus. Given the size of the crowds, physical needs and suffering, all sorts of frustrations, how easy it would have been to create a problem: a riot, a stampede, etc.? But these pilgrims were unusually self disciplined, patient and tolerant. A Pakistani woman Sairah Irshad Khan wrote from her experience: "we were struck by the sea of humanity plowing its way to, or from, the river. Amazingly, there was no jostling, no pushing, little garbage, and although this must surely have been an assembly of among the most wretched of the earth, no begging." ["Indian Spring" http://www.newsline.com. pk/html/impressions.html] No doubt a good and competent U.P. government made excellent arrangements. Yet given the size, no government, however good, can assure such success. The success depended, fundamentally, on every pilgrim's "self discipline." This Maha Kumbh offered the most compelling evidence on the "self discipline" of Hindu pilgrims.

To understand the significance of the event, one needs a frame of reference; a perspective. Ram Dass alias Richard Alpert, with a Stanford Ph.D. and professorships at Harvard, Stanford and

California, the very high priest of Western education, explains the meaning of perspective from his personal experience given in one of his best sellers, [How can I Help.] Well informed about India's poor and poverty, as Richard Alpert he came to Varanasi, walked around its ghats, saw thousands in final stages of one illness or another waiting to die, and placed change in their begging bowels but could not see them in their eyes. Three months later after having met his guru, Neem Karoli Baba, he visited Vanransi again as Ram Dass with a different perspective. And this time, he wrote, " to my profound amazement I found in their eyes not the suffering that I have been reticent to face but looks of peace. In fact I even saw some of their eyes pity for me, lost as I was in illusion. Leprosy, leukemia, blindness, such poverty that they had only a loincloth and a begging bowl...and still... peace." Mahakumbh has also been seen from similar two perspectives. While pilgrims looked for, and saw, asceticism in the Naga sadhus, the clothed cameramen, like the guards at Aschwitz, were doing their job photographing their nudity and eccentricities little wondering what it meant. Similarly, like Eichmann scheduling trains, the editors at magazines were sensationalizing pictures to sell their wares, never questioning their ethical dimensions in demeaning the pilgrims. MahaKumbh can't be explained by the Western intellectual tradition; that would be like Parmahans Ramakrishna's dressed up salt doll wading in the ocean to measure its depth. For its proper understanding Ram Dass's is the spiritual and relevant perspective. Kumbh is inherently, and fundamentally, spiritual; after all it is all about amrit.. Any Kumbh is holy and MahaKumbh is the holiest of the holy. Sangam, the meeting of three waters, represents to the pilgrims, by act of their faith, a phenomena of transcendence. Faith is fundamental. As Gandhiji said: "So long as our eyes of knowledge have not opened, we have no choice but to see with the eyes of faith."[The Bhagavadgita] Swami Chimnayananda said it well. "The amrit has gone to them [pilgrims from villages] because they have no ego. What they have instead is faith"

Like a major decennial Census that provides detailed information about some aspects of a country's population, large gathering at regular Kumbhs provide authentic evidence on the various dimensions of the Hindu faith. This Maha Kumbh being the most special and attended by the largest population provides the most authentic evidence on Hindu beliefs, practices and rituals. Like a huge census, the evidence from this Maha Kumbh is vast and multidimensional. Its analysis and implications would take many years and fill major treatises. To start with it has shown, once again and after a long time, a different and better view of the Indian society: beautiful, peaceful, real, serene, spiritual and vast as contrasted with the India seen through Bollywood and media: vulgar, violent, unreal, ugly, poor, materialist, greedy, corrupt, and bounded.

Over the past hundreds of years, Hindu religion has been belittled, censured, condemned, criticized, decried, deformed, demeaned, demonized, denounced, depreciated, derided, derogated, despised, detested, disdained, disgraced, disfigured, disparaged, distorted, ridiculed, scorned, scoffed. Much of this denunciation has been carried on by a number of myths promoted by two arguments: (i) evaluated within the Western materialist, rationalist, scientific framework, and (ii) by association. For example a common myth is that caste system and untouchability is fundamental to Hinduism. That is take the caste system and untouchability then Hinduism will wither away. Since some of the "low caste" Hindus are defined as untouchable. They are therefore discriminated against and hence are poor. It follows therefore that Hinduism is a source of poverty or poverty is embedded in Hinduism. Many writers have added a new charge of fundamentalism against Hinduism. The evidence from Maha Kumbh directly contradicts all such contentions.

How did caste and untouchability express itself at the Maha Kumbh? Were there Brahmins at the gate checking the pilgrims status in case they belonged to lower caste and were untouchables? Look at the evidence. (i) Maha Kumbh happens every

144 years. (ii) It is the holiest of holy occasion in the Hindu religion; there can't be, and is not, a more holy occasion. (iii) Dipping at Sangam during this period is therefore the holiest of holy ceremonies. (iv) 100 million people performed these ceremonies including dalits, so-called "low caste" and "untouchables' Hindus. (v) Entry to this ceremony was not restricted to any one.

If caste system and untouchability is essential to Hinduism, as the myth has been propagated, would it not be logical for them to bar these low caste and "untouchables" from these holiest of the holy ceremonies? The direct evidence is that these low caste and untouchables performed exactly the same ceremony, of dipping in the holy waters, as any Brahmin or Hindu sage. Not only low caste

Hindus, even Muslim women from Pakistan were welcomed to participate in these ceremonies. "Here we were, Pakistanis and Muslims, readily announcing both, being treated like the most welcome of guests, invited to not only watch, but participate in what were the most sacred of Hindu rites, at their holiest of religious ceremonies." wrote a thankful Sairah Irshad Khan and concluded; "Apart from the undeniable spiritually uplifting element of the exercise, the thought that lingered long afterwards was the warmth we had encountered at every step of the way." The Maha Kumbh provides the most direct and clear evidence that untouchability is neither germane to, nor a part of, Hindu religion.

Untouchability is a form of discrimination following from exploitive power relations. There is ample evidence of the prevalence of untouchability among Christian, Muslim and other communities. In fact holocausts are the most severe and oppressive forms of untouchability. History is full of stories about Crusades, Jihads, Hindukush, genocide of Native Americans, Slavery and lynching of Black Americans, Armenian, Jewish and Romas holocausts. British Rule in India caused the deaths of two hundred million Indians. ["Mahatma Gandhi, Amartya Sen and Poverty" Gandhi Marg. Vol. 20. No. 4. January -March 1999. pp. 421 - 444] Mike Davis has made a similar argument in his book: Late Victorian Holocausts.

Not only is untouchability NOT a part of Hindu religion, every Hindu sage and leader, Vivekananda, Gandhi, to name two, have acted against such discrimination. In fact fighting for the weak and exploited is the most important Hindu dharma. Accepting low caste and so - called untouchables at the holiest of holy Hindu ceremonies at Maha Kumbh, and treating them equally, follows logically from Hindu beliefs, dharma and principles. By contrast, we know from the apologies offered by the current Pope, the then Pope participated in the Jewish holocaust; no Pope has so far acknowledged the 3 million Romas holocaust; is it because Romas originate in India and Indians are untouchables for them. One is hard pressed to find Muslim and Christian leaders who have spoken against untouchability and caste system in their own communities.

From the evidence of 5,000 ashrams at Maha Kumbh it is clear and obvious that there are many different shades of ideas, opinions, philosophies and practices in Hinduism. There is no single person or body who speaks for all Hindus.

Compare it to Christianity, which has a large number of different churches. Can a lay Christian

participate in a gathering where all these sects meet together?

There has never been one single place or occasion where Christens of all denominations have gathered together. Evidence from Maha Kumbh fully refutes the charge of fundamentalism in Hinduism.

Maha Kumbh confirms that in spite of abuse for the past one thousand years, and still from those in authority, it is toady alive and well.

Hundred years ago Swami Vivekananda understood its bright future. Sri Aurobindo anchored his nationalism in Hinduism. Mahatma Gandhi made it clear to the Christians trying to covert him: “To-day my position is that, though I admire much in Christianity, I am unable to identify myself with orthodox Christianity.

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articles on hinduism

Navratras, Story of Cosmic Evolution

By Pankaj Dixit

http://www.timesofindia.com/today/28edit5.htm

NAVRATRA or nine auspicious nights signifies the basic principle of yoga that energies should involute back to the primal source to rejuvenate the individual form, which is the human body. This return brings out the union of the microcosmic individual, *Pinda*, and the macrocosmic consciousness, *Brahmanda*, passing through the entire cyclic process of creation because time and space are self-perpetuating.

In *Navratra*, Nav means nine and Ratra means night. In Indian philosophy the number nine is closely associated with the process of creation in the cosmic time cycle. The entire cosmic cycle consists of three phases -- creation, preservation and dissolution. Each of these three parts split into triads (3x3=9) brings the numerical order to nine. Adi Sankaracharya in the 8th century AD clearly indicated the significance of number nine in the *Soundaryalahiri*, 11th sloka: ``The four *Siva chakras* and five *Sakti chakras* create the nine *Mula-Prakratis* or basic manifestations, because they represent the source substance of the whole cosmos".

These nine cosmic wombs or *Nava-Yoni* have a parallel nine categories of nature in the macrocosm. This nine-fold division is projected in nine apertures of the body -- two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, genitals and anus, nine psychic centres, nine planets, nine divisions of time -- *ghatika, yama, ahoratra, vara, tithi, paksha, masa, ritu*, nine gems, nine moods or *Navras* and nine forms of Goddess Durga or Tripurasundari worshipped during *Navratras*.

The intricate relationship of the number nine with creation is clearly visible in the nine months' gravidity of the human being. According to the Tantric concept of cosmic involution from the *Sahasrara chakra*, 56 rays are said to proceed to *Muladhara chakra* to constitute earth element, 52 in *Manipur* to form water element, 62 in *Svadhistan* to establish fire element, 54 in *Anhata chakra* pertains to the character of the air element, 72 in *Visudhi chakra* forms ether element and 64 in *Ajna chakra* shapes *manas* or mind.

In total, there are 360 rays or potencies of universal *sakti* represented by *Maha Tripurasundari*. It is vindicated in the form of a circle which has a 360 degree angle indicating fullness. This 360 digit again totals to nine, the number of creation. The universe is also composed of 36 *tatvas* unfolding from primal unity or *Parama Shiva* which again has the numerical value of nine. The days representing the 16 phases or *kalas* of the moon constitute a fortnight or *poksha* and two pakshas -- waxing and waning -- make a month. These *tithis* are also 360 in a lunar year again depicting a total of nine. Nine is considered to be complete, *puran*, because any number multiplied by nine gives a figure that totals to nine. Likewise nine added or deducted from any

number gives a figure with the numerical total unchanged. This concept is explained in the famous *santi path mantra* of the *Upanishads*.

The other significant part of *Navratras* is ratra or night. The Rig Veda clearly says that before creation began everything was shrouded in the darkness of night and from that darkness creation came about. The same idea is reflected in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. These nine nights occur on equinoxes or equal nights when the sun is vertically overhead at the equator or centre. Hence the human body also attains equilibrium with nature and meditation and worship of *Sakti* with *Beej mantras* revitalises the body.

Therefore forms of Durga are worshipped with their respective *yantras*. Barley is sown in homes as a symbol of the creative power of the mother Goddess. In recognition of the importance of *sakthi* or feminine force, traditionally, little girls are symbolically worshipped on the eighth day, *Ashtami*.

The Navratras also celebrates the victory of Lord Rama over the demon Ravana and many chant the famous *Ramrakshastotra* in the mornings. In Bengal these nine days resound with devotion and dedication to Godess Durga. Durga Puja was initiated by the landlord Kans Narayan of Bengal in the 16th century. In South India, especially in Mysore, Dussehra celebrations , symbolises the triumph of virtue over vice.

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Between the sublime and the ridiculous

By Anuradha Dutt

http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon3.asp?cat=\opd2&d=OPED

There is a growing impression that the BJP agenda is being laid down by pujaris. The perceived attempt to saffronise education through the rewriting of history books for schools, and the induction of astrology, karamkand and Ayur Veda, hitherto the preserve of the priestly class, into college and university curricula, seems to support this contention. It has been reinforced by the fracas over the shila daan at Ayodhya.

The centre was seen to be held to ransom by the suicide threat of Mahant Ramchandradas Paramhans, chairman of the Ramjanmabhoomi Nyas, which has been spearheading the temple movement. While the Mahant's motives may have been apolitical, the manner in which the Government's hand was forced, with rival pontiffs and prelates all trying to intercede, appears to have given legitimacy to the priestly class's attempt to determine state policy.

Antipathy to the Sangh parivar's revivalist agenda among groups that espouse the cause of oppressed castes, hinges largely on fears of a Brahminical resurrection. Over ages, new faiths and sects have sprung up as a reaction to the dominance of this class. Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and even the Bhakti cult, while adhering to the Vedantic principles of karma and rebirth, rejected the right of hereditary priests to mediate between God, truth and man. Apparently, all disowned the hierarchy that characterises Hindu society, and affirmed individual dignity. In recent times, the reformist Arya Samaj attempted something similar within the parameters of Hinduism.

But, so deeply ingrained is caste in Hindu tradition that it rears up to strike like a snake when provoked. The irony is that the very sections that are wary of a Brahminical revival, have welcomed the Mandal Commission's enhancement of caste based reservations in Government jobs. Such a provision is seen as a means for self-empowerment by the beneficiaries, even if it entrenches their place in Manu's hierarchy even more firmly.

The BJP, by convention, a party that represents upper caste interests, has been forced by political compulsions to accept the Mandal formula, so as to enlarge its votebank. However, the party's endorsement of the activities and pursuits of the priestly class, as a matter of policy, is very much in evidence. And nowhere is this more so than in the spheres of education and culture. The Human Resource Development Ministry seems to have provided ample bait to Hindutva opponents.

The appointment of supporters of the revivalist agenda to academic bodies as well as the exercise to prioritise the study of epochs of Hindu ascendancy and knowledge systems have triggered bitter criticism. The struggle to build the temple at Ayodhya is viewed as part of the larger design to

Sanskritise India's political and social edifice. The conflict between the votaries of Hindutva votaries and the Left-secular intellectuals has preoccupied the media. While the former see these developments as a long over-due correction of an unfair historical perspective, the latter deride them as a retreat into obscurantism. The debate has focused on the motives of the progenitors of change, who have been charged with trying to subvert the nation's secular identity.

The fact that Brahmins have traditionally been the repositories and perpetrators of scriptural and esoteric knowledge, vested in texts compiled in Sanskrit and its offshoots, seems to have lent credence to the charge. **Yet, the reality is that for the vast majority that has little to do with sanitised notions of religion and conduct, nurtured by the secular-liberal ethos, the old beliefs and customs are more relevant to their existence. Divested of them, their lives would be rudderless. They can hardly opt to survive in a cultural void by rejecting their distinctive evolutionary history, or replacing it with an inadequate substitute, lifted from some other cultural paradigm. Therefore, to keep on blaming Hindutva for perpetuating retrogressive practices is unjustified as astrology, karamkand and Ayur Veda are traditional support systems, that mark the rites of passage through life.**

The demand to build the temple to sanctify Lord Ram's birth place is equally valid as he occupies a seminal place in the Hindu psyche and worldview, just as Prophet Mohammad does in the Islamic, or Jesus Christ in the Christian. Only the means needs to be dissociated from political aims. **The charge of trying to resurrect Brahminical supremacy via the educational agenda also seems exaggerated as the traditional preserve is now open to even non-Hindus.** But, knowledge of Sanskrit would clearly be necessary as the incantations and conceptual matrix are in the classical language. In this context, the UGC's proposal to set up over 400 Simple Sanskrit Speaking Centres makes sense.

The agenda can be faulted for a very different reason. **Esoteric wisdom in all cultures is kept secret.** This is implied in the Biblical injunction not to throw "pearls before swine."

Viewed thus, the UGC plan to set up a National Centre for Jyotir Vigyan and Other Occult Sciences, for the study of Tantra and other mysteries seems absurd. For, the disclosure of the "secret doctrines" would further expose them to ridicule by skeptics and misuse by charlatans. The end result would be to make them plebian.

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Secularism and India Inc

Priyadarsi Dutta

http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon3.asp?cat=\edit4&d=EDITS

Na tatra yatra na'ham, na tatra yannmanyi, kimandammi banchami, sarvam sanbinmay tatam" (There is nowhere, where I am not, there is no where that is not within me, what more I am left to covet, when all pervades the entirety). Thus spake Acharya Vidyaranya Swami, the 14th Century Mathadheesh of Sringeri, shortly before he passed into Mahasamadhi. His last words represent the all encompassing catholicity of Sanatan Dharma that has tussle with none. True to his vow of mendicancy he had relinquished the long held post of Prime Minister of Vijayanagara, the legendary Hindu kingdom he was instrumental in establishing with Harihara and Bukka in AD 1336. The Sringeri monk Acharya Vidyaranya was provoked to tread a nationalistic path when Allauddin Khilji's commander Malik Kafur was cleaving into southern India, razing temple after temple and turning Hindu cities into killing fields.

With reference to Sankaracharya Jayendra Saraswati of Kanchi some people are today asserting that monks should restrict their activities to spirituality. These detractors are captives of an escapist interpretation of Hindu philosophy. Sublime as they might sound, they want to imply that since the soul is immortal, how does it matter if the body is hacked to pieces-will it make a difference to Lord Shiva if one amongst his million temples, viz Somnath, is sacked? But there is another interpretation that Jayedra Saraswati, perhaps the greatest living exponent of Sanksrit in India, drives home. Even though the body has no purpose without the soul, it is important since without the body as the medium the soul cannot be known.

Last year at a public function in New Delhi he had expressed his personal belief that Hindu culture being Sanatan (timeless) will survive despite all persecution by invaders or commotion from within. And yet, he added, we should be pragmatic on the ground level to ensure it is so. Hence while he expresses his predilection for Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas over the VHP, he does not dismiss either as communal. The VHP might be doing many idiotic things, but it represents the resolve that Hinduism henceforth will not lie low. And it is highly unfortunate that affiliates of a religion that specialises in breaking down temples, converting cathedrals and shrines in mosques, and demolishing archeological treasure are hailing the Supreme Court verdict over symbolic puja as the "victory of secularism".

The renewed secular jihad declared by the media in the wake of the Gujarat backlash accuses Hindutva of communalising the atmosphere in the country. Liberal intellectuals can afford to do so only because they are safe in a country whose frontiers are defended by a Hindu army. In an imaginary case scenario they could not have preached this secularism under the reigns of Allauddin Khilji, Giyasuddin Tughlak, Babur or Aurengzeb. They

cannot do so even in Srinagar, let alone Islamabad or Dhaka for even though secularism is dear to them, life is dearer than secularism.

Was there something ironic when 57 innocent pilgrims were scorched to death inside the Sabarmati express, when the name Sabarmati had become synonymous with peace, non-violence and tolerance? On the other hand the carnage was actually a product of the political Gandhianism of minority appeasement that emanated from Sabarmati in te 1920s and 30s.

As Naipaul observes, post-conversion, there is a tendency to obliterate the past. Secularism can come about when the religious faith of people are kept parallel. There is no need for them to meet in the typical East-West encounter of Indo-Anglican writing. To maintain a detente, some ground rules have to be accepted by those who wish to force their sectarian beliefs but do not have the numbers to do so.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

An American in Varanasi (Excerpts - rest at the site given below)
by Rod Eason
http://www.indiainfo.com/articles/rod-eason.html



As I stood on the steps of Manikarnika Ghat, the preeminent cremation grounds in Varanasi, and gazed out on the murky water of the Ganges River, I knew I was in another world altogether. "This ain't Kansas," as they say, and although I had been in India for almost three weeks, nothing could have prepared me for the sights of Varanasi.

India's oldest city lived up to its reputation as both wondrous and bizarre. The three days I spent there were the culmination of an incredible journey that took me from the noisy, crowded capital of Delhi to the spiritual heights of the Himalayas to the union of three great rivers in Allahabad and finally to the strange City of Light known as Varanasi.**India?**

Why would an American want to go to India? That's the question everybody asked during the six months that lead up to my departure. Even the Indians I work with at a software company in Sunnyvale were surprised, particularly by my decision to bypass the more typical tourist attractions in Agra and Rajasthan and head for the holy Garhwal region in the Himalayas.

What attracted me to India was not the Taj Mahal or the lavish palaces of the 18th century, but rather the true essence of India as described in the Vedas. The Veda is a blueprint to India's spiritual heritage. It has brought to light the practical value of meditation, Ayur-Veda and Jyotish. These disciplines are gaining wider appreciation in the West as they are beginning to be seen as a compliment to our own knowledge and experience rather than a contradiction.

I've been practicing meditation for 23 years. Although far from an expert in Vedic literature, I nonetheless have felt a closeness to this knowledge due to my own meditative experience. The desire to travel to the home of the Veda became increasingly strong in recent years. However, as a married father of a nine-year old with too many responsibilities and too little vacation time, a trip

to India seemed as remote as India itself. I mean, this isn't exactly like planning a week at the Grand Canyon. We're talking about the other side of the world here. Across eleven time zones and the international date line. Yeah, India was a nice idea, but how do you make it happen? As it turned out, the fulfillment of this desire came from an unlikely source.

Here's The Deal

For the last seven or eight years I've been playing in a monthly poker game. Five buddies, all married, holding on to a 'boy's night out' once a month. Poker is really just an excuse to get together. The stakes are small, the talk is cheap, occasionally risqué and always interesting. We all look forward to it. And everybody thought India was a great idea. This could be our trip. We knew the wives wouldn't want to go. This was for us. But at the same time we knew it would never work. The wives, after all, would never *let* us go.

Next month it came up again. India just wouldn't go away. We started planning the trip. We told the wives about it. They didn't really object too much. It was a year away and I think they figured it was just some guy's thing that we would eventually lose interest in. As the months went by, the interest grew stronger. We talked about India, bought travel books, exchanged email and surfed the internet. However, I also began to realize that due to circumstances, we wouldn't all make it. Sure enough, two of our buddies fell out. We were down to three.

We made arrangements with a local travel agency to put together a package for the three of us—Frank, Charlie and myself. We gave them a list of places we wanted to go and they booked a guide to get us there. With three months to go, we scheduled a weekday lunch at an Indian restaurant to review the trip. That morning I received an email from Charlie. I called Frank and told him Charlie couldn't make it. "To lunch?" he asked.

"No, he can make it to lunch," I said. "He just can't make it to India."

We met at lunch, hammered Charlie for about an hour and convinced him that this was the trip of a lifetime and he had to go. As we finished lunch, Charlie said, "I don't know what I was thinking. You guys are right. I'm in!"

As he drove away from the restaurant, Frank and I looked at each other and said, "He's not going."Two weeks later Charlie was out for good. We didn't even bother trying to turn him around. There would be just two to India.

Shots And More Shots

From our research, we gathered that northern India has just three main seasons—summer, winter and monsoon. Our challenge was to find a window of time that avoided the extreme heat of the summer, the torrential rainfall of the monsoon and the snow of the winter. That window appeared to be the month of September. We set our departure date for September 7 and continued our preparations.

With the travel arrangements made we turned our attention to the supplies that would be needed. We decided that we would take only a backpack and another small carry-on bag. We proceeded to fill our backpacks with everything from mosquito repellent to flashlights to toilet paper. You know, all the essentials.

I put it off as long as I could, but after constant pressure from my wife and a weekly reminder from my mother—"Rod, have you gotten your shots yet?"—I broke down and visited my doctor. My hopes for an easy way out quickly vanished when he launched into a list that included hepatitis A, hepatitis B, cholera, tetanus, typhoid, polio, meningitis and malaria.

"That's it?" I asked.
"Well," he continued, "There are other diseases that we don't have vaccines for. Like dengue fever for example. They also call it broken bone fever because when you get it you feel like your bones are being broken."
"Swell," I thought. Maybe I should go to Hawaii instead.

Turns out my doctor had traveled quite extensively in Southeast Asia. Although he had never been to India, he knew a fair amount about the country. When I told him I was going to Varanasi, he said, "Ah yes, the holy city. Get the shots."

In the end I met him a little more than half way. I passed on hepatitis B because the Center for Disease Control indicated travelers to India were of little risk as long as they took basic precautions. Same thing with cholera, and the vaccine is only 20-30 percent effective. "20 to 30 percent is better than nothing," my doctor said.

"I'll take my chances," I bravely replied as I thought about the prospect of two additional shots. Despite some flu-like symptoms for two days and a couple of sore arms, I survived the shots in pretty good shape. The last vaccine was for malaria. It consisted of a series of tablets taken once a week for eight weeks. "Are there any side effects?" I asked.

"Well," my doctor began, "It's somewhat rare, but there is one thing that I should tell you about because it can sneak up on you."

"What's that?" I wondered.
"It sometimes can create the symptoms of mental illness," he said.
"Swell," I thought. Just what I need at 10,000 feet in the Himalayas.

On Our Way

We boarded United Airlines flight 805 in San Francisco on Sunday, September 7 at 1:30 in the afternoon. Fourteen hours later we were in Hong Kong. Having never been there, I was hoping to at least get a nice view of the city as we landed. The weather didn't cooperate and we landed smooth as silk in near fog and a driving rainstorm. "It doesn't get any better than this," remarked the flight attendant that had cautioned us to expect heavy turbulence on the way in.

About nine hours later, just after midnight local time, we landed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi. Touchdown. We were in India.

We were met at the airport by our guide, Mr. Kapileshwar, and two drivers he brought along, Vijay and Nitin. Mr. Kapileshwar, or Kapil as we came to call him, was a pleasant man with a round, clean-shaven, smiling face. He had served as a tour guide throughout much of India and had been to the Himalayas on many occasions. A strong trekker, Kapil had also taken an expedition to Everest base camp.

Vijay was an older gentleman, large for his size with broad shoulders and a strong back. He had a

warm glow on his beard-covered face and a twinkle in his eye. He spoke little English, but we knew right away that we were going to like him. Nitin, in his early twenties, was much younger than the others, but seemed quite friendly.

The fifteen-minute drive to our hotel was our first exposure to Indian traffic. Our first surprise was that not all vehicles had working headlights. After the third large truck appeared out of nowhere, Frank asked Kapil if this was normal. "Actually, they are required to have lights," he explained. "But some drivers, they don't."

We spent our first night at the Jukaso Inn in the Connaught Place section of central New Delhi. Moderate by Delhi standards, the Jukaso Inn was comparable to a Motel 6 in the U.S. Little did we know at the time that this would be the only night during our three-week stay in India that would not have a power outage.

We never intended to spend much time in Delhi. And the intense humidity and a confusing trip through the center of the city to find a bank to exchange currency did not change our plans. We made only one stop at a large park called Jantar Mantar. Built in 1725 by Jai Singh II, the former ruler of Jaipur, it stands as the first open-air Vedic observatory. The park has several large red and white sundials along with other instruments carved out of stone, once used to calculate time and the astrological position of the planets. Viewing these instruments through the sense of sight is said to directly affect the physiology and awareness of the observer. Frank and I did notice that several of them were quite mesmerizing. You didn't want to take your eyes off them.

The Hierarchy of the Road

It's about a six-hour drive north to Haridwar. The fact that the road condition was poor didn't seem to deter the drivers, ours included, from driving as fast as possible. With constant use of the horn, we raced through the countryside, swerving to pass slower vehicles and narrowly avoiding a head-on collision with the on-coming traffic.

No American should ever attempt to drive a car in India. There is nothing in the U.S. that can possibly prepare a person for Indian driving. Even most Indians don't drive. Those that do are artists. Well, most of them. Ours certainly was. Vijay had driven taxis, buses and large trucks in his lifetime. "Forty years driving in Bombay," he proudly stated. He could easily handle our Tata Sumo, India's version of a sport-utility vehicle.

That doesn't mean that Frank and I weren't freaked out by our first encounter with the Indian system of driving. To begin with, it's all backwards. The steering wheel is on the right and you drive on the left; that is, when you're not driving down the center of the road which is what everybody does. There are few lane markings and the ones that exist are ignored. The idea is to drive up to the rear bumper of the car in front of you and honk the horn until the car moves over enough to let you by. Never mind that the on-coming cars are doing the same thing. At the last second everybody moves back into place and traffic continues without a hitch.

To Frank and me it seemed chaotic and out of control, but in some bizarre way the whole system works. One of the things that holds it all together is the trust and mutual respect drivers hold for one another. No one drives with an ego in India. Harsh words are never exchanged on the road. Unlike the U.S., there is a huge reliance on the other driver to do the right thing. As two cars approach from opposite directions on a narrow road, neither is forced to reduce his speed due to

this implicit understanding that every driver will act responsibly in a tight situation. Well, most of the time. Just outside Haridwar we saw the mangled ruins of a couple of buses that collided head-on. A not-too-subtle reminder that sometimes the system breaks down.

With so many people and so few roads in northern India, everyone competes for the straight line, the shortest distance between two points. Cars, trucks and buses all maneuver along the narrow twisting roads of the Himalayas. Drivers are constantly jockeying for position. As if handed down from generations before, there's an unwritten hierarchy that governs travel on the Indian roads. From the animals on up, everyone seems to know his place and accepts it. Larger faster vehicles have almost an obligation to overtake smaller slower vehicles. It's not exactly survival of the fittest, but Darwin would be proud nonetheless.

The cows are the slowest so everybody passes them. They are however, given their due respect and a small measure of space on the road. For 5,000 years these animals have roamed the land unthreatened by man. The look in their eyes as they lie down in a busy intersection as much as says, "What, me worry?" Ever present, but only occasionally a nuisance, they will move after a few blasts of the horn. They know the routine.

Next come the pedestrians. Slow of course, but usually intelligent enough to watch out for passing cars even if it means waiting until the last second to move.

For many, a bicycle is the common mode of transportation. These rickety contraptions can only hope for a smooth section on the shoulder of the road as they are the first ones forced off in the ongoing competition for space.

The next step up is the motor scooter. To refer to them as motorcycles would be too generous. They're basically underpowered mopeds, but they are nimble and able to move in and out of traffic rather quickly. In many cases this becomes the family car. Three or four on a scooter is not uncommon. Helmets are rare and reserved for the driver only. Ladies ride side-saddle with children in the drivers lap.

Ford Escorts and Geo Prisms dominate the sub-compact car field. More roomy are the older style Ambassador cars. They're comfortable enough for in-town driving, but lack the power needed for efficient hill climbing. That's not to say they don't make a strong effort, if exhaust emissions are any indication.

Our Tata Sumo seemed to be the ideal vehicle for five people to navigate through the hills in relative speed and comfort. We passed everything except the Jeeps. Because of their response and ability to handle various types of terrain, the Jeeps were the most capable vehicles on the road. They were also the most dangerous. Their mostly young drivers tended to display a touch of cockiness to go along with a lead foot. Fortunately, the responsiveness of the vehicle and the driver's quick reactions were usually enough to avoid any real trouble.

There is no shortage of trucks and buses on the roads in northern India. With thick black diesel smoke following in their path, they emerge as a stark contrast to the pristine beauty of the Himalayas. To be stuck behind one on an uphill climb is truly nauseating. The downhill is a different story. No one wants to mess with a large bus on a downhill slope. They travel the middle of the road and force all other vehicles to cower meekly to the edge in some kind of twisted payback for every car that passed them on the uphill climb. Any car foolish enough to challenge

them is usually forced to surrender by one strong blast of the horn.

"Namaste"

Haridwar (‘gate of God’) is one of the seven holy cities of India. The site of the Kumbha Mela every twelve years, it attracts pilgrims from all over India who come to bathe in the sacred waters of the Ganges. For Frank and I it was the first stop on our journey into the Himalayas.

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Visible India - Darsan (Excerpts)
By Diane L. Eck

Hinduism is an imaginative, an "image-making, religious tradition in which the sacred is seen as present in the visible world – the world we see in multiple images and deities, in sacred places, and in people. The notion of darsan call attention as students of Hinduism, to the fact that India is a visual and visionary culture, one in which the eyes have a prominent role in the apprehension of the sacred. For most ordinary Hindus, the notion of the divine as "invisible" would be foreign indeed. God is eminently visible, although human beings have not always had the refinement of sight to see. Furthermore, the divine is visible not only in temple and shrine, but also in the whole continuum of life – in nature, in people, in birth and growth and death. Although some Hindus, both philosophers and radical reformers, have always used the terms "nirguna"(qualityless) and nirakara (formless) to speak of the One Brahman. Yet the same tradition has simultaneously affirmed that Brahman is also saguna (with qualities) and that the multitude of "names and forms" of this world are the exuberant transformations of the One Brahman.

India presents to the visitor an overwhelmingly visual impression. It is beautiful, colorful, sensuous. It is captivating and intriguing, repugnant and puzzling. It combines the intimacy and familiarity of English four o'clock tea with the dazzling foreignness of carpisoned elephants or vast crowds bathing in the Ganga during an eclipse. India's displays of multi-armed images, its processions and its pilgrimages, its beggars and its kings, its street life and markets, its diversity of people – all appear to the eye in a kaleidoscope of images. Whatever Hindus affirm of the meaning of life, death, and suffering, they affirm with their eyes wide open. Many westerners, for example, upon seeing Hindu rituals observances for the first time, are impressed with how sensuous Hindu worship is. It is sensuous in that it makes full use of the senses – seeing, touching, smelling, tasting and hearing. One "sees" the image of the deity (darsan). One "touches" it with one's hands (sparsa), and one also "touches" the limbs of one's own body to establish the presence of various deities (nyasa). One "hears" the sacred sound of the mantras (sravana). The ringing of bells, the offering of oil lamps, the presentation of flowers, the pouring of water and milk, the sipping of sanctified liquid offerings, the eating of consecrated foods- prasad – these are the basic constituents of Hindu worship, Puja.

For all its famous otherworldliness, India is a culture that has also celebrated the life of this world and the realms of the senses.

Source: **Darsan - Seeing the Divine Image in India**
Anima Books. Page 10 - 12

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Meet the Brahmins of ancient Europe, the high caste of Celtic society

By Peter Berresford Ellis

http://www.hinduvoice.net/cgi-bin/maillist/mojo.cgi?flavor=archive&id=20030115010923&list=HV

The Celtic people spread from their homeland in what is now Germany across Europe in the first millennium bce. Iron tools and weapons rendered them superior to their neighbors. They were also skilled farmers, road builders, traders and inventors of a fast two-wheeled chariot. They declined in the face of Roman, Germanic and Slavic ascendency by the second centuries bce. Here Peter Berresford Ellis, one of Europe's foremost experts of the Celts, explains how modern research has revealed the amazing similarities between ancient Celt and Vedic culture. The Celt's priestly caste, the Druids, has become a part of modern folklore. Their identity is claimed by New Age enthusiasts likely to appear at annual solstice gatherings around the ancient megaliths of northwest Europe. While sincerely motivated by a desire to resurrect Europe's ancient spiritual ways, Ellis says these modern Druids draw more upon fanciful reconstructions of the 18th century than actual scholarship.

The Druids of the ancient Celtic world have a startling kinship with the brahmins of the Hindu religion and were, indeed, a parallel development from their common Indo-European cultural root which began to branch out probably five thousand years ago. It has been only in recent decades that Celtic scholars have begun to reveal the full
extent of the parallels and cognates between ancient Celtic society and Vedic culture.

The Celts were the first civilization north of the European Alps to emerge into recorded history. At the time of their greatest expansion, in the 3rd century bce, the Celts stretched from Ireland in the west, through to the central plain of Turkey in the east; north from Belgium, down to Cadiz in southern Spain and across the Alps into the Po Valley of Italy. They even impinged on areas of Poland and the Ukraine and, if the amazing recent discoveries of mummies in China's province of Xinjiang are linked with the Tocharian texts, they even moved as far east as the area north of Tibet.

The once great Celtic civilization is today represented only by the modern Irish, Manx and Scots, and the Welsh, Cornish and Bretons. Today on the northwest fringes of Europe cling the survivors of centuries of attempted conquest and "ethnic cleansing" by Rome and its imperial descendants. But of the sixteen million people who make up those populations, only 2.5 million now speak a Celtic language as their mother tongue.

The Druids were not simply priesthood. They were the intellectual caste of ancient Celtic society, incorporating all the professions: judges, lawyers, medical doctors, ambassadors, historians and so forth, just as does the brahmin caste. In fact, other names designate the specific role of the "priests." Only Roman and later Christian propaganda turned them into "shamans," "wizards" and "magicians." The scholars of the Greek Alexandrian school clearly described them as a parallel caste to the brahmins of Vedic society.

The very name Druid is composed of two Celtic word roots which have parallels in Sanskrit. Indeed, the root vid for knowledge, which also emerges in the Sanskrit word Veda, demonstrates the similarity. The Celtic root dru which means "immersion" also appears in Sanskrit. So a Druid was one "immersed in knowledge."

Because Ireland was one of the few areas of the Celtic world that was not conquered by Rome and therefore not influenced by Latin culture until the time of its Christianization in the 5th century ce, its ancient Irish culture has retained the most clear and startling parallels to Hindu society.

Professor Calvert Watkins of Harvard, one of the leading linguistic experts in his field, has pointed out that of all the Celtic linguistic remains, Old Irish represents an extraordinarily archaic and conservative tradition within the Indo-European family. Its
nominal and verbal systems are a far truer reflection of the hypothesized parent tongue, from which all Indo-European languages developed, than are Classical Greek or Latin. The structure of Old Irish, says Professor Watkins, can be compared only with that of
Vedic Sanskrit or Hittite of the Old Kingdom.

The vocabulary is amazingly similar. The following are just a few examples:

Old Irish - arya (freeman),Sanskrit - aire (noble)
Old Irish - naib (good), Sanskrit - noeib (holy)
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This applies not only in the field of linguistics but in law and social custom, in mythology, in folk custom and in traditional musical form. The ancient Irish law system, the Laws of the Fénechus, is closely parallel to the Laws of Manu. Many surviving Irish myths, and some Welsh ones, show remarkable resemblances to the themes, stories and even names in the sagas of the Indian Vedas.

Comparisons are almost endless. Among the ancient Celts, Danu was regarded as the "Mother Goddess." The Irish Gods and Goddesses were the Tuatha De Danaan ("Children of Danu"). Danu was the "divine waters" falling from heaven and nurturing Bíle, the sacred oak from whose acorns their children sprang. Moreover, the waters of Danu went on to create the great Celtic sacred river--Danuvius, today called the Danube. Many European rivers bear the name of Danu--the Rhône (ro- Dhanu, "Great Danu") and several rivers called Don. Rivers were sacred in the Celtic world, and places where votive offerings were deposited and burials often conducted. The Thames, which flows through London, still bears its Celtic name, from Tamesis, the dark river, which is the same name as Tamesa, a tributary of the Ganges.

Not only is the story of Danu and the Danube a parallel to that of Ganga and the Ganges but a Hindu Danu appears in the Vedic story "The Churning of the Oceans," a story with parallels in Irish and Welsh mytholgy. Danu in Sanskrit also means "divine waters" and "moisture."

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Such praise poems are found in the Rig Veda and are called narasamsi. The earliest surviving poems in old Irish are also praise poems, called fursundud, which trace back the genealogy of the kings of Ireland to Golamh or Mile Easpain, whose sons landed in Ireland at the end of the second millennium bce. When Amairgen, Golamh's son, who later traditions hail as the "first Druid," set foot in Ireland, he cried out an extraordinary incantation that could have come from the Bhagavad Gita, subsuming all things into his being [see sidebar right].

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There survives the famous first century bce Celtic calendar (the Coligny Calendar) which, as soon as it was first discovered in 1897, was seen to have parallels to Vedic calendrical computations. In the most recent study of it, Dr. Garret Olmsted, an astronomer as well as Celtic scholar, points out the startling fact that while the surviving calendar was manufactured in the first century bce, astronomical calculus shows that it must have been computed in 1100 bce.

One fascinating parallel is that the ancient Irish and Hindus used the name Budh for the planet Mercury. The stem budh appears in all the Celtic languages, as it does in Sanskrit, as meaning "all victorious," "gift of teaching," "accomplished," "enlightened," "exalted" and so on. The names of the famous Celtic queen Boudicca, of ancient Britain (1st century ce), and of Jim Bowie (1796-1836), of the Texas Alamo fame, contain the same root. Buddha is the past participle of the same Sanskrit word--"one who is enlightened."

For Celtic scholars, the world of the Druids of reality is far more revealing and exciting, and showing of the amazingly close common bond with its sister Vedic culture, than the inventions of those who have now taken on the mantle of modern "Druids," even when done so with great sincerity.

If we are all truly wedded to living in harmony with one another, with nature, and seeking to protect endangered species of animal and plant life, let us remember that language and culture can also be in ecological danger. The Celtic languages and cultures today stand on
the verge of extinction. That is no natural phenomenon but the result of centuries of politically directed ethnocide. What price a "spiritual awareness" with the ancient Celts when their culture is in the process of being destroyed or reinvented? Far better we seek
to understand and preserve intact the Celt's ancient wisdom. In this, Hindus may prove good allies.

The Song of Amairgen the Druid I am the wind that blows across the sea; I am the wave of the ocean; I am the murmur of the billows; I am the bull of the seven combats; I am the vulture on the rock; I am a ray of the sun; I am the fairest of flowers; I am a wild boar in valor; I am a salmon in the pool; I am a lake on the plain; I am the skill of the craftsman; I am a word of science; I am the spearpoint that gives battle; I am the God who creates in the head of man the fire of thought. Who is it that enlightens the assembly upon the mountain, if not I? Who tells the ages of the moon, if not I? Who shows the place where the sun goes to rest, if not I? Who is the God that fashions enchantments-- The enchantment of battle and the wind of change?

Amairgen was the first Druid to arrive in Ireland. Ellis states, "In this song Amairgen subsumes everything into his own being with a philosophic outlook that parallels the declaration of Krishna in the Hindu Bhagavad-Gita." It also is quite similar in style and content to the more ancient Sri Rudra chant of the Yajur Veda.

Peter Berresford Ellis is one of the foremost living authorities on the Celts and author of many books on the subject, including "Celt and Roman," "Celt and Greek," "Dictionary of Celtic Mythology" and "Celtic Women."
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Our Druid Cousins

By Peter Berresford Ellis

Hinduism Today 2/2000

Meet the brahmins of ancient Europe, the high caste of Celtic society.

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I am a wild boar in valor; I am a salmon in the pool; I am a lake on the plain;
I am the skill of the craftsman; I am a word of science;
I am the spearpoint that gives battle;
I am the God who creates in the head of man the fire of thought.
Who is it that enlightens the assembly upon the mountain, if not I?
Who tells the ages of the moon, if not I?
Who shows the place where the sun goes to rest, if not I?
Who is the God that fashions enchantments--
The enchantment of battle and the wind of change?

Amairgen was the first Druid to arrive in Ireland. Ellis states, "In this song Amairgen subsumes everything into his own being with a philosophic outlook that parallels the declaration of Krishna in the Hindu Bhagavad-Gita." It also is quite similar in style and content to the more ancient Sri Rudra chant of the Yajur Veda.

Peter Berresford Ellis is one of the foremost living authorities on the Celts and author of many books on the subject, including "Celt and Roman," "Celt and Greek," "Dictionary of Celtic Mythology" and "Celtic Women."PETER BERRESFORD ELLIS, 30 GRESLEY ROAD, LONDON, N19 3JZ, ENGLAND

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An Atlantis in the Indian Ocean
(*Review of Stephen Oppenheimer: Eden in the East*)

By Koenraad Elst
http://www.swordoftruth.com/swordoftruth/articles/revelation/revelation.html

One of the many insulting epithets thrown at AIT disbelievers is that they are no better than "Atlantis freaks". Actually, this is not entirely untrue. Some AIT skeptics who have applied their minds to reconstructing ancient history, have indeed thought of centres of human habitation in locations now well below sea-level. When Proto-Indo-European was spoken, the sea level was still recovering from the low point it had reached during the Ice Age, about 100 metres lower than the present level. It was in the period of roughly twelve to seven thousand years ago that the icecaps melted and replenished the seas, so that numerous low-lying villages had to be abandoned.

After all, it is a safe bet that more than half of mankind lived in the zone of less than 100 m above sea level. In the context of the present debate on global warming, it is said that a rise in sea level of just one metre would be an immense catastrophe for countries like Bangla Desh or the Netherlands. The Maledives would completely disappear with a rise of only a few metres. But more importantly, most big population centres today are located just above sea level: Tokyo, Shanghai, Kolkata, Mumbai, London, New York, Los Angeles etc. If the sea level would rise 100 m, most population centres including entire countries would become a sunken continent, a very real Atlantis. Consequently, there is nothing far-fetched in assuming the existence of population centres and cultures, 10 or 15 thousand years ago, in what are now submarine locations on the continental shelf outside our coastlines.

In a recent book, **Eden in the East: the Drowned Continent of Southeast Asia** (Phoenix paperback, London 1999 (1998)), Stephen Oppenheimer has focused on one such part of the continental shelf: the region between Malaysia, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Thailand, Vietnam, China and Taiwan, which was largely inhabitable during the Ice Age. Thinking that this was then the most advanced centre of civilization, he calls it Eden, the Biblical name of Paradise (from Sumerian edin, "alluvial plain"), because West-Asian sources including the Bible do locate the origin of mankind or at least of civilization in the East. In some cases, as in Sumerian references, this "East" is clearly the pre-Harappan and Harappan culture, but even more easterly countries seem to be involved.

Oppenheimer is a medical doctor who has lived in Southeast Asia for decades. He is clearly influenced by Marxism, e.g. where he dismisses religion as a means to "control other people's labour", with explicit reference to Karl Marx's Das Kapital (p.483). His book is based on solid scientific research (genetic, anthropological, linguistic and archaeological), and is in that respect

very different from the numerous Atlantis books which draw on "revelations" and "channeling".

The most airy type of evidence, in its massiveness nonetheless quite compelling, is comparative mythology: numerous cultures, and especialy those in the Asia-Pacific zone, have highly parallel myths of one or more floods. These are not opaque allusions to Freudian events in the subconscious but plainly historical references to the catastrophic moments in the otherwise long-drawn-out rise of the sea level after the Ice Age. For, indeed, this rise was not a continuous process but took place with occasional spurts, wiping out entire tribes living near the coast. The last such sudden rise took place ca. 5500 BC, after which the sea level fell back a few metres to the present level.

According to Oppenheimer, the Southeast-Asian Atlantis, provisionally called Sundaland because it now is the Sunda shelf, was the world leader in the Neolithic Revolution (start of agriculture), using stones for grinding wild grains as early as 24,000 ago, more than ten thousand years older than in Egypt or Palestine. Before and especially during the gradual flooding of their lowland, the Sundalanders spread out to neighbouring lands: the Asian mainland including China, India and Mesopotamia, and the island world from Madagascar to the Philippines and New Guinea, whence they later colonized Polynesia as far as Easter Island, Hawaii and New Zealand.

Oppenheimer aligns with the archaeologists against the linguists in the controversy about the homeland of the Austronesian language family (Malay, Tagalog, Maori, Malgasy etc.): he locates it in Sundaland and its upper regions which now make up the coasts of the Southeast-Asian countries, whereas most linguists maintain that southern China was the land of origin. Part of the argument concerns chronology: Oppenheimer proposes a higher chronology than Peter Bellwood and other out-of-China theorists. My experience with IE studies makes me favour a higher chronology, for new findings (e.g. that "pre-IE" peoples like the Pelasgians and the Etruscans, not to speak of the Harappans, turn out to have been earlier "Aryan" settlers) have consistently been pushing the date of the fragmentation of PIE back into the past.

Another reason for not relying too much on the theories of the linguists is that Austronesian linguistics is a very demanding field, comprising the study of hundreds of small languages most of which have no literature, so the number of genuine experts is far smaller than in the case of IE, and even in the latter case linguists are nowhere near a consensus on the homeland question. Linguistic evidence is very soft evidence, and usually the data admit of more than one historical reconstruction, so I don't think there is any compelling evidence against a Sundaland homeland hypothesis. Conversely, archaeological and genetic evidence in favour of the spread of the Austronesian-speaking populations from Sundaland seems to be sufficient.

It is quite certain that some of these Austronesians must have landed in India, some on their way to Madagascar, some to stay and mix with the natives. Hence the presence of some Austronesian words in Indian languages of all families, most prominently ayi/bayi, "mother" (as in the Marathi girls' names Tarabai, Lakshmi-bai etc.), or words for "bamboo", "fruit", "honey". More spectacularly, linguists like Isidore Dyen have discerned a considerable common vocabulary in the core lexicon of Austronesian and Indo-European, including pronouns, numerals (e.g. Malay dva, "two") and terms for the elements. Oppenheimer doesn't go into this question, but diehard invasionists might use his findings to suggest an Aryan invasion into India not from the northwest, but from the southeast.

But he does mention the legend of Manu Vaivasvata saving his company from the flood and sailing up the rivers of India to settle high and dry in Saptasindhu. Clearly, the origins of Vedic civilization are related to the post-Glacial flood, probably the single biggest migration trigger in human history.

The Tamils have a tradition that their poets' academy or Sangam existed for ten thousand years, and that its seat (along with the entire Tamil capital) had to be moved thrice because of the rising sea level. They also believe that their country once stretched far to the south, including Sri Lanka and the Maledives, a lost Tamil continent called Kumarikhandam. If these legends turn out to match the geological evidence quite neatly, our academics would be wrong to dismiss them as figments of the imagination. But the Indian or Kumarikhandam counterpart to Oppenheimer's book on Sundaland has yet to be written. This indeed is probably the most important practical conclusion to be drawn from this book: extend India's history by thousands of years with the exploration of now-submarine population centres.

Another language family originating in some part of Sundaland was Austro-Asiatic, which includes the Mon-Khmer languages in Indochina (its demographic point of gravity being Vietnam) but also Nicobarese and the Munda languages of Chotanagpur, at one time possibly spoken throughout the Ganga basin. It is the Mundas who brought rice cultivation from Southeast Asia to the Ganga basin, whence it reached the Indus Valley towards the end of the Harappan age (ca. 2300 BC). In this connection, it is worth noting that Oppenheimer confirms that "barley cultivation was developed in the Indus Valley" (p.19), barley being the favourite crop of the Vedic Aryans (yava). Unlike the Mundas who brought rice cultivation from eastern India and ultimately from Southeast Asia to northwestern India, and unlike the Indo-European Kurgan people whose invasion into Europe can be followed by means of traces of the crops they imported (esp. millet), the Vedic Aryans simply used the native produce. This doesn't prove but certainly supports the suspicion that the Aryans were native to the Indus Valley.

Concerning the political polemic, the usual claim that the caste system with its sharp discrimination was instituted by the invading Aryans to entrench their supremacy is countered by the finding that even the most isolated tribes on India's hills turn out to have strict endogamy rules, often guarded with more severe punishments for inter-tribal love affairs than exist in Sanskritic-Hindu society. Here, Oppenheimer confirms that in the Austro-Asiatic and Austrone-sian tribal societies, where many of India's tribals originate, inequality is deeply entrenched: "Yet the class structure which cripples Britain more than any other European state, is as nothing compared with the stratified hierarchies in Austronesian traditional societies from Madagascar through Bali to Samoa. (...) This consciousness of rank is thus clearly not something that was only picked up by Austronesian societies from later Indian influence." (p.484) Social hierarchy is not a racialist imposition by the Aryans, but a near-universal phenomenon especially pronounced among Indo-Pacific societies including most non-Aryan populations.

Stephen Oppenheimer makes a very detailed and very strong case for the importance of the culture of sunken Sundaland for the later cultures in the wide surroundings. India too certainly benefited of certain achievements imported from there. What is yet missing is a similar study for the equally important and likewise neglected culture of the sunken lands outside India's coast.

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articles on hinduism

India, superpower in the 3rd millennium BC - and AD

by Koenraad Elst, Leuven (Belgium), 5 May 2000
http://members.nbci.com/_XMCM/koenraadelst/articles/superpower.html

In the 3rd millennium BC, the Indus-Saraswati civilization was the world leader in science and technology as well as in trade and philosophy. We are witnessing a return to India's roots, considering the bright prospects of India in the 3rd millennium AD, soon to begin. In current discussions about this development, the Pokharan nuclear tests were the inevitable main points of reference, because they have acted as an eye-opener to Indians and foreigners alike. The tests have made the point that India now plays in the top league: technologically, because Indian scientists have demonstrated their mastery of that very technology which, after 1945, decides a country's status in geopolitics; and politically, because India has demonstrated the will and capacity to assert its vision of a multipolar world, as opposed to the unipolar "new world order" inaugurated by the Soviet implosion. In this guest column, I would like to look into some of the implications of the emerging power e! quation.

India's relations with the Muslim world It is still customary in the Western media to see 'Hindu India' as one half of an antagonistic duo with Pakistan or the larger Muslim world. If this perception was ever valid, the nuclear tests and other developments have rendered it completely obsolete. Pakistan just cannot compete with India, and the Indian tests were correctly explained as necessitated by India's defense needs vis-a-vis China and the US. Contrary to all predictions by foreign 'experts', the BJP government has not built gas chambers for the Indian Muslims, and it has not given an anti-Muslim thrust to its foreign policy.

In this connection, I must congratulate the present ruling party, the BJP, for a policy of which I personally used to be a critic. When you study the BJP's foreign policy statements since the party's founding in 1980, you find that they strictly avoid any confrontationist positions vis-a-vis the Muslim world as such. There were of course harangues against Pakistan and its proxy wars, there were warnings against Islamic 'fundamentalism', but underlying all this was a basic assurance that a BJP government would continue India's policy of cooperation with Muslim countries, in parallel with the BJP's charm offensive towards India's Muslims. While independent Hindu revivalist intellectuals have analyzed relations with the Muslim world in terms of a 'clash of civilizations' since long before Samuel Huntington popularized this expression, the BJP's approach was strictly nationalistic: treat Indian Muslims as Indians, and likewise treat the Arabian Muslims as Arabs, the Ayatollahs !

as Iranians, rather than as representatives of a mythical pan-Islamic power. In years past, I used to deride this de-ideologization of the Hindu approach to the Muslims as a sign an intellectual sloppiness and opportunism; but in fact, it is eminently wise policy. While focusing on Islam as a

doctrine remains a valid project for scholars of comparative religion, it would be wrong for politicians to treat Arab or Indian Muslims as essentially spokesmen of Islamic doctrine, reducing them to their religious identity. In reality, the national interests of Iran or Egypt and the individual interests of Indian Muslims are shaped far more by objective realities than by religion. Hence the correctness of the BJP's approach of disregarding religious identities and emphasizing national identities instead.

Policy-makers in the West should pay more attention to the difference in economic and technological performance between India and the Middle-Eastern countries: while the former is poor but dynamic, the latter are rich but stagnant, unable to outgrow their status as a mere market for American goods. **India's image is increasingly determined by its brainy engineers rather than by Mother Teresa,** and the country should prepare to take a leadership role in the progress of its less dynamic West-Asian neighbors. Among other things, this will help all parties concerned to exorcise any remaining bad memories of religious conflict, and get on with their lives. For Muslims in India, it is now glaringly clear that their best interests lie in joining the mainstream. They have given up on Pakistan, witness recent occasions where Indian Muslims celebrated Indian rather than Pakistani sports victories. Pakistan, let's face it, is in a shambles: it is socially stagnant, educationally backward, economically bankrupt, and the number of Muslims killed in sectarian violence in the last five years is a hundred times higher in Pakistan than in India. Indeed, Pakistani Muslims too are reconsidering their position, increasingly emphasizing their ethnic (Sindhi, Baluchi, Pathan) identities and musing about some kind of confederation with India. While Pakistan as a state has an obsessive hostility to everything Hindu and Indian, India can treat Pakistan as just a nuisance, a failed state from which an increasing number of Pakistanis seek to free themselves. India plays in a higher league, it is one of the emerging world powers, and South-Asian ! Muslims want to be part of this, rather than play along in Pakistan's pitiable proxy wars.

India and the USA

One of the sad aspects of the Cold War was the estrangement between India and the West. For most of the time, India has been the only democracy between the Jordan and the Yellow Sea, and should have been the West's natural ally in the region. Attitudes on both sides were shortsighted and pre-occupied with ideological posturing and strategic calculations, but that should all be history by now. The aftermath of Pokharan saw a lot of anti-US defiance among Indian politicians and commoners, but now that the dust has settled, India should prepare for global partnership with the US, China and other countries to ensure peace and cooperation. The US, on its part, should of course invite India into the club of permanent Security Council members: this is a demand of fairness, but also of American interests. Both the US and India have been major targets of terrorism, so the US cannot continue to sponsor anti-Indian terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir all while combating anti-American terrorism in the Middle East. To the extent that the US sees China as a threat, it has an interest in treating India as a counterweight and check on Chinese expansionism. This is all so obvious to any rational observer, and it is about time US policy-makers wake up. Probably the gradual realization of the failure of the punitive policy against India, imposing 'sanctions' on a fellow nuclear power, which only draws more strength from them, will drive the message home.

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articles on hinduism

LEFTIST SCHOLARSHIP IN INDIA

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How would you expect that Hinduism, the world's oldest and most complex religion, would appear as seen through the eyes of Marxists? Naturally it would not look very good. After all Karl Marx himself declared that religion was the opiate of the masses. However now communism has fallen all over the world and religion, including Hinduism, is still going strong. We have learned that the real truth has been that Marxism was the opiate of the intellectuals, as it has been called, not that religion itself is an illusion.

Unfortunately, the universities of India have been strongly influenced by Marxists since independence and their view of Hinduism has often become entrenched in the educational system. A name which comes to mind readily is that of **Romila Thapar**, Emeritus Professor of History at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), which is itself well known in India as a center of Marxist activity. Thapar is neither the most important, nor the most prominent figure of Marxist circles, but she has been very much in the news lately and represents a wider phenomenon, and her name has been picked here for no other reason. She and her colleagues are responsible for a number of textbooks in India on the history of the country, which not surprisingly are negative about the majority religion of the land. Thapar is not unique in her thought, but she affords us a good example of leftist scholarship has worked in India.

If we understand that historians like Thapar are Marxists the logic behind her studies becomes obvious. Thapar's historical criticisms of Hinduism are quite negative, and it is often easier to get more sympathetic accounts of Hinduism from professors in the West, particularly those who have practiced some professors in the West, particularly those who have particularly those who have practiced some Hindu-based yogic or meditational teachings. Thapar even doubts whether Hinduism as a religion really existed until recent times. She portrays Hinduism not as a comprehensive tradition going back to the Mahabharata or to the Vedas, but as a relatively modern appropriation, and therefore misinterpretation, of older practices and symbols, whose real meaning we can no longer know as we are not products of that cultural milieu which produced them in the first place. This view is called "deconstructionism" in the West and is the product of French Marxist thinkers.

By this view Thapar sees Hinduism, and religion in general, as reinterpreting cultural symbols for purpose of social and political exploitation. She tries to point out that Hinduism is mainly a vehicle of social oppression through the caste system and is not worthy of much respect for any

modern rational or humanistic person. This is standard deconstructionist thinking about religion which is based on the assumption that there is nothing eternal in human beings and therefore there can be no continuous meaning in religion. In other words she interprets Hinduism and religion which are supposed to deal with the eternal, only in terms of time and history. Such people have failed to understand the correct development of reason (buddhi) according to Hindu sages, whose real purpose is to allow us to discern the transient from the eternal, not to deny the eternal in favor of the transient such as is the movement of the logic of thinkers like Thapar.

In particular, Thapar tries to show that the non-violence and tolerance generally ascribed to Hinduism are myths that Hindus or India never really followed. There are a few historical in stances of Hindus being violent or oppressive of Buddhists and Jains, which she emphasizes. There are also historical instances of Buddhists being oppressive of non-Buddhists. Such is the egoism inherent in human nature that is difficult to root out. But these are exceptions. There is no Hindu or Buddhists tradition of crusades or holy wars like that of Western religions of Christianity and Islam there is a tradition of non-violence (ahimsa), which however imperfectly followed, was honored in India more so than anywhere else in the world.

What is most interesting about Thapar's studies of Hinduism is that they are devoid of any spiritual dimension. She ignores the great Hindu yogis and gurus and does not discuss the Hindu Philosophy of the universe or higher states of consciousness, which she does not give any validity to. She sees the institution of Sannyasa or monastic renunciation as another source of social authority (and therefore oppression of the masses), not a spiritual institution. Her interpretation of Hinduism follows purely social and political lines. Yet as an atheist and Marxist can we expect that she would understand or appreciate Hindu devotional or yogic practices? You will certainly never find her quoting the Upanishads or the Gita in a Favorable light. In this regard I am reminded of a communist poet of Maharashtra whom I once met, who described the Gita as "the greatest mystification the human mind has ever produced." No doubt Thapar would be inclined to concur.

To put together Hinduism and Buddhism along with Christianity and Islam is itself not a very bright idea and can barely be sustained intellectually, but Indian Marxists' view of Hinduism is on the same order as Karl Marx's view of Christianity, or the Chinese communist view of Buddhism. Going to them to understand Hinduism is a lot like going to Marx to understand Christianity or Mao to understand Chinese Buddhism. Following their Marxist mentors, they accuse Hinduism of having a political agenda in the guise of religion (which since there is no God in their view, religion could never have any real spiritual agenda anyway). Yet there is no doubt that such Marxist thinkers, seeing the world only in political terms, have an entirely political agenda. For instance, Thapar's recent historical accounts are clearly meant as attacks on the Hindu revivalist movement in India, which the communists have always regarded as their main enemy. As Hindu revivalists are emphasizing the continuity of the religion and the ongoing relevance of its traditions, Thapar and her associates are looking for ways to deny it.

Marxists like Thapar like to appear as social liberals and objective academicians and some intellectuals trained in the Western tradition may look at them in this light. Thapar does not parade her Marxism, particularly in recent years, and her criticism of Hinduism, though harsh, is presented in an indirect scholarly style, which makes it less obvious. But we should understand the background of such thinkers, which is hardly objective or free of political motives.

I am conscious of the fact that the subject is big and my treatment of it is sketchy. I am, for example, not discussing at all the tie-up of Marxists in Indian universities with Marxists in European and American universities, how the two stand together and by each other, how the Indian Marxists have found hospitality in Western universities, and so on. What I am pointing out is that simply because a don comes from India does not mean that he or she is providing an accurate or sensitive account of Hinduism or the history of India. In fact, India scholarship often tends to be very second-hand, and Indian scholars, in the absence of a perspective of their own, tend to be imitative. I must say that the most Westernized, anti-religious, materialistic intellectuals I have ever met were in India, not in the West, and they were often teachers in universities. The same inability to understand or even appreciate religion can be said of many professors in America, who as products of materialistic Western academia are similarly likely to analyze religion not as a spiritual phenomenon but as a purely social-political institution. Leftist scholars in India look to such Western thinkers for their inspiration and have little regard for the Hindu spiritual and philo-sophical tradition which they neither understand nor feel any kinship with. If they have any God or guru, it is Marx, and Hindu system like Vedanta are as foreign to them as they are to any non-Hindu.

Hindus who are religious-and the great majority are strongly religious-should not mistake such Marxist views for an objective pursuit of truth, whether they come from India or elsewhere. Fortunately with the downfall of communism in the world, the influence of communism in India is on the wane, but just as the old communists are holding on to their declining power in the political institutions of China (and Bengal), they are holding on in the educational institutions of India. It is unlikely that they will let go of their line of thought.

As a westerner writing on Hinduism in a positive light it is strange that the main opponents I have run into are Hindus them selves, that is the Marxist Hindus, who like many rebels are the most negative about their own cultural traditions which they have but recently abandoned. The views of these leftists are often on par with the anti-Hindu views of Christian fundamentalists while the latter see Hinduism as a religion of the devil, the former see it as a personification of social evil, the manifestation of caste division which is their devil (though curiously Marxism works to encourage class hatred, not to promote social harmony and peace between the classes).

Hindus today, like followers of other religions, should no longer accept the Marxist view of their religion and their history, but to do so they must first unmask it. This does not mean that Hindus have done no wrong or that they should not reform their social system or become more compassionate. The proper social changes that need to be done in India or anywhere else in the world do not require rejecting religion in the true sense, or adapting communist-socialist policies which are failing every-where. On the contrary, the appropriate changes follow from a better understanding of the spirit of universality in Hinduism, which is the essence of its religious view, its recognition of God as the self of all beings.

Observing such Marxist thinkers one is reminded of the Katha Upanishad: "Living in the midst of ignorance, considering themselves to be wise, the deluded wander confused, like the blind led by the blind. The way to truth does not appear to a confused immature mind, deluded by the illusion of wealth (materialism). Thinking that this world alone exists and there is nothing beyond, they ever return again and again to the net of death." The Upanishads saw long ago that materialistic thinkers who regard that this world is the only reality only lead us to ignorance and sorrow. It is

about time that people in India started to heed the words of their ancient sages, even if it means questioning modern professors.

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One Truth, Different Paths

By David Frawley 'Vamadeva Shastri'
http://www.timesofindia.com/today/26repu12.htm

India possesses a great indigenous civilization dating back to 7000 BC, such as recent archaeological discoveries at Mehrgarh clearly reveal. It had the most extensive urban culture in the world in the third millennium BCE with the many cities of the Indus and Sarasvati rivers.

When the Sarasvati river of Vedic fame dried up in the second millennium BCE the culture shifted east to the more certain rivers of the Gangetic plain, which became the dominant region of the subcontinent. Gone is the old idea of the Aryan invasion and an outside basis for Indian culture. In its place is the continuity of a civilization and its literature going back to the earliest period of history. Based on this reclamation of its glorious past India can now look to the future as the broadest and most enduring culture on the planet.

The oldest Indian text and perhaps the oldest book in the world, the Rig Veda boldly proclaims: "That which is the One Truth the seers teach in many different ways (Rig Veda I.164.46)," and "May noble aspirations come to us from every side (Rig Veda I.89.1)." This bedrock of Indian or Bharatiya pluralism gave rise not only to the many different sects of Hinduism but also to Buddhist, Jain, and Sikh traditions, perhaps the largest diversity of spiritual teachings in the entire world. Though largely misunderstood in the West as polytheism or a worship of many Gods, this Bharatiya pluralism reflects an open quest for truth and a free flowering of all human potentials beyond any restriction to a particular name, form or institution. It embraced art and science as well as religion and metaphysics.

Unfortunately, over the first fifty years since independence India has not discovered its real roots. Its intellectuals have mimicked Western trends in thought. They have forgotten their own profound modern sages like Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo who projected modern and futuristic views of the Indian tradition. While Westerners come to India seeking spiritual knowledge, Indian intellectuals look to the West with an adulation that is often blind, if not obsequious.

The world is now entering into a global age in which pluralism must be the foundation of world culture. It is no longer a missionary, colonial or communist era in which one group can be allowed hegemony in the world. It is a new age of dialogue and respect in which we must learn to honour and cherish all the cultures of the world. This should start with tribal peoples who are the custodians of the Earth and of the wisdom of nature that we are so quickly losing to a destructive technology. It must include the great traditions of the East like Hinduism and Buddhism which have a firm foundation in tolerance and synthesis. We must learn to embrace all human beings

and their cultures as part of one great family. Let our differences be a cause for admiration and celebration, not for mistrust or hatred.

It is time for India to once more be a leader and an innovator in world culture, rather than a follower and imitator as it is at present. Sri Aurobindo remarked that India's real role was to be the guru among the nations of the world. At present it can hardly keep order within its own frontiers. While we see Indians doing well outside of India as the elite of foreign lands, inside India they are still floundering. Why is it that India today cannot nourish or promote the remarkable capacities of its own people?

To change this situation a new vitality and creativity is necessary that honours the country's venerable traditions but does not restrict itself to past forms and conventions. Above all, it requires a new generation of thinkers who are global in outlook but grounded in the practical spirituality of Yoga and Vedanta. Indian thinkers must return to their cultural wellsprings, not to stop there, but to create a new vision for humanity. New rishis, yogis and bodhisattvas must arise to complement the old.

We can already see how such traditional Indian disciplines as Yoga, Ayurveda and Vedanta are gaining respect worldwide for their integral and holistic approach. Such an Indic or dharmic perspective should be added to enrich religion, philosophy, and science all over the world. The new generation of Indians should take up this task of world-making as their goal. The new world order of the computer and the information revolution offers the country a situation quite favourable to its unique spiritual and intellectual talents. But for this to occur India must stand up and speak out, not merely to please everyone, but to blaze a new trail to the universe that dwells both inside and outside of ourselves.

Such a new India would combine science and spirituality in a global perspective, adding the intuitive insight of the ancient rishis to the critical acumen of modern scientists. If a unitary consciousness is indeed the basis of the universe, as quantum mechanics requires, India's yogis have already shown the way to realize it. It would create a system of medicine that would combine the advances of biochemistry along with an understanding of the life-force and the soul which mirror the greater human being that is cosmic in nature. The new India would develop our material potentials but for the glory of the Spirit, the Self of all beings, just as classical India combined a vast flowering of art, architecture, music and dance along with numerous philosophies of the absolute and yogic paths. The new India would protect the earth while reaching out to the planets and stars, reclaiming the paradise that this tropical land of many rivers used to be. It would honour our spiritual ancestors and their legacy, fulfilling the deeper urges of our species and not merely accepting material affluence as enough. It would raise the poor and the downtrodden, not to convert people to a belief but to help all people become happy and free in both body and mind.

Such an awakened India is crucial for world culture, which presently remains trapped between a destructive consumerism on one side and a rigid religious exclusivism on the other. Today the United States is only superpower in the world. But it is a superpower in the outer world only. Its material wealth hides a spiritual poverty and growing psychological and social unrest. No technological superpower can properly guide the world. Only a spiritual superpower can do this, which India has the best potential to become. The question is whether the country and its leaders are willing to make the sacrifice that this must entail. India holds the Shakti, the spiritual power

and evolutionary force of humanity. It is the great World Mother in her manifestation. Let its yogic force come forth once again for the benefit of all!

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Scholarship or prejudice?

By David Frawley
http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/op/stories/2003030400010200.htm

India does not need people like Witzel to save its soul, any more than it needs Christian missionaries to do so. It doesn't need them to teach it what dharma, truth or civilisation really are. Similarly, the world of Vedic scholarship does not require them to explain the secrets of the Vedas, which clearly they don't even suspect, much less know.

MICHAEL WITZEL predictably attacks anyone who suggests any greatness for Vedic culture or any connection between it and the Harappan civilisation. The number of such Vedic scholars East and West that he has made personal diatribes against is now over a dozen, though to his lament, he has still not succeeded in reducing their numbers or weakening the appeal of their ideas.

Strange views

Yet Witzel's own views, which he seldom highlights, are much stranger. He has not only proposed an Aryan invasion/migration into ancient India in the post-Harappan era (after 1500 BCE) through the Panjab going east, he has similarly detailed a Dravidian invasion/migration of India about the same time through Sind but going south. Yet he is fair in his judgment of the Aryans and Dravidians, he regards both peoples as equally primitive and as not having even developed agriculture much less any civilisation of their own.

He has stated that both Vasishta and Agastya, the two greatest Vedic sages of north and south India, were in fact Iranians. Now he is also proposing that Buddha, called Shakyamuni, was a descendant of recent Shaka (Scythian) migrants to Bihar from Iran around 600 BCE and suggests that Buddhism itself might even be an Iranian heresy, not anything really Indian. Influenced by the story of how Biblical Moses led the Jews out of Egypt into Israel, Witzel has written that Vasishta brought King Bharata (who gave his name to the land of India) out of Eastern Iran into India! Of course, while the Bible remembers such an exodus no such Vedic or Puranic records exist, but that does not slow him down.

Instead of either the Aryans or Dravidians as the authors of the great Harappan culture Witzel has proposed the Mundas or aborigines. While he claims I have offended the Mundas and other aboriginals for questioning their ability to create the Harappan civilisation, he doesn't seem to find any problem in offending both the Aryans and the Dravidians by finding them both quite incapable of its creation (in spite of their literary and historical records of great antiquity for which the Mundas have nothing comparable). Yet he also suggests that the Mundas themselves could just as well be migrants into the region from the southeast, completing his scenario that people and culture must come to India from the outside, regardless of how many peoples and cultures India is able to produce.

Such views are much stranger than suggesting that the Vedic literature, the largest remaining literature of the ancient world, may actually be related to the Harappan/Sarasvati civilisation, the largest urban civilisation of the ancient world, particularly since both reflect the same geographical region. Such scholars ignore the great Sarasvati river and its many archaeological sites that number in the hundreds. They would place the original Vedic Sarasvati river in Afghanistan and have the Vedic Aryans strangely ascribe this name of their holiest river to a dried up stream in India on which Harappan culture had

coincidently once been centred, as if the Vedic people had some intuition of the river's former greatness long before they arrived! They would equate the sophisticated and advanced Vedic literature with the compositions of uncivilised, primitive nomadic tribes, though it has managed to leave its mark on the culture of the entire subcontinent, and no other earlier literature has survived.

When I recently suggested in an article about the ecology of ancient India (which doesn't even mention his name), that India provided the ideal subtropical river system for developing civilisation, Witzel now adds that India is also an unsuitable place to live, quoting how people from the Iranians to the Moguls found the climate too hot for them to stay. I don't know if he ever counted the number of people able to live on these hot north Indian rivers compared to the deserts of Iran and Central Asia. Even in Harappan and post-Harappan times, North India was densely populated and could easily support a great civilisation and maintain its continuity through the ages.

Battle for the soul of India

Witzel's background is purely as a linguist. He does not claim a deeper study of Indian philosophy, yoga, or spirituality, for which he has never expressed any regard. So when he speaks now of the soul of India one has to wonder what he is talking about. Nor has he ever written about Indian culture or *Bharatiya samskriti* in a positive light or as a real entity in its own right.

His `love' for India is so well known to the Indian community in the U.S. that there is hardly an internet discussion list maintained by them where his rigid anti-Hindu and anti-India views have not been noted. Witzel's name is commonly mentioned along with Dan Burton and other India-bashers. A simple search on the Internet will reveal numerous contemptuous remarks that Witzel makes against Indians, Hindus, India and the Indian government. His open support for the Marxist historians of India is also well known. Many people have started seeing through his misrepresentations, abuse and vitriol, disguised as `scholarship.' The reader may himself refer to reviews of his writings at http://www.bharatvani.org/indology.html, including articles that question Witzel's knowledge of the Sanskrit language.

Odd endeavour

Witzel has even recently done some articles on the Vedic religion, as he claims, to show what it really was and to counter the many distortions about it that exist today (probably made by Hindus!). This is a rather odd endeavour for someone who neither believes in nor practises the Vedic religion, nor has ever shown any respect for its great ancient or modern teachers, much less sought to be a disciple in any Vedic tradition or lineage. It reminds one of the atheists on temple boards that have occurred in Kerala.

Yet for perhaps the first time, Witzel suggests in his latest response that he really honours the great civilisation of India after all, but leaves us guessing in exactly what way. Perhaps he hasn't quite figured it out yet. In any case he has not referred to which of his papers actually say this.

No, India does not need people like Witzel to save its soul, any more than it needs Christian missionaries to do so. It doesn't need them to teach it what dharma, truth or civilisation really are. Similarly, the world of Vedic scholarship does not require them to explain the secrets of the Vedas, which clearly they don't even suspect, much less know. In fact if Witzel is truly interested in real spirituality, which is the true soul of India and of the Vedas, India can provide him with quite enough teachers and teachings to keep him quiet for a long time.

DAVID FRAWLEY

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articles on hinduism

A Hindu Call For Religious Pluralism

By David Frawley
(Pandit Vamadeva Shastri)

Hinduism is the largest pluralistic religion in the world. It teaches that there are many paths, many sages, and many holy books and that no religion can claim any exclusive or final representation of truth. This does not mean that Hinduism does not recognize a unity to truth. On the contrary, Hinduism recognizes a total and profound unity but one that is broad enough to allow for diversity and to integrate multiplicity, like the many leaves on a great banyan tree.

This Hindu pluralism has confused people coming from singularistic religious traditions, such as have dominated the Western world, who are baffled by the great diversity within Hinduism. It has caused them to look upon Hinduism as a collection of cults or sects rather than any consistent religious heritage. However if we look deeply into the many-sided vision of Hinduism we will discover that it has much wisdom to teach everyone. Today in the emerging global era we must learn to handle the great diversity of human beings and their often very different cultures. This requires a pluralistic vision in all aspects of life, from which religion, often the most important aspect of human culture, cannot be excluded.

Hinduism is built upon diversity and holds within itself an amazing,even bewildering, variety of teachers and teachings from what appear to be the most primitive forms to the most abstract spiritual philosophies and yogic practices. One could say that there are more religions inside of Hinduism than outside of it. Hinduism has more Gods and Goddesses, more scriptures, more saints, sages and avatars, than any other religion in the world, perhaps more than all the other major religions put together. This is because Hinduism has sought to preserve all the main spiritual practices that developed in India over the past five thousand years. It has never sought to reduce itself to any one teacher, book, faith or revelation. It has always remained open to new teachings and revelations on one hand, and yet has not cut itself off from older traditions on the other. It would be as if in the Western world today along with the dominant religions of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, that the old Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Babylonian and Persian religions had been preserved, as well as an acceptance of newer teachings and religions.

We can contrast the Hindu view with that of dominant Western religions and their standard formula of one God, one prophet or savior and one holy book that has led them to promote the supremacy of their belief for everyone. Christianity and Islam, with few exceptions, have sought throughout history to convert the entire world to their faith, and to this end have often tried to discredit, if not suppress other traditions - a practice that still continues in various parts in the world. On the other hand, Hinduism has never tried to create any one center, one church, one

pope, or one doctrine or to impose its views through any army or group of missionaries. It has sought to preserve diversity and emphasizes local application of the teachings.

In the dawning global age we can no longer claim that any one religion is the only truth for all humanity any more than we can claim that one language, culture or way of life is the best for all. We must have a broad enough view to recognize what is of value in the different peoples and cultures of the globe from so-called aborigines, who have a much deeper understanding of nature than modern people, to the great civilizations not only of Europe and the Middle East but of America, Africa and Asia, including those not built upon Biblical religious ideas.
Any great civilization, we must note, is a product of diversity. It is able to bring together many different views and practices in science, religion, art, and culture as well as embrace various racial, ethnic, and linguistic groups. It also has a long sense of history and can integrate within itself many different historical currents. A culture where everyone must have the same beliefs and follow the same practices is not a true culture and must deny the human spirit that always seeks to grow and express itself in a variety of ways.

Religious Pluralism and Unity of Religions

Some modern Hindu teachers have stated that all religions are one, that they are all ultimately the same and all equally good. They look upon different religions as merely alternative ways to reach the same goal, as little more than different names for the same thing. This has caused them to mix different religions together, often with little discrimination, trying to be all things to all people. While their view may be motivated by a sincere effort to bring about religious harmony and world peace, it has led to many distortions. Above all it has gone against the pluralistic approach of the Hindu tradition.

Making all religions the same is a denial of pluralism and can breed another form of intolerance. Pluralism in any field does not mean that all alternatives are the same but that we do have different choices, which may not all be good or equal. Having pluralism in food, for example, means that we can choose from many different types of food. It does not mean that all food articles are of equal nutritional value or of the same taste.
This equating of all religions as equal and good makes it appear wrong for religions to disagree with one another, even if their views are contrary. It destroys discrimination in religion and makes people blur over different views of God, immortality, the goal of life, and the ways to achieve these. Rather than honoring diversity in religion, it attempts to reduce this diversity to a vague identity that no one can challenge. Rather than giving people a number of different choices in religion it tries to make all these choices appear to be the same or inconsequential. In eliminating choice it destroys freedom and inhibits inquiry and growth.

And on what grounds do we make all religions the same? Do we do it on the grounds of monotheism, the belief that there is only One God? This debars non-monotheistic religions like Buddhism or Taoism, as well as many native beliefs. Do we propose it on that all religions teach us to be good? Yet what is said to be good in one religion may not be good in another religion. Like any other human cultural phenomena religions are so diverse that if we try to reduce them to a common pattern, we will only have a few bones left over, not a real human being. Could we reduce art all over the world to a single standard of sameness without destroying its richness and vitality? This attempt to make all religions the same is a continuation of the effort to stifle

religious differences and prevent freedom in the religious realm.

What Hinduism really teaches is religious pluralism, not the need to make all religions the same, which is intolerant of religious differences that are often not at all minor or inconsequential. Religious pluralism, on the other hand, is tolerant of religious differences. It does not seek to reduce all religions to a common model. It lets their differences stand out as they are and does not seek to cover them over with a veil of unity. Pluralism says that it is fine for us to have different or even contrary views about religion and this does not have to be a problem. The important thing for us is to seek truth or God in the way that is most meaningful for us.
Pluralism in religions does not require that we reduce all religions to a common mold in which their distinctions disappear into an amorphous unity. It certainly doesn't mean that we have to practice all religions or bow down to all their leaders as great and holy. Pluralism in religions does not mean that we have to believe in or accept all religions as true, regardless of what they teach. Pluralism means freedom. There should be freedom in the pursuit of the spiritual life, even if it allows others to arrive at a different understanding of truth than what we ourselves honor. This means that we should not bar people from changing their religious beliefs, nor should we seek to impose religious beliefs upon people by force or propaganda. We should give people the space to discover the truth without our interference.

After all truth is the truth. It is not a fantasy that has to be protected. If we allow people the freedom to discover what is real they cannot avoid it. On the other hand, if we try to impose truth on people, what they arrive at will not be their own truth, their own discovery but a mere doctrine, label or fantasy. Truth is self-evident. The truth that fire burns does not require a religious sanction or political law to protect it. It doesn't need a priestly order or a police force to enforce it. We don't need to use persuasion to make people believe that fire burns. We need only let them work with fire and discover what it is. The same is true of all the great laws and powers of both nature and the Divine. Hindu pluralism does not deny the unity of truth or the fact of cosmic law but regards it as a matter of self-discovery and self-knowledge, not the enforcement of a mere belief or opinion.

Pluralism and the Clash of Different Paths

A pluralistic religious view accepts that there are many different religious paths. These paths have various degrees of differences between them, some perhaps minor, some perhaps major. Different paths will appeal to different individuals relative to their varying temperaments or levels of development, which are bound to be diverse and ever changing. Some of these paths may be good or noble, others may be naive or perhaps even despicable. Some may appeal to a low level of religious temperament, others may appeal to a high level of spiritual realization.

A pluralistic view does not seek to force these paths into any preconceived harmony or bar people from following paths that are not good or exalted. It does not attempt to police the paths, but rather to sustain the freedom that prevents anyone path from imposing itself upon all as the final truth. In pluralism their is no final judgment on these different paths. Each person is allowed their own opinion of what they think is best. The freedom to follow a path is as important as what any path may be.
A pluralistic view does not bar either disagreement or debate between different paths. It allows people to critically examine and choose between different paths to find out what is valid for them

on an individual basis. In fact a pluralistic view encourages free and critical discussion and does not place religions, like sovereign nations, outside the sphere of examination as if anything called a religious faith could no longer be questioned. Pluralism allows the clash of paths, not as an outer battle, but as part of a spirit of free examination. This clash of paths is as important as any unity between paths for helping the human spirit grow. We grow spiritually more from dialogue with those who disagree with us than from having our beliefs unquestioningly affirmed by others. This requires that we are willing to have our own views scrutinized as well as being willing to examine those of others.

Yet though creating a forum for possible debate, a pluralistic tradition does not seek to finalize that debate or even insist that people partake in it. Pluralism asks that we maintain tolerance in spite of such disagreements and debates. It means that we should accept religious differences as a fact of life, like other natural variations, even if all such variations are not entirely wholesome. Pluralism not only does not require that we make all religions the same, it doesn't even require that we like all religions. It allows us to have our own judgments, however narrow or wide these maybe, as long as we allow others the same freedom of opinion. Nor does pluralism try to reduce one religion to another. It doesn't say that Buddhism has to become a form of Hinduism regardless of what Buddhists might think, that Christianity and Judaism must reunite, that all religions have to become sects of some greater religion, or similar attempts to equate or unite different religions. Nor does it say it is wrong for people to have such ideas. Pluralism allows different religious views to exist including those which are synthetic and those which are not. It allows religions to come together if they wish but to stay apart if that is their inclination as well. It recognizes that differences in religion can contribute to the beautiful diversity of life and don't have to be a problem.

Pluralism therefore does not mean that a person cannot be strong in their particular path. Pluralism does not mean that a Hindu cannot be a staunch Hindu but has to be a Christian and Muslim as well in order to be tolerant. Similarly it does not mean that a Christian cannot be dedicated to his faith as the highest. It means that however much we may think our path is the best for us that we must allow other people a similar dedication to their own path, even if it is contrary to ours, including the freedom not to follow any path at all.
Pluralism means that we must make the freedom of religious practice a more important principle than the supremacy of any particular belief. We should not only respect but uphold our neighbor's right to follow another religion, even if we think that it is contrary to the real truth. This means that missionary efforts to convert others by persuasion and intimidation should come to an end and be replaced by a free examination of religious issues with honesty, courtesy and friendliness.

To arrive at truth in any field we need freedom. Freedom creates diversity. Both freedom and diversity allow for creative growth and inquiry. In this development truth can be arrived at as an individual experience, rather than imposed upon the resistant individual as a collective belief which makes it little more than a blind emotion. Human beings naturally have their different temperaments, inclinations and states of development. We should have learned after so much bloodshed throughout history that to try to impose one way of thought on all people is an error. It is not only not spiritual, it goes against nature and life which are filled with every sort of variation. Should we insist that the wind only blow in one way or that plants only grow on one type of soil?

Of course groups that deny freedom and diversity to sustain their power and control may not be

happy with demands for pluralism. They may prefer to have their own territory where no competition is allowed. But their period of rule is coming to an end. Even singularistic religious traditions will soon have to recognize the validity of pluralism, including granting a new respect for the very pluralistic and so-called polytheistic traditions, like Hinduism, that out of intolerance they have not only failed to understand but have oppressed.

In Hinduism the ultimate goal of life is freedom or liberation, Moksha. This is not an outer freedom to get what we want but an inner freedom to go beyond all external limitations. This freedom is the real unity behind the diversity of Hinduism and the key to its many sides. Hindu pluralism therefore is not the denial of unity but the affirmation of real unity which transcends outer differences. True unity is built upon freedom, not conformity, and is a state of the heart or inner consciousness, not an outer condition of labels and slogans. While the West has emphasized external freedom, which has given it a sense of pluralism in the outer aspects of life, Hinduism teaches inner freedom, without which outer freedom has no real meaning. This inner freedom allows for the full flowering of the soul so that our entire human potential, which is ultimately one of spiritual aspiration, can manifest and bring truth and beauty to our entire existence.

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Philosophies of Life of East and West
Edited by Allie M. Frazier
(Source: Readings in Eastern Religious Thought – Hinduism vol. 1. Edited by Allie M. Frazier pg 10-16)

In considering the beginning and development of Western philosophy **G.W. Hegel** remarked, that in the West the **"mind's way is roundabout".**

By this he points to the significant fact that Western thinkers first directed their attention to the **external world.** The most significant development in Western philosophy, is build upon the premise that truth is a relationship which exists between judgements and real things. The problem of the relationships and between thinking and reality thus emerged as a central concern for Western thinkers.

Part of our heritage in the West is the recurring attempts to evade the transcience of earthly life by means of religious hopes, metaphysical systems and vigourous activism.

Time exists by virtue of its "perpetual perishing". Any being subject to time is subject to its dominant characterisitic, transcience.While we may control an indifferent environment by our technological prowress and our scientific genius, we cannot thereby, alter the essence of time.

In the West, man has set himself and his will against the destructive movement of time.

The West has restructed its views, of history to the spans of man's life on earth (often restricting such history of Occidental man).

Moreover, the West has developed and responded to a linear and evolutionary conception of time. (perhaps rooted in and validated by the sciences of geology, history, and paleontology. Each historical moment is presumed to be unique and non-repeatable.

Westerners believe, that the destructive ravages of time can be averted only by careful planning and by preservation of existing modes of stability, such as institutions, religions, political orders.

While the West focuses principally upon human history, in general, the East focuses upon the history of nature or being. The scale of time (in Hindu and Buddhist scriptures) completely staggers the imaginations of the Westerners. Eons follow upon eons in a seemingly endless succession.

In the East, the great aim of religious men is to find that overall cosmic unity that is hidden behind the veil of temporal succession and cosmic change.

According to the Eastern appraisal of the human predicament, the ground of man's bondage to

endless suffering rebirth, and ignorance is his enslavement to the demonic forces of the cosmic illusion.

Men, through ignorance of their real spiritual destinies, are caught in the thralldom of desire and pleasure, and as a consequence suffer pain, death and rebirth.

Man seeks the death of temporality and rebirth in a mode of absolute freedom is symbolized in the concepts of Nirvana, Kevola, moksha, Tao – the shore completely beyond the chains of illusion.

The paths taken to reach such unconditional liberation, whether in Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism or Jainism, lead the soul progressively away from involvement in its personal individuality, its world and their incessant becoming.

The aim of most Eastern religious discipline is not simply to comprehend the plight of man's bondage to illusion, but also to overcome that enslavement by the nullification of the factors which cause the bondage example, Desire, pleasure, pain, birth and death.

The contrast between the Christian appraisal of the human predicament and the typical Oriental appraisal of man's situation is quite instructive.

The Christian views man's fallen condition as a form of bondage to the destructive consequence of sin – such as anxiety, guilt, pride, self-centredness. While this is deplorable condition in which to exist, it is nevertheless a real condition.

For Eastern religions, man's enslavement to the world – to individuality, desire, pleasure, pain, rebirth – is not a real condition at all.

Hence, most religious persons in the East do not seek a relationship with external being, (God), but rather they seek a realization of an eternal mode of being which is hidden from them by their ignorance.

Western religious thought is produced by the convergence of two traditions – The Greeks and the Christian. Its key concepts are revelation, relationship and community. In the East, (India) the key concepts of religious thoughts are recognition, realization, release and reunion.

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Human Evolution and The Ten Avatars

By NARAYANI GANESH

http://www.timesofindia.com/today/19edit5.htm

WE differ from each other by just a fraction of a per cent, according to the scientists who have successfully deconstructed the human genome. The basic chemistry is almost the same among different species. For instance, what sets us apart from mice is only a few hundred genes. No wonder, then, that Hindu mythology is replete with stories of what seem like `freaks' of nature - mutations and semi-mutations as reflected in exotic creatures. Even the story of evolution as enumerated in the Vedas and other scriptures is startlingly in tune with modern scientific theories.

Biologists describe evolution itself as the continuous adaptation of organisms or species to the environment by the integrating agencies of selection, hybridisation, inbreeding and mutation. All life began in the water and only after millions of years did some forms adapt to land. Let's take a look at the ten avatars of Vishnu. His abode is in the mythical ocean of milk, an oblique reference to the cosmos; he reclines on the coils of the Adisesha. the five-headed primeval serpent, each of its heads symbolising each of the five elements, the *panchabhootha* - Earth, water, energy, air and sky.

In his Matsya or fish avatar, the first, Vishnu saves the world from the deluge. His rescue of the *saptarishis*, the seven saints, ensured the survival and propagation of the species. As Kurma or the divine tortoise, an amphibian in the second avatar, Vishnu lent his back to be used as the pivot on which the gods and the asuras placed the rod with which they churned the ocean to recover some of the precious things lost in the deluge.

The third incarnation was that of Varaha or the wild boar, an unrefined land animal that rescued the earth from the waters after it had been dragged down by the demon Hiranyaksa. The fourth is an interesting mutation: Half-animal (lion), half-man, the Narasimha avatar. He freed the world from the oppression of Hiranyakasipu, the demon-father of Prahlada.

As Vamana, the dwarf-like man, Vishnu in his fifth incarnation restored the power of the gods which had been undermined by the penance and devotion of King Bali. As Parasurama in his sixth avatar, he delivered humankind from the oppression of the kshatriya rulers - Parasurama did that 21 times with the help of his axe, a basic tool - in a crude version of Rama.

As Sri Rama, the *maryada purusha* or ideal human, evolution reached a point of refinement, both biological and civilisational. Here too, Rama as Vishnu's seventh incarnation yet again destroys a wicked force personified by Ravana.

But it is as Krishna, the eighth avatar, that Vishnu steals hearts and minds. That's why it is referred to as the perfect avatar. The Lord becomes the eternal lover when he cavorts with the gopis in Vrindavan; but he also becomes the serious and eternal philosopher and guide when he advises Arjuna on the battlefield at Kurukshetra. This is immortalised as the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Song of God, a do-it-yourself manual on how to attain self-knowledge and realisation. Although Krishna is the `author' of the Gita, he is at once both its substance and its goal.

In his incarnation as Krishna, the Lord reveals the universe that is within each one of us. Little Krishna's mother Yashoda asks him to open his mouth to check if he's eaten mud as his companions complain he has. When Krishna opens his mouth wide, what she sees takes Yashoda aback: She sees the entire cosmos there - not just the earth but other

worlds as well. She could also see another face and mouth with all the worlds therein too, and still another within it, and so on without end, revealing the infinite nature of all existence.

Buddha has been included as the ninth avatar, an enlightened being who realised this truth and who advocated non-violence and equality. Meanwhile, we await the final and tenth avatar, that of Kalki on a white steed, who will help us re-establish virtue in the Kali Yuga.

We are all part of the universe, each one of us. We are constantly seeking out our origins, both in outer space and inside our own bodies, as we have done in the human genome project. What the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures and Krishna's revelation of the cosmos tell us is that the universe is, in fact, within our grasp - right within us, as the eternal `I'. We just have to realise it.

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KONARAK: In all its resplendence sun

By Hugh and Colleen Ganter

http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/09/26/stories/1326049l.htm



NO one is quite sure how old Konarak is, who founded it or why. But there are tales. Even in Bhubaneshwar, 65 km away, and in Puri, 35 km down the Marine Drive, history has turned into legend, evolved into myths, crystallised into crafts. If you should choose to take the road from Bhubaneshwar, pause briefly at the dazzling roadside hamlet of Pipli. Its craftsmen once specialised in making bright applique backdrops for the great idols of the temple of Puri: Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. Today, these sacred skills have been adapted to creating vivid bags, cushion covers, bedspreads, tablecloths and brilliant garden umbrellas.

After all that resplendence, Konarak might come as a bit of a disappointment, at first. The town, which was a major port in the First Century A.D., is insignificant today. Its famed temple sits low in a walled depression, snugly cosseted in folklore.

According to the ancient Bhavishya Purana, Samba, the handsome son of Lord Krishna, once made the mistake of slighting the mischievous sage Narada. In revenge, Narada tricked Samba into visiting a forbidden place where the ladies of the court were bathing. When Lord Krishna learnt of this, he cursed his son and the young prince was immediately stricken by a disfiguring skin disease. Samba pleaded his innocence, and proved it. His repentant father told him to bathe in the Chandrabhanga river . When Samba was cured, he built a temple in honour of Surya, the Sun God.



The Sun God has always been revered as the curer of skin diseases. When the Ganga King, Narasimhadeva I (1238-1264 A.D.) built his sun temple here, in Orissa, he also relocated the Samba legend in the city of Kon (the corner) Arka (of the sun).

Walk down the steps, set in the slope of the retaining walls, and you will



encounter an architectural drama. The body of the ancient temple is concealed by the rise of a pillared building. In all likelihood, this was the Bhoga Mandip or Festive Hall.

Climb the steps of the Bhoga Mandip, very slowly, and let the temple reveal itself. It is magnificent but, nevertheless, it was only the entrance hall of the great temple. Behind it, soaring for 70 metres into the sky, was the tower protecting the sanctum. Sadly, that collapsed a century ago, leaving only its pillared platform. And to prevent the entrance hall from suffering the same fate, an English architect had it filled with sand which, possibly, was the wisest thing he could have done.



Walk around the remains of the Sun temple, admiring its intricate sculptures. The temple, now identified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, replicates the legendary Chariot of the Sun. Twelve enormous carved wheels appear to support the temple-chariot which is drawn by seven galloping horses. They represent the seven days of the week. The charioteer is the Sun God, himself, though the main idol once enshrined in the sanctum of the temple was removed to Puri after the temple began to crumble: it was built of that easily-eroded stone, khondalite. One reason for the abandoning of the temple could be that it was shunned by the local pundits. Surya was regarded as an alien god brought in from Iran along with his fire-worshipping priests, the Magi. A beautiful carving of Surya, still standing in the temple, shows him wearing knee- high boots, normally associated with equestrians. All other Hindu deities are barefoot.

Primarily, however, this temple was meant to glorify the life and times of a king and his court. The emphasis of the sculptures and carvings, therefore, is on luxury, valour, pomp and sensuousness. Keep this in mind when you walk around the temple. Let your imagination take wing to see and hear the musicians and the sounds of the royal hunt; the amorous whispers of the courtesans leaning languidly against pillars, or perfuming their bodies in the smoke of fragrant fires; hear the soft pad-pad of a lumbering elephant and the tong-tong of the bell around its neck; scent the aromas of rich viands simmering in a cooking pot, Konarak, then, was a burgeoning royal capital.



Even in the 16th Century, when the Mughal chronicler Abul Fazl wrote his Ain-i-Akbari, 28 temples stood here: six outside the entrance and 22 beyond its enclosing walls. Today, the ruins of only a handful remain. The site museum, however, has an impressive collection of sculptures found abandoned when the temples collapsed.

Traditions, though, are not as easily eroded as the stones of temples. Every year, when the moon waxes in the January-February month of Magha, a great fair is held around a small saline pool, three kilometres from the temple. The pool has been renamed the Chandrabhanga. Pilgrims bathe before dawn and wait for the red orb of the sun to rise out of the sea. Then they walk to the temple for their rich rituals of worship.

For a brief moment, then, life returns to Orissa's ancient temple of the Corner of the Sun.

KONARK – SUN TEMPLE
http://travel.indiamart.com/seasonal/history-beckons/konark.html



When Sun raises itself over Bay of Bengal, it's first rays fall on a temple dedicated him-- Sun God. This temple is located along shoreline of Bay of Bengal. It is called Konark temple. Invariably this temple stands as a symbol of Orissa. The sun temple was built in 13th century. The architecture and sculpture of Konark temple spell out poetry in stone. This monument form the golden era of Orissan art is included in the world heritage list.

Konark temple was designed in shape of a huge Chariot. This was the chariot of Sun. According to Hindu mythology, Sun God commands a chariot pulled by seven horses while it transverses from East to West in during daytime. The artists involved in carving out this temple had this story in mind and they were successful in creating the desired structure. Today many sculptures are in bad shape and archaeological survey of India has done a lot to restore many of them. But still it becomes clear that this marvelous piece of architecture was in shape of a mammoth chariot with 24 wheels pulled by seven horses and commanded by Sun God. The wheels of chariot depict time, which accompanies sun while he travels in sky. Some say that 24 wheel are 24 hours of a day and the seven horses represent seven days of the week.

The whole temple has intricate and delicate carvings, which enthralls any visitor to this temple. The surrounding was also chosen to suit the grace and glory of structure. Lush green forest and a clean atmosphere with sea roaring not far from this place has a charm of its own. The sea is just two kms away from Konark but when temple was built the waves touched the foot of temple and worshipped the deity inside.

The walls of Black Pagoda, as European sailors called it, have murals depicting different aspects of life. The sculptors who carved out these motifs on the temple have done their work with incomparable charm. These depictions are an attraction for not only the connoisseurs of art but they fascinate common man too. Scenes of love war trade court transactions, hunting, catching of elephants, sages teaching, childbirth, amorous dalliances, dancers and mythical figures all show vivid moods and colors of life. Incomparable charm of these figures bring alive a picture of day to day activities in those days.

The temple is built on a 4-meter high platform. The main spire of the temple was 220 feet high but it collapsed and Jagmohana or the porch is filled with stones to prevent it from collapsing. It is 120 meter high. The morning, noon and evening sun are caught by three chlorite figures of Surya. Each of these figures faces three different directions. The main entrance of has two huge statues of lions crushing elephants. The dancing hall, which lies between main structure of the temple and the enter ance, has very intricately carved depictions. In fact the walls, ceilings, the base; every thing is filled with delicate carvings. This temple also has erotic carvings as done on the walls of Khajuraho temples. These carvings were probably done to show that from worldly pleasure one could attain salvation by coming to god. Or these carvings also show how peace can be obtained

by renouncing the false pleasures. How could the artists forget planets when they were constructing temple for sun God? So they built a temple dedicated to the nine planets. This temple is located to the right of main entrance.



Konark is very near to Bhubaneshwar and Puri. From The state capital Bhubaneshwar it is just 65 Kms and Puri is just 35 kms from Konark. These two places also serve as transit points to Konark. Bhubaneshwar and Puri provide nearest railway links to Konark. The Bhubaneshwar airport is the nearest airstrip. Also these places reduce the accommodation problem in case of a major tourist inflow to the town of Sun temple.

Every year in November these temples come alive with classical dance performances by artists from all over India. Konark temples are venue for the Konark dance festivals. During this festival people from all over the world come here. They enjoy the classical dance performances by renowned dancers with Sun temple providing the back ground. This festival of dance is a major tourist attraction for the place.

Otherwise also when the sun goes down the horizon floodlights illuminate the Konark temple. The artificial lights enhance the beauty that engulfs the visitor during daytime. These lights reflect sun temple as mammoth structure as if there is no equivalent to it. And yes beauty and architecture of Black Pagoda in Konark is incomparable at least in this part of the world. It has created an image of its own on the world tourist map. The memories of Konark shall be etched in visitors' mind even years after his visit.

Konark Dance Festival:



Dance was always an integral part of worship in Orissa. This is distinctly manifested as the presence of dancing halls is in practically all of Orissa's temples. Odissi, the traditional classical dance of Orissa owes its revitalisation to the discovery of the ancient treatise on dance, the 'Abhinaya Chandrika' and the study of ancient sculptures on the walls of temples by dedicated artistes. Thus, it is only fitting that the Konark Dance Festival, a mega celebration of classical dance forms in India, is held every year at one of India's most splendiferous venues, for an evening of dance, is the Amphitheater located at the backdrop of the fabulous Sun Temple at Konark.

SILENT HISTORICAL PAST IN STATUES OF KONARK TEMPLE, ORISSA, INDIA

The pleasure that we experience after reading the great literary text of great authors gives the same feeling that can be experienced after looking the world famous Konark temple at Konark (Orissa state), India. Konark is famous for its majestic

temple of the Sun God. The word KONARK bears a name composed of two word elements - KONA means Corner and ARK meaning the Sun.

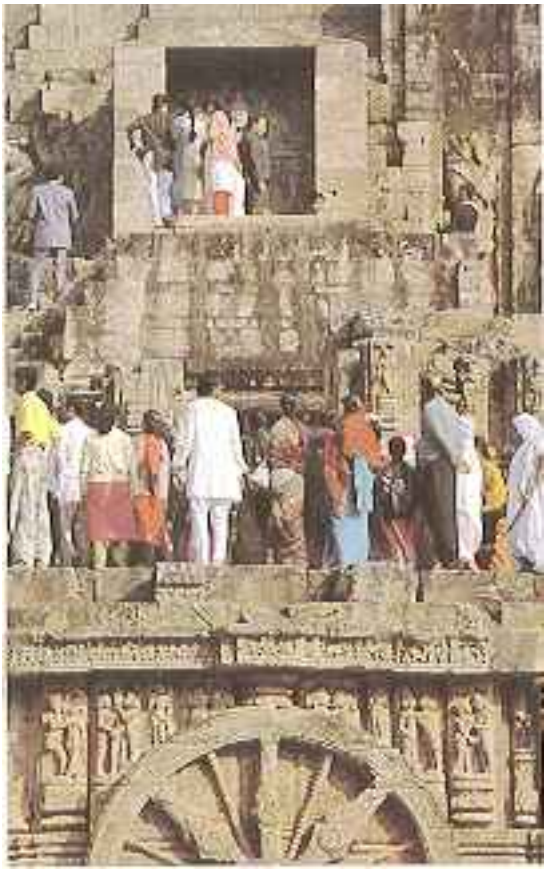
In this sun temple of Konark it appears like as if the architecture and his sculptors has written beautiful poems on stones in the smallest to smallest stone of the temple. Still the present silent ruins speak of their rich glorious past which we are all proud of.


A chariot wheel of the sun-god, Surya, from the temple at Konarak in Orissa

Due to various human interventions and natural calamities with the passage of time, the main temple had suffered destruction turning into a ruin. Still whatever is left illustrates the fine architectural skill of the rich historic past.

The Sun temple of the Konark was made by King Narshimha Dev-I of Ganga dynasty in 1250 AD. The entire temple of Konark was conceived as a single piece of sculpture. It is said that in its construction process about 12,00 sculptors worked for 12 years. In this context it is also said that its highly skilled master architecture and sculptor Bishu Maharana when left his home for 12 years when his son Dharampara was too young. When his son grew up and became a master in architectural mathematics, he came to meet his father at the site of construction. But there occurred an error in one of the element of construction without which it was not possible to build the crown of the temple. His son pointed out the error and gave solutions using his skills thereby letting the work go ahead. Legend says that at one instance his son Dharampara became happy for his success but at same time he felt guilty using his success behind the failure of his own father. This hurted his sentiments so much that he committed suicide after climbing the temple and jumping into the river Chandrabhaga flowing in backyard of the temple in those times.

Architect Bisu had thought of design as an enormous replica of the Sun-God's cosmic chariot. Konark temple has three marvellous illustrations - Rising Sun, Sun at its peak in afternoon, and the all days tired Sun. Expressions of love and fights, victory and defeat, hunting and trading, soldiers on elephant top, dancer beating drum and many day to day human activities of those times, which those sculptors had inscripted on stones.



When this temple was in its construction phase, it was the "Golden Period" for the architectural splendors in Orissa. Today this temple complex is in ruins and all efforts are made for its restoration. It also figures its place in the World Heritage List of Monuments. Still when one looks at this architectural marvel one becomes speechless on looking and feeling the hidden marvellous skills of sculptors of that period.
These silent statues of the ancient Indian civilization in Orissa, without saying the words speak for everything. And for feeling and seeing these silent statues thousand of people visit there every year.

The happiness after the victory chiselled in stones and the horses made of stone is in reality the unrivalled architectural marvel. The chariot of Sun comprising of 24 wheels and 7 horses turns the eye into fantasy as if the chariot of Sun God will go on a voyage in the sky. It is also said that the main temple, which is in ruins by the virtue of passage of time, was also the highest temple in India in those times rising to some 225 feet in height. Unfortunately the architect's dreams were never realised and it collapsed before it could be completed. However present day's temple height rises to a height of 128 feet.

In each and every statue of the Konark there lies some hidden meaning. The chariot of 24 wheels and 7 horses symbolises 24 months of the Indian calendar and 7 days of the week. Each of the 24 wheels had 8 spokes which resembles the time period in 8 parts (paher in Hindi) of the day. However the real experience and charm of those unsung skilled sculptors can only be experienced in person and not by photographs alone. However the Sun temple is towards its own sunset and all kinds of efforts are made to save it from extinction. This temple was constructed on the soft soil which is also a factor towards its early description. If the Konark temple was looked well after its construction, it would have surely been featured as another wonder like the Taj Mahal at Agra (Uttar Pradesh state).



However there are no two opinions that in Konark, 1200 sculptors' tireless labour is capable of filling with experience which elates one with happiness and joy. Anyone visiting there is filled with a magical sense of awe and wonder to experience the artistic and architectural genius and abilities those 1200 sculptors and craftsmen. Konark temple is not just a symbol of Orissa state but the entire Indian sub-continent.
I feel how poorer I would have been, had I missed the opportunity to see this majestic temple situated at a distance of 64 kilometers from Bhubneshwar, the capital city of Orissa.

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articles on hinduism

When you become the Brahman
By Harish C Gaur
http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon3.asp?cat=\opd2&d=OPED

Scriptures mention four objectives of human pursuit; dharma, astha, kama and moksa, to be taken up in the given order. Dharma is the cultivation and practice of the code of moral conduct consistent with and as ordained by scriptures in first phase of life (as celibate pupil in the house of the preceptor or (in a gurukul).

These would include understanding and cultivation of divine traits as fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and yoga, (giving of) charity, control of desires, and senses, study of scriptures, (observance of) austerity, up-righteousness, (practice of) ahimsa, (speaking) the truth, compassion to all beings, modesty, forgiveness, fortitude and purity (of body and thoughts). One should also learn to avoid non-divine traits as ostentation, arrogance, self-conceit, anger, pride and excessive attachment to worldly possessions.

Several paths of treading on the path of spirituality have been elaborated. These include; path of (disinterested) action (karma yoga), path of devotion (bhakti yoga), path of meditation (dhyana yoga) and the path of knowledge (jnana yoga).

Among Hindus, Vedas are considered as source of the ultimate truth. They are 4 in number Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda. Each of these has 4 parts; the hymns (mantras in poetic metre), brahmanas (documents of ritualistic precepts for guidance of priests and the way of conducting sacrificial duties by householders); aranyakas are for meditation and contemplation by those who have retired to forests and upanisads deal with philosophical aspects tending to spiritual monism and knowledge about the self (atman, as distinct from the body) and its relationship with the supreme reality (paramatma, referred to as brahman in upanisads). There are 4 gospels in the form of 4 sacred verses (mahavakya) in respect of the ultimate truth one from (upanisad part of) each veda.

The starting point for first gospel is the understanding that self (atman) is not the body (sharir). About the self, it was said by Lord Krisna in Bhagavad Gita; it is unmanifested, unborn, immutable, indestructible, without parts, while the body is born (when it manifests itself) undergoes modifications as childhood, youth, old age suffers misery and ultimately meet death and becomes unmanifested in due course. The self is not the body but provides to it the consciousness and enables its functioning and various activities that sustain the body. When the self deserts, body rapidly deteriorates and has to be cremated or buried as per norm of the society.

The first gospel is; the self (confined within the body) is the supreme self (brahman) (ayam atma

brahma) from Atharva veda. This is often explained by the simile of air confined within balloons of different sizes and shapes in which it stays until punctured, when it again becomes part of the cosmic air from which it was withdrawn. In the same way self within different bodies of different living beings, is the supreme self.

This step, the realisation of the real nature of the self vis-a-vis the body also provides the consciousness that sustains the body. At some time the self discards the body, like a person discarding worn out clothes to put on new ones. The consciousness is due to self within. This is the second gospel, "The consciousness is (due to) brahman (prajnanam brahma) from Rigveda.

The next step is the realisation when the preceptor tells the disciple, "You are that (brahma) (tat-tvam asi). This is not easy. One has to realise that his real self is not the body or any of the modifications (gross, subtle or causal) nor (any of the modifications of) prana that support all activities of the body nor the organs of perception and antahkarna. Slowly he is led to the understanding, "You are that (brahman) which you are seeking", is from Samaveda.

The final step is the realisation by this aspirant, "I am brahman" (aham brahmasmi) from Yajurveda". This is the feeling of the immortal self, being unattached to all activities. This elevates the mind to magnanimous heights as: brahman alone is truth (brahma satyam) and the samsara is unreal (jagat mithya), like in a dream. This is all that one has to learn or what needs to be known. It is said, knowing brahman one becomes brahman, with this realisation one gets freed from all miseries, attains eternal happiness and is freed from the birth-death cycle of the samsara.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Harvest of faith?
By Francois Gautier
http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon3.asp?cat=\opd1&d=OPED

This column is specially addressed to my Christian brothers and sisters of India. At a time when again a Western missionary ministering in India (Father Marian Zelazek who works among leprosy patients in Orissa) has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and when Mother Teresa's beatification - and later the canonisation - is being speeded-up by the Vatican, it is time to look into the real motives of Christian missionaries working in India.

We all know that Mother Teresa incarnated in the 20th century true Christian charity, helping "the poorest of the poor", and that she lived a life of nun, with rectitude and service, as Jesus Christ would have liked her to. It also should be said that Mother Teresa did the work that wealthy Hindus and Hindu organisations should have done. After all, there is no denying that it takes a Westerner to pick up the dying in the streets of Calcutta and raise abandoned orphans, a thankless task if there is one. Hindus, even though their religion has taught them compassion for 4,000 years, have become very callous towards their less fortunate brethren and there are not enough Hindu organisations, apart from the Art of Living, the Vivekananda and Ramakrishna missions, or the RSS, doing charitable work as the Christians do. This is despite the fact that there is growing awareness amongst Hindu organisations that it is time to get their act together, that they ought to be doing more for the dispossessed and the poor of the land than they have so far.

Unfortunately - and in spite of herself maybe - Mother Teresa carried a very negative image of India: That of poverty beyond humanity, of a society which abandons its children, of dying without dignity. Alright, it is accepted there is some truth in it. But then it may be asked again: Did Mother Teresa ever attempt to counterbalance this negative image of India, of which she was the vector, with a more positive one? After all, she had lived here for so long that she knew the country as well as any Indian, having even adopted Indian nationality. Surely she could have defended her own country? She could, for example, have spoken about India's infinite spirituality, her exquisite culture, the gentleness of its people, the brilliance of its children...

Regrettably, Mother Teresa said nothing of the sort. Does this mean that she stood for the most orthodox Christian conservatism? Was it, as some of her detractors said, that her ultimate goal was to convert India to Christianity, the only true religion in her eyes? I cannot believe it, although it is true that she never once said a good word about Hinduism, which after all is the religion of 700 millions people of the country she said she loved, and has been their religion for 5,000 years - long before Christianity appeared. Did Mother Teresa consider, as all good Christians do - particularly the conservatives ones - that Hinduism is a pagan religion which adores a multitude of heathen gods and should be eliminated?

The hardline Hindus argue that there has been no change in Christian or Protestant designs on India since they arrived with the Portuguese and the British, and that Mother Teresa was much more clever than Lord Hastings: She knew that on the eve of the 21st century, it would have looked very bad if she had openly stated her true opinions about Hinduism; so she kept quiet. It seems a bit farfetched but, ultimately, is not her charitable work - whatever its dedication - an indirect method to convert people? For without any doubt, most of the people she saved from the streets did ultimately become Christians. And if you ask those "elite" Indians who knew her well, such as photographer Raghu Rai, a great

admirer of her, she always said: "It is now time for you to embrace the true religion." (Raghu Rai politely declined.)

India today is an emerging super power and Indian Christians, while worshipping the memory of Mother Teresa, should try - by talking around themselves, writing articles and books - to propagate a more positive image of their country. Why does India's intelligentsia, most of whom are born Hindus, also defend her? These are intelligent, educated people; they must surely have some inkling of Mother Teresa's negative impact? Does Vir Sanghvi or for that matter Naveen Chawla, Mother Teresa's ever admiring biographer, understand what she really stood for? That she may have been someone basically hostile to their culture, their religion, their way of life?

Also, do they know that Hindu society has always been the target of Christians since their coming here? Do they understand that they and a thousand of their peers, who belong to the intellectual elite of India and keep praising Mother Teresa (or Father Zelazek), are doing harm to their country and opening it to its enemies? The Christian influence is very strong in India today: It shapes the minds of its young people in a subtle way through its schools, which many of the children of the affluent attend. It moulds the thinking of the tribes it has converted, particularly in the North-East where the missionaries have always covertly encouraged separatism (see the remarkable book Indigenous Indians by the Dutch Scholar, Koenrad Elst).

It is also sad to see the majority of Hindus are unaware of the very negative image of their country and religion which Mother Teresa's name is carrying. It is even more unfortunate to see that Hindus vote for her as the most popular Indian (as reported by a weekly magazine that recently conducted an opinion poll). Was Mother Teresa really Indian? Did she really love India as an Indian? While we must respect her memory, it is necessary that Mother Teresa's sainthood or Father Zelatek's potential Nobel prize be seen in their proper perspective by both Hindus and Indian Christians: By making her a saint, or giving Father Zelatek a Nobel, the Vatican and the West are still perpetuating a kind of condescending, neo-colonial attitude: "We, the Westerners, bring to you, the heathens, the civilisation and the true God."

Ultimately, when she becomes a saint, Mother Teresa's spirit will continue to haunt India because she will be worshiped by millions of Westerners for the very negative qualities and aspects that India is trying to emerge out of: Poverty, human despair and lack of self respect.

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Hinduism is India

By Francois Gautier

pyare desh vasiyon
garv se kaho hindi-chini bhai bhai
garv se kaho Stalin zindabad
garv se kaho hum UN ke chele hain

Since the Gujarat riots, it looks as if a battle between two radically different Indias is happening right now, under our own eyes; and the outcome of this battle will decide what kind of India we will have in the 21st century. India's human rights groups, many of India's finest intellectuals, the communists, the Congress, many politicians - in fact a major chunk of India's elite population - assert in the strongest terms that on one side you find an India which is communal, mistreats, or even kills minorities;

tries to impose its majority feelings and way of life on the others and is generally attempting to create a Hindu state; on the other, they continue, you have the secular and democratic forces of this country, the journalists, activists, catholic priests, Muslim liberals, who truly believe that circumstances have come to such a boil after the Ayodhya episode and the Gujarat massacre, that India has to be saved from Hindu fundamentalists for its own good.

This is on the surface, because history shows us that what appears as truthful, is often false and misleading and what popular opinion holds as false is time and again the truth, which is attacked by dark forces by decrying it, denying it, or belittling it. Thus, if you examine closely the theory of the good secular Muslim/ Christian/Marxist, versus the bad/dangerous/ fundamentalist Hindu, you are bound to come-up against several deep contradictions. First, historically, Hindus have been the least fundamentalist people in the world: Never trying to impose their creed upon others by the power of the sword, like Christianity or Islam, or even by the non-violent means of preaching, like Buddhism. Hinduism has also proved over the ages its infinite tolerance towards other religions, giving refuge to all persecuted minorities in the world, whether Parsis, Syrian Christians, Jews, or Tibetans today.

Second, Hindus have been particularly targeted in the last 15 centuries: Louis Frederick, one of France's most respected, balanced and respected historian, called the Muslim invasions of India "cataclysmic". Indeed, these invasions have left a deep scar of fear in the Hindu psyche and most of India's modern problems - Ayodhya, Kashmir, or the dangerous enmity with Pakistan - are a left-over from these murderous assaults on Hinduism.

Moreover, Hindus in India are not only an object of mistrust and contempt from many, but they

are also chased from their own ancestral lands. There were one million of them in Kashmir in 1900, and 300,000 in 1947 - but only a few hundred today. Hindus have become refugees in their own land. In Assam, Tripura, or Nagaland, Hindus are being outnumbered by Bangladeshi illegal immigrants and terrorised by pro-Christian separatist groups, such as the Bodos or the Mizos, while local governments often turn a blind eye. Hindus are killed and raped in Bangladesh, were persecuted under the Taliban and are treated as second class in Pakistan.

It is true that the secular voices in India are often sincere, talented people who really want to preserve their country against the forces of communalism. One cannot fault a Shabana Azmi, an Arundhati Roy, a Medha Patkar, or eminent journalists like Dilip Padgaonkar with frivolity. These are people who are already famous or rich enough not to have to hog the limelight. They believe that they are putting their fame, or their pen, at the service of true secularism. But then, they have to ask themselves the

question how it is that they have the freedom to criticize and to write whatever they please. In China, a country which many of them admire, they would already be in jail or thrown out of the country; in Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, they might even get killed. It is time that India's intellectual elite realised how much they owe to Hinduism, both in terms of the ethos of tolerance in this country, its immense culture, and its spirituality.

It is also true that one has witnessed in the past few months a sudden hardening of the secular forces against Hinduism. Not only in India, but abroad; not only with Indian journalists, but also amongst the Western correspondents. In France, for example, all the major newspapers have carried again and again particularly nasty stories against Hindus. Recently, one of the leading French newspapers asked General Musharraf this pointed

question: "Why does the world protest against the killings of the

Palestinians by the Israelis, but stays silent when thousands of Muslims are killed in India?" And this gave Musharraf his golden cue: "It is not only Muslims who are targeted in India he answered, but also Sikhs and Christians...India pretends to be the biggest democracy in the world, but it is only a bluff..."

Why this sudden hardening against what the secular forces like to call "Hindu fundamentalism"? Throughout their history, Hindus have had numerous enemies: Arabs, British, Portuguese, and today Marxists, Muslims and Christians seem to have united against the common enemy. All of them, today and yesterday, felt that Hinduism was the only stumbling block to a wholly Islamised India, or a wholly Christianised India, or a wholly Marxist India.

And indeed they were right: It is because of Hinduism that for seven centuries India endured bloody after bloody invasions and still remained Hindu in its majority; it is because of Hinduism that India was never fully Christianised, as so many countries colonised by the British, the Portuguese or the French were; it is because of Hindus that Marx could never get a real foothold throughout India: It is because of Hindus that westernisation, the civilisation of Coca Cola, MTV and MacDonald, is having a tougher time in India than it has had elsewhere in Asia or the developing world.

And, ultimately, India has to decide: Does it want to lose its soul at the hands of the secularists and become a country like dozens of others in the developing world: Westernised, globalised,

christianised, standardised? Or does it want to remain unique, special, different, with a remarkable culture which has survived centuries of invasions and colonisation? It is thanks to this uniqueness that a Hindu is different from anybody in the world, or even that an Indian Muslim is different from a Saudi Muslim, or an Indian Christian different from a European Christian. Yes, there is truly a battle between two Indias at the moment; but it is not the secular versus the communal, or the good Muslim versus the fanatical Hindu. It is a battle between a spiritualised India and de-spiritualised, devitalised, dehumanised India.

The truth is: If India loses its dharma at the hands of India's enemies, there will disappear the only real spirituality left in the world. Once upon a time, true spirituality, which is the antithesis of religion, roamed the wide world: From Egypt to Mesopotamia, from China, to Greece. But today, the world is peopled by intolerant religions that still decree that their God is the only true one. Christianity is willing to put up millions of dollars of "charity " money to convert thousands of innocent tribals in the North-East of India, thereby cutting them from their roots and culture; Islam has men and women, who in good faith (look at the beautiful and innocent faces of some of the Palestinian women suicide bombers) are willing to kill and get killed to impose Allah's ways on an erring world. If we continue in this manner, we are going towards self-destruction, pralaya. I can only finish by quoting what the Mother of Pondicherry once said: "India must be saved for the good of the world, since India alone can lead the world to peace and a new world order

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Why the cynicism about Indian gurus?

Francois Gautier

http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/mar/12franc.htm

Westerners have often a deep suspicion of 'gurus' and are wary of anything which has a 'Hindu' flavor. It is true that some of the gurus teaching in the West might have brought a bad name to Hinduism; but is this a reason to clamp them all together under the same 'fake' label?

Indian journalists unfortunately share often the same resistance to gurus as their Western counterparts. And one can also understand their misgivings, given the problems there has been in India with certain gurus having political connections. But these are the exception to the rule. Why then brand all gurus as 'godmen,' a negative and slightly cynical term, as many Indian journalists do? Or why always ask gurus the same pointed and devious questions about their opinions on Ayodhya and 'Hindutva?'

Isn't it also strange that Indian journalists do not display the same aggressiveness towards Christian bishops or priests, whom they never call godmen, but 'holy father?' They also like to question the 'miraculous' powers of Indian gurus, as it was done a few months ago in an issue of *India Today* targeting Sai Baba. But is it less rational or Cartesian to think, as the Christians do, that Jesus Christ multiplied breads, or resurrected the dead?

Running down Hindu culture and Hindu gurus is fine -- but a huge majority of the Indian population -- which, let us remember, is 85 per cent Hindu -- sees nothing wrong in this culture: ordinary Indians meditate, do *pujas*, perform *asanas*, chant *bhajans*, or practice *pranayama*. There is no sectarism here, no fake mysticism, no pagan obscure rites. **The irony is that this very spirituality on which Indian intellectuals tend to look down, is taking root in the West:** more and more sportsmen, for instance, are using *pranayama* to enhance their performances; ordinary Americans are meditating by the millions (see this week's *Time* magazine showing American children learning meditation); *hata-yoga* has long taken Europe by storm and has been copied by all kinds of gymnastics or aerobics…

Does India need the West to realise what an inconceivable spiritual inheritance it has in its hands? A knowledge which once roamed the shores of the world, from Mesopotamia to Egypt, from Greece to Babylon, but which today has disappeared in a world peopled by intolerant churches? Do Indian schools have to wait for the United States, before they start teaching Indian children their own culture?

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, for example, the founder of the Art of Living has also been catalogued as a 'godman' by *The Deccan Herald.* Yet, he too is helping to spread both in India and abroad this

wonderful spiritual inheritance, promoting as much the revival of Sanskrit and Vedic knowledge, as an ecological concern for plastic disposal, or trying to save the centenary trees which are in danger of being chopped down on the Bangalore-Kanakapura road, as it is being widened.

His numerous associations prove that he is not only a "guru of the rich," as he has been accused by *The Indian Express:* his village schools, for instance, do so well, that children have a 95 per cent rate of success in exams; his youth training programs bring to India's remotest hamlets in Karnataka or even in Naxalite infested Bihar, Housing, Hygiene, and Human values. His volunteers work with their own hands in villages to clear the garbage, clean the sewage infested roads and generally renovate the place. Finally, the medically-tested Sudarshan Krya technique is today taught in Tihar jail, or in corporate offices in California.

The Kumbh Mela has just concluded. It was an extraordinary event: probably the biggest spiritual gathering in the history of the human race. At a time where the West has lost its spiritual moorings and when, even Eastern countries such as China or Japan are submerged by Western culture -- MTV, Coca-Cola and McDonald's -- India has shown that in spite of tremendous odds, she has succeeded in keeping her spirituality alive. But once again during the Kumbh Mela, the Indian media coverage showed the same Western slant against gurus, saints and sadhus.

Instead of highlighting the remarkable degree of cleanliness, orderliness and efficiency demonstrated by the organizers, the UP Government and the police, it chose to focus on naga sadhus smoking *ganja*, or the VHP "hijacking the mela," or on Western "hippies" in search of enlightenment.

Indian journalists could have shown a little more pride in their own culture by saying, for instance, that it is miraculous that there are still men in the world who are ready to give-up everything, including their clothes, for the love of God; or that as long as Indian villagers were smoking *ganja*, they did not beat their wives, gobble-up their salaries and drink themselves to death, as they are doing today, now that (foreign owned) alcohol has invaded India; or that any religion worth its name tries to protect its own interests, as the VHP is doing (the VHP is not trying to convert other religions, **yet they are subjected to a much greater bashing by the Indian press than Christian priests or Muslim mullahs); or that it is to India's credit that Westerners come here searching for the spirituality they can't get any more in the West.**

It is part of the freedom of the Press to be able to criticize anything and anybody. And we must acknowledge that Indian journalists have often played a positive role by highlighting injustice or corruption in public life. But the spitefulness that they sometimes display towards the saints, sadhus and gurus of India seems a little bit unfair. For however much poverty there is in this country, however many problems it is facing, India's gift to the world in the 21st century will be its spirituality, this eternal knowledge which alone She has preserved.

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India should wake To the hour of God
By Francois Gautier
http://www.timesofindia.com/today/07edit5.htm

THERE is sadness today in India, after the terrible earthquake, which took so many lives. It is said that when so many people die a violent, sudden death at the same time, their sufferings and cries create sorrow in the atmosphere, which is so palpable that you can feel it thousands of kilometers away. But it is more than that: It was the 26th January, India's Republic day. India had reason to celebrate, as **after so many centuries of degradation, it may be on the verge of a Renaissance, spiritual and physical, of a gradual flowering back of some of the greatness of ancient Bharat, of maturing again into a great civilisation which once more will radiate towards Asia and the world.**

Naipaul called India a wounded civilization, and rightly so. India, the mother of all civilizations, has been wounded so many times already: nobody will ever understand the unspeakable barbarism that foreign invasions did to India; how many times India had been on the edge, on the verge of losing her soul, whether at the hands of colonialism, by the betrayal of her own people, or the stifling influence of modernity. India was caught unawares on this 26th January. Accidents sometimes happen, in the face of which even God may be helpless, as Sri Aurobindo says in Savitri: "An idiot hour destroys what centuries made". Was this earthquake such an an idiot accident, wounding India in her heart at a moment when she was riding high?

As Sri Aurobindo says again, "There are moments in the Hour of God, when the Spirit moves among men and the breath of the Lord is abroad upon the waters of our being; there are others when it retires and men are left to act in the weakness of their own egoism." The first are periods when even a little effort produces great results and changes destiny. Has India come at such a crossroads of her civilisation ? It does indeed look as if everything has been given to her so that she not only survives but also makes the progress necessary to again become a great nation, socially and economically, redeem within herself her ancient spirituality and gift it to the West which today finds itself rootless and lost in a soulless modernity. But to do so, India needs leaders who will have the vision and the courage to take bold decisions; it needs also the assent and the collaboration of all its citizens. Can she do it?

She should, as God has given Her a helping hand: a new leadership perhaps more in tune with her ancient spirituality and imbued with a vision of what India can be; a new millennium, where everything is possible; good conditions with a growing economy and competent people, who are today the best software programmers in the world, a must in the coming Information Age. And overall, it is very rare in the history of humanity that so many sages and avatars be born at the

same time, as they have been born in India in the last two hundred years : from Vivekananda to Sri Aurobindo, from Ananda Mai to Ammachi, from Sai Baba to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

However, the real question today is: Will India be faithful to her dharma? Will India heed the call? Listen again to Sri Aurobindo : "Unhappy is the man, or the nation which, when the divine moment arrives, is found sleeping or unprepared to use it. But thrice woe to them who are strong and ready, yet waste the force or misuse the moment; for them is irreparable loss, or a great destruction". India and Indians have the great opportunity now to collaborate with the Future and with the Force that beckons them. It is possible that India may not fully rise to the occasion, that its leaders are scared to take bold decisions, that its people are not united enough, that India is letting the Ganges be polluted beyond salvation, its forests shrink, and might be losing its soul to globalisation.

This earthquake then is more than a black karma: it is a warning that the time has come for **India to put its act together.** And the sadness can act as a lever for a more powerful realisation. Today, not only the whole of India is grieving for Gujarat, but maybe for the first time since the British left, a feeling of fellowship, which cuts across religions, has awakened amongst Indians here and abroad.

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Sonia Gandhi and the great Aryan myth

By Francois Gautier

http://www.indian-express.com/ie/daily/19990927/iex27012.html

Everything has already been said about why Sonia Gandhi holds such a fascination for India: the fact that she belongs to the Nehru dynasty, or the eternal inferiority complex that a part of the Indian intelligentsia seems to be holding towards the West. This is particularly striking amongst a section of the Indian media (Outlook, Asian Age), which always appears to look at India through a western prism and constantly worry how the foreign press views India, how the foreign countries - particularly the United States of America - perceive India, what the human rights agencies say about India...

But what has never been said is this: the white skin of Sonia may also bewitch Indians because of the theory of the Aryan invasion, which is still taken as the foundation stone of the history of India. According to this theory, which was actually devised in the 18th and 19th centuries by British linguists and archaeologists, the first inhabitants of India were good-natured, peaceful, dark-skinned shepherds, called theDravidians, who had founded what is called the Harappan, or Valley of the Indus civilisation. They were supposedly remarkable builders, witness the city of Mohenjo-Daro in Pakistani Sind, but had no culture to speak of, no literature, no proper script even. Then, around 1500 B.C., India is said to have been invaded by tribes called the Aryans: white-skinned, nomadic people, who originated somewhere in Western Russia and imposed upon the Dravidians the hateful caste system. To the Aryans are attributed Sanskrit, the Vedic, or Hindu, religion, India's greatest spiritual texts, the Vedas, as well as a host of subsequent writings, the Upanishads, the Mahabharata, the Ramanaya, etc.

This was indeed a masterly stroke on the part of the British. Thanks to the Aryan theory, they showed on the one hand that Indian civilisation was not that ancient and that it was posterior to the cultures which influenced the Western world - Mesopotamia, Sumeria, or Babylon - and that whatever good things India had developed -Sanskrit literature, or even its architecture - had been influenced by the West. Thus, Sanskrit, instead of being the mother of all Indo-European languages, became just a branch of their huge family. Thus the religion of Zarathustra is said to have influenced Hinduism, and not vice versa. And on the other hand, it divided India and pitted against each other the low caste dark-skinned Dravidians and the high caste light-skinned Aryans, a rift which is still enduring.

But today, this theory is being challenged by two new discoveries, one archaeological and the other linguistic. Firstly, in the Rig Veda, the Ganges, India's sacred river, is only mentioned once, but the mythic Saraswati is praised fifty times. For a long time, the Saraswati river was indeed considered a myth, until the American satellite Landstat was able to photograph and map the bed of this magnificent river, which was nearly 14 km wide and took its source in the Himalayas. Archaeologist Paul-Henri Francfort, who studied the Saraswati regionat the beginning of the Nineties, found out that the Saraswati had "disappeared", because around 2200 B.C., an immense drought reduced the whole region to aridity and famine. "Thus", he writes, "most inhabitants moved away from the Saraswati to settle on the banks of the Indus and Sutlej rivers". According to official history, the Vedas were composed around 1500 BC, some even say 1200 BC. Yet, the Rig Veda describes India as it was before the great drought which dried up the Saraswati, which means in effect that the so-called Indus, or Harappan civilisation, was a continuation of the Vedic epoch, which ended approximately when the Saraswati dried up.

Recently, the famous Indus seals discovered on the site of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa have been deciphered by Dr N. Rajaram, a mathematician who worked at one time for the NASA and Dr Jha, a distinguished linguist. In the biased light of the Aryan invasion theory, these seals were presumed to be written in a crude Harappan (read Dravidian) script, although theyhad never been convincingly deciphered. But Rajaram and Jha, using an ancient Vedic glossary, the Nighantu, were able to prove that the script is of Sanskrit lineage and have so far deciphered 2000 seals. As the discovery of the Saraswati river, the decipherment of the Indus scripts also goes to prove that the Harappan civilisation, of which the seals are a product, belonged to the latter part of the Vedic Age and had close connections with Vedantic works like the Sutras and the Upanishads.

Hence, it is becoming more and more clear that there never was an Aryan invasion in India, a theory which was imposed upon the subcontinent by its colonisers and is today kept alive by Nehruvian historians (such as Romila Thapar), Christian missionaries (it is thus easy to convert the downtrodden tribals and Dravidians, by telling them that Hinduism was a religion thrust upon them by the hated "Brahmin" invaders) and the communists (who hate anything Hindu). But as long as India will not rewrite its history books andteach its children to be proud of its ancient and indigenous civilisation, there will be other Sonia Gandhis who will come and exploit India's Secret Craving For The White.

Gautier is the South Asia correspondent of `Le Figaro', France's largest circulation newspaper, and the author of `Rewriting Indian History'. The views expressed in this piece are solely the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of his newspaper. His column will appear every alternate Monday.

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articles on hinduism

Cartesian Thoughts On Hindu Stone Gods

By FRANCOIS GAUTIER

http://www.timesofindia.com/today/05edit5.htm

WE westerners are brought up on the good old values of Logic and Cartesian Reason - from Descartes, French philosopher, mathematician and physicist, who in his Discourse of the Method elaborates a system whereby doubt is methodically used to analyse any unknown phenomenon. He is also the man who said, ``I think, therefore I am". We are taught right from childhood to believe, like Saint Thomas, only what we can see and to have faith only in what we experience ourselves. A few of us, whose parents have Marxist leanings, are also injected with a good dose of atheism - that is to disbelieve in the unnatural, the supernatural, the religious, and generally what is invisible to the eye.

This is why many of us when we come to India, have difficulty with the way Hindus adore Gods in the forms of statues. How in heaven can there be any form, any divine presence in a piece of stone, or even more so in a Lingam? You must have noticed how uneasy some of the western tourists look when they are in a living temple, whether in Badrinath, or Meenakshi: they are stirred by memories of old childhood stories of how Christian missionaries had to battle these superstitious beliefs in idols (the word idolatry implies that which is worshipped blindly, in an un-Cartesian manner) to install an altar or a church.

Yet, a few westerners, instead of rejecting outright this ``pagan" habit that Hindus have had for millenniums of adoring stone Gods, have tried to analyse it, using this very Cartesian reason and logic with which we are endowed, thanks to our rigorous education. One such person was Alexandra David-Neel, famous writer, explorer, spiritualist, and the first woman to have penetrated Tibet. In her book, `India as I saw it' (Plon. Paris, 1951), she remarks: ``The energy which the Hindus project on the idol is not totally immaterial. It could be assimilated to a subtle substance, which is impregnated with the thoughts, desires and images of the seekers". And she elaborates further: ``The existence, real or not, of the deity represented has no importance, what matters is the accumulation of the psychic forces in the statue". Thus, she continues: "Images of Gods are fulfilling a function similar to what electricity does to a car battery. In this particular case, it is the adoration of the devotees, which charges the statues. And once fully charged, one can draw energy out of it, because like a battery, the statue will not get empty if one continues to charge it with energy through the cult, and the concentration of the prayers and aspirations of the faithful". And Mrs Neel concludes: ``It is thus that an idol which has been adored for centuries by believers, is now charged with a considerable sum of energy due to the repetition of incalculable acts of devotion, during which the faith, imagination, aspirations, desires of these untold crowds of believers have been directed towards the image of their divinity". Her wrapping up of the subject is simple: Gods are thus created by the energy emitted by the faith in their existence.

Will this rather ``scientific'' explanation of idol worshipping be sufficient to convince the disbelievers? We are not so sure. This reminds one of the story of our friend Bruno Philip, ex-correspondent in India of Le Monde. He himself, like any good Frenchman, tended to disbelieve in supernatural stories. When he heard that Ganesh was drinking milk a few years back, he went to the nearest temple with a smirk on his face. But lo, he saw with his own eyes the God actually drinking the milk. However, when he telephoned Le Monde in Paris with his story, he was told that he must have drunk too much the night before and advised to go back to bed!

But then, Bruno could have told his disbelieving boss in Paris that all religions, however Cartesian they are, have their share of beliefs in the supernatural and unscientific. Is it more rational or Cartesian (than worshipping stone idols) to think, for instance, as the Catholics do, that Mary conceived a child while remaining a virgin, or that Christ came back from the dead and ascended physically to heaven (and not in his subtle body, which is more likely), or that Jesus multiplied breads and cured incurable people? Even today, American preachers who come to India carry full page advertisements in newspapers promising whoever comes to their rallies that not only will they encounter God, but they will also witness miracles. Descartes must be shaking his head, up there in heaven.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

The vicious circle

Francois Gautier

http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon3.asp?cat=\opd1&d=OPED

India is a country of wonderful people. Warm, hospitable, tolerant. Its intellectual elite, in Delhi, Bombay, Chennai or Bangalore, are good friends to have, fun-loving and always cordial with westerners.

Intellectually, the journalists and writers of this country are often witty, brilliant, speak good English, and write even better. In fact, quite a few of them, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, Upamanyu Chatterjee and others, have become households names in the English literary world and have brought a good name to India. Arundhati Roy has even shown us that one can be a successful writer and also work for a social cause - even going to the extent of going to jail for that.

Yet, there is something that I have never understood: **Although most of India's intellectual elite is Hindu, the great majority of them are Hindu haters - and it even seems sometimes that they are ashamed to be Hindus. They always come out with the same cliches on Hindutva, the Saffron Brigade, the Hindu "fundamentalists"** and if you listen to them, you get the impression that India is in the hands of dangerous Hindu fundamentalists and that the Christian and Muslim minorities of India are being cruelly persecuted.

Recently, Courier International, a very prestigious French magazine, which is read by diplomats and politicians, published a special issue on "Hindu fundamentalism" with a cover photo of RSS members doing their lathi drill. The ignorant westerner who read it must have had the impression that India indeed is in the grip of fascist, nazi-like Hindu groups and that civil liberties are curtailed here. When the editor-in-chief of that magazine was contacted, he pointed out that all the pieces had been translated from articles... written in the Indian Press by Indian journalists...

If I did not know India, I would tend also to believe what I read about India in the Western press: A nation torn by caste discrimination, poverty, corruption, Hindu extremism and natural calamities. But after living more than 30 years in this country, my experience is totally different: Hindus are probably the most tolerant people in the world - they accept that God manifests Himself under different forms, at different times, according to the needs and mentality of each epoch: Krishna, Christ, Mohamed, Buddha... Thus they always allowed throughout the centuries religious minorities who were victimized in their own countries to settle in India and to prosper and practice their religion: The Syrian Christians, in fact the first Christian community in the world, the Jews, who have been persecuted all over the world (including in my own country France), but were left in peace in India; the Armenians, the Parsis, and today the Tibetans...

As a Westerner, living in India, apart from the obvious bureaucratic hassles, the slowness of everything and the dirt, being here has also been a dream: I have never been mugged in 33 years, no policeman has ever asked me my papers in the street (see what happens to you if you are dark-skinned and without a tie in the metro in Paris) and I have always been made welcome even in the remotest villages of India. As a journalist, it is even better: I do not have to ask permission to go out of Delhi and submit the subject and route of the features I propose to do outside the capital and I do not get kicked out of India, even if I criticize its government - all this contrary to China, which even then remains a more coveted post for a foreign correspondent than India.

It is true that for a western journalist, coming to India can be a baffling experience. The diversity - going from one state to the next is like passing from one country to another - the language is different, so is the food, the habits, the political set-up; the complexity of India's political life, its heavy subtleties; the incredible religious, social and ethnic diversity... So what does the new correspondent do, when often he has at heart to do justice to the country he has been asked to report about? He turns to his Indian fellow journalists for enlightenment.

Regrettably, the first input he is given by his Indian colleagues, is very negative: The black mark of Ayodhya on India's secular fabric, the heavy hand of the Army in Kashmir, the terrible castes abuses in Bihar, or the Taliban-like Bajrang Dal. And this is why if you read the Western reports on India, however good their styles, however well-meaning they are, they all say the same thing with infinite monotony (and often nastiness).

Again, it is absolutely factual that there are unforgivable things done in India in the name of caste; that the disparity between rich and poor is shocking, that affluent Hindus have very little concern about their less fortunate brethrens, or else have no respect for their environment. But it is also true that there is so much positive things to be written about India, so many great people, so much tolerance, so much talent, so many fascinating subjects. Nevertheless Western journalists seem only to concentrate on the negative.

This is the vicious circle of journalism and India: The negative goes from the Indian journalist to the Western journalist... and comes back to India under the form of unfriendly reporting.... The recent Sabarmati burning followed by the rioting in Gujarat, showed again the veracity of that phenomenon. Here you had 58 innocent Hindus, the majority of them being women and children, burnt in the most horrible manner, for no other crime but the fact that they want to build a temple dedicated to the most cherished of Hindu Gods, Ram, on a site which has been held sacred by Hindus for thousands of years.

When a Graham Staines is burnt alive, all of India's English press goes overboard in condemning his killers, but when 58 Graham Staines are murdered, they report it without comment. No doubt, the revenge which followed is equally unpardonable. No doubt, Indian and foreign journalists who rushed to Gujarat, wrote sincerely: after all they saw innocent women, children, men being burnt, killed, raped. Which decent journalist, who has at heart of reporting truth would not cry out against such a shame? But then history has shown us that no event should be taken out of context, and that there is in India, amongst the Hindu majority, a simmering anger against Muslims, who have terribly persecuted the Hindus and yet manage to make it look as if they are the persecuted.

And once again, the Western press coverage of the Gujarat rioting comes back to haunt India:

Hindus targeting Muslims, fundamentalism against innocence, minority being persecuted by majority... But when will the true India be sincerely portrayed by its own journalists, so that the Western press be positively influenced?

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Relink science to spirit

Author: Francois Gautier

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Will science and spirituality ever meet? This was the topic of a recent seminar at the prestigious Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. Indian scientists, one after the other, expounded, on how reason, rigour, logic and the spirit of inquiry are the most important parameters of scientific discovery. None of them, except for Abdul Kalam, made references to ancient Indian science. All of them spoke of science from a western point of view.

Truly western science, because of its immense material resources, has come to dominate the world. Billions of dollars is required these days for research which India can not afford. Since it is unable to remunerate honorably its scientists and engineers many of them have migrated to the West.

Western science is like a blind man, because it dissociated itself from the spirit in the 17th century. Reasons are several: First, because the powerful Christian church interfered in government matters. Thus it was very rigid and backward in scientific topics, believing until very late that the earth was flat or that the world started in 4003 BC. And whoever disagreed with these views was burnt at the stake!

Many thinkers of the 17th century, particularly French philosophers such as Descartes or Pascal, had unilaterally decreed that the only valid scientific and philosophical tools of inquiry were reason and logic. A third factor came in the 20th century with the advent of Marxism and Communism, which decreed that spirituality poisoned people minds and hence had to be eradicated.

Was this divorce of science from the spirit beneficial to the West? Well, western scientists have been able to devise the most sophisticated weapons to kill man; but man is still not capable of killing his own ego. The West, in spite of its huge prosperity based on its tremendous technological and scientific achievements, is becoming a sick society, where children go on rampage killings; where every other person in the US is under psychiatric treatment for depression or insomnia. Where out of five marriages, three end up in divorce.

Nobody in the conference, except Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, who was a guest of honour, also bothered to ask this question: has Indian science kept in touch with the spirit? Well, major discoveries in Indian science, such as the position of the stars, the calculation of solar eclipses, or the concept of the zero, were made at the time when there were no instruments. How were they made? Because

of a profound and everlasting quest for the spirit in India. It is in this manner that Buddha, was able to say, long before western science, that everything in our Universe is constituted of atoms, constantly changing, dying and being reborn at each moment. And this is the first theorem that any scientist should apply: Know Thyself, Know Thy mind. Because If you know your own mind, then you can fathom all other minds; if you know one particle of the world you know all the particles of the world. This is the truth that India has been practicing for millenniums.

Finally, nobody in the symposium cared to mention that western science owesa lot to India. Pythagoras, pioneer of modern geometry, was inspired byIndian mathematics; Egyptians built their pyramids by means of Indianarithmetic; 18th century French astronomers were using Hindu calculationsof the positions of the stars and the solar eclipses.

But unfortunately, Indian science today is very westernized, because the scientific knowledge taught in the universities lacks a connection with the spiritual, and never mentions India's ancient tradition of scientific inquiry.

The British colonials imparted through education a certain western bent of mind. Additionally, many of India's top scientists today have a strong connection with the West. The ultimate achievement for them is to have a chair in a foreign university, where some of them brand India as a backward, fundamentalist country. Isn' it so Mr Amartya Sen? But the real issue is: how can Indian science re-link itself again with the spiritual? There is no question that the Spirit is very much present in India: everywhere you go, you find ashrams, yogis, sadhus, ordinary people practicing meditation or pranayama.

The natural tendency here is to understand the levels of consciousness beyond the surface materiality. Other than Indian Nobel laureates there have been geniuses like Ramanujan, who, with no sophisticated means, were able to devise stupendous mathematical theorems. But Indian science has to look within and delve in its scientific past. The secrets of the Vedas, for instance, both spiritual and scientific, have never been fully deciphered; Sanskrit too has never been analyzed in a modern manner. Indian science mustshow the West how to reestablish the spiritual link and at last unite matter and spirit.

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Journalism as the art of living

By Francois Gautier

http://www.indian-express.com/ie/daily/19991108/ile08020.html

In a year or so, a unique and revolutionary new Indian school of journalism is going to be inaugurated in Bangalore. In this school, students will not only be taught the complete art of journalism. They will also learn to look at India through an Indian perspective, to cast an eye on the world which will carry some of the knowledge and wisdom of a civilisation -- their own -- which is five thousand years old.

They will, for instance, be taught pranayama, the ancient technique of breathing devised thousand of years ago by Indian sages, so that they know how to regulate their breath in time of stress and thus control their emotions. They will be taught the art of meditation, so that they can get their inspiration from a quiet, strong and silent mind. They will be taught asanas, so that their body is strong and resilient and can endure any physical situation. They will be taught a unique cleansing technique called Sudarshan Kriya, which eliminates toxins and stress from the mind and body.

They will study the Vedas, which contain the ultimate truth, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and India's great philosophers like Sri Aurobindo. They will even be taught to sing and dance, so that there is joy and spontaneity in their life and not the dry, intellectual pompousness of the pipe-smoking, Oxford English-speaking journalist, or the chain-smoking pseudo-Marxist... In short, they will be taught the Art of Living.

Sounds preposterous? But these methods should be applied to all aspects of education in India, from the kindergarten onwards, so that schools and universities do not churn out western clones, who have no idea about the greatness and the immense wealth of their own country. And the first thing which should be taught to all students, whether they are toddlers or aspiring journalists, is that there exists a Knowledge - spiritual, occult, yogic - still alive in India, which has died all over the world, where only churches and dogmas survive, although this knowledge was once prevalent in ancient civilisations -in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece etc. They should also understand that if this knowledge, which is not Hinduism, which is not religious, is left to die in India, it will be gone forever from this world which might slowly drift towards pralaya.

At the moment, India is still living under Nehru's legacy, who had chosen to turn its back on anything which had a spiritual connection and had espoused the Marxist way of life, which produced an immense bureaucracy, corruption and the kind of politicians we see today. It also bred many generations of Indian intellectuals and journalists, who kept running down the greatness of their own country and aped anything that came from the West -- the good and the bad. Today many of Indian newspapers and magazines do not reflect a true Indian point of view,

but constantly look at India through a western prism which contains none of the wisdom and knowledge of ancient India.

Take the Pope's visit for instance. Instead of defending India's point of view - as it would have beennormal practice in any other country - by doing some background research on the atrocities committed by the Portuguese in Goa, or about the economic incentives wh-ich missionaries have used -- and are still using - to convert entire chunks of the Northeast and Central India, most of the Indian press went on its usual VHP-RSS-Bhajrang Dal bashing. It is too easy to repeat ad infinitum that Christians in India are only two percent (a nearly ten years old census), because the influence which Christians exert in India is tremendous. Not only do they control the best schools (and hospitals), thus shaping the minds of India's future elite, their sometimes alliance with Marxists make them redoubtable adversaries.

Furthermore, very few newspapers and magazines chose to publish extracts of the Southern Baptist Church's prayer books (the second largest Christian organisation in the US, of which President Clinton is a member) which call Hinduism "satanic" and say that "Hindus live in the darkness of their hearts,which no lamp can dispel". Some of the Christian leaders (the majority of Indian Christians are nice and peace-loving people) have thus been able to take full advantage of this hatred of the Indian press -- which is mostly composed of Hindus -- against any organisation or individual who dares to defend Hindus, and their softness for anybody who attacks Hindus.

It is in this way that the Vatican was able to lecture India on the "atrocities" committed against Indian Christians, without mentioning the much greater atrocities committed against the Hindus who had welcomed so wholeheartedly Christians centuries ago. It is also sad that the BJP, which not so long ago was the target of attacks by these very same journalists, chose to arrest a few of the leaders of those groups who had the courage to stand up for their own ideas. Do you remember, Mr Advani, when you were arrested and branded a "Nazi" by the Indian press, who stood by you then?

So what is needed is a new generation of Indian journalists who willbe proud of their country without being chauvinists, who will be brilliant without being superficial, who will take the best of the west, without being western clones, who will draw inspiration from the knowledge alive in this country, without being bigots. They will be Indian journalists.

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Buddhism to blame for India's ills

By Francois Gautier

The Indian Express Monday, September 25, 2000

Buddhism offered a simple way out of human misery to anybody, whatever their status. This may explain why at the beginning of our era, the entire northern and eastern. India was practising Buddhism. Unfortunately, after Buddha's death, his followers gradually made Buddhism a religion of rigid tenets, do's and don't, which not only
diminished its popular appeal, but also harmed India. This harm has two facets: non-violence and maya.

Many Buddhists like to believe that Buddhism disappeared from India, because it was slowly "swallowed" back by Hinduism at the hands of the vengeful Brahmins. But the truth could be entirely different. Hinduism of the Vedas and the Gita always held ahimsa as one of its highest spiritual values, but at the same time understood that
violence can sometimes be necessary to defend one's borders, women and children. Which is why, until Buddhism made non-violence an uncompromising, inflexible dogma, India's borders were not only secure, but extended from Afghanistan to Kanyakumari.

But when Ashoka embraced Buddhism, one sees that soon thereafter the first invasion -- that of Alexander the Great -- submerged the subcontinent: India's great protecting armor, which had worked for millenniums, had been breached. As the first Muslim invasions started submerging India in the seventh century, Hinduism was able to initially withstand the violent onslaught of Islam, thanks to its tradition of Kshatriyas, but contrary to what history books say, Buddhism was literally wiped off the face of India in a few centuries, as it refused to oppose any resistance.

For the Muslim soldiers, Buddhists, who adored statues and did not believe in Allah, were as much infidels as the Hindus, and they razed every single Buddhist temple (and also Jain, as the ruins below Fatepur Sikri have proved) they encountered, burnt all the precious libraries and killed tens of thousands of monks, without encountering any resistance. This is why you cannot find a single trace of Buddhist structures today in India, save for a few stupas, which were too cumbersome to be destroyed.

The second unfortunate legacy which Buddhism gave to India is maya. "Everything is illusion, everything is misery, misery, misery, Buddhists said -- and still say today -- and the sooner you get out of it by attaining nirvana, the better. But Hinduism had always taught that the Divine is concealed in all things, animate and inanimate, and that every aspect of life has to be conquered by the spirit: even the Asura is a fallen angel, doing unknowingly God's work. Hence Hinduism

had addressed itself to all aspects of life, from the mundane, as brilliantly shown in Khajurao, to the subtle spiritual planes which stand one after the other above mind. In contrast, Buddhism came and said: "Just leave matter and take refuge in Buddha". And as result, because Buddhism has had a subtle influence on Hinduism, India started disdaining her physical envelope, her very body
and material sheath, India's yogis started withdrawing more and more in their caves, its people neglecting their surroundings, its leaders forgetting about beauty. And the result is there today for everybody to see: an ugly India, full of trash and refuse, with very little sense of aesthetics left; cities unplanned, polluted, crowded, hideous; a people who says it worships its mighty Himalayas and sacred Ganges, but which has allowed the
former to be nearly completely deforested and the latter to be so polluted, that sometimes it is not even fit for bathing.

And Indians cannot put all this on account of poverty, because its rich people are probably the most guilty, often not caring for anything and anybody beyond their own doorstep. It is true that Buddhism has nearly completely disappeared from the subcontinent but its rigid spirit endures in subtle ways: Mahatma Gandhi was
no doubt influenced by Buddhist non-violence when he refused Churchill's proposal in 1943 for a Commonwealth status after the Second World War, if India collaborated with the Allies' efforts against Japan and Germany; or when he constantly gave in to Muslim intransigence, thereby precipitating India's Partition. Today, we see that the enemies of a dharmic India often use Buddhism as a weapon, whether it is the much hyped Ambedkar, who advocated conversion of Dalits to Buddhism, or Indian intellectuals such as Praful Bidwai and Arundhati Roy, who borrow from Buddhist thought to show why India should not have the atom bomb.

We see also, in a country like Shri Lanka, a very militant Buddhism, chauvinistic in its promotion of Sinhala interests and anti-Hindu in its persecution of Sri Lankan Tamils. We notice too that new avatars of Buddhism, such as the remarkable Vipasana movement of Shri Goenka, have not fully lost their anti-Hindu slant and are still
proposing a very rigid non-violence. Western historians like to call Emperor Ashoka "the Great" and India chose at Independence his three lions trademark as its symbol. But was he that great? He went from being an extremely cruel emperor to a rigidly non-violent one, not a very balanced mental attitude for a religion which always
promotes the "middle path".

Western historians call Emperor Ashoka "the Great" but was he that great?

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articles on hinduism

Hindus- majority yet minority

By Francois Gautier
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Hindus, who comprise the majority population of India, boasts of one the oldest cultures of the world. Sanskrit is often thought as the mother of all languages; Hindu philosophy has to considerably fashioned Greek mythology and Celticlore (as demonstrated by French Indianist **Guy Deleury**); and these two traditions represent the foundation of all European culture.

We all know that the zero concept originated from India, but it is not so well known that the Egyptians used Hindu arithmetic concepts to build their pyramids, that Hindus inspired Pythagorean mathematics, or what an 18th century French astronomers **Jean-Claude Bailly** had remarked: 'Hindu calculations of the position of the stars and of solar eclipses were so precise that we are still using them today'.

Thus the Hindus, inheritors of an immense, noble and age-old culture, constitute 85 per cent of India and represent the social, religious and cultural majority of this emerging Asian superpower of the 21st century. And yet, their voice is rarely heard in India. They are respected neither in home, nor abroad; and they generally lack self-confidence.

Could it be that Hindus are a psychological minority in India, whereas minorities, such as the Christians, which constitute only 3 per cent of the population, wield an enormous moral power in this country, thanks to the quality of their schools and hospitals and because of the pride they have in their own religion and moral standards?

All European children, Italian or German, are brought-up on Christian values and Greek philosophy. It would be impossible, in France for instance, for the Muslim minority – immigrants from French ex-colonies such as Algeria or Morocco to impose their views and culture on the government. In fact, Muslim girls are not allowed to wear a veil when they go to French school: 'you are in France, you have been given the French nationality, so behave like a French first and like a Muslim second', they are told bluntly.

Would that be possible in India? Would any Indian except the much-maligned RSS, have the courage to ask Muslims to be Indians first, and Muslim second? Or tell Catholics and Protestants that they have to revert to a more Indianised Christianity, such as the one that existed in Kerala before the arrival of the Portuguese Jesuits? And see how stridently Muslims and Christians backed by most of the media – react when the Human Resources Minister, Dr Murli Manohar

Joshi, wants to teach Indian children a little bit of the greatness of their culture.

There are two sets of standards used in India amongst intellectuals; one for the Christians or the Muslims; and one for the Hindus. When the Australian missionary Graham Stains and his two sons were killed the Indian and foreign press spent weeks – if not months – in eulogizing Graham and making Nazis of all Hindus held responsible for his murder. But if a few days later 20 labourers, as innocent as Stains' two sons, are savagely assassinated by separatists in Kashmir, it will only warrant a few lines in Indian newspapers, without any of the outraged comments which followed Staines murder.

When the Ayodhya mosque was brought down, it was as if eternal shame had descended upon India. 'Death of secularism', 'Hindu fundamentalists have taken over the country', 'a Black Day in the history of our democracy', the newspapers screamed. However unfortunate the Ayodhya episode was, nobody was killed there; but the terrible Bombay blasts which followed, orchestrated by Indian Muslims, with the active help of Pakistan and the silent approval of Saudi Arabia, which took the lives of hundreds of innocent Hindus, never warranted the kind of moral indignation which followed Ayodhya.

Hindus are ironically chased from their own ancestral lands. There were one million of them in Kashmir in 1900 but only a few hundred today, the rest having been made to flee through terror. In the North-East, Hindus are being outnumbered by Bangladeshi illegal immigrants and terrorized by pro-Christian separatist groups, such as the Bodos or the Mizos. In Karnataka, a bill will bring more than 43,000 Hindu shrines and maths under the commissioner's control. This act does not apply to Christians and Muslims. The Indian government still sponsors the Haj pilgrimage.

Hindus should become a little prouder of themselves: there is ample talent and brains in India today. Hindu children regularly top their schools and universities in the US, they are the best programmers of this planet and are are amongst the richest people in UK, the US or Canada. Why can't the majority of this marvelous, diverse, ancient and extraordinary country stop behaving as if it was a moral minority?

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Shared spaces of Islam and Hinduism

By Francois Gautier

http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon3.asp?cat=\edit3&d=EDITS

At a time when Hindus and Muslims have again started killing each other; when mistrust, misunderstanding and hate stalk the two communities; it is imperative that Islam and Hinduism learn at last to live together. There is no other solution: Hindus cannot wish away the 130 million Muslim minority; and the followers of Islam in India cannot ignore forever the feelings of the majority community, who after all total 850 million strong in India and 1.1 billion worldwide. Kashmir is an unsolvable problem, as neither Pakistan, nor India, are ready to surrender their claims, and for obvious reasons. Ayodhya remains an equally inextricable dilemma, because it has been politicised and communalised so much by political parties, that nobody is willing to take the first step. But then, how to bridge the apparently immense gap between Islam and Hinduism ?

On the surface, you cannot find two more dissimilar religions: The first is a monotheistic faith which proclaims that Allah is the only God and that believers of all other religions are to be treated as "infidels"; the second swears by polytheism and adores thirty three million Gods and Goddesses. Hindus face East to pray; Muslims turn to the West. Hindus write from left to right; Muslims from right to left. Hindus love the colour saffron, Muslims dote on green. While Muslims are regarded as Mlechhas (unholy) by Hindus, Muslims consider Hindus Kafirs (infidels). Whereas the Quran condemns idolaters to Hell and grants permission to the faithful to kill infidels, Hindus are sitting and waiting for the Kalki Avatar to redeem the world of Mlechhas. Because of these differences, both these creeds have been at loggerhead for centuries and the Muslim invasions of India have been exceptionally bloody. Even today, Islam and Hinduism collide in Kashmir, in Ayodhya, or in the wars between Pakistan and India.

Yet, unknown to both Muslims and Hindus, there exists striking similarities between Islam and Hinduism. In a just released book, Hinduism and Islam, the Common Thread (Vyakti Vikas Kendra, Bangalore, vvkpress@vsnl.com) Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the founder of the worldwide Art of Living movement, highlights the fact that contrary to common belief, Hinduism is as monotheistic in its creed as Islam. 'Advaita', for instance, keeps speaking about non-dual monotheism, while the **Bhagavad Gita says: "Eko devah sarva Bhutantaratma" (one God who dwells in everybody).** Or elsewhere: "All the 33 crore devi devtas are nothing but the rays of one Paramatma (the Supreme Being)". We also find that in Hinduism one God is given 108 names, or sometimes even 1008 names ("Sahastranaama"); in the same way, Islam believes in one God who is vast and formless and He also is addressed by 99 other names.

It is true that Islam abhors the worshipping of God in stones or images and that this has been the

prime motivation for Arabs and other Muslims to destroy so many Hindu temples and statues in India from the 7th Century onwards. But do Muslims know that many Hindus, at the end of a puja, say:"Hritpadma karnikaa madhye shivena saha sundari; Pravishadvam mahadevi sarvai aavarnai saha" (You return back to my heart from the idol). Though Islam strictly adheres to the formless (nirakar), it has nevertheless recognised the importance of the Form and the Symbol, symbolised by the Kaaba of Mecca; honouring it is worshipping the Formless through the Form (sagun saakar). Offerings like Chaddar at the Dargah is also a common traditional practice among Hindus, who like offering Chunni to the Mother Divine in the temple. More important even, Namaaz comes from two Sanskrit words: Nama (to worship) and Yaja (to unite with God.) Vajrasana (a yogic posture) is an essential part of the Namaaz, which is prescribed five times daily in the Quran. Friday, the holiest day for Muslims, is as well the holy day for Hindus to worship of the Mother Divine (the Rahukal puja or the noon puja on Friday is considered very auspicious by Hindus). "The 30 days of prayer and fasting", says again **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar,** "is akin to the Mandala puja and the name of the Islamic month of Ramadan comes from the Sanskrit word Rama-dhyan. Dhyan means to meditate and Ram in Sanskrit means 'the one who shines in the heart'. Thus Ramadan refers to a time to meditate on God. Fasts are also associated with Vedic worship, and Islam has retained that fasting and praying tradition for Ramadan".

It is also very important to note that in the Hindu tradition, although the moon and stars are revered, it is the sun that predominates, since it was a source of comfort in the icy Himalayas, the cradle of Hinduism. In the Arabian desert, it was the moon and stars that gave comfort, while the harsh sun was hostile; hence the moon and the stars were chosen as the symbols of serenity and divinity (Shiva is also known as Chandrashekhara-one who has the crescent moon for a crown). In a similar manner, in India, it was the saffron colour which stood out in the greenery of the Gangetic plains, whereas green was chosen by the Arabs, as it was seen from far in the yellow deserts and this is why today, green adorns many Islamic flags. Again, in the Hindu tradition the first born of God is Brahma and his wife is Saraswati; the first born of God in Islam is known as Abraham (a-Brahma) and his wife is Sara. **The Hindus have a practice of chanting mantras on the beads of the japamala; the Muslims too chant the 99 names of Allah on the 99 beads of their rosary.**

Finally, Mecca was also a holy place for Hindus. The ancient Vedic scripture Harihareshwar Mahatmya mentions that Lord Vishnu's footprints are consecrated at three holy sites, namely Gaya, Mecca and Shukla Teertha: "Ekam Padam Gayayantu MAKKAYAANTU Dwitiyakam Tritiyam Sthapitam Divyam Muktyai Shuklasya Sannidhau". Though Islam prohibits idol worship, the black Kaaba stone is held sacred and holy and is called "Hajre Aswad" from the Sanskrit word Sanghey Ashweta: Non-white stone (The Shiva Linga is also called Sanghey Ashweta). The pedestal Maqam-E-Ibrahim at the centre of the Kaaba, is octagonal in shape. In Hinduism, the pedestal of Brahma the creator is also octagonal in shape. Just as in Hinduism, the custom of circumambulating (Pradakshina) the Deity is practiced at the Kaaba also. The pilgrims go around the entire building (Kaaba) seven times in the anticlockwise direction.

We could go on forever and show more remarkable parallels between Islam and Hinduism. But it is best to say that it is unfortunate that Hindus have forgotten that all Muslims are their brothers and sisters and that only their ways of worship are different. Muslims, in turn, have completely blanked out the fact that their forefathers were Hindus once upon a time-even Afghanistan and Arabia were part of Hindu kingdoms before the advent of Christ-so they have every right to be

proud of Vedic culture; they should not disown Hindu traditions. Thus, Hindus and Muslims spring from the same family and must respect each other more and more, so that this senseless clash of religion, which in turn leads to a clash of civilisations, slowly fades away.

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The great ambition of Hinduism

BY *Francois Gautier*

http://swordoftruth.com/swordoftruth/archives/byauthor/francoisgautier/tgaoh.html

It requires another foreign correspondent to provide a counterpoint to Delhi-based American journalist John Eliott's rather condescending article: ***Can Hindus be ambitious*** (Outlook, December 21, 1998), where he says that Hinduism is the main obstacle to India's modernisation and liberalisation. Because if an Indian had answered his attacks, he would have immediately been taxed of "nationalist", or even accused of being a follower of the Sangh Parivhar.

Let's first start by what John Elliott gets right:

For some mysterious reason, Hindus appear to be the most undisciplined, collectively selfish, and nationally uncaring community in India, so that it requires a Mother Theresa to look after their own underprivileged. In the same way, they do, as Mr Elliott points out, tend to extend cleanliness only to their own immediate surroundings : their homes, or their front porches, but neglect the rest. It is puzzling for instance how a people which has worshipped the Ganges for thousands of years, treats it with so little respect, dumping every day thousands of chemicals in its waters. True again, Hindus are a tolerant people. India for example, is probably the only country in the world where the Jews not only were not persecuted, but were also welcomed with open arms when they fled the destruction of Jerusalem and allowed to practise freely their religion. True also: this tolerance can often become misguided: Naxalites ought to have long ago whipped in public Rahul Bajaj, who is responsible for polluting entire cities in the name of his petty, selfish interests.

But all the rest is wrong.

Take John Elliott's view of Hinduism for instance : Hinduism has never been a religion, but a way of life, allowing countless sects, philosophies, creeds, to develop in its fold, as long as they were faithful to the central core of its essence - Santana dharma. Over the centuries, this way of life has subtly influenced even India's invaders, be it Christians or Muslims, who are like no other Christians and Muslims in the world. Mr Elliott has also not bothered to study Hinduism in depth, when he says that basically Hinduism teaches fatalistic acceptance.

On the contrary, Hinduism admits for example that one can use violence if necessary : when one's brothers, sisters, or country are in danger - this is the very message of Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhavagad Gita. It is Buddhism and Jainism which perverted that message and opened India to the first invasions of Alexander the Great and subsequently to the Muslim onslaughts. Later, it is Gandhi and his rigid and moralistic attitude of ahimsa, refusing even to fight Nazism, the most asuric force of our modern age, which paved the way for India's splitting in two.

"Hindus lack ambition", accuses Mr Elliott! But Indian civilisation not only had the loftiest of

ambitions, but it also achieved extraordinary realisations, which were unparalleled in the world. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, India's great revolutionary, philosopher, and Sage: "It lived with a noble, ample and vigorous order and freedom; it developed a great literature, sciences, arts, crafts, industries; it rose to the highest possible ideals of knowledge and culture, of arduous greatness and heroism, of kindness, philanthropy and human sympathy and oneness. It laid the inspired basis of wonderful spiritual philosophies; it examined the secret of external nature and discovered and lived the boundless and miraculous truths of the inner being; it fathomed self and understood and possessed the world."

Debilitating and cruel caste system? The caste system is the most misunderstood, the most vilified subject of Hindu society. Let us again listen to Sri Aurobindo: "Caste was originally an arrangement for the distribution of functions in society, just as much as class in Europe, but the principle on which this distribution was based was peculiar to India. A Brahmin was a Brahmin not by mere birth, but because he discharged the duty of preserving the spiritual and intellectual elevation of the race, and he had to cultivate the spiritual temperament and acquire the spiritual training which alone would qualify him for the task. So it was for the Vaishya whose function was to amass wealth for the race and the Shudra who discharged the humbler duties of service without which the other castes could not perform their share of labour for the common good".

But, yes, Mr Elliott, there is no doubt that the institution of caste degenerated: It ceased to be determined by spiritual qualifications and thus lost most of its meaning. The spirit of caste arrogance, exclusiveness and superiority came to dominate it instead of the spirit of duty, and the change weakened the nation and helped to reduce us to our present condition.

And of course, Mr Elliott has to feed us the mantra of foreign (and sadly Indian) journalists : the "(Hindu) fundamentalists / Hindutva". But a bit of nationalism is indispensable for the well-being of a nation. Most of Europe's culture is based on its Christian heritage and we the French are proud of our Greco-Roman tradition. Thus, India does need to regain a little of its self-pride, after having been trampled upon by so many invaders... and made fun by so many foreign corespondents! It is healthy sign that it is happening in a some small measure today.

Finally : has India failed, as Mr Elliott implies? But is not the very fact that India still exists a miracle in itself? This nation survived ten centuries of one of the most terrible genocide ever perpetuated on a race in the name of religion, the soul-stifling British colonial rule and 40 years of "secular" socialism; and it is going to survive the perils of industrialisation and westernisation, because, whatever Mr Elliott and his pairs say, no country which has survived so much when all other great civilisations, such as Greece or Egypt, are only memories in dusty text books, can be snuffed out by the winds of liberalism.

Thus, John Elliot's malevolent vision of an India which will gradually be shaped by more materialistic forces, such as liberalisation and satellite TV, may never come true. Thank God! That would be the end of this country's uniqueness and genius - whatever its faults.

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articles on hinduism

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The Genius (and innocence) of the Indian Voter
By Francois Gautier
http://www.indiagov.org/perspec/dec99/voter.htm

In more than fifty years of India's independence, the Indian voter has shown that he throws his ballot INTELLIGENTLY, as he always gives a chance to those politicians or parties who pledge to do things for him but rejects them outright at the next election if they fail to deliver the goods.

As everywhere else in the world, there are two kinds of voters in India: the rural voter and the urban voter. The Indian urban voter votes with his MIND - that is, he is mainly influenced by his atavism - parents, education, background etc. - and by what the English-speaking Press says. And there lies the Catch 22 of Indian politics, for the media in India has for a long time struck a single "secular" note. Which means in effect that anything belonging to the official history was deemed acceptable, while anything that had a Hindu flavour was ruthlessly attacked. It is in this way that the Bharatiya Janata Party combine, which is today in power for the third time and for which nearly 50% of India voted in the last election, was for long the outcast of Indian politics, variously called by the Indian media "fanatic, non-secular, communal, even Nazi (does the Indian Press know that Hitler killed six million Jews in cold blood?).

Until recently, nothing much had changed in India: the English-speaking press indulged in Hindu-bashing (and part of it still does today) and was faithfully copied by the western correspondents (who are still at it), most of whom are totally ignorant of India and turn towards Indian intellectuals to fashion their opinions.

It is thanks to this constant belittling that for a long time, the BJP had absolutely no chance in mainstream politics - remember how it got only two seats in 1984, while the Congress obtained an absolute majority? Fortunately, there has been a change of heart in a section of the Indian Press, particularly since the Kargil war, when the Pakistanis treacherously took advantage of the Lahore peace process initiated by the BJP Government in February 1999, to infiltrate Pakistani soldiers disguised as *Mujahideens* on the Indian side of the Line of Control in Kashmir. The Indian soldiers performed very bravely in the face of tremendous odds and the Indian voter not only appreciated this bravery but also Prime Minister Vajpayee's restraint in not crossing over onto the Pakistani side of the LOC. This war reawakened in India a bit of the ancient *kshatriya* (warrior) spirit of nationalism, which is indispensable for a nation to grow and be self-confident. The voter also understood that it is important for India to have a strong army to defend the country's borders, its women and children and the values which India always upheld since Vedic times.

The rural voter who, it should be remembered, forms 80% of the electorate, votes with his HEART, although he may be in some way influenced by what the local language newspapers say

- which often take up blindly the opinions of the English speaking press. It is both a wonderful and terrible trait, because since 1947, this innocence has been taken advantage of by various sorts of politicians, who have utilised four different kinds of factors.

1. The adulation of film stars

Film stars are enormously popular in India and are akin to demi-Gods. Since the early sixties, various film stars, who had no political qualification, ended up as being Chief Ministers of the southern states - often with disastrous consequences. Because they needed a lot of demagogy to sustain their image of demi-Gods and had to resort to heavy subsidises - rice at Rs. two a kilo, free distribution of saris, free water for the farmers etc. - thus emptying the coffers of the states while they were in power. Furthermore, they were often authoritarian, corrupt and did not give back to the people one inch of the adulation and respect they enjoyed.

2. Dynasty and sycophancy

Dynasty is a western word which does not really correspond to the Indian reality. And sycophancy should rather be called the "bhakti "spirit which is a 5000 year old spiritual tradition in India. This extraordinary "bhakti" tendency of Indian people means that they tend to worship anybody whom they feel has an aura about him, or her, no matter his or her personal faults, no matter if he or she is a fraud - or half a fraud. It's a marvellous principle and it has worked for millenniums in the *Guru-Chela* (guru-disciple) relationship - you surrender to divinity in your human guru and through him you attain realisations if your surrender is sincere. But it does not work in politics because politicians do not even have a gram of the aspiration and realisations of gurus.

3. The "Shakti" phenomenon

There is also amongst Indians of the subcontinent a very strong tradition to worship the female element of the Divine, who takes up many forms: *Mahakali, Mahalaxmi, Mahasaraswati, Maheswari*, etc. It's a bit of a paradox, because Hindu women in India can also be persecuted, but nevertheless, it has always played an important role in the history of the country: there are more women MPs in India than in France for instance. It is this *shakti* phenomenon which allowed Indira Gandhi to govern with an iron hand this male-dominated country for nearly twenty years; and this tradition has even survived in the neighbouring Islamic states, such as Pakistan or Bangladesh - witness Benazir Bhutto or the two Bangladesh Begums.

4. The Aryan myth

According to the theory of the Aryan invasion, which is still taken as the foundation stone of the History of India and which was actually devised in the 18th and 19th century by British-related linguists and archaeologists, the first inhabitants of India were good-natured, peaceful, dark-skinned shepherds, called the Dravidians, who had founded what is called the Harappan - or Indus Valley civilization. They were supposedly remarkable builders, witness the city of Mohanjo-Daro in Pakistani Sind, but had no culture to speak of, no literature, no proper script even. Then, around 1500 B.C., India is said to have been invaded by tribes called the Aryans: white-skinned, nomadic people, who originated somewhere in Western Russia and imposed upon the Dravidians the hateful caste system. To the Aryans are attributed Sanskrit, the Vedic - or Hindu religions, India's greatest spiritual texts, the Vedas, as well as a host of subsequent writings, the Upanishads, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, etc...

This myth divided India for ever and pitted against each other the low caste dark-skinned Dravidians and the high caste light-skinned Aryans, a rift which is still enduring. The Muslim invaders, the European colonisers, the missionaries and finally the Congress, each exploited to the hilt for their own selfish purpose this artificial divide, as recent linguistic and archaeological discoveries are proving that there probably never was any Aryan invasion.

Voting with the heart is a unique quality and it is this innocence, these spontaneous tendencies of *bhakti* or *shakti* in the rural Indian which make the greatness of India, its "sanatana dharma" and not the pompous, secular, left-leaning intellectual in the comfort of his flat in New Delhi or Bombay. No, what has to be changed is the SYSTEM which allows power-hungry politicians to exploit this purity of heart of the rural voter. As Danielou wrote in his History of India: "on top of the Partition tragedy, there is the other calamity of modern India namely the post-Independence leadership, which chose to turn its back on most of its ancient institutions, social and political, and adapted blindly and completely the British system, constitutional, social, political, judicial and bureaucratic". And as India's Great Sage, Sri Aurobindo, also reminds us, "In ancient times, there always was a strong democratic element in India, which certainly showed a certain similarity with Western parliamentary forms, but these institutions were INDIAN".

India should then go back to the wisdom and the innocence of what constitutes the base, the soul and the essence of this country: the rural masses. And like in ancient times, but couched in modern forms, the rural voter should elect what he knows directly: the *panchayat* leaders of his village, town or community; in turn these leaders will elect those who will represent them at the state level and so on until the top. So that so much money and time are no more wasted on useless elections which throw up the same old politicians. Thus, the wisdom of India will go once more from bottom to top - and not from top to bottom as it is now.

The author, who has lived in India for thirty years, is the South Asia correspondent for "Le Figaro" France's largest circulation daily and has published two books: "Rewriting Indian History" (Vikas, New Delhi) and "Un Autre Regard sur L'inde" (Editions du Trident, Pans, Geneva). The views expressed in the article are solely of the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of his newspaper or our journal.

-Editor

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True colours

By Francois Gautier
August 20 2003

If you are looking for the right type of Hindu - one who is neither too fanatical nor too ritualistic, but is liberal minded, speaks good English, is able to interact with westerners; in short, a secular Hindu - then here is one: His Holiness Swami Agnivesh, chairperson of the United Nations Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery; chairperson, Bandhua Mukti Morcha (Bonded Labour Liberation Front); and, general secretary, Bharatiya Arya Pratinidhi Sabha

Indeed, if you conduct a search with his name on the Internet, you will come up with exactly 4,345 hits - all to his credit. Swami Agnivesh is fighting on every front: For the Dalits, against bonded labour, for the underprivileged, against child labour, for oppressed women, against big dams, for minorities, for the holy cow... He is networking with various religious leaders of all major faiths, women's organisations and social-political activists in their effort to carry out anti-liquor movements throughout India; he is strengthening the Arya Samaj movement to fight against various forms of casteism, communalism, religious obscurantism and other social evils. He has been actively involved in assisting women's movement with a view to ensuring their equal participation in all walks of life...

Indeed, Swami Agnivesh's official biography reads like a virtual who's who. He has, to his credit, various published books like Vedic Socialism, Religion, Revolution and Marxism, and has published various articles on national, social and political issues in leading newspapers and magazines. He was the chief editor of Rajdharma, a fortnightly magazine, and Kranti Dharma, a monthly magazine. He has been awarded the Anti-Slavery International Award, London, 1990, and Freedom and Human Rights Award, Berne, Switzerland, 1994. He has been striving to establish a liberal, egalitarian society based on tolerance and mutual accommodation and coordinating efforts under the banner of 'Religions for Social Justice'.

Try to find a counterpoint to his stands, an article adverse to him, any piece of criticism... it would be impossible: There are none. Swami Agnivesh is a beacon of virtue, he is the West's ultimate answer to all the problems afflicting India, and this is why he strides all over the world, giving talks to rapt audiences on the evils of Indian society in New York, Manila, Paris, Tokyo, Montreal, Geneva... you name it. The trouble is that whenever you see someone who projects himself or herself as perfect, seek out the shadows, because nobody can be that good.

If you look a little closely at Swami Agnivesh's actions and words, you will quickly realise that his first target is what he calls "Hindu fundamentalism". He has, for instance, undoubtedly with

good reasons, very strong opinions about the Sangh parivar: "Even if we forget the Mahatma's ideals, we should never forget who killed the Mahatma." Or, "It is a medical analogy that explains the present convulsions (within the Sangh parivar) best - that of de-worming - when the worms in their final twitch of desperation release their poison." Strong words, indeed.

The unforgivable rioting by Hindus against Muslims in Gujarat went a long way in supporting Swami Agnivesh's theories on the Sangh parivar (except that there seemed to have been a lot of middle class, even Dalit Hindus). Subsequently, in a book written in collaboration with Reverend Valson Thampu, Harvest of Hate: Gujarat Under Siege, he makes a deserving attempt at recording in exacting details the plight of Muslims at the hands of raging Hindus during the violence.

However, it is not exactly balanced: The first mention of the burning of the Sabarmati Express, which after all triggered the whole thing, only comes on page 37, merely giving the Muslim version of the story: "The so-called kar-sevaks ordered tea from the Muslim vendors and forced them to shout 'Jai Shri Ram', before serving the tea; and those who refused to oblige would be roughed-up." Why does the good Swami not mention that in 1991, in a Godhra madarsa, all the Hindu teachers who were voluntarily tutoring the children, were massacred? Or that today the Electricity Board is afraid to go in Muslim areas of Godhra, where 80 per cent of electricity is illegally tapped?

If you continue to scrutinise Swami Agnivesh's deeds, you will discover that he has strange bedfellows. True, he chooses his allies in secular spirit: Christians, Dalits, Muslims... all of this is wonderful, except that many of them are avowed enemies of India and often work abroad to belittle its image. Indeed, Swami Agnivesh is often quoted in the Pakistani newspaper, Dawn, or on the website of the very aggressive Christian Mission Frontiers, where he says: "The appropriate terminology, therefore (to designate these Hindus), is 'Hindu fascists' or 'fascist Hindus'." You will also find him in the now defunct tehelka.com, which declares this about him: "Gujarat does not symbolise Nazi Germany, though Swami Agnivesh in a recent TV discussion was not too far wrong in suggesting that it now emerges as a laboratory for the Sangh parivar's governance experiments with human, and human rights, violation of minority communities."

It is good that Swami Agnivesh seems to have taken up the cause of the Muslims: Indeed, he is widely quoted by Islam on Line, or Islamic Relief about his views on Hindu fascism. But does he have to go as far as saying: "It is incredibly sad, how the Muslim community seems almost wholly abandoned by the rest of the country?" Or: "Can we really blame the Muslims of Gujarat if they come to prefer Dawood Ibrahim to Narendra Modi?" Ultimately, such statements will only strengthen Muslim extremists, incite moderate Muslims to become jihadis; his words are so anti-Hindu that they might even prompt moderate Hindus to support the Bajrang Dal, a most counter-productive result, which we are sure, is not the good Swami's intention.

At the end of the day, we would like to think that Swami Agnivesh is a misguided activist who overreacts in his enthusiasm. But nevertheless, he really seems to be too good to be true. There is an element of negativity in him, a total lack of positivism, which make us slightly uneasy. We all know there are unforgivable aspects of Indian society, such as untouchability, child marriage, poverty, or child labour... But what about the wonderful sides of this ancient and great civilisation, which still harbours one of the most tolerant and liberal spirituality of the world, which has given refuge to all the persecuted minorities in the world, from the Jews to the Parsis, from the

Armenians to the Tibetans?

There are today's saints such as Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, who are trying to reform Indian society, but with love and practical tools, not by hammering at it and lowering its image in the eyes of the world. Are then Swami Agnivesh's orange robes and turban a disguise, a lure with which he can hit out more freely at his own culture? Will the real Swami Agnivesh please stand up and show us his true colours?

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articles on hinduism

Dislike of the Christian world towards Hindu India -Interview with Francois Gautier
By Rajeev Srinivasan
Rediff on the Net
http://216.32.165.71/news/1999/feb/12rajeev.htm

'There is an unconscious militant dislike of the Christian world towards Hindu India'

Francois Gautier *is the South Asia correspondent for* Le Figaro, *one of France's most respected newspapers. He has lived in India since 1971, and has been associated with Auroville in Pondicherry for much of that time. He has strong views on India, as can be seen in the following.* **Rajeev Srinivasan** *interviewed him by email.*

Could you tell us a little about your background, for example your education and upbringing?

I was born in Paris in 1950. I had a strict upper-class Catholic education but I never really fitted in the system and revolted against it quite early. Thus, I was sent to many famous boarding schools all over Europe, from which I was regularly kicked out! My family wanted me to be a businessman and I attended an American business school in Paris called IDRAC, but my interest was in writing and I quit to work in a small newspaper, which quickly folded; then I wrote the script of a film for a friend (whose father, a famous film director, had given him 30,000 francs to do his own film). Needless to say, the film was never released and soon after, I left for India: I had just turned 19.

Have you worked with anybody other than *Le Figaro*?

When I reached India, I stopped writing for a long time, except my own diaries and I went into other spheres -- meditation and gardening, for instance! In 1982, at the occasion of the Asian Games in Delhi, I chanced upon an article (*on the Asian Games*) in a French newspaper. It had all the usual clichés on India: poverty, fakirs, Mother Teresa... So I wrote a letter of correction to the editor; and he offered me to write an article, which I did. And then another article followed and another and another...

I then started writing and photographing for different publications and finally ended-up being the correspondent in South Asia, for the Geneva-based *Journal de Geneve*, which at one time used to be one of the best international newspapers in Europe. Five and a half years ago, I switched to *Figaro,* for which I now work exclusively, except for the occasional photo feature (on kalarapiyat for instance).

How did you become interested in Indology?

Indology grew on me the moment I started getting out of Auroville (which is a bit of an island in the midst of India). In fact I would say that India grows on those (Westerners) who LIVE in India in whatever field (dance, music, spirituality, crafts, photography -- but not journalism). Also I have an interest in spirituality and it opens up so many different areas of Indian life.

You are married to an Indian, aren't you? Do you have other roots in India now?

I have been married nine years to Namrita, who is from Delhi (mother is Hindu, father Sikh). Being married to a "daughter of India" is a natural complement of my being in this country for 30 years. My roots are very much in this country, even though I remain a Westerner. But I have no intention of going back to France, except for yearly visits to meet my family.

What is your relationship to Auroville?

I came to India with the first caravan for the international city of Auroville -- and even though I spent seven years in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondichery, because I was immediately attracted by this totally Indian and spiritualised atmosphere (lots of Westerners in Auroville), my dedication is to Auroville, where I have spent most of the last 22 years. It is this ATTEMPT at human unity which makes Auroville great (because so far, we cannot boast of many achievements!) and the fact that such a place exists and that it is in India (where else could it be but in the land of great tolerance and spiritual experiment?) is a sign of hope for the rest of humanity.

I have read excerpts from Rewriting Indian History on the web at www.hindu.org, the site of Hinduism Today. What is your relationship if any, with Hinduism Today?

No direct relationship with them. Sitaram Goel, publisher of the *Voice of India* (*For a long time, Sitaram Goel and Ram Swarup, who just passed away, single handedly defended Hinduism in the face of the Marxist-Christian-Muslim onslaught in India*) had read some of my articles in *Blitz* magazine and asked me if he could publish a series of them under a book form. I answered that I would rather write the book from scratch and thus was born *The Wonder That Is India.*

Later, *Hinduism Today,* a remarkable set-up, which for the first time in the history of Hinduism is attempting to rationalise and gather together this great knowledge to present it to the world, offered to put it on their site in the net.

You take exception to A L Basham's *The Wonder that was India:* because it thinks of India only in the past tense?

Not only does he think that India was great solely in the past, but his idea of India's greatness is very selective; furthermore, he subscribes to the usual Western slogans: the eternal clichés propagated by a few Christian missionaries and "enlightened secularists" on the Indian caste system. "The Aryans anointed themselves the ruling class (= Brahmins and Kshatriyas), while the poor conquered Dravidians (Harappans), became the slaves, (= Vaishyas and Shudras)". Or: "As they settled among darker aboriginals, the Aryans seem to have laid greater stress than before on purity of blood and class divisions hardened..." (*pp. 36, The Wonder that was India*). Or else this monstrosity: "...In the Vedic period, a situation arose rather like that prevailing in South Africa today, with a dominant fair minority, striving to maintain its purity and its supremacy over a darker majority"... (*pp. 138, The Wonder that was India*). Poor India, being granted the honour by

Basham, of being the founding father of racism! But it is thus that Basham lays the ground for his later theories on what he calls Hindu imperialism.

You quote widely from Koenrad Elst (whom I have interviewed in the past). Isn't Elst -- and for that matter Dr David Frawley and Dr Subhash Kak -- dismissed by some as not serious scholars?

It is very unfortunate that Konrad Elst is not able to publish his writings but in Hindu oriented magazines or publishing houses, for he is not only one of the most thorough and knowledgeable scholars on India, but also, because he is a Westerner, he is able to perceive things that Indians themselves, blinded by two centuries of colonialism and 50 years of so-called secularism, do not see any more. I hope that History will grant him his due place in the fight for Indian Renaissance.

All are very rigorous scholars -- the scope of Elst's knowledge is amazing. But they have been going for a long time against the mainstream thought of this country, which was initiated first by the Britishers and later taken on by Nehru and the intellectual left based in JNU, all of which were predominantly anti-Hindu and which strove to eradicate the genius that was India.

What other books have you written? Do tell me more about them.

I have written *Rewriting Indian History*, published by Vikas. In February *Un autre regard sur l'Inde (A Different look at India)*, will be published in France and Switzerland by Editions du Tricorne and I have just finished a novel called *The last caravan to India* which I hope to publish first in France and later in India, after getting it translated in English.

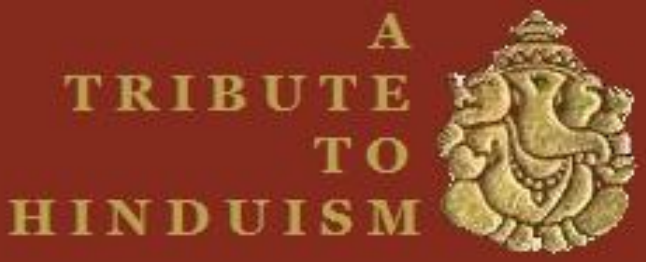
What are you currently working on?

I am working on two books in collaboration with Indian photographer Raghu Rai. The first one is on kalaripayat, which as you may know is the ancestor of all great Asian martial arts, such as judo and karate. This Kerala-based multi-discipline martial art travelled to China and later to Japan with Buddhism and brought to these countries not only martial knowledge, but also medical science which gave birth to acupuncture in China. The other book is about the French influence in India, past and present.

Your views on the discrediting of the Aryan Invasion Theory. Isn't it a bit far-fetched to suggest that in addition to not being invaded, in fact Indian tribes went westwards?

The massacres perpetuated by Muslims in India are unparalleled in history, bigger than the Holocaust of the Jews

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articles on hinduism

The Symbol of Ayodhya
François Gautier
http://www.swordoftruth.com/swordoftruth/articles/revelation/revelation1.html

How many of those who have lambasted so many times the "Hindu fundamentalists" and lamented the destruction of the Babri Masjid mosque as the "death of secularism in India", have been to Ayodhya? (not Faizabad, mind you, which is Ayodhya's twin Muslim city). When one arrived in Ayodhya before the destruction of the mosque, one was struck by the fact that it was a Hindu town "par excellence". More than Benares even, it is dotted everywhere with innumerable temples; it has all these old Hindus houses and this lovely river with its ghats which runs through the lower town. And then, forlorn on the top, there was this lone mosque with its two ugly domes, which looked so out of place and unused, that any one with a right sense -and that includes the Muslims- should see that it was not worth making an issue of. The destruction of the Babri Masjid still evokes such fiery reactions, that the importance of Ayodhya has been totally overlooked: Ayodhya is a symbol, through which two India's are facing each other. And the outcome of their confrontation will shape the future of this country for generations to come.

The first India wants to be secular and unite together through an egalitarian, democratic spirit all the minorities, ethnic groups, religions and people of the country. But the question is: what would be the binding element of this kind of India? Secularism, says the first side. But secularism has a different meaning for each one. For the British, it was a convenient way to divide and rule, by treating each Indian community on par, although some were in minority and others in majority, thereby planting the seeds of separatisms. For the Congress Party, it has always meant giving in to the Muslims' demands, because its leaders never could really make out if the allegiance of Indian Muslims first want to India and then to Islam - or vice-versa. And for India's intelligentsia, its writers, journalists, top bureaucrats, the majority of whom are Hindus, it means, apart from belittling its own religion and brothers, an India which would be a faithful copy of the West: liberal, modern, atheist, industrialized, intellectual and western-oriented.

Moreover, what makes India unique? Certainly not its small elite which apes the West; there are millions of these western clones in the developing world who wear a tie, read the New York Times and swear by liberalism and secularism to save their countries from doom. Nor its modern youth, whom you meet in Delhi's swank parties, who are full of the MTV culture, wear the latest Klein jeans and Lacoste T Shirts, and who in general are useless, fat, rich parasites, in a country which has so many talented youngsters who live in poverty. Not even its political, bureaucratic and judicial system; it's a copy of the British set up, which is not fully adapted to India's unique character and conditions. What then?

The second India which is confronting the other through the Ayodhya issue is, of course, the India

of the Hindus. When Imam Bhukari states that "we (the Mughals) gave everything to this country, its culture, its manners, its arts, and the Hindus by destroying the Babri Masjid showed how little gratitude they have", apart from making a pompous declaration, he proclaims exactly the opposite of the reality. Because the truth is that not only Hinduism is what makes India unique, so different from all the other nations of the world, but it is the single most important influence in Indian history. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, India's Great Sage and Modern Age Avatar: "The inner principle of Hinduism, the most tolerant and receptive of all religious systems, is not sharply exclusive like the religious spirit of Christianity or Islam...it is the fulfilment of the highest tendencies of human civilisation and it will include in its sweep the most vital impulses of modern life.."

And indeed, if you look at India today, you find that Hinduism has permeated, influenced, shaped, every part of this country, every religion, every culture. Be it the Christians who are like no other Catholics of the world, or Indian Muslims, who whatever they may say, are utterly different from their brothers in Saudi Arabia. But Hinduism is too narrow a word, it's a corruption of the original word "Indu", for true Hinduism is Dharma, India's infinite and eternal spiritual knowledge, which took shape into so many varied expressions throughout the ages, be it the Vedantas, Buddhism, or the Arya Samaj and which is today still very much alive in India, particularly in its rural masses, which after all constitute 80% of its population. And the words of the great Sage still echo in our ears: "Each nation is a shakti or power of the evolving spirit in humanity and lives by the principle it embodies. India is the Bharata Shakti, the living energy of a great spiritual conception- and fidelity to it is the very principle of her existence...But we must have a firm faith that India must rise and be great and that everything that happened, every difficulty, every reverse must help and further the end..."

What one has to grasp is that the issue of Ayodhya only makes sense when the immense harm the Muslims did to India is not negated, as indeed it has been and still is today in the official History books in the West - and sadly in India also. The Muslim jehad against Hindus, alas, continues even today, whether in Kashmir, where the last Hindus were made to flee in terror, or in Bangladesh and Pakistan, where the crowds still regularly go on rampage against Hindus and their temples (as told by a Bangladeshi Muslim herself, Talisma Nasreen). It is in this light, that it becomes extraordinary for an impartial observer to see today that when for once, the Hindus wanted to displace, not even to destroy, ONE mosque and rebuild the "temple", which they believe was built in this particular place, for one of their most cherished Gods, the one which is loved universally by all, men, women, children, THEY were treated as rabid fundamentalists. The great Mughals must be laughing all the way down their graves! What a reversal of situation! What a turnabout of history! And when the mosque was destroyed, it evoked such fiery reactions, such pompous, overblown, sanctimonious, holier-than-thou, atrocious, ridiculous, sly and totally undeserved outrage, both within India and in the Western world (who should be the last one to give lessons to India), that the importance of Ayodhya as a symbol has been totally overlooked.

The obvious trap is to think that the demolition of the mosque in Ayodhya is something to gloat about and that it is the duty of all good Hindus to see that other important mosques at Mathura, Vanarasi, or elsewhere, be also razed to the ground; or that all cities with a Muslim name be renamed with a Hindu one. This is not true Hinduism, which has always shown its tolerance and accepted in its fold other creeds and faiths. Indeed a true "Hindu" India will be secular in the correct sense of the term: it will give freedom to each religion, each culture, so that it develops

itself in the bosom of a Greater India, of which dharma, true spirituality, will be the cementing factor.

Nevertheless, the destruction of the Babri Masjid, however unfortunate, has made its point: the occult Mughal hold over Hindu India has been broken and centuries of Hindu submission erased. Hindus have proved that they too can fight

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articles on hinduism

Whose Kumbh is it?
Sagarika Ghose
http://www.indian-express.com/ie/daily/20010201/ied01022.html

I went to the Kumbh Mela as a journalist, thirsting for the extraordinary and the impossible. The spectacle of huge numbers, ganja-crazed trishul-waving Naga Babas and a river of thrilling filth. What a superb opportunity for purple prose! What a moment to demonstrate my metropolitan bafflement at a hot-eyed fervid throng. What picturesque Orientalism I might conjure up with my oh-so-potent art. I might write of the ``capering clowns of karmic comedy", or of ``dreadlocked hot-rodders riding a moksha-highway". I might write of the Irrational Subaltern, the Lunatic Other, the Bizarre Alternative or the Intoxicated Multitude.

But instead of excitement and stupefaction, I found my grandmother sitting on the banks of the Sangam. There she sat, an old woman who looked just like my dead òf40ódidima, with her paan supari spread out in her lap, the familiar smell of dhoop wafting out from her sari, surrounded by the cosy smells of my family pujas. I heard the quiet bells of everyday workaday piety. How she used to whisper ``Durga Durga" as I left for school in the mornings. The bamboo quills that she doled out parsimoniously during Saraswati Puja.

In a million strong crowd, I found little households carrying out their own customary rituals. I saw the remembered practices of faith that are handed down in every family. Amidst the differences, there were many unifying memories of my playful and merry religion. I was almost shocked at our shared inheritance of custom and belief: batasha and agarbatti, payesam and three blades of grass. And I saw them played out on a banana leaf sitting cross-legged on a clammy dusty riverbank, opposite my grandmother. The Irrational Other? The Great Indian Freak Show? But this was granny, whimsical prayer-chanting granny with her small boxes of this and that and her never-ending stories. ``No, no," I wanted to scream at the cameras, ``please don't convert my granny into a freak! Please don't transform these tiny silent beliefs into a demeaning spectacle of the bizarre with a price tag, for a shopping mall."

I saw no clichetically frenzied mob. Instead I saw serious patriarchs and gentle aunts, grave with intimations of mortality. This was no frightening stampeding crowd. Instead, I saw the dignity of the pilgrim in his unsmiling communion with the afterlife and in the struggles to overcome personal tragedy. I saw faces that were introspective, mature with the acceptance of death. ``òf40óAkeli ayee hai, bachchi," a woman offered me marigolds, ``òf40óphool lekar jaa."

Harvard-educated Srivats Goswami, of the Gambhira ashram, asked: ``What is the press doing to the Kumbh? Is the Kumbh a spectacle? Is it a circus of loudspeakers and flashing cameras? The Kumbh is a place of meditation, of courtesy and of affection. The Kumbh is where

you realise that The Impossible is not external to you, it exists side by side with the smallest domestic tasks. Cheek by jowl with our everyday lives, just next to our daily being, churns the vast secret galaxy. You need not seek out the high mountains and deep forests. Just press your hand against the invisible glass, and feel The Impossible, sitting right by you."

And there among the Kumbh families, I too felt the closeness of the Extraordinary. Not in the grotesque images of ``abnormal'' sadhus, but because I saw how easily a magnificent river and an auspicious sun can be bound up in my grandmother's very normal pallu. **I wept that a colonial education has taught me to view the quiet depths of my own family as nothing but ``colourful oddities''.**

(The writer works for Outlook magazine and has authored the novel The Gin Drinkers.)

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Mark Tully pulls out all stops for Hindutva

By Bishwanath Ghosh

The Asian Age - August 27, 1997

The BJP has found a new advocate in Mr Mark Tully, the former BBC correspondent, who feels that Indian civilisation has a Hindu base to it and that Hindus should proclaim their identity with pride.

The party is so thrilled with one of India's famous foreigners endorsing its line that it has devoted seven pages to Mr Tully's views in a recent issue of its mouthpiece, BJP Today.

The former BBC correspondent has expressed these views while addressing the National Hindu Students Forum in Britain. "I believe that Indian has to have some way of expressing its respect for its own civilisation and accepting the fact, and I have said this publicly many times before, that it is, and you can argue, whether there is such a thing as Hinduism or not, scholars will always argue but most Indians feel that there is a Hindu base to this civilisation," says Mr Tully, who has authored several books including No Full Stops in India.

Mr Tully is considered by many in the BJP as more Indian than Indians, and they are extremely happy that the well-known foreign journalist has expressed such an opinion at a time when "many educated Indians were wary of endorsing BJP's Hindutva philosophy."

Mr Tully even comes to the rescue of the BJP: "As soon as you talk about Hinduism in Bharat, you are immediately, and I have had this said to me many times, been accused of or told that you are BJP or RSS or something like that. Now in my view the BJP is a political party.

"But I do profoundly believe that India needs to be able to say with pride, 'Yes, our civilisation has a Hindu base to it.' And for Hindus to be able to say with pride that they are Hindus."

Mr Tully says he was aware that this was the slogan of the RSS in some places, but he still believed that it was "right and proper" for both these things becoming part of India's life.

He opined that the genius of Hinduism, and the very reason of its survival for so long, was that it does not stand up and fight. "It changes and adapts and modernizes and its absorbs and that is the scientific and proper way of going about it as well.

Why is Christianity in so much trouble at the moment? Because it is so difficult for it to adapt," says the celebrated television journalist. Saying that Hinduism would prove to be the religion of the next Millenium. Mr. Tully added it should be proud that there are 125 million Muslims, who can do namaaz whenever they like, and that there are Christians who rejoice that St. Thomas probably came to India and 20 million of whom flood to the churches.

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A vision for revision (History as taught in Pakistan)

By S Gopikrishna

http://www.rediff.com/news/2000/sep/14gopi.htm

The year is 712 AD

As the rays of the sun usher in the morning, a band of valiant soldiers sweep across the farmland on horseback. Behold the frenzied look in their eyes, listen to the hooves of the horses. Observe the gleam of the soldiers' swords by the light of the torches used for illumination and setting villages ablaze.

They rob, but are not plunderers...

They kill, but are not murderers....

They destroy, but are not desecrators...

For they are Allah's chosen warriors. What they destroy is ignorance, what they are ushering in is enlightenment...

Thus, in 712 AD, did history begin...

I can see you scratch your head and ask yourself as to how history can suddenly "begin" at a discrete point in time, but trust me! According to the enlightened scholars writing textbooks in Pakistan, history did begin in 712 AD when Muhammad Bin Qasim's hordes swept into Sindh.

While we poor Indians are in the process of weighing evidence to decide whether the Aryans were indigenous or foreign to India, a brilliant and elegant solution has been found to the question in Pakistan.

The question is simply not worth our time. After all, why bother about anything taking place before the advent of Islam? Anything and everything that happened before that is not worth knowing, remembering or discussing.

Talk about simplistic solutions by simpletons...

Pakistani textbooks and Pakistani "scholars" exemplify the phenomenon of logical skills atrophying because of an overdose of religious instruction. Like the genius who wrote to the Dawn, (a leading Pakistani newspaper) about why the government should destroy all vestiges of Harappan civilisation. According to this savant, all existing archaeological evidence should be destroyed and a sign installed in its place: "Behold the fate of idolaters!"

My only reaction was: "Behold idiocy in its pristine beauty!"

In fact, history as we understand it, is no longer taught at the school level in our neighbouring country. It has been long replaced by something called "Mu'ashrati Ulum" (social studies) and "Mutala'a-I-Pakistan" (Pakistan studies), the latter succeeding the former at the middle school to high school transition. Both form an interesting mosaic of geography, history, religious studies, half-truths, quarter truths, and plain fiction woven together in a tapestry as complex as that of an Iranian carpet minus its charm.

This exceedingly complex analytical technique, patented and propagated in Pakistan, converts a lemon into something as unrecognisable as a melon. A perusal of such textbooks enlightens to the following conclusions, which for some mysterious and unfathomable reason have evaded us simple and straight thinking folks in India:

1. The Congress was founded by Hindus in 1885 for ensuring that India would continue to be in anarchy.

Explanation: Everybody knows that Allan Octavian Hume founded the Congress party. The million dollar question is: "How does he become Hindu?"

Well, you see, the Hindus and the British colluded and intrigued with each other to replace the benevolent Mughal emperors (Yeah, Aurangzeb was very benevolent!) with tyrannical British rule. Given the intimate connections that existed between the Hindu back-stabbers and the British usurpers, it can be safely concluded that they constitute two faces of the same coin. Thus, there is nothing wrong in labelling Hume a Hindu.

The reference to anarchy comes from the fact that India plunged from its "exalted status" of a pillar of the Daar-Al-Islaam (such enlightened countries where Islam reigns supreme) to the lowly Daar-Al-Harb (those good for nothing countries where the governments remain ignorant of Islamic principles) when Bahadur Shah Zafar was forced to make way for the Brits in 1857.

Thus, when the Hindus were intriguing to grab power from the British, they were simply looking to replace one kind of anarchy with another. Thus, anarchy reigns supreme in India

2. Adi Sankaracharya, the Hindu philosopher, was influenced by Islam in propounding his theory of Monism (Advaita).

Well, Islam came to India in 712 AD. Sankaracharya, as we all know, lived for some time in Kashmir which was one of the first places to receive Islamic enlightenment. Ergo, how can Sankaracharya not have been influenced by Islam?

If you are still sceptical, just remember that Hinduism lacks the elegance of Islam's monotheistic tenets. Since monotheism is a feature of Sankaracharya's works, it is evident that he copied them from Islam.

3. It was the low caste Hindus who converted to Islam en masse as a result of the atrocities of the higher castes.

Which begs the question: "Er, ahem...How about those who were forced to convert as a result of their inability to pay the jazia?"

Benazir Bhutto herself suggests on Page 26 of her autobiography Daughter of the East that her ancestors were probably Rajput converts who became Muslims in the 18th century. Now, if the profound revelation about low caste conversions were true, we would have to conclude that the Rajputs were a "low caste" who suffered atrocities at the hands of the higher castes.

If people really did convert to Islam in order to escape the curse of caste, why do we find caste being bandied about in Pakistan even now? An examination of the matrimonial section on page L of the 'Advertiser's Section' of the edition of the Dawn dated August 20, 2000, reveals the services of a certain Mrs Asmat (with a Lahore telephone number) who can be contacted for "compatible matches of educated, beautiful boys of all castes and sects." On the same page, we find another Mrs Naqvi (again with a Lahore telephone number) who specialises in "Syed, Sheikh, Arrain, Rajpoot boys and girls."

Er, I thought Pakistan was an enlightened society where caste was a redundant abomination, which was the lot of us Indian ignoramuses... The Pakistani genius for telling tales and self-promotion in the name of history would leave even the most experienced of advertising executives dumb founded.

The art of story telling has become a cherished and hallowed tradition in Pakistan, spreading its tentacles to the top echelons of government. As an example, we have the former prime minister, the (not quite) Honourable Benazir Bhutto. On pages 26-28 of the aforementioned autobiography, she talks about the exploits of her ancestor, a certain Mir Ghulam Murtaza Bhutto, who was so handsome that "all the women in Sindh fell in love with him, including a young British woman. In those days, it was haraam (forbidden) for a brown-skinned man to fall in love with a white woman." It was this transgression that drew the wrath of the local British army officer, Benazir alleges.

"Col Mayhew heard about this forbidden relationship and sent for him," we learn.

"Mayhew screamed, 'How dare you encourage the affections of a British woman! I'm going to teach you a lesson,' and started to whip him when Murtaza `seized the whip and lashed the colonel instead'."

The narration would certainly make one bristle with seething contempt for British racism. Indeed, patriotism, racial pride and the revenge extracted would warm all our breasts. Who wouldn't cheer when this Murtaza, with an agility belying the best of the Bollywood boys, thrashed the racist Mayhew black and blue?

Very impressive, indeed!

Till you read Professor Stanley Wolpert's version of the same episode as narrated in his Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times. Stanley Wolpert is an authority on the modern history of the Indian subcontinent and has authored the section on modern Indian history in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. He accords Benazir (and her baba, the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto) the unique honour of being named and denounced as liars.

According to the venerable professor, the lady who had set Murtaza's heart on fire was a simple desi, not a goree. Worse, the element of racism so prominent in Benazir's version is overshadowed by simple jealousy in Wolpert's narration. You see, this unnamed desi damsel who warmed

Murtaza Bhutto's heart had been hired by Mayhew for warming his bed. (Excuse my crude expression.)

Not surprisingly, the act of discovering his mistress and Murtaza Bhutto inflagrante delicto amidst their nocturnal trysts made Mayhew create mayhem. The element of patriotism in all the lashing and thrashing alluded to is as strong as melody in a peacock's call. It was the quintessence of a phenomenon accurately captured by the late Diana, Duchess of Windsor: "In a relationship, there is place only for two. Three people involved in a relationship make things a little crowded."

The whole point is, do the Bhuttos have to come up with such cheap exaggerations in order to increase their supposed sex appeal? Worse, do they have to put a patriotic spin on their sex appeal?

Anything goes as long as it serves the purpose of self-promotion. Mind you, it is only the concerns of the readers' attention and article length that prevent me from going beyond exposing the tip of the iceberg.

Well, you now know how Pakistani history works with respect to all periods, ancient, mediaeval or modern. It is a myth-maker's paradise. Revisionism and exaggeration are so commonplace that is difficult to find a book which desists from indulging in the practice. From the humblest to the highest, Pakistani historians possess a collective vision for revision. Indeed revision, as attempted in Indian history books, looks like a languishing molehill when compared to the mighty Pakistani mountain of tall tales.

Our educators and journalists have ignored the Pakistani forest in the process of identifying Indian trees (or should I say, herbs and shrubs) in their search for historical revision. They scream, rave and rant about the way history is being "engineered and manufactured" by the Government of India. Yet, you hear not a whimper or a whisper about revision in Pakistan, a process that has reached its zenith under the watchful and nurturing glances of a half a dozen regimes, starting from Marshal Ayub Khan onwards.

Will any kind soul explain to me as to why our "spokesmen" complain so much about revision in India while turning a Nelson's Eye to the Pakistanis merrily dedicating themselves to historical revision and carving massive mountains of myths in the process?

S Gopikrishna writes on India and on issues of pertinence to Indians from Toronto.

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articles on hinduism

How the American press misrepresents India

By S Gopikrishna

http://www.rediff.com/news/2000/aug/23gopi.htm

How does an American journalist become an expert on India?

He opens his mouth wide open and puts his foot straight in.

"Whaddya speak in India? Gaun-dee?" the bespectacled student asked, ready to take notes.

"Excuse me!" I said, not quite understanding the question.

"Like… Isn't the language of India called Gaun-dee?" he repeated, with the air of a teacher rephrasing a question for a dull student.

"Gandhi! Gandhi isn't a language. Gandhi was a leader." I exclaimed.

"Oh really!" he said, with a quizzical look, "so whaddya speak there? Indian or Indonesian?"

Is the above event real?

Well, a budding journalist, majoring in Asian history and journalism from a renowned mid-western university, had the above conversation with me during an "interview" on India not too long ago. Before I discuss the nuggets penned by our American journalist friends about India, let me digress briefly and share with you an anecdote about their genius at substituting fact with fiction.

In the late forties, an enterprising American journalist journeyed to Bangkok to write an "insightful" article about that country of white elephants and spicy curries. His reports brimmed with information about the most exotic happenings conceivable -- of human beings who cohabited and consorted with the apes, underdressed women who lived on a staple diet of rice and curried ants' eggs and fanatically worshipped the royal family of Thailand. The royal family always posed for pictures without the queen mother because -- hold your breath -- she (the queen mother) had a bushy tail!

The news understandably caused a stir among journalists in the US. An army of journalists soon lined up at the Thai embassy for visas and tickets to discovering exotica that would catapult them to fame and a fabulous fortune. The puzzled embassy officials were aghast when they discovered the reasons for the spate in visa applications. They issued a statement to set the record straight -- the queen mother couldn't be seen in public because she had passed away ages ago.

The moral of the anecdote: Anything is right about countries where people aren't white.

Half a century later, have there been significant changes in the quality of reporting? As an example, let us examine the American (ie. North American) newspapers' reporting of facts (elementary facts) about Hinduism.

In 1994, at the onset of the plague in Surat, *The Washington Post* propounded the following hypothesis: Since rats are the cause of the epidemic, is there a specific reason for not killing the rats? Well, rats are considered to be so holy by Hindus that they would prefer to kill themselves over the rats.

Subsequent enquiries proved that the only grain of truth in this tall tale was that a certain deity called the goddess of rats, is worshipped in a remote temple in Rajasthan. This little fact was expanded, exaggerated and extrapolated into a conclusion that sounds comical, stupid and insulting.

Since nothing succeeds like sensationalism, the other American newspapers followed suit in reporting the incident, garnishing and flavouring the "Hindus worship rats" story till a mountain of Himalayan proportions had been built from the molehill. Despite numerous clarifications and demands for an apology, American newspapers had neither the courtesy nor the decency to issue one.

The venerable ***New York Times*** informed us in 1998 (in the course of its discussion of India's nuclear bomb) that the Bhagavad Gita venerates Shiva, the destroyer among the Trinity! Since the *Bhagavad Gita* is available on the Internet, search the text and discover for yourself how many times the word "Shiva" appears. In the 700 *shlokas* of the Bhagavad Gita, Shiva is mentioned 700 minus 700 times.

Not to be outdone, ***The Chicago Tribune*** declared Krishna to be a "goatherd" in January this year. A goatherd, eh! Given that India and snake-charmers are inseparable in the American imagination, I suppose we should thank ourselves that Krishna wasn't called a "snake-head". (Smugglers bringing Chinese immigrants on those rickety ships that appear periodically on the west coast are called "snake-heads".)

On Christmas Eve last year, ***The Toronto Star*** decided, (I suppose), that ten hands would prove a little unwieldy for goddess Durga and "downsized" her hands to a manageable eight -- "eight-armed fierce Hindu goddess Durga" was their description of the goddess.

Instead of heaping ridicule on them, why can't you write letters and correct the record? you ask. If you write a letter to the editors of any of these publications, consider yourself honoured if they condescend to reply, let alone correct the error. Since arrogance and ignorance are inseparable, your letter will probably end up in the shredder instead of the editor's desk. No matter how many letters you send them, you will discover that they are firm believers in the adage -- "Silence is golden."

Well, if you argue that accuracy in reporting on religions is difficult since grasping the finer points of another's faith is all but impossible, let us examine an issue far easier to comprehend: The geography of India. After all, the only "tool" that you need to study and understand the geography of India is an atlas.

Well, if an "experienced" journalist and a supposed South Asia specialist at that, declared to you that the Chinese got within 300 miles of Calcutta in 1962, what would you do?

Would you:

1. Ask for his mailing address so that you can send him a map of India?

2. Roll your eyes, cluck your tongue and ask him, "Will you ever learn?"

3. Encourage him to explore employment in other professions?

4. Nominate him for a prestigious award recognising journalistic achievement?

It turns out that the correct answer is **4.**!

Sounds crazy?

Well, let us examine the following excerpt from a book called ***War at the top of the world -- Clash for mastery of Asia*** written by a so-called "expert" on South Asia, a certain Eric Margolis. On page 214, we find the following:

"South Asia's rivers flow down from the Tibetan plateau. The headwaters of India's most important rivers and principal source of the groundwater that nourishes the continent including the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Indus, Chenab, Ravi, Yamuna, Gandak and the Saptakosi, to name a few, rise in Tibet. China has gained a death-grip over India's main supply of water."

Well, when I consulted three different atlases, I found that the headwaters of the Ganga and the Yamuna (Gangotri and the Yamunotri respectively) were in the Himalayan region of Uttar Pradesh. As for the Chenab, it originates in Himachal Pradesh, flows south and then north-west into Kashmir before entering Pakistan. The Gandak originates in central Nepal and flows into India. Since when have Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and central Nepal amalgamated themselves into Tibet?

China gaining a death-grip over India's main supply of water or no, Margolis should certainly work hard at getting out of the death-grip of misinformation.

In a discussion on the Indo-China war on page 132, he reveals to us that the Chinese captured Bomdila, which is 300 miles from Calcutta. Consulting any map would make it very clear that any point 300 (as the crow flies) from Bomdila would leave you somewhere in Assam which in turn is hundreds of miles from Calcutta.

Given that the book is pregnant with factual errors such as the ones discussed, it becomes necessary to ask if Margolis can see straight, let alone think straight.

And how is the book released? To rave reviews.

How is the author of this tome rewarded? Well, he wins the SAJA (South Asian Journalists Association) Award for his writing on India.

Before I move on, let me highlight just one more nugget that I culled from this remarkable text. On page 205 of the aforementioned book, a discussion on nuclear technology enlightens us to the

fact that Tritium is an "element". Given his "discovery", shouldn't we write a joint letter to the nomination committee for the chemistry Nobel Prize requesting that Professor *Funda-gol* (oops, I meant Margolis) is to be rewarded for his efforts?

Of course, no discussion in this context is quite complete without referring to the exalted empress of erroneous embellishments -- **Madame Barbara Crossette.** Never averse to overlooking reality when it challenges her preconceived notions, she is the kind of journalist who manages to be "on the spot" in Kashmir, Karnataka and Kerala without getting facts correctly.

Her magnum opus on India, ***India -- Facing the challenges of the twenty-first century*** has more holes in it than a slice of Swiss cheese. A couple of the more obvious flaws are given below:

Her paeans of praise to Inder Gujral's performance as information minister before the Emergency -- his (alleged) ushering in of free speech, upholding high quality of reporting and not succumbing to political pressure -- overlook the fact that AIR came to be called "All Indira Radio" during his tenure. Gujral's being proclaimed the beacon of free speech is as pathetic as her allegations about India's "stealing" foreign technology to build bombs. Crossette also tears to bits the Communist Party of India (Marxist) -- which is Moscow supported. Would Comrade Jyoti Basu be amused if accused of clutching Kremlin's skirts?

Most (if not all) American reporters working in India, look up to Crossette as a role-model in view of her power and influence. She has thereby facilitated a perpetual contest amongst American journalists working in/on India for producing gibberish.

Welcome to American reporting on India -- a factory of fiction where the *dramatis personae* are more convinced of their expertise than anyone else.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Mythology as Weapon
By Frank Morales
http://www.hinduweb.org/home/dharma_and_philosophy/dharma/main.htm

The related terms "myth", "mythology", "mythological", etc., have had an interesting history and a very pointed polemic use. That the terms are rife with very negative connotations is doubted by very few. The way the terms are used today both within academia, as well as by the general public, is to denote something which is untrue, false, "primitive" (i.e., not European), a lie. Just the other day during a visit to the dentist's office, I saw a pamphlet on the table called "The Myths About Sexually Transmitted Diseases". The ultimate question that we, as committed Hindus, all need to ask ourselves is do we really want such powerfully negative terms also associated with the sacred stories, teachings and history of Sanatana Dharma?

Polemically speaking, one culture's "myth" is another culture's sacred history...and visa versa. The academic field of the study of "mythological" literature was started by 18th century European Classicists who took their misconceptions about their own Greco-Roman pre-Christian religious and cultural heritage and attempted to apply them to all contemporary non-Christian cultures - including that of Bharat. These founders of "mythological" studies were convinced, as is unarguably evident in their writings, that the realm of religious story could be clearly demarcated into two radically distinct camps:

1) "Myth", that is the primitive stories about gods, goddesses, spirits, demons, magic and mysticism etc. found throughout all of the indigenous and non-Biblical cultures of the world - all certainly no more than ignorant "pre-scientific" attempts by these heathen savages (THEIR words, not mine) to explain such mysteries as natural weather phenonema.

2) "History", that is Biblical literature and everything proceeding such literature to be found throughout the history of Europe and the post-Columbian Americas.

There is the wonderful saying that we have all heard, that "history" is written by the victors. Consequently, the stories of Noah's Ark, Abraham, Moses, the Judges, David, etc. are unquestioningly accepted by most European historians - and sadly by many Hindu historians! - as being incontrovertible and established fact. This, even though the evidence for these supposed historical facts are in many cases no stronger, or even less so, than the evidence supporting the historicity of the ancient stories of Sanatana Dharma. What these Western scholars and their Westernized Indian counterparts called the "mythical" Sarasvati River, for example, was discovered to be a concrete geological fact in our century by satellite photography; Krishna's "mythical" city of Dvaraka was, likewise, discovered off the coast of Gujarat about two decades

ago (anyone out there have a crane?).

Despite these facts, the Puranas, Itihasas and traditional histories of Bharat, unlike the Biblical "myths", are relegated by modern Western scholars to the misty realm of "myth". Bluntly: primitive fables. If you've guessed that what has brought this situation about has been nothing less than European racism and intellectual colonialism, coupled with a strong element of Hindu inferiority complex, you've guessed right! The terms "myth", "mythology", "mythological", etc., have been used as a powerful weapon by anti-Hindu bigots for decades as a way of delegitimizing Hindu beliefs and the Hindu way of life.

Whether such unscholarly use of these otherwise legitimate terms will be allowed to continue as a weapon against Hinduism is up to each and every person presently reading this. Such terms should be absolutely anathema to every sincere and self-respecting Hindu when speaking about the sacred stories of Sanatana Dharma. Our stories are not "myths". If we truly respect our religion, our culture, our selves, we must never use these terms again. Rather, we should do what many other formally oppressed non-Christian cultures have recently done (such as many Native American tribes), and call these "Sacred Stories". We can later, as informed Hindus, debate over the meaning of these stories - whether they are literal history (which many very clearly are), or meant to be taken allegorically, or whatever. But, please, let us all agree not to ever degrade our Sacred Stories again by calling them "myth".

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Bhagavata Purana's Eternal Krishna

ACHARYA SHRIVATSA GOSWAMI

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?art_id=3704838

KRISHNA Dvaipayan Vyas was the great scholar and saint who had compiled the Vedic hymns, recorded the aphorisms on philosophy and metaphysics known as Vedanta Sutra, and finished the great epic of victory called the Mahabharata.

One day, the wandering sage Narad happened to meet Vyas and was not happy to see him looking forlorn. He asked, ''Why are you looking so lost, even after your great achievements?''

''A great achievement — that is precisely what I am looking for'', replied Vyas, ''I am not satisfied yet''. Narad advised him to sing the stories of Krishna, and Vyas began writing the Bhagavata Purana. In the Vishnu Purana, the Harivamsa Purana, and above all, the Mahabharata, the stories of Krishna had been sung by Vyas in considerable detail. Why, then, was Vyas dissatisfied? The answer lies in the Bhagavata Purana itself, where the essential Krishna is the one who dwells eternally in Vraja, the land of the cowherds around Mathura. The Mahabharata is concerned with Krishna outside Vraja, but Krishna as the embodiment of bliss manifests essentially in the lilas, plays and pastimes of Vraja.

Krishna's literary manifestation, rooted in Vyas's work, gives us his innumerable manifestations: In rituals and dramas, in paintings and songs, in frescoes and dances, and many other media.

The Bhagavata Purana and other works tell us stories of how the divine is always trying to break away from its divine fetters. When you are pervasive and omnipresent, how can you have the freedom to play? Being omnipresent, you are constantly watched by those who adore you, worship you and serve you. You need a disguise. The Lord tried several disguises in different animal forms, but those forms restricted his play, his lila, because with them it was not possible to relate to the other important partner of the game, humanity. He tried the trick of disguising himself as the half-animal and half-human Narasimha, but instead of getting the best of both worlds he got the worst: The animal kingdom and human reality were both alienated. Then it came to him; ''If I wish to play fully with my creation, and humanity is in the centre of that creation, I have to relate to it as human''. He tried various human incarnations, but in each of them he assumed the form of some special person: King, ascetic, or scholar. In these forms, a complete relationship with common humanity was not possible.

Krishna realised this and resolved that if he wanted to play, and to play fully, he needed a good playground and good playmates. In the best game, the players lose any other identity, and act only

as players in the game. Playing can be of two kinds, one within the rules and one without. When you start playing you have to follow the rules and the format, but when you grow as a player you play spontaneously, and the rules evolve as you play along. Krishna, when he came on a 'playing vacation' to Vraja, played both ways. The game of the Lord in the recreational weekend of this incarnation was to keep order in the arena called creation. Krishna came to Vraja, which was not a formal playground but a perfectly wild setting for an unwatched, carefree vacation. But since Krishna is also the supreme Godhead, he could not shirk his responsibilities. As he told his friend Arjun, he had to look after the welfare of his beloved devotees, and remove all the troubles and obstacles that get in the way of a good life for humanity. Even while vacationing in Vraja, he had to keep up his job of house-keeping. So Krishna as supreme Godhead took care of all the 'worldly' difficulties, the ones that create the problems in the world, and he did it playfully.

Krishna selected his playground and playmates very carefully. He was born in the royal family of Mathura, because he had promised Vasudev and Devaki that he would become their son, but as soon as this promise was fulfilled he acted on his priorities. He had not come down to be a king once again, so within moments of his appearance he started working on his agenda. The gods and the devotees — his parents Vasudev and Devaki — spoiled his vacation by worshipping him as God. So he moved from the formal world of grandeur and worship to the informal setting of play and love. When Vasudev carried Krishna through a storm, out of the palace and across the river to the home of the cowherd Nandababa, whatever speck of the dust of grandeur Krishna carried on his feet was washed away by the overflowing stream of love called Yamuna.

He had taken a vow that in this incarnation his only activities would be to love and play — activities where grandeur is a barrier

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articles on hinduism

Indian shooting squad targets British for 'humiliating' treatment at games
http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0%2C3604%2C546484%2C00.html

When India's crack shooting squad arrived in Bisley for the Commonwealth shooting championships, they expected a friendly reception. Luxurious rooms, perhaps, vegetarian food thoughtfully laid on, and a few kind words from their British hosts.

But last night the Indian shooters described their 10-day stay in Britain as "humiliating" and said they would lodge a formal complaint with the competition organisers.

When the squad arrived at Bisley, Surrey, home of the national shooting centre, two weeks ago they discovered many of their delegation had been allocated "shabby" rooms only 6.5ft square. There were no towels, and one delegate said: "hardly room to hang up my coat".

Worse was to follow. At meal times surly British canteen staff allegedly refused to give the Indian marksmen second helpings of food. "We had to literally plead to get something to eat," India's national coach, Sunny Thomas, said. "They insisted we say 'please' even though many of us didn't speak English. If we were five minutes late they refused to serve us. It was belittling."

Mr Thomas also said a waiter informed him at a communal evening barbecue: "This food is not for Indians."

The Indian team also claims British officials treated them condescendingly. When Indian marksman Manavjid Singh accidentally left his gun under a tree, the officials demanded a written apology.

"The whole thing was completely blown out of proportion. I have never had that feeling before from any other country I have visited in 16 years of competitions," Baljit Singh Sethi, the secretary general of India's National Rifle Association, said last night.

Mr Sethi said that as the event went on, the mood became increasingly acrimonious. The Indian team won 13 gold, six silver and eight bronze medals - more than anyone else. Recalling the day when India took all four gold medals at stake, Mr Sethi said: "Every time the Indian flag went up, the murmurs increased; I could make out from their [the British officials'] expressions they were appalled at the clean sweep."

Mr Sethi finally complained to Graham Hudson, the Commonwealth shooting championship's New Zealand president. He told him: **"They [the British] still feel that the Indians are their slaves."**

Last night a spokesman for the National Small-bore Rifle Association said the competition's

organisers were "surprised" and "disappointed" by the Indian team's allegations.

"We are astonished. They were looked after the same as everyone else. Twenty-two nations were here. India was the most successful team."

The spokesman added that no complaints were made while the Indian team was at Bisley. "The accommodation that they used was left in a terrible state. Bedding and duvets were stolen as well as cutlery and some other things."

The championships at Bisley, which is owned by the Ministry of Defence, were run by the Small-bore Rifle Association together with two other shooting organisations, the National Rifle Association and the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association. The NRA has close links with the Countryside Alliance and says its aim is "to promote and encourage marksmanship" throughout what it calls "the Queen's dominions". The NRA describes several of its fixtures as "imperial meetings".

Last night Mr Thomas vehemently denied that his squad had stolen anything. "Everything was kept intact," he said. The team would now lodge a formal complaint, he said.

Mansher Singh, India's top marksman, who arrived back in Delhi on Sunday, said: "It happens only in Britain."

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A Temple for the Goddess of Anima

By K M Gupta

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?art_id=22085884

Some way off the old Calicut-Madras Trunk Road there is a village called Thacha-nattu-kara. And in this village, there is a temple dedicated to Jyeshta, the goddess of misfortune. It is the only one of its kind in the whole of India.

Jyeshta in feminine gender means ‘elder sister’. She is the elder sister of Mahalakshmi, the goddess of good fortune. While Lakshmi is the goddess of riches, her elder sister is the deity of poverty, indigence, odium, reproach and ignominy. Her very name is a term of reproach. Lakshmi is the idol of the auspicious and the propitious, of all that is desirable in life, whereas her sister, Jyeshta, is the symbol of all that is detestable, damnable and loathsome.

The two sisters are born rivals. Where one is in, the other is out. So the Indian household is engaged in a constant fight to keep Lakshmi in and Jyeshta out. Waste, dirt, squalor, slovenliness, indolence, idleness, disorder, anger and all such undesirable things show the presence of Jyeshta in the house. Until she is turned out, Lakshmi wouldn’t enter and stay. In some houses, it is a custom for the lady of the house to open the back door first, send Jyeshta out and then open the front door and let Lakshmi in.

Once Lakshmi and Jyeshta stood at the doorstep quarrelling over which one of them was more beautiful. When the householder appeared, the two sisters asked him to be the judge. The clever householder, wary of displeasing either of them, hedged: ‘‘You, Lakshmi, are more beautiful when you enter, and you, Jyeshta, are more beautiful when you exit.’’ Both were pleased. Lakshmi entered the house and Jyeshta exited proudly.

Lakshmi is Sridevi, the goddess of the blessed and Jyeshta is Moodevi, the goddess of the accursed and the damned. Then how is it that this persona non grata among the Hindu pantheon was able to find a house of worship for her in Thachanattukara?

Lakshmi is known to be chanchala — unsteady and fleeting. She is also dukhamoola — the cause of misery and misfortune. Lakshmi is the source of happiness only in appearance. In truth, underneath, she is the source of misery. The fight for Lakshmi moolah, dukhamoola) debases and often inhumanises man. The world loves and worships Lakshmi because it is cursed to love and worship appearance. Lakshmi is the goddess of appearance.

Jyeshta is poor and indigent, but she has strength of character. She is not chanchala. She is not seductive. She discounts appearance. She is steady and unflinching. She has grit. It is the strength

of the soul that gives man real strength and happiness, not moolah. Beneath the level of appearance, Jyeshta is the giver of real strength and happiness. Actually, the roles of Lakshmi and Jyeshta are interchanged. In the deep spiritual sense, Lakshmi is Jyeshta and Jyeshta is Lakshmi. The wise worship Jyeshta, not Lakshmi.

Lakshmi is the goddess of persona and Jyeshta is the deity of anima. Jyeshta has no worshippers in the world because the world worships only persona or appearance and glamour — and not anima or inner soul.

The Jyeshta temple in Thachanattukara is a unique symbol of the Indian psyche, which is inexclusive by nature. Hence it is the 'Hindu Sphinx' to the West. India's Sanatana Dharma is in fact a miniature representation of nature where it is 'All In, Naught Out'. In nature everything has its role and place. So is it in Sanatana Dharma. It accommodates all. It expands to take up all. It extends from advaita to the most grotesque forms of worship. It extends from dhyana to animal sacrifice. It ranges from passionate bhakti to arch atheism. It extends from the worship of Lakshmi to the worship of Jyeshta. The Jyeshta shrine is a fine symbolism of India's anima.

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The Rigveda: Widows don't have to burn

By O. P. Gupta

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In August, 2002, one case of committing sati and two failed attempts to commit sati in Madhya Pradesh were reported by the media.

Reports also appeared that the Rajasthan high court allowed prayers within premises of Rani Sati Mandir of Jhunjhunu district, but prohibited organising fairs, distribution of pamphlets and performing chunri ceremony at the temple till final orders.

Some people assert that richa X 18.7 (seventh richa of sukta 18 of chapter ten) of the Rigveda commands a Hindu widow to mount on the pyre of her deceased husband. In fact, the word vidhwa (widow) does not independently occur in this richa at all. So how can this richa be related to widows?

The word vidhwa does appear in many other richas of the Rigveda. One website quotes Kane's translation of this richa as, "Let these women, whose husbands are worthy and living enter the house with ghee applied as corrylium (to their eyes). Let these wives first step into the pyre, tearless without any affliction and well adorned." From the moment of death of her husband, a woman is no more called "a wife" but a widow. So the phrase "these wives" in the above translation of Kane cannot be interpreted to refer to widows."

In fact, sukta 18 commands a Hindu widow to return to the world of living beings; the Rigveda confers on her all the properties of her deceased husband. The third richa (X 18.3) commands "May those who are living remain separate from the dead..." (Rigveda Samhita by H.H. Wilson and Bhashya of Sayana edited by Ravi Prakash Arya and K.K. Joshi). Dr Wendy D. O'Flaherty, Ph.D., in her book, Rigveda (Penguin Classics, page 52) mentions, "Those who are alive have now parted from the dead." Shri Ram Sharma Acharya of Bareilly in his Rigveda (in Hindi) translates, "Mritak ke pass se jeevit manushya laut aavey..." This command of Rigveda to leave behind the dead is equally applicable to Hindu widows as they are also living.

The English translation of the seventh richa (X 18.7) as given by H.H. Wilson etc. is,

"Let these women who are not widows, who have good husbands, enter (anointed) with butter. Let women without tears, decorated with jewels, first proceed to the house." Shri Radhakrishna Shrimali and Smt. Ashalata Upadhaya of Jodhpur in their book Rigveda (Diamond Pocket books, page 156) give similar interpretations of X 18.7 and X 18.8. Thus, different authors from different places vouch that richa X 18.7 does not refer to widows at all. What this richa says in a nutshell is that, married women should be first (among others) to return to their homes.

The eighth richa (X 18.8) specifically commands a Hindu widow to return alive to her home. H.H. Wilson translates: "Rise woman, and go to the world of living beings; come, this man near whom you sleep is lifeless; you have enjoyed this state of being the wife of your husband, the suitor who took you by the hand." Here again, it is confirmed that X 18.8 actually commands a Hindu widow to return to the world of living beings. Also, this very richa confers upon her full right on the house of her deceased husband (apne putradi aur ghar). In 1995, the Supreme Court interpreted Section 14 (1) of the Hindu Succession Act to the effect that a Hindu widow has full ownership rights over properties she inherits from her deceased husband. The Supreme Court said that the objective was to wipe out disabilities imposed by Hindu shastras. The Supreme Court thus reasserted rights conferred on widows under richa X 18.8.

According to Acharya Sayana, it is the first six richas of sukta 16 of the chapter 10 of the Rigveda (X 16.1 to 6) which are to be recited at funeral pyres; and, none of these six richas either call for burning of widows or make any reference to widows. I would like to draw the attention of readers to richa X 40.8 of the Rigveda which praises Ashwin gods for protecting a widow. It shows gods were praised for protecting widows. How could gods go to protect widows, and, thus act against the Rigveda if the Rigveda had actually commanded burning of widows? Another richa, X 40.2, may come as a complete surprise to many Hindus. H. H. Wilson translates it: "Where are you, Ashwins, by night? Where are you by day? Where do you sojourn? Where do you dwell? Who brings you into his presence in the same place (of sacrifice) as on her couch a widow (brings) her husband's brother, as a woman (brings) her husband (to her)." Thus, the Rigveda not only sanctioned survival of a widow but also her living with her devar with full dignity and honour in the family. So it expressly sanctioned widow marriage.

The third chapter of the Rigveda is considered the oldest part of the Rigveda. Richa III 31.1 commands that a son-less father accepts the son of his daughter as his own son. That is, all properties of a son-less father shall be inherited by the son of his daughter. Richa III 31.2 commands that if parents have both son and a daughter, the son performs holy acts of pindadaan (after death of father) and the daughter has to be enriched with gifts (rindhan, that is, to be made wealthy). Richa II 17.7 also attests share of a daughter in the property of her father.

Those who misinterpret the Rigveda to say that it sanctions sati do this mischief by misspelling the last word of richa X 18. 7 as "yomiagne." The last word of this richa is actually "yomiagre." Thus, there is no richa in Rigveda calling for widow burning. Veda, Ramayana and Gita are the three supreme scriptures of Hindus.

All others (like Brahmanas, Upanishads, Puranas, Dharmashastras, Sutras, etc.) are just commentaries, explanatory notes or stories written by individuals. As commentaries written on the Constitution of India cannot override the articles of the Constitution of India, similarly, commentaries or explanations on Vedas by individuals cannot supersede richas of Vedas or the Ramayana or Gita. In the Ramayana, everyone knows that after the death of King Dasharatha, his wives were never asked to step into the pyre of Dasharatha. Rather, they lived in family with full honour and Ram always bowed his head before his widowed mothers with full respect. In the Mahabharata, Kunti, mother of the Pandavas did not commit sati. Thus, there is no command in the Ramayana or in Gita to commit sati.

Over the centuries, relatives have been murdering relatives for property. This will continue in the coming centuries too. Greed is human nature. If greedy people incite a widow to commit suicide on the pyre of her husband, let us not say or believe that widow burning is sanctified by the Rigveda or by Hinduism. Richa X 18.3 commands a Hindu widow to separate from the dead and richa X 10.8 commands her to return alive to her children and her home. For their own empowerment, Hindu women should to remember the seven richas viz (II 17.7), (III 31.2) (X 18.3) (X l8.8) (X 40.2) and X 40.8) to assert and claim their status and rights.

(O.P. Gupta is ambassador of India to Finland).

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Caste and Bhagawat Gita - Contributed to this site By Ambassador O P Gupta



Supporters of casteism oftenly quote two slokas viz. (IV.13) and (XVIII.41) of Shrimad Bhagwat Gita to support four castes by birth. Let us examine. In sloka (IV.13) Lord Krishna says: "Chaturvarnyma mayaa sristam gunkarma vibhagsah" i.e. four orders of society created by Me according to their Guna (qualities/behaviour) and Karma (profession/work/efforts).

Lord Krishna does not say guna and karma of previous life. In sloka (XVIII.41) Lord Krishna says "Brahmana Kshatriya visham sudranam cha paramtapa, karmani pravibhaktani svabhavaprabhavaigunaih."

It means people have been grouped into four classes according to their present life karma (profession/work) and svabhava (behaviour). `The division of labour into four categories - Brahman, Ksatriya, Vaishya and Sudra - is also based on the Gunas inherent in peoples' nature`. Had this division been based on birth, Lord Krishna would have naturally used phrase 'Janmani pravibhaktani' in the very shloka (XVIII.41).

In sloka (XVIII.42), Lord Krishna prescribes duties (karma) which one must do in order to qualify as a Brahman i.e. among other duties (karma), he must have studied Vedas and must teach Vedas to others. Thus, if a person has neither studied Veda, nor teaches Veda to others, he is not a Brahman.

Brahman categorisation is an acquirement through efforts like present day degrees of MA, MBBS etc. A teacher's son cannot be called a teacher by birth, a General's son is not a general by birth, son of an engineer is not an engineer by birth, son of an IFS officer cannot be called an IFS officer by birth.

Can he? Readers may note here Lord Krishna has clearly commanded that Hinduism is a missionary religion as sloka (XVIII.42) casts a duty on Brahmans to teach & propagate Vedas to others. Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar is the first writer who struck me asserting that Hindusim is a missionary religion (Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission, Dhananjay Keer, page 270).

In slokas (XVIII.68) and (XVIII.69) Lord Krishna has again cast missionary duties on his devotees to preach His gospel all over the globe. RV (X.191) and AV (III.30) also impose missionary duties on Hindu priests to bring all under harmony i.e.under one flag.

Under Islamic law, anyone who attempts to convert a Muslim into a Kafir has to be killed. Feroz Shah Tughlak (1351-88) ordered to burn alive those Brahmans who tried to convert Muslims into Hinduism. In view of this Islamic capital sentence, Hindu priests perhaps permanently gave up missionary zeal. It was restarted by Arya Samaj but during the British rule as 'suddhi.'

Following are the two missionary shlokas of Gita:

(Gita: XVIII.68) He who, offering the highest love to Me, preaches the most profound gospel of the Gita among My devotees, shall come to Me alone; there is no doubt about it. Gita: XVIII.69: (Among men there is none who does Me a more loving service than he; nor shall anyone be dearer to Me on the entire globe than he.)

In sloka (X.20) Lord Krishna says 'ahamatama gudakesa sarvabhutaa sayasthitah' i.e. `Arjuna! I am the universal self seated in the hearts of all beings.` Here, Lord neither excludes sudra from `all beings` nor excludes Himself from being in hearts of sudra. In sloka (XVIII.61) Lord says `eshwarah sarvabhutaanaam hraddesearjuna tisthati` i.e. Arjuna! God abides in the heart of all living beings.

Again, sudras are not excluded. In sloka (XIV.4) Lord Krishna says 'of all embodied beings Arjuna, prakrti or nature is the conceiving Mother, while I am the seed giving Father.' Thus, Lord Krishna says that he is as much Father of sudras as he is Father of any other Hindu.

In sloka (XVI.18) Lord Krishna says: "Given over to egotism, brute force, arrogance, etc. they hate Me dwelling in their own bodies as well as those of others." Thus, Lord Krishna instructs that a Hindu must not hate others Hindus as he is there in bodies of all Hindus so Gita prohibits untouchability.

In sloka (XVI.19) Lord says "These haters, sinful, cruel and vilest among men, I cast (them) again and again into demonical yonies (wombs)." In sloka (XVI.20) Lord again curses Manu supporters that such Hindus never attain Me (i.e. moksha): "Failing to reach Me, Arjuna, these stupid souls are born life after life in demoniac wombs (asura yoni) and then verily sink down to a still lower plane."

Gita: XVIII.71: In sloka (XVIII.71), Lord Krishna opens His gates for all Hindus including sudras when he says "The man who hears holy Gita with reverence, he too shall reach happy world (shreshtha ewam shubh lok) of the virtuous (punyatmas). So how can Manusmriti or Gautam sutra or anything ban Sudras from listening to Vedas and Gita? In sloka (V.18) Lord says "The wise (who desire to achieve moksha) look with the same eye (samadarshi) on a Brahmana endowed with learning and culture, a cow and pariah (chandal) too." Therefore, those who look down upon sudra are neither wise nor can they achieve moksha.

Shrimad Valmiki Ramayan also says whosoever including sudra reads it will achieve greatness and get rid of all sins. Valmiki Ramayana: 1.1.98-100) Thus, Vedas, Ramayana and Gita confer authority on sudras to possess and read these.

In Ramayan, Lord Rama has Himself set following two lessons for all Rambhaktas Hindus which we witness every year in Ramlilas but never follow in our practical lives so we were defeated by foreigners. (For a comparision, see how steadfastly muslims adhere to and follow examples set by Prophet in Sunnah). Ravana was a grandson of risi Pulatsya. He was an expert on Vedas too. So, he was a Brahimin by birth under Manu definition as well as a Brahimin (educated) by qualification (veda-gyata) but he and most of his family members were killed by Lord Rama for their wrong doings.

So, the first lesson of Ramayana is that everyone (irrespective of his caste) is equal before law. Lord Rama visited Shabri, called her a mother (mata); ate food from her hands and washed feet of Nisadraj.

Lord Rama lived for years among vanvasi (tribals). So, the second lesson of Ramayana is that a true Rambhakta should never discriminate against SC/ST/Dalit Hindus, should never hesitate to visit and dine with them. See, Mahatma Gandhi always followed mansa, vacha and karmana both these two lessons of Ramayana and he became a Yug Purus.

Many SC/ST/Dalit Hindus are not even aware of rich contributions made by their ancestors to the three supreme Hindu scriptures. To cite just a few:

(i) Risi Kavas Ilusu was revealed Suktas (X.30) (X.31) (X.32) and (X.33) of Rigveda and sloka 453 of Samveda. Risi Ilusu Aksova mojvan was revealed Sukta (X.34) of Rigveda. Both, under current Manusmriti definition were sudra.

(ii) In Tandya Brahman (14.66) risi Vatsa has been called a sudra-putra. Revelations to risi Vatsa are there in Rigveda, (VIII.6) (VIII.11), Samveda (8,20,137,143, etc) and Yaj (IV.16-36), (VII.40), (XXVI.15).

(iii) Risi Kaksivat was son of risi Dirghatamas by a sudra maid servant (Brihaddevata IV.24.25). Risi Kaksivat was revealed many richas in RV (I.119 to 125).

(iv) Maharisi Vedvyas compiled all richas into four Vedas in the format currently available. He also composed Mahabharat, Shrimad Bhagwat Gita and all the Puranas. He was born to Satyawati daughter of a fisherman by risi Parasar. He was of dark complexion (Krishna Dwaipayan). Thus, as per Manusmriti definition, he was a dalit Hindu/Varna-sankar by birth. As we know, Kauravas and Pandavas were descendants of this Satyawati through Vedvyasa. But, Kauravas and Pandavas are accepted as Kshatriyas not on basis of birth but on the basis of their occupations (as rulers/kings).

(v) Maharishi Mahidasa Aitereya, a Maharastrian Sudra (perhaps a Mahar), composed Aitereya Brahman and chapters I, II & III of Aitereya Aryanaka. His mother was a maid named Itara.

(vi) Maharisi Valmiki who composed Valmiki Ramayan was not a Brahimin by birth.

Thus, no one has right to deny free access to SC/ST/Dalit Hindus to what their ancestors have contributed, nor, should one give up or run-away from his ancestral heritage on teasings by others. One does not give up his ancestral properties on false presentations/forged documents.

The writer is currently Ambassador of India to Finland. The article are personal views of the

author; and, not that of the Govt. of India.

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The futility of religious conversions - Contributed to this site by Ambassador O P Gupta



Horrible and brutal lynching of five dalit Hindus in Duliana, Jhajhar (Haryana) in Oct. 02, 2002 and simmering tensions in Chakwara near Jaipur on use of a village pond attracted a number of articles either lamenting or accusing someone.

In wake of these, articles justifying conversions of dalit Hindus also appeared and group conversions into Islam, Christianity and Buddhism were organised at Jhajhar and at Selaiyur (Chennai, 6th Dec., 2002). On 28th Nov., 2002, SC/ST Commission reported that Duliana lynching was not based on caste considerations demolishing main plank of conversion lobby. Religion and conversion should be private matters like right to choose partners where State has no role but only so far as these private rights are exercised privately at private places.

Group conversions organised with fanfare at public places are not sanctioned by Constitution and are subject to IPC provisions on apprehensions of breach of public order.

First generation social reforms in Hinduism (abolitions of untouchability and caste based disabilities) were successfully led by Swami Dayanand, Swami Vivekanand, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Sant Phule, Sri Narain Guru (SNDP), Basaveshwar, Varkari, etc. and have been codified in the Constitution and various Acts. Second generation social reforms in Hinduism from within for wider social acceptability of Vedic norms of equality by birth is the real solution to contemporary problems of the Hindu Samaj, not the gimmicks of conversions, nor the caste wars.

Root cause of conversions as rightly pointed out by N. Varadrajan, State Secretary of CPM(TN) are social ostracism and humiliations of dalits which this article attempts to remove. Late Shri Mohit Sen wrote in the Indian Express that what has aggravated the caste problem is the almost complete lack of any campaign against caste system - that decisive impediment to modernisation of Hindustan - to paraphrase the remarks of Karl Marx written in 1835.

In Ambedkar's view the caste system is a social division of people of same race. [Dr. Ambedkar Life and Mission by Dhananjay Keer, page 269]. This assertion of Ambedkar that all castes of

Hindus belong to same race is in conformity with 15 richas of Vedas, specially Yaj 26.02. 'Caste is the bane of Hindus. Caste is the cause of downfall of the Hindus. Owing to caste the Hindus' life has been a life of continuous defeats. Caste has made Hindus the sick men of India. Caste has ruined the Hindu race and has destroyed, demoralised and devitalised Hindu society.'

What is more, Dr. Ambadkar said, caste has made Shuddhi - conversion into Hinduism - impractical because one does not know which caste the convert to Hinduism will join. Caste has thus killed, he adds, the missionary spirit of Hindu religion [page 270].

Rigveda mentions four classes (but not castes by birth). Manusmriti mischievously converts these four classes into four castes by birth and introduces about forty mixed jaties but all related by blood. Manusmriti does provide some social mobility from one caste to another but through marriages. To keep Hindus divided under British Rule, 2378 main castes among Hindus were invented by employees of British Raj.

In the 1891 census about 1156 sub castes of chamars alone were recorded. God know how many castes and sub castes have so far been invented Intercaste marriages were allowed as per Satapath Brahaman(4.1.5.9) Paraskar Grihya(1.4.8—11) and Baudhyana Dharma(1.8.16.2-5).

Manusmriti's caste system militarily weakened Hindus. As per Manusmriti and subsequent smritikars , sudras (working class) were kept out of villages and, thus, excluded from military, politics and the Govt. Vaishyas were kept confined to business, agriculture and cattle breeding so Vaishyas were not required to participate in military, politics and the Govt. Brahimins took position that arms and military was not their prime concern. So under Manu system, majority of population (say 75%) was mentally conditioned to be militarily impotent & politically neutral.

Only Ksatriya was supposed to be in military and had duty to fight wars. If Ksatriya were 25% (say) of population, 12.5% being ladies were excluded from military, rest one third of male being children and one third being too old to fight were also not available for military service. Thus, in Manu system only three percent of population had moral duty to fight for nation.

So, under Manu system a population of 10000 Hindus could yield a maximum of only 300 to fight whereas from a population of 10,000 of other religions over 1700 men or more were eligible/available to fight. No wonder, Hindus though larger in numbers, were always defeated by small numbers of foreigners, their women raped and molested, their temples destroyed and they were dragged thousands of miles on foot and auctioned as slaves in Kabul etc.

Was it a punishment under Slokas (XVI.18, 29 & 20) that Hindu were defeated and auctioned as slaves for violating Vedic & Gita's norms of equality by birth? If so, should we not free ourselves from this curse by obeying Veda & Gita in our real lives? When the Constitution of India restored Vedic norms of equality by birth and gender equality, see, our Armed Forces have never been defeated; we Hindus have not again fallen as slaves, we are being accorded respect all over the world; and, India has become the fourth largest economy in the world in a short period of fifty years, a nuclear weapon country with its own missiles, satellites, digital telemetry, etc.

As per latest World Development Indicators, India's gross national income in 2001 on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) basis was US$ 2913 billion, the fourth largest after the USA ($ 9781 billion), China ($ 5027 billion) and Japan ($ 3246 billion). These Big Four are followed by Germany ($ 2580 billion), UK ($ 1431 billion), France ($ 1425 billion), Canada ($ 825 billion) and Pakistan ($

263 billion) on PPP basis, etc.

Ambedkar rightly diagnosed that caste is a notion, a state of mind. Its destruction means a notional change in mental set up. Hindus observe caste not because they are inhuman and wrong headed. They (Hindus) observe caste chiefly because they believe deeply that it is so ordained in their religion" (page 291). Dr. Ambedkar concluded that destruction of authority of Veda, destruction of sacredness and divinity of Vedas will lead to annihilation of castes; but, failing to destroy spiritual authority of Veda he got himself converted into Buddhism in 1956. In his famous 22 vows, Dr. Ambedkar mercifully did not include destruction of sacredness of Vedas.

If Hindus practise casteism, as Dr. Ambedkar rightly assessed, in belief that it is part of their religion, how could Hindus have agreed to destruction of Vedas - the fountainhead of their religion? I think a better way to annihilate casteism is to convince Hindus that casteism, as substantively proved in previous two parts, is truly not a part of Hinduism.

It is contrary to Hinduism. Casteism is rust and dust collected around Hinduism over centuries. I believe much more pragmatic way to annihilate caste is not engineering of conversions; not mutual acrimony; not caste wars; but full throated articulation of correct interpretations of 25 richas of Vedas, the thirteen slokas of Shrimad Bhagwat Gita and two examples set by Lord Rama which should convince upper caste Hindus that by practicing Manusmriti, they are actually committing sins (paap) of violating Vedas, Gita and Ramayana.

Such a course of action will loosen religious grip of Manusmriti on mindset of sawarnas. No Hindu knowingly prefers to earn wrath (shraap) of Vedas or Lord Rama or that of Lord Krishna by going against their commandments.

Gandhi fought tooth and nail to maintain unity of Hindu Samaj by fighting against untouchability, underwent 21 days fast to retain unity with scheduled caste Hindus by promising them more number of seats in legislatures than offered by the then British rulers. Whereas Manu after Rigvedic rishis was the one who fragmented and divided Hindus pushing them into slavery, Gandhi proved himself to be the grand Unifier in grand chain of Rigvedic rishis who mansa, vacha and karmana implemented the missionary shukta RV (X.191); and, like Moses delivered Hindu Samaj to its political liberation/freedom ,though , some may argue at much higher cost in terms of Hindu lives lost, but Gandhi was not a member of the Government.

It is another thing that Gandhi failed in handling/assessing the then Muslim League.

Articulation of above 38 richas & slokas will also convince Hindu priests that they have been preaching contrary to Vedas, contrary to Gita and contrary to Bhagwan Shri Ram's examples. For comparison, one may note how steadfastly Muslims follow examples set by their Prophet in Sunnah. But, we, Hindus, do not put into practice what Bhagwan Ram himself practiced.

Managers of Hindu temples must instruct their priests to immediately put into practice these 38 richas and slokas. Stopping entry of SC/ST/Dalits Hindus into temples is violative of RV (X.191) and AV(III.30). Hindus of Chakwara violated AV (III.30.6) in denying access to village pond to Bairwa Hindus. Command of RV (X.191) oftenly came as shock and pleasant surprise to many Hindu priests whom I personally talked.

Many admitted not knowing Sanskrit nor ever having read Vedas but only having memorised

some mantras and shlokas for conducting ceremonies. Pujaries said that they expect present-day leaders of Hindu Samaj to re-educate them and they assured that they will be second to none in spreading correct message of Vedas.

Pujaries agreed with me that they should visit SC/ST/Dalit houses for offering religious services as it would increase their regular income but their main difficulty was jhijhak i.e. who will bell the cat. Simply abusing and cursing Hindu priests or Brahmans in general will not lead to annihilation of caste, rather, their exposures to above 38 richas and slokas will certainly.

Incomes of all Hindu temples should be pooled to educate pujaries and an all India Hindu Pujari Service (IHPS) should be started by management of temples in which all Hindus would be eligible for recruitment based on their knowledge. Supreme Court has been faster than our socio-religious leaders in opening recruitments in temples for all Hindus.

In March 96, Supreme Court (JJ K. Ramaswamy and B.L. Hansaria) rightly ruled that office of temple priest cannot be hereditary. In October, 02, Supreme Court (JJ S. Rajendrababu and Doraiswamy Raju) held that non-Brahimins are eligible to perform religious ceremonies and work as temple priests if they are well versed with relevant rituals. These two decisions are consistent with real Hinduism as per RV (X.125.5) and RV (X.98.7).

At page 271, Keer informs that Dr. Ambedkar had also suggested destruction of idea of the hereditary priesthood and democratisation of the profession of priests by the grant of a sanad to any Hindu who passed a certain test and now it has been given force of law by the Supreme Court.

Conversion of Dalit Hindus to another religion has not proved to be a satisfactory answer, as even after conversion, converts do not get 'social equality' in their new religions. Conversions have proved to be divisive raising social tensions and creating law & order problems. Use of phrases like dalit Christians, dalit Muslims, dalit Buddhists in Indian media proves the point. R. Thirumalvalavam, Head of the Panthers Party of India told a website (Nov. 15, 2002): 'that for emancipation of dalits, conversion is not the solution. Converts remain Dalit Muslims or Dalit Christians or Dalit Buddhists.'

A Dalit writer, told to the Week (18th Nov., 2001): 'Over the years, when Dalits converted to Islam, Sikhism or Christianity, they did not lose their Dalit identify. They remained primarily Dalits, and, then Christians or Sikhs. Conversion is not the answer to exploitation of Dalits.' Detlef Kantowasky, a German Professor of Sociology in his recent book `Buddhisten in Indien heute` says that Mahars who converted into Buddhism are still not able to shake off their untouchable stigma. In addition, new converts invite ridicule from Dalit Hindus for abandoning old faith generating another ripple of social tensions. Gaining 'social equality' is a two-way process involving two parties, oppressor and oppressed. Unilateral action (i.e. conversion, running away by oppressed) does not solve the problem as the other party continues to treat converts as before in villages. Converted dalits get socially cut off from Hindu dalits. Converts find their social circle in new religion further reduced and limited to previous converts from their old Hindu caste. As per Hindustan Times (15th June, 98), the then Census Commissioner of India (Dr. M. Vijaymuni) was quoted saying that there were caste divisions in Muslims (584), Christians (339), Sikhs (130), Buddhists (93), etc.

The 1901 census of Bengal placed Muslims into three groups: Ashraf (better class), Ajlaf (lower

castes) and Arzal (Degraded castes). This categorisation was repeated in the Indian Express of 19th March, 1997. A website lists 72 different Islamic sects. Sunnies accept and venerate Hazrats Abu Bakr (632-634), Omar bin Khattab (634-644), Uthman (644-656) and Ali bin Abu Talib (656-661) as their first four rightful Caliphs (Khalifa i.e. successor to Prophet Mohammad, sallahu alai wa sallam) in this sequential order.

Hazrats Omar, Uthman and Ali were murdered one by one. Shiat Ali (i.e. followers of Ali, shishya of Ali, written as Shia or Shiite) believe that Hazrats Abu Bakr, Omar and Uthman became Caliphs against expressed desire of the Prophet (Khumb Declaration) and; that, Hazrat Ali ought to have been accepted as the first Caliph and the first Imam after Prophet.

This is the fundamental difference between Shiites and Sunnies. Shiite Muslims do not accept Hazrat Abu Bakr, Omar, Uthman as Caliphs and Sunni Muslims do not accept Khumb Declaration. Shiite Muslims treat Hazrat Ali as the first Caliph and the first Imam. Sunnies accept Hazrat Ali only as the fourth Caliph. Consequently, text of Shiite Kalama and Shiite Namaz are different from those of Sunnies.

Shiite texts directly and indirectly declare and reaffirm that Hazrat Ali is the first Imam and the rightful successor of Prophet which Sunnies do not accept and cannot recite. The text of Sunni Kalama is La ilaha il Allah, Muhammadan Rasul Allah and the text of Shiite Kalama (Shahadatah) is La ilaha il Allah, Muhammadan Rasul Allah, Aliyun Wali-Allah, Wasiyu Rasulillah, wa Khalifa tuhu bila fasl. There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, ‘Ali is the Friend of Allah. The Successor of the Messenger of Allah And his first Caliph.

Basic tenets (usul-e-din) of Sunni Muslims are three: (i) Tauhid (unity of God); (ii) Noubouat (Prophethood) and (iii) Maad or Qayamah (day of final judgement). Shiite Muslims have two more basic tenets: (iv) Imamah based on family line from the House of Prophet (Ahlul-Bayt) and (iv) Justice of God (ahl). Shiite further believe that `noor` of Allah passes only through family line from generation to generation. These are matters of faith and belief which separate Shiite and Sunni. Shiite and Sunni generally do not inter-marry. They have different mosques, different texts of namaz, different body postures while offering namaz; and, different timings of namaz. Shiite are mainly divided into Ithna-Asheri, Bohras and Ismailies with no inter-marriages without conversion to husband’s sect; and, even these Shiite do not attend each others mosques. In Tanzania, intra-Islamic conversions were noticed: Shiite and Ahmadias were seeking converts from Sunnies and vice-versa. Ahmadias do accept Prophet Muhammad(saas) as a messenger of Allah but not as the last one. (http://www.alislam.org) (http://www.thepersecution.org).

Main sects in Sunni Muslims are Hannafi, Maliki, Shafii and Humbali. They are followers of Maulanas Abu Hanifa Al-Numan (699-767), Malik ibn Anas (714-796), Mohammad ibn Idris Al-Shaffi (767-820) and Ahmad bin Hanbal (780-855) respectively. Another Sunni sect is Ahle Hadith.

There are theological differences between Deobandi and Barelvi Sunnis. In the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Ahmadias were declared non-Muslims and now there is pressure in Pakistan to declare Shiite to be non-Muslims. In this context, it is worthwhile to take note of a recent address made by H.E. Mr. Mahathir Bin Mohammad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, at the Al Azhar University, Cairo on 22nd Jan., 2003. He said `we all know that Prophet brought only one Islam but today there are many Islamic religions. There are Sunnies and Shiites divided into numerous

groups by different Imams and Orders. Some of these interpretations and teachings are so different that their followers actually accuse each other of not being a Muslim. In fact they regard many who profess to be Muslims as infidels because of the thousands of different interpretations of Islam and the very many sects and adherents, each claiming to be true followers of Islamic religion, Muslims are thoroughly confused.` (28th January, 2003 - International Herald Tribune).

Holy Quran (ISBN: 0-940368-56-0) does not accept Jesus as a son of God nor his crucifixion, therefore, nor his resurrection. It accepts Him only as one of the messengers of God. Surah (IV.157) says that `they did not kill Isa son of Marium, the apostle of Allah (Jesus Christ) nor did they crucify him;` and, Surah (IV.158) says that Allah took him upto Himself. In Surah (IV.171) it is stated that Messiah, Isa son of Marium is only an apostle of Allah.

'Desist, it is better for you; Allah is only one God: far be it from His glory that He should have a son.' In Surah (V.116) concept of trinity has been declared to be false. It reads: 'And when Allah will say: O Isa son of Marium! did you say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah, he will say: Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say).'

Surah (XXV.2) again asserts that Allah did not take to Himself a son. Thus, the Holy Quran does not accept the basic principles of Christianity i.e. Trinity, Crucifixion and, therefore, the Resurrection.

The Holy Bible is silent about life, whereabouts and activities of Jesus Christ between twelfth to thirtieth years of his age. Karna was born to unmarried virgin Kunti by blessings of God Sun; and, in Christian belief Jesus was born to Virgin mother Mary. There is similarity of circumstances. A German author Holger Kersten in his book Jesus Lived in India (ISBN-1-85230-5509) has described in detail His unknown life in India before and after crucifixion.

Some scholars believe that Christ had visited many cities in India learning Vedas, Yogas, meditation, etc. before returning to Palestine to preach, and; after surviving crucifixion returned to India and died in Kashmir. Some scholars suggest that Jesus Christ was an Essene preacher.

Philosopher Schoupenhaure in his book 'Religion and other Essays' (page-116) asserts that the Christian faith sprung from the wisdom of India. From Girnar inscriptions of Ashoka, it is observed that Buddhist monks went to Syria to preach Buddhism. Pliny, a Greek historian of first century AD has written that religious sect Essene lived in Palestine about a century before Christ, now accepted as a sect of Buddhism. In Egypt, Essenes were called Therapeuts. Christians acknowledge Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost and at the time of Baptism water is sprinkled. In Buddhism, water is sprinkled while performing 'abhishekam' and Buddhists acknowledge trinity of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Births of Buddha and Christ were preceded by stars and both had twelve disciples. We Hindus also have Trideva (Brahma, Vishnu & Mahesh) and we also sprinkle water at religious ceremonies. Dead Sea scrolls (about 800) discovered in eleven caves near Qumran during 1947-65 are believed to be Essene literature.

Dead Sea scrolls are carbon dated between a span of about 68 BC to 124 AD and despite being contemporary of Jesus do not mention Jesus Christ being the son of God. On internet when one puts `Jesus Christ in India` into search mode one gets about 267000 references on Yahoo.

Website http://www.tombofjesus.com gives graphic details of grave of Yuz Asaf in Srinagar

(India) which points east-west keeping with Jewish custom. Some believe it is grave of Jesus. The second century Church Father Irenaeus (who lived until about 180 C.E.) in his book `Against Heresies` has written that Jesus lived to be an old man upto times of the Emperor Trajan (98 AD), before finally dying in Asia. The Acts of Thomas describes the stay of Jesus and Thomas in Taxila (now in Pakistan) at a marriage ceremony at the court of King Gundafor in the twenty sixth year of his rule (47 C.E.).

Bhavishya Maha Purana (volume nine verses 17-32) says that Jesus (Isha Masih) was in India/Kashmir during reign of King Shalivahan which has been placed within 39 to 50 C.E. On this subject of life of Jesus Christ after crucifixion one may see books by Nicolas Notovitch (1894), Maury Lee (Jesus of India), Elizabeth Clare Prophet (Lost Years of Jesus), Paul C. Pappas (Jesus' Tomb in India) and Mark Mason (In Search of the Loving God).

Jesus Christ preached in Aramaic language. Modern scholars believe that the Hebrew Bible(Old Testament), or Tanakh, was composed by four or five writers between 1000 to 400 BCE based on much older traditions. The New Testament was composed by a variety of writers between 60 to 110 CE. The contents of the New Testament were formalized by Athanasius of Alexandria in 367 CE, and finally canonized in 382 CE.

There are many disagreements about the order and composition of the Holy Bible among various sects (http://www.sacred-texts.com). The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) differ in some aspects at places. What is the correct chronological order of these four Gospels is known as the Synoptic Problem in the Christian theology. Very little has survived about origins of these Gospels, when, where, why and by whom these were composed.

From first few centuries to 18th century, Augustinian hypothesis that Matthew, Mark, Luke is the correct sequence was the dominant view. In 1783, Johann Jakob Griesbach proposed Matthew-Luke-Marks sequence. In 1820 Johann Gottfried Herder proposed that Mark's Gospel being the shortest should be the earliest document. Roman Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostals, Orthodox Church, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehova's Witnesses, Mermons, etc. have many fiercely contested theological differences among themselves.

In the medieval period, one sect of Christians used to kill/execute Christians of another sects (Catholics vrs Protestants; Inquisitions, etc.) X-mas is globally celebrated on 25th December as birthday of Jesus Christ but not by all Christian faiths. What is the truth only Jesus knows. Luke (II.8) says that at the time of birth of Jesus `.And there were in the same country(near Bethlehem) shepherds abiding in the field , keeping watch over their flock by night. It is said that in Palestine/Bethlehem, December is the coldest month when shepherds and their flock are not likely to be there in fields by night Shepherds are out in fields with their flocks in better months of summer. Holy Quran vide surah(XIX.20) does attest that Mary(Marium) was a virgin & chaste, untouched by any mortal man before conceiving Jesus. But surah (XIX.23) states that Mary gave birth to child Isa(Jesus) near trunk of a palm tree, not in a cave/stable. Surah(XIX.25) says that fresh ripe dates fell upon Mary when shaking trunk of the palm tree. It is said that ripe dates fall only in the summer months(July to September) in Palestine.Thus, both Holy Quran and Luke's Gospel create some doubt about correctness of the present popular belief that Jesus was born in December. These are great puzzles of religion but could be explained as another miracles Jesus.

Atharvaveda says (XII.2.33) :: let him not hate us, nor let us(hate) him. Dhammapada says:

'Hatred does not cease hatred at any time, hatred ceases by love, this is its nature. Let us live happily, not hating those hate us.'

[1.5]. New Testament says: 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you. [Matthew 5.44]. `But I say unto you which hear, love your enemies, do good to them which hate you` (Luke 6.27). `Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you` (Luke 6.28).

But love ye your enemies, and do good (Luke 6.35). These show influence of Veda and Buddhism on Christ.

The News Week of USA (16th April, 2001) at page 45 reported that there are 33000 different Christian denominations in the world!!! The Catholic Bishops Conference of India (Sunday, 28th June, 98) estimated that 41% of new Pentecostals in India were former Catholics and 31% from other Christian sects.

So intra-Islamic and intra-Christian conversions are realities. In many countries Pentecostals have replaced Catholics as the majority denomination!!! Christians of one denomination generally do not attend Church of another denomination. Indian Christians are said to still discreetly follow pre-conversion castes of their Hindu forefathers. Syrian Christians (i.e. St. Thomas Christians) are said not to marry Latin Christians or Neo-Christians.

High caste Christians do not mix with Dalit Christians. As per http://www.dalitchristians.com, Christian Dalits suffer same oppression, segregation and discrimination at hands of caste Christians and 80% of jobs in Church and Church related institutions have been monopolised by caste Christians though dalit Christians comprise 75% of Catholic population in India.

TK Oommen & Hunter P. Mabry in their book `The Christian clergy in India` verify this discrimination. Dalit Christians website further alleges that untouchable Christians are forced to sit separately in many rural churches in India.

They must enter through a separate door into rural church and receive communion at separate altar!!! Jat Sikhs do not mix with Ramgarhias and/or Mazhabi Sikhs. There are separate gurudwaras for each group. One Muslim leader of Bihar (Dr. Ezaz Ali, President, All India Backward Muslim Morcha) was quoted (March 1997) that “social and economic condition of Muslim Dalit (arzal) is same as that of Hindu Dalit.

Their conversion to Islam has not helped them acquire social class mobility. While as Hindus they were ridiculed by upper caste Hindus, as Muslim Dalits they are looked down upon by upper caste Muslims (Ashrafs).” As per The Week (Jan. 31, 1999), Pasmanda Muslim Samaj of Bihar reiterated oppression of dalit Muslims at hands of upper caste Muslims pointing out that out of 245 Muslim MLAs produced by Bihar between 1952 to 1995 there has been no dalit Muslim MLA so far. How many Dalit Hindus have been elected to Bihar Assembly?

So, there are wheels within wheels in matters religious; these are too complicated for common persons, one does know what is truth and what is not truth and, the best way out is not to get involved in religious bigotry but to live and let live in peace and harmony with neighbours.

`Love thy neighbour` should be our motto. Let one not question correctness of religious faith of the other. Let us live happily under the banner of our tricolour reflecting unity in diversity.Concept of Vasudhaiva kutumbakam i.e. universal brotherhood is the best policy.

Another shocking but real problem is practice of some sort of untouchability, within SC/ST/Dalit Hindus. Conversion from one religion to another does not address this problem. Some websites espousing emancipation of dalits publicise only divisive/negative slokas of Manusmriti (to exclusion of harmony seeking richas/slokas of Vedas, etc.) which makes double damage to their own cause as, on one hand, it only further depresses SC/ST/Dalit Hindus to meekly give into submission believing it is too difficult to fight Dharma; and, on the other hand, convinces caste Hindus more & more that this is what Hindu Dharma ordains so they start practicing casteism with more conviction.

Various reform movements during freedom struggle made substantial gains which got codified in the Constitution of India. But from 1950s onwards there has been no real social reform movement. It is high time to do second generation reforms of Hinduism from within. SC/ST/Dalit Hindus who are already armed with the Constitutional articles and various Acts should be exposed more and more to the 25 Vedic Richas, 13 slokas of Shri Mad Bhagwat Gita and to rich contributions of their ancestors to three supreme scriptures so as to boost their morale and to convince them that their fight is not against Vedas, not against Dharma but only to cleanse Veda of the rust and dust collected over centuries - that they are going to fight to restore original teachings of holy three scriptures that they are returning to their roots.

Such a strategy will liberate dalit Hindus from their mental mindset of being “lowly born” and empower them mentally & spiritually to take up the fight.

On the other hand, exposure of caste Hindus to these very richas will change their mindset that practising untouchability and casteism is really a sin (paap) against dharma. Democratised All India Hindu Priest Service (IHPS) will only accelerate this process. Casteism cannot be annihilated by mutual acrimony, by violence or conversions, or by caste wars as it is a mental state or a mindset.

During my foreign service, I have seen educated Indians living in foreign countries for decades but still practising casteism there in foreign countries in more subtle form!! Let the Yajna (social movement) assisted by 25 Vedic richas and 13 slokas of Gita be initiated to permanently destroy both the demons – the demon of intra-Hindu casteism and the demon of intra SC/ST/Dalits Hindu casteism from the Hindu subconscious mind.

Let us return to our roots of Vedic brotherhood equipped with modern science and technology.

The writer is the Ambassador of India to Finland. The article are personal views of the author; and, not that of the Govt. of India.

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articles on hinduism

Rig Veda and the Indian woman - Contributed to this site by Ambassador O P Gupta



In August/Sept. 2002, one case of committing suttee or sati and two failed attempts to commit suttee in Madhya Pradesh were reported in the media.

Reports also appeared that the Hon'ble Rajasthan High Court allowed prayers within premises of Rani Sati Mandir of Jhunjhunu district, but prohibited organising fairs, distribution of pamphlets and performing chunri ceremony at the temple till final orders.

Some people assert that Rigveda vide richa (X.18.7) (seventh richa of 18th Sukta of tenth chapter) commands a Hindu widow to mount pyre of her deceased husband.

One website quotes PV Kane's translation of this richa as: "Let these women, whose husbands are worthy and living enter the house with ghee applied as corrylium (to their eyes). Let these wives first step into the pyre, tearless without any affliction and well adorned."

One may note that even this English translation does not categorically state that let these widows first step into the pyre. This translation simply says "let these wives first step into pyre." As per common sense, from the moment of death of her husband, a woman is no more called "a wife" but a widow (vidhawa). So phrase "these wives" in above translation of Kane cannot be interpreted to refer to "widows."

In fact, Sukta 18 commands a Hindu widow to return to world of living beings; to return to her house to live with her children and grand children and Rigveda confers on her all the properties of her deceased husband. One should go through all the fourteen richas of this 18th Sukta (revealed to Rishi Sunkusuk Yamayan) so as to understand the true and correct meaning of (X.18.7).

The third richa (X.18.3) commands "May those who are living remain separate from dead ……..…" (Rigveda Samhita by HH Wilson & Bhashya of Sayana edited by Ravi Prakash Arya and K.K. Joshi ISBN 81-7110-138-7). Dr. Wendy D. O'Flaherty, Ph.D. in her book the Rigveda (Penguin Classics) (page 52) translates: "Those who are alive have now parted from those who are dead…." Ralph T.R. Griffith translates "Divided from the dead are these, the living:…." Shri Ram Sharma Acharya of Bareilly in his Rigveda (in Hindi) translates: "mritak ke pass se jeevit

manushya laut aavey……..”

Dr. Ganga Sahay Sharma, Ph.D., in his Rigveda (Delhi Pocket Books) translates: “ye jite huve log marey huve vyaktiyo ke pass se laut aavey……...” This command of Rigveda to leave behind the dead; to remain separate from dead is equally applicable to Hindu widows too as the widows are also living/jeevit persons.

English translation of the seventh richa (X.18.7) as given by HH Wilson is “Let these women who are not widows, who have good husbands, enter (anointed) with unguent and butter. Let women without tears, without sorrow, and decorated with jewels, first proceed to the house.” Dr. Wendy O’Flaherty, Ph.D. translates this seventh richa: “These women who are not widows, who have good husbands – let them take their places using butter to anoint their eyes. Without tears, without sickness, well dressed let them first climb into the marriage bed.”

Shri Ram Sharma Acharya translates “yeh sunder patiwaali sadhawa naariya ghrit yukta kaajal lagaati hui apne grih ko prapta ho. Yeh naariya aasuuon ko tyag kar manoovikaaroo ko duur karati hui sundar aishwarya waali ho kar sabase aage chalati hui apne gharo ko prapt ho.”

Dr. Ganga Sahay Sharma, Ph.D., translates: “Ye sadhawa ewam shobhan patniya naariya ghrit aur anna ke sath apne ghar mey pravesh kare. Ye streeya aasuuon ke bina roga rahit aur shobhan dhan waali ban kar apne ghar mey sabse pehle pahuche.”

Shri Radhakrishna Shrimali & Smt. Ashalata Upadhyaya of Jodhpur in their book Rigveda (Diamond Pocket books) (page 156) give similar interpretations of (X.18.7) and (X.18.8). Thus, six different authors, from different places vouch that richa (X.18.7) does not refer to widows at all. What this richa says in a nutshell is that married women should be first (among others) to return to their homes. Readers may see that as per these authors this richa does not say that first these women step into pyres. This seventh richa appears in Atharvaveda at (XVIII.3.57) and (XII.2.31) also.

The eighth richa (X.18.8) especifically and expressly commands a Hindu widow to return alive to her home. HH Wilson translates: “Rise, woman, (and go) to the world of living beings; come, this man near whom you sleep is lifeless; you have enjoyed this state of being the wife of your husband, the suitor who took you by the hand.” This verse is to be recited by dead husband’s brother etc to widow and he has to make widow leave her husband’s body as per Asvalayana Grih Sutra(IV.2.18)

Dr. Wendy D. O’Flaherty, Ph.D., translates: “Rise up, woman, into the world of living. Come here; you are lying beside a man whose life’s breath has gone. You were wife of this man who took your hand and desired to have you.”

Pt. Shri Ram Sharma Acharya translates this richa: “Hey mritak ki patni! Tumhara yeh pati mrityu ko prapta ho chuka hai – ab tum iske pass vyartha baidhi ho. Apne putradi aur ghar ka vichar karti hui uutho. Tum ish pati ke sath garbh dharan aadi stree kartavya ko pura kar chuki ho aur tum uske pran ke chale jaane ki baat bhi jaanati ho attah ghar ko lauto.”

Dr. Ganga Sahai Sharma, Ph.D., translates: “Hey mritak ki patni! Tum apne putro ewam ghar ka dhyana karke yeha se uutho. Aap marey huey vyakti ke pass kyo soyee ho? Ish purush ke panigrahan wa garbhadhan ke anuroop aap vyavahaar kar chuki ho. Aap ishke sath marane ka

vichar chhodo." Arthur A. Macdonell, in his book "A History of Sanskrit Literature"(page106) also says that (X.18.8) is addressed to the widow, who is called upon to rise and take the hand of her new husband, doubtless a brother of the deceased, in accordance with an ancient marriage custom.

Macdonnel quotes following translation of (X.18.8) as given by Ralph T.R. Griffith: Rise up; come to the world of life, O woman; Thou liest here by one whose soul has left him. Come: thou hast now entered upon the wifehood Of this thy lord who takes thy hand and woos thee. Thus, eight different authors from different places confirm that (X.18.8) actually commands a Hindu widow to return to the world of living beings, return alive to her home and return alive to her children.

Also, this very richa confers upon her full right on house of her deceased husband (apne putradi aur ghar). In 1995 Supreme Court interpreted Section 14(1) of the Hindu Succession Act to the effect that a Hindu widow has full ownership rights over properties she inherits from her deceased husband. Supreme Court said that object was to wipe out disabilities imposed by Hindu Shastras.

Supreme Court, thus, restored rights conferred on widows under richa (X.18.8).This richa appears in the Atharvaveda at (XVIII.3.2) also.

In RV(X.18.9) the new husband takes bow (or any symbol or any item) from the hand of dead husband, and while taking the widow as his wife says to her: let us launch a new life of valour and strength begetting male children overcoming all enemies who may assail us. HHWilson translates:Taking his bow from hand of dead man,(new husband says) for the sake of our vigour, energy and strength, I say you(dead) are there(in grave);may we (who are) here (on ground), blessed with male offspring, overcome all enemies who assail us.

According to Achraya Sayana, it is the first six richas of 16th Sukta of Xth chapter of Rigveda (X.16.1 to 6) which are to be recited at funeral pyres; and, none of these six richas either call for burning of widows or make any reference to widows.

I would like to draw attention of readers to richa (X.40.8) of Rigveda which praises Ashwin gods for protecting a widow. It shows gods were praised for protecting widows. How could gods have gone to protect widows, and, thus, behaved against Rigveda if Rigveda had actually commanded burning of widows?

Another richa (X.40.2), may come as a complete surprise to many Hindus who wrongly presume that widow remarriages are not allowed in Hinduism. HH Wilson translates it: "Where are you, Ashwins, by night? Where are you by day? Where do you sojourn? Where do you dwell? Who brings you into his presence in the same place (of sacrifice) as on her couch a widow (brings) her husband's brother, as a woman (brings) her husband (to her).

Dr. Wendy D. O'Flaherty translates: "Where are the Ashwins in the evening, where in the morning, where do they stop and where have they spent the night? Who invites you as a widow takes her husband's brother to her bed, as a young woman takes a young man to a room."

Ralph T.R. Griffith translates (X.40.2): "Where are ye, Asvins, in the evening, where at morn? Where is your halting place, where rest ye for the night? Who brings you homeward, as the widow bedward draws her husbands's brother, as the bride attracts groom?" Dr. Ganga Sahay

Sharma translates in Hindi: “Hey Ashwin kumaroo! Tum raat aur din mey kaha rahate ho? Tumhara samaya kaha bitataa hai? tum kaha nivas karate ho? Jisprakar vidhawa apne devar ko aur sadhawa apne pati ko charpayee par bulaati hai ushiprakar merey atirikta kaun yajaman tumhe yajnavedi par apne anukul banaataa hai?” Thus, Rigveda not only sanctions survival of a widow but also her marriage and her living with her devar with full dignity and honour in the family. So, it expressly sanctions widow-marriage.

In Atharvaveda there are many richas which sanction/ instruct remarriage of widows, such as ,AV(IX.5.27-28) and AV(XVIII.3.1-4).WD Whitney translates AVX.5.27);:Whoever(a female)having gained a former husband,then gains another later one ,if they(both) shall give a goat with five rice dishes, they shall not be separated. AV(IX.5.28) reads :Her later husband comes to have the same world with his remarried spouse who gives a goat with five rice dishes with light of sacrificial gifts.

AV(XVIII.3.1) blesses a widow with progeny (children) and property in this life time. AV(XVIII.3.2) is repeat of RV(X.18.8). WD Whitney &Joshi translate ::Go up ,O woman, to the world of living; you stand by this one who is deceased ; come! To him who grasps your hand, your second spouse (didhisu) ,you have now entered into the relation of wife to husband. AV(XVIII.3.3) is interpreted as the command to turn back a maiden(young calf or young woman)away from dead to home. WD Whitney translates ::I saw the maiden being led, being led about, alive ,for the dead; as she was enclosed with blind darkness(agyanataa) ,then ,I led her off-ward from in front .AV(XVIII.3.4) is translated by another author as ::O ye inviolable one!(the widow) tread the path of wise in front of thee and choose this man (another suitor) as thy husband. Joyfully receive him and may the two of you mount the world of happiness .In this richa word aghnya has been used for widow which means a widow can not be killed .As a cow cannot be killed so a widow cannot be killed. Contradicting his translation of RV(X.18.7),PV Kane in his History of Dharmashastra has himself quoted verses to inform that:: another man is ordained for a woman in five calamities viz,(i)when husband is missing and is unheard of (ii)husband dies (iii)is impotent (iv)becomes ascetic;(v)husband is declared depraved. Agnipurana(154.5-5), ParasarSmriti(IV.30) and Narad Smriti(V.97).(Further details at http://baharna.com)

The third chapter of Rigveda is considered the oldest part of Rigveda. Richa (III.31.1) commands that a son-less father accepts son of his daughter as his own son i.e. all properties of a son-less father shall be inherited by son of his daughter. Richa (III.31.2) commands that if parents have both son and daughter, son performs holy acts of pindadaan (after death of father) and daughter has to be enriched with gifts (rindhan i.e. to be made wealthy). Richa (II.17.7) also attests share of a daughter in property of her father. Custom of daughter being given freedom to select her husband is attested in RV(X.27.12)

Those who misinterpret Rigveda to say that it sanctions suttee do this mischief by mis-spelling the last word of richa (X.18.7) as “yomiagne” and neglecting commands of other richas. The last word of this richa is actually “yomiagre” as shown in Sanskrit in above quoted Rigveda by HH Wilson and Pt. Shri Ram Sharma Acharya.

In fact, body of dead person is not burnt at all on a pyre in this 18th Sukta!! The dead body is being buried under ground (in a grave) vide tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth richas of this 18th Sukta. So, whose funeral pyre a widow is being asked by pro-sati lobby to

mount if corpse of her husband is being buried in the ground under this very sukta of Rigveda!!! Thus, there is no richa in Rigveda calling for widow burning. In fact, Rigveda commands a widow to return alive to her home with a new husband.

During the medieval period, thousands of women were burnt alive on stakes in Europe after Churches declared them to be witches. In his book "In Search of Loving God," Mark Mason (Chapter IX) has written that towards the end of the Dark Ages in Europe, Emperor Charlemagne had forbidden burning of supposed witches.

In the ninth century, the Church also repudiated the belief that witches had supernatural powers. Papal Bull (ad extirpanda) issued by Pope Innocent III in 1252 authorised seizure of possessions of persons accused of not following the faith as laid down by the Church, their imprisonment and executions.

Pope Innocent VIII issued the bull (1484) against witchcraft and appointed Inquisitors. It is estimated that a few million people were tortured and executed in Europe for witchcraft over three centuries and 85 percent of them were women who were burnt alive on fire stakes.

Others claim figure of burnt alive during 1450 to 1700 should be much less: only about two lakhs!!! No one knows the correct number of women who were burnt alive on stakes in medieval Europe .In Holy Quran, at many places it is said that Kafirs are inmates of fire such as surah(II.39), (III.10) (III.116) etc. In modern era,without recalling the past bitter memories, we may look forward , follow the policy of live and let live, policy of peaceful co-existence.

Veda, Ramayan and Gita are the three and the only three supreme scriptures of Hindus. All others (like Brahmanas, Upnishads, Purana, Dharma Shastras, Sutras, etc.) are just commentaries, explanatory notes written by individuals. As commentaries written on the Constitution of India cannot over-ride the Articles of the Constitution of India and as laws passed by the Parliament or State Assemblies cannot supersede the Articles of the Constitution of India, similarly, commentaries/explanations on Vedas by individuals cannot supersede richas of Vedas or Ramayan or Bhagwat Gita.

Maharishi Vedvyas has himself written in Mahabharat that in cases of conflicting views,Vedas shall supersede all other writings:

"whenever there is conflict between what is declared in the Vedas and provisions in any of the Smritis, Puranas, etc., what is declared in the Vedas shall prevail."

In Ramayana, everyone knows that after death of King Dasharath, his wives were never asked to step into pyre of Dasharath. Rather, they lived in family with full honour and Bhagwan Shri Ram always bowed his head before his widowed mothers with full respect. In Mahabharat, Kunti, mother of Pandavas did not commit suttee and she was active in all family matters and accorded full respects by all including Lord Krishna .Dharmaraj Yudhishthir ,being gyata of Dharma would certainly have asked his widowed mother Kunti to commit sati if it was a requirement of dharma.

Yudhishthir never did so means committing sati was not a requirement of Dharma. Thus, there is no command either in Ramayana or in Gita to commit suttee.

Over centuries relatives have been murdering or getting assassinated relatives for property, and, it

will continue in coming centuries also. Greed is human nature. If greedy people incite a widow to commit suicide on pyre of her husband so as to deprive her of her gold, silver and land, let us not say or believe that widow burning is sanctified by Rigveda or by Hinduism.

Richa (X.18.3) commands a Hindu widow to separate from dead and richa (X.10.8) commands her to return alive to her children/her home. RV(X.18.9) commands her to be remarried immediately to a brother/relative of deceased husband. For their own empowerment, Hindu women will be well advised to remember the seven richas viz. (II.17.7) (III.31.1) (III.31.2) (X.18.3) (X.18.8) (X.40.2) and (X.40.8) to assert and claim their status and Vedic rights.

The writer is the Ambassador of India to Finland. The article are personal views of the author; and, not that of the Govt. of India.

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Caste and the Hindu scripture - Contributed to this site by Ambassador O P Gupta



Over centuries, percentage of Hindus in the world population has been declining; and, even in independent India, percentage of Hindus in total population has been declining!!!

Percentage of Hindus in total population of India was 84.98% in the 1951 census; 82.7% in 1971; 82.6% in 1981 and 82.41% in the 1991 census. But in the Census Data Online report (tables 23 & 24) (www.censusindia.net), percentage of Hindus in the 1991 census has been revised downwards to 82%.

The 2001 census report is yet to be officially issued. Shri Ramesh Chander Dogra-Urmila Dogra at page 34 of their book `Let us know Hinduism` published by Star Publications (2003) have placed percentage of Hindus in India at 79% only. For this decline, we Hindus have to blame ourselves.

It calls for serious introspection and reappraisal of our socio-religious norms. Whereas Islamic priests (mullah) and Christian priests have been working overtime with missionary zeal to seek new converts so as to increase their demographic weight, Hindu priests (pujaries) unaware of Rigvedic norms of equality by birth and gender equality but armed with Manusmriti have been working hard over last one thousand years to reduce population of Hindus: by making it more and more difficult for a sizeable chunk of Hindus (now called ST/SC/Dalits) to let them remain Hindus with honour and dignity by concocting high caste- low caste syndrome; by not sanctifying widow marriages; and, by not seeking new converts to Hinduism.

Widow marriage is expressly sanctioned under RV(X.40.2), RV(X.18.8) RV(X.18.9), Atharvaveda (IX.5.27-28) and AV(XVIII.3.1-4).

The very concepts of castes by birth, upper/lower castes, superior/inferior castes, outcastes, untouchables, dalits, etc. are expressly prohibited by Rigveda, by Ramayana and by Shrimad Bhagwat Gita.

Protagonists of castes by birth cite in particular Purus-Sukta (X.90.12) of Rigveda and slokas (IV.13) and (XVIII.41) of Shrimad Bhagwat Gita. This claim is totally knocked down if one keeps

in mind other richas of Rigveda and other slokas of Gita and examples set by Lord Rama. There is no birth based caste in Rigveda is evident from a simple fact that names of none of Rigvedic rishis carry any present day caste titles like Pandit, Sharma, Tripathi, Chaturvedi, Trivedi, Singh, Rao Gupta, Namboodari, etc. etc.

There are about thirty women risi (risikas) in Rigveda implying gender equality that women were not discriminated in matters of education nor were prevented from gaining exellence.

In fact RV(X.85) the marriage hymn containing forty slokas was revealed to lady risi Surya Savitri which has to be recited at time of solemnising marriages as per Vedic rites but many out of ignorance donot recite it leaving marriage rites incomplete. For conferring full Vedic sanctity on marriage, parents should make it a point to insist upon pandits to recite (X.85) in mandapam before saptpadi ceremony. In some Hindi movies one finds Durga saptapadi slokas being recited at time of marriage!!!

Vedas, Valmiki Ramayan and Gita are three and only three supreme religious scriptures of Hindus. All others (Brahmanas, Upnishads, Puranas, Sutras, Smrities) are just commentaries, explanations, stories mixed with historical accounts and poets' imaginations.

Many Puranas themselves state that these are stories (mahatmya) as narrated by Kakbhisundi, Sukracharya or other sages. All books written in Sanskrit cannot be elevated to status of religious scriptures. Therefore, these latter compositions must yield to supremacy of Vedas. It is not a new assertion as these themselves acknowledge supremacy of Vedas. For example, Manusmriti vide Sloka (II.6), states that Vedas are the primary/first source of authority. Manusmriti (II.13) reconfirms that the supreme authority of law is the shruti i.e. Vedas.

So, it is logical that all such slokas of Manusmriti which are violative of Veda should stand rejected. In fact, Maharishi Ved Vyas, who is credited to have compiled/edited all the four Vedas in present format and who is believed to be author of Mahabharata, Shrimad Bhagwat Gita and all the Purans has himself laid down (Mahabharata: 1-V-4): that `whenever there is conflict between what is declared in the Vedas and provisions in any of the Smritis, Puranas, etc., what is declared in the Vedas shall prevail` (Human Rights and Indian Values by Justice M. Rama Jois, Page 2). In 1899 AD Prof. Arthur A. Macdonell 'A History of Sanskrit Literature' has written (page 28) 'works of vedic revelation (shruti) were deemed of higher authority in cases of doubt than the later works on religious and civil usage, called smrti.'

At page 31 Macdonell adds 'Dharma sutras are, in general, the oldest sources of Indian law and are closely connected with Veda which they quote and which the later law-books regard as the first and highest source of dharma.'

Thus, Macdonell suggests that Vedas supersede every other scriptures and stand the supreme. Justice A.M. Bhattacharjee also in his book 'Hindu Law and the Constitution' says (page 16) that by a rule of interpretation, if the shruti (Vedas) and the smriti differ on any point, the former is to prevail but the British Courts ruled just the opposite!! In practice, Justice Bhattacharjee says (page 18) commentaries & digests (nibandhas) replaced smritis in British Courts.

In Atmaram v Bajirao, the Privy Council ruled that opinions of latter day commentators (Bhasyakars) would prevail over Vedas. In view of the Privy Council decision in Ramnad case (1868), it was no more open to Hindus even to inquire whether disputed points were in conformity

with Vedas or not (page 37).

Thus, while paying lip services to supremacy of Vedas, British Indian Courts, in name of upholding local latter/usages & practices, slowly but steadily whittled down, caselaw by caselaw, the supremacy of Vedas; and, thus promoted divisiveness/diversities among Hindus to meet imperial interests of their political masters of the day to divide & rule.

No one can be definite how old are Vedas, Ramayana and Gita. What is their real antiquity? European scholars estimate that Rigveda was composed during 1500 to 1200 BC (Before Christ). Rigveda comprises revelations to 414 rishies.

Thus, Rigveda has aura/majesty of a Holy scripture having been approved by a sort of Dharam Sansad comprising 414 rishies. Thereafter, Ramayana and Mahabharata were composed. Shrimad Bhagwat Gita is a part of Mahabharata. Other scholars estimate that Rigveda was revealed much before 5000 BC as it does not mention cotton (kapas) whereas the oldest cotton seeds found in (Mehrgarh) Baluchistan have been carbon dated to 5000 BC (Scientific American Journal, August 1980).Astronomical data ,some zodiac configurations and references about equinoxes etc in Veda support antiquity of Rigveda beyond 5000BC.

It is believed that Manusmriti was composed much later during Kushan period, about 100 years after Chankya/Kautilya. Arthur A. Macdonnel ,Principal, Oxford College (born in Patna, Bihar) in his book 'A History of Sanskrit Literature' (1899 AD) estimates that Manusmriti in its present form was composed near about 200 AD, Yajnavalkya Dharma Sutra in 350 AD, Mitaksara in 1100 AD, Parasar Smriti in 1300 AD and Dayabhag in 1500 AD.

In his book, Macdonnel (page 366) warns that the smritis are not on the same footings as law books of other nations as these are works of private individuals (Brahmins); these were written by Brahimins for benefit of Brahinins whose caste pretentions these books consequently exaggerate. Further, none of these books from Manusmriti onwards were approved by any Dharam Sansad (religious congregation). Macdonnel advises, it is, therefore, important to check statements/claims made in smrities by outside sources.

But, British Indian Courts neglected this advice of Macdonnel. Further, the original text of Manusmriti has been tampered with was acknowledged by Sir William Jones, an employee of the East India Company who arbitrarily elevated it as the Law book of Hindus in British Indian Courts. Bertrand Russel in his book, Power, has traced from prehistoric times that priestly class used religious beliefs and practices to accumulate power and wealth. In medieval times, kings used to rule in many European countries at pleasure of Catholic Pope. Papal approval was a must for ascending thrones in Europe. So, priestly class acquiring power in name of religion was there in other societies also.

As devil is there in the details, readers may closely look at English translations. HH Wilson (ISBN 81-7110-138-7) translates (X.90.11): 'When they immolated Purusa, into how many portions did they divide him? What was his mouth called, what his arms, what his thighs, what were his feet called?' Ralph T.H. Griffith translates: 'When they divided Purusa how many portions did they make? What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet?'

Translation of (X.90.12) by HH Wilson 'His mouth became the Brahmana, his arms became the Rajnya, his thighs became the Vaishya, and the Sudra was born from his feet.' Translation of

(X.90.12) by Griffith 'The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms Rajnya was made. His thighs became Vaishya, from his feet the Sudra was produced.'

With a view to create hereditary monopoly on easy money of dakshina, greedy priests many centuries after Vedas concocted hypothesis in form of Manusmriti that as Brahman was born from mouth of Purusa, he was the superior most and as Sudra was born from feet which is impure part of body he was impure and the inferior most. In Manusmriti (5/132) it is stated that organs above nabhi are sacred (pavitra) and those below are impure (apivatra).

There is no sanction for such a hypothesis in Rigveda. Wilson says objective of (X.90.11) was 'to immolate Purusa;' and, Griffith says 'to divide Purusa.' This context, this background that, division of body of Purusa into four parts was done to immolate/sacrifice/kill the Purusa , has been totally suppressed and manipulated in Manusmriti. In sloka (I.31), Manusmriti claims, that for growth of people (lokanbridhi) Brahma created Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra from mouth, arms, thighs and feet. What Rishi Narain, composer of (X.90) has conveyed is a very simple common sense, that: even the most powerful man like Purusa can be immolated/destroyed/killed if his mouth, arms, thighs and feet are separated.

If we kill a person what do we do? We cut his body into pieces. This is what followers of Manusmriti have been doing over centuries destroying/immolating Hinduism from within by dividing/separating Hindus among different castes by birth and by putting them at fratricidal war with each other, thus, reducing Hindu population. By throwing Sudras out of villages, followers of Manu amputated feet of Hinduism, thus, made Hinduism crippled and invalid. Will followers of Manusmriti agree to get their own feet amputated on the same logic that their legs are impure parts of their bodies?

Another interpretation of(X.90.11 & 12)is creative i.e. a powerful (virat) man emerges from Yajna. Acharya Shri Ram Sharma of Bareilly translates (in Hindi) 'Virat purus kitne prakaroo se utpanna huvey. Unka mukh Brahman, bhuja kshatriye, janghaye vaishya aur charan sudra huye.'

Acharya translates these two richas on lines of creation not immolation, so, in his translation, body of Purus is not being divided into four limbs. By common sense, a virat Purus is the one who is healthy and one is healthy only if his mouth, arms, thighs and feet are joined together and work in perfect harmony with each other. Whenever this harmony among different parts of body is disturbed/destroyed, he becomes paralysed and sick.: and he is no more a virat Purus. So, what Rishi Narain is saying is that a Society will emerge as the most powerful Society like the Virat Purus only if its intelligentia (educated people i.e. Brahmans), Government (Rajnya), business community (Vaishya) and professionals & workers (Sudra) are joined together and work in as close harmony with each other as mouth, arms, thighs and feet of any healthy person work.

These two richas, thus, emphasise total equality, perfect unity & complementarity of all the four classes of people so as to make a Society powerful. In a healthy person, mouth does not claim to be superior to legs, arms do not claim any superiority over legs, arms do not function independently of head (Parkinsons’s disease), etc. as each part of a body is composed of identically same materials and is functionally dependent upon each other.

No part of body is inferior or superior to any other part of the body; each dependent on the other; each complementary to the other, each supporting the other. Thus, Purus Sukta commands that

none of the four classes is inferior or superior to other and each is dependent on the other for its healthy survival. But, just contrary interpretation has been created by greedy people and British Courts to divide and rule over Hindus:Those who say that as Sudra represent feet of Virat Purus, and, as feet is impure so Sudras are impure should know that richa (X.90.14) says that earth was born from the same feet of Purusa. So, will they leave this earth on the same analogy of earth being an impure place? Based on (X.90.14) Sudras will be justified to claim the entire earth as exclusively theirs. Also one may note that whenever we worship, we always place our heads on feet of God in any temple, so how can anyone say that anything representing the same feet of God is impure and untouchable.

There is no stipulation of high or low by birth in Rigveda. Many rishis of Rigveda under current Manusmriti definition do not turn out to be Brahmins by birth. There is no stipulation in Rigveda that son will necessarily inherit profession of his father i.e. there is no hereditary claim on professions. In richas RV (V.23.1) and (V.23.2) Rishi Dyumna prays to Agni 'Bestow Agni, upon Dyumna, a son, overcoming foes by his prowess; one who may with glory subdue all men in battle' (HH Wilson). A rishi of Rigveda is praying Agni for a warrior son. In RV (IX.112.3) another rishi says 'I am the singer, papa is the physician, mama throws the corn upon grinding stones.` So, father of a Rigvedic rishi is a physician! In Manusmriti a physician has been called impure/sudra. In richa (X.125.5) rishi says that by imparting training one can be turned into a warrior, a Brahma, a rishi or a sage.

Thus, in Rigveda profession is not by birth, not hereditary, but by training (karma/efforts/prayatna).

HH Wilson translates (X.125.5), 'I verily of myself declare this which is approved by both gods and men; whosoever I will, I render him formidable, I make him a Brahma, a rishi or a sage.' This richa appears in Atharveda (IV.30.03) also. RV (X.98) is revealed to risi Devapi who was elder brother of King Shantanu of Mahabharata. In RV (X.98.7) Devapi, is functioning as a purohit to his own brother King Shantanu.

So being a ksatriya under Manusmriti definition, one brother (Devapi) under Rigveda is functioning as purohit to another brother (King Shantanu). Hymns RV (IX.96) and RV (X.179.02) were revealed to rishi Pratardana who was a King of Kashi. Lady rishi Lopmudra, a Ksatriya ' daughter of King of Vidarbha - was married to risi Augustya. The third Mandala of Rigveda was revealed to risi Vishwamitra and family. In (III.58.6) he confirms his family lineage to House of Jahnu who was a King of Kanyakubj. Gayatri mantra RV (III.62.10) was revealed to risi Vishwamitra Gathin. Gayatri mantra appears in Yajurveda (III.35) and in Samveda (1462) also. Therefore, by reciting Gayatri mantra one simultaneously venerates three Vedas. Richas RV (III.53.22-24) confirm risi Vishwamitra Gathin himself was a warrior. Hymn RV (VI.75) attests rishi Payu Bhardwaj was also a great warrior. In Mahabharata days Parasuram, Dronachraya, Kripacharya were great warriors.

Some assert that Arayns were/are fair complexioned people and sudras are dark skinned. They also claim that four varnas are based on colours of skin. This is not true as Lord Rama and Lord Krishna are always depicted in coloured pictures as dark complexioned (shyama varna). Rishi Ved Vyas who compiled Vedas was himself of dark complexion. Rishi Kanva who richly contributed to Rigveda was himself a dark skinned person vide RV (X.31.11):

There is no mention of forced southward migration either in Rigveda or in Dravidian literatures. But some scholars assert that fair skinned Aryans invaded India during 1500 BC and defeated dark skinned Dravidians and pushed them into South India. Such scholars end up concluding that Dravidians too migrated into India (before Aryans) from the Mediterranean regions!!

Word Dravida occurs in RV (III.61.6) but means treasure, prosperity. In Atharvaveda (XVIII.3.1) too word dravina means property/wealth. No society expels rich. So why did Aryans act against common sense and why did they expel rich people are another fundamental weaknesses of Aryan Invasion Theory(AIT)

The Aryan Invasion Theory, one school claims, was developed by Max Muller, a highly paid German employee of the East India Company to deny political & moral basis to Hindus to claim independence from British as they(Hindus), too, under this theory were foreigners in India (from Russian steppes or Mediterranean) like Britishers. This imperialist theory was designed to confer as much political legitimacy/rights on Britishers over India as Hindus (Aryans and Dravidians) had over India; all being foreigners.

Later, even Max Muller conceded that 'Aryan in scientific language is utterly inapplicable to race. It means language and nothing but language. Aryans are those who speak Aryan language with Aryan grammar whatever their colour, whatever their blood.' In Rigveda, Arya means educated ones.

Higher caste/lower caste and untouchability, etc. is in open and direct contradiction of many other richas of Vedas viz. RV (VIII.93.13), RV (X.191), Atharveda III.30 and VII.54 (or VII.52) and Yujurveda (26.02) and (36.18). Unity in diversity is famous Indian motto. Cows of different colours like black, red and spotted ones give same white milk RV (VIII.93.13) is a metaphor used in Vedas for diversity yielding to unity. HH Wilson translates (X.191.2): 'Meet together, talk together, let your minds apprehend alike: in like manner as the ancient gods concurring accepted their portion of the sacrifice:'

RV (X.191.3) 'Common be the prayer of these (assembled worshippers), common be the acquirement, common the purpose, associated be the desire. I repeat for you a common prayer, I offer for you a common oblation:'

RV (X.191.4) 'Common (worshippers), be your intention; common be (the wishes of) your heart; common be your thoughts, so that there may be thorough union among you:'

W.D. Whitney & K.L. Joshi translate Atharveda (III.30.1) 'like-heartedness, like mindedness, non-hostility do I make for you; do you show affection the one towards the other, as the inviolable (cow) towards her calf when born:'

Atharveda (III.30.5): 'Having superior intentful, be you not divided, accomplishing together, moving on with joint labour come hither speaking what is agreeable one to another, I make you united, like minded.'

Atharveda (III.30.6): 'Your drinking saloon be the same, in common your share of food, in the same harness do I join you together; worship you Agni united, like spokes about a navel.' Thus, SC/ST/Dalit Hindus have Vedic rights of equal & free access to water wells, tanks, food-shops, temples, worshipping, etc.

Atharveda (III.30.7): United, like minded I make you, of one bunch, all of you, by (my conciliation; (be) like the gods defending amrita; late and early be well-willing yours." Thus, all Hindus are of one bunch, one stock. Atharveda (VII.54.1) and (VII.54.2): "Harmony for us with our own men… May we be harmonious with mind, with knowledge, may we not fight… let the day not come when Indra's arrow fall on us."

Yajurveda (26.02) (richa No. 1460) prays for well being (kalyan) of all including sudras as under: RTH Griffith & Dr. Ravi Prakash Arya translate "That I to all the people say address this salutary speech, To priest and nobleman, Sudra and Arya to one of our own kin and to the stranger." Thus, Yajuveda confirms that Sudras belong to same community, same race as that of the priest, Rajnya and arya. Thus, Sudras are not a separate race, a point always so emphatically emphasised by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (Page 269, Dr. Ambedkar Life and Mission by D. Keer). "In Ambedkar's view the caste system is a social division of people of the same race." Shri Ram Sharma translates: "Kalyan karane wali vani ko Brahman, raja, sudra, vaishya, apne jano aur samasta jano ke liye kahata hoon." Yaj (36.18): "O Deva, strengthen me. May all beings regard me with eyes of a friend. May I regard all beings with the eye of a friend. With the eye of a friend do we regard one another."

Thus, the central command of the 15 harmony richas and 10 profession not hereditary richas is that all Hindus are totally equal by birth, of one bunch, share same water and food, worship together united in same temple, common are the prayers, common be the purpose, common be thoughts, united like spokes of a wheel, common be oblation, friendly towards each others, etc. etc. One becomes a warrior (Rajnya), Brahman (educated ones) or rishi, not by birth but by his efforts/training (karma) vide RV (X.125.5). No one is superior by birth and no one is inferior by birth. In fact RV (V.60.5) reads "No one is superior (ajyestasa) or inferior (akanishtasa). All are brothers (ete bhrataraha). All should strive for the interests of all and should progress collectively. (sowbhagaya sam va vridhuhu):

The writer is the Ambassador of India to Finland. The article are personal views of the author; and, not that of the Govt. of India.

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articles on hinduism

Imagine they were Christian missionaries, or Islamic terrorists

By S Gurumurthy

http://www.newindpress.com/column/Column.asp?ID=IEH20010826004254&P=old

All four of them were kidnapped, over two years ago, in August 1999. By a leading purveyor of terrorism in Tripura, the National Liberation Front of Tripura. The Indian intelligence knows that the American-powered Baptist Church, which keeps spreading the poison of separatism among the tribals of North East, fully backs this terrorist outfit.

Now, after two years it has been confirmed that the terrorists have snuffed out the kidnap victims. Both the Central Government and the Tripura Government have confirmed their deaths. But most Indians are unaware of the abduction earlier and of their death now.

Why was this abduction the least known? Why no screaming headlines day after day. Why no stinging editorials week after week. No biting criticisms from secular columnists. No statements from secular intellectuals. No accusation from secular leaders or their parties. No adjournment or other motions in Lok Sabha. No storming of the well, no strangulation of the Rajya Sabha asking to dismiss the Tripura government. Why?

Simple. Though highly dedicated social workers, the victims happened to be Hindus. Worse still, they were all RSS men. But, not one of them is an ordinary RSS worker; every one a responsible leader of the organization.

Shyamal Sengupta was the secretary of the RSS for the entire Eastern India. Sudhamoy Dutta was a fulltime worker of RSS in charge of the Agartala segment. Dinendra Nath Dey was in charge of the organisation in South Assam. And Subha Shankar Chakraborty was a full time worker of the organization in charge of a district in Tripura. They were kidnapped and killed precisely because they were fighting the violent separatist elements in the North East like the National Liberation Front of Tripura.

Since Independence, North East India has become the hunting ground for different denominations of the Christian churches for their religious head count through organized and un-resisted conversions. Nowhere in the world churches of all denominations are allowed to hunt the less informed people as in India; more importantly, as in the North East. Most of the foreign churches carry their national flag. The Anglican Church carries the British Flag. The Lutheran the German flag. The Baptist the American flag. So do the Danish, Dutch and all other national churches. They carry their flags and politics wherever they go. There is more of politics, global politics,

than Christianity in the work of most national churches. The geo-political designs of the US internalize the role of the church. It is such geopolitical designs of the West during the cold war, which handed over drugs and guns to the youth of the North East. And this is what extended terrorism and separatism to others in the most sensitive area of our country.

International aid money for religious conversions to drug funds operate in this region to make the tribals believe that they have nothing to do with India, as to disfigure India. The sermon of most of the foreign national churches to the less informed tribals is that they are distinct and separate. So they must become separate from India. This is what these four kidnapped and killed patriots were resisting and fighting against.

But it is workers like them who rush to render relief to the victims of flood or drought, earthquakes or other disasters. When the Russian and Saudian aircraft had a mid-air collision near Delhi, and all mutilated bodies, most of them of Muslims, were strewn around, it was the RSS workers who rushed first to the spot and took charge of everything, including the cremation of the stinking flesh remains, and restoration of the valuables. Even its worst detractors admit that be it war times or at peace time, the work of the RSS has been commendable. But their good work goes mostly unreported by the media. Nevertheless the media puts them on the front page whenever it has to, for precisely the wrong reasons. But anyway they do not work to get the media attention. Like in work, in their kidnapping and death administered by the terrorists also, the four patriots have been denied recognition. But they did not work or die to get the recognition of any.

Imagine it was the other way round. Had the kidnapped and killed been Christian missionaries. Let it be just one missionary, not four. What would the secular editors, newspapers, columnists have not said. "barbaric communalism at work" "secularism in danger" "fascism at play" and what not. What would not the secular political leaders and parties have done? Would they have allowed Parliament to function? The completely fabricated nun rape case in Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh had debilitated the nation's mind for months and months. Thanks to the secular megaphones in the media and politics, the whole world was made to believe that it was some kind of pastime in India to rape nuns. Even after the incident was proved fabricated, not a single accuser withdrew his word. Not a single newspaper expressed regret. Not a single political leader regretted his hysterical conduct. Not a single political party expressed guilt at having misled the nation. The less said about those Christian leaders, who took millions of captive school children on to the streets to protest against the false rape, the better. Now the court in Jhabua has explicitly ruled that there was no communal rape. Most newspapers did not even report the court verdict, thus serving the cause of secularism.

Even if the killed four had been Islamic terrorists, there would be enough secular elites and editors who would walk up to the Wagah border with candles in their hands to plead for peace so that no more killings take place. It is a different matter that they would not have the guts to walk in the streets of Srinagar and Anantnag with the same message of peace. Their struggle for peace is conditioned by assured protection, which the government can give at Wagah, not in Kashmir.

This is the drift in the national mind. This is what made V P Singh who was the prime minister (when the Kashmiri Hindus were thrown out of their domicile of thousands of years on to the streets of Delhi) not to visit the Kashmiri Hindus who had become refugees in their own land of

birth. They were at the refugee camps in Delhi, a stone's throw from the PMs office and home. He knew the rule of Indian polity that it was un-secular to meet the Jihad victims who belonged to the majority faith. He never saw them till he ceased to be the PM and even after. It is not without reason that he is an unquestioned leader of the secularists! It is this drift, which makes responsible editors of newspapers to arrange meetings of the Jihad-advocating-Kashmiri separatists with the elites of India. Like V P Singhs, they would not even meet the victims of Jihad, much less arrange the meetings of the victims.

The logic is clear. It will be un-secular to be seen with the victims who belong to the majority faith, but totally secular to work with the Jihadis. With those who religious head hunt in the North East. Nothing is more indicative of a drifting mind. This is what the four kidnapped patriots had fought to resist, and got kidnapped and killed.

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Even Ashoka would go for war, should his people be killed

S Gurumurthy

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'War is not the option' they say. 'Nor is it the solution', they counsel. 'Be restrained' they pontificate. Whether it is the peace-loving media or the neutral intellectual in India or the United Kingdom or Iran or China, they speak in one voice. For every warmonger in the world, we have a million peace-makers. This ratio is increasing by the day. There are more peacemakers than at any point in history. Subject to one difference. The warmongers are sincere about the war, highly motivated about their cause. The peacemakers are terrified of them. So they do what is easy. Pontificate to the victim.

The Wagah candle carriers are telling Vajpayee to tell Bush to tell Musharraf to tell the terrorists to stop the terror. Marxists, by habit and belief, are suspicious of the US. But Harkishen Surjeet is advising India to tell the US to pressure Pakistan to rein in the terror. So bizarre is the counselling to avoid the war.

War is of course a bad word now. But surprisingly not when the West wages it. England will go to the far off Falklands to wage war. Just for its honour. The US would carpet bomb and flatten a whole Afghanistan, in the name of protecting Americans. A global alliance has been forged for this war, the war against terror, a highly respectable war. Israel will hit the nuclear facility in Iraq, to destroy a perceived danger to the Jewish people. These are wars. But being waged by the 'civilised', they are not bad wars. They are wars for peace; noble and good wars.

But if India were to think of a war as a counter to the attack on innocent citizens, against the attack on its Assembly and its Parliament, it would be a bad war. Not wholly a war against terror, for it is against a partner in the war against terror, that is Pakistan. It is not just that the US or UK or China or Iran would consider it a bad war. Even the Indian liberal will not accept such a war.

It is conceded that the life of an American is so precious to the US that it must go to war if they die or their lives are threatened. Similarly the life of a Jew is so precious to Israel that they should go to war, every time there is a suicide attack. Is the life of Indians so cheap that even over 60,000 of them dying at the hands of terror in Kashmir is not good enough to think of a war?

'Yes', they say. 'Let any one go to war. India should not go to war'. Their obsession with peace at any cost proves, by contrast, that any one who thinks of war as a solution is against peace. So those who sincerely believe war as a legitimate means for peace are shy of talking about it. With

the result the whole national mind is confused. Nothing would benefit the enemy than a warrior's confusion.

This was precisely the position of Arjuna before the start of the Kurukshetra war. And it was exactly the position of Ashoka after the Kalinga war. One was confused by noble thoughts before the war, and the other was confused by noble thoughts after the war. But fortunately Sri Krishna laboured through 18 long chapters of discourse in Bhagwat Gita to clear Arjuna's confusion and to help him take a decision. Arjuna finally decided to wage the war. But unfortunately Ashoka did not have the wise counsel of a Sri Krishna to clear his confusion. **Result, Ashoka's confusion still haunts India. In the Indian dictionary, war has turned a dirty word, thanks to our construction of Ashoka.** But what our intellectuals failed to fathom is that only wars waged **out of ambition**, like Ashoka did and realised, are wrong. Not wars to prevent the slaughter of the innocents.

So we have perverted Ashoka. **Whether it is Tsun Tsu or Bhishma, men of wisdom have regarded war as sometimes essential to bring peace.** A great saint once said even wars may have to be waged out of love. **What is wrong is war of hate. That is Jihad. But a war to protect ourselves from Jhad is not a war of hate.** In dictionary and statistics, of course, both are wars.

What Ashoka retreated from was war motivated by lust and ambition, not wars to prevent wars. Even the peace-at-any-cost peacemakers would not say that India is motivated by lust of ambition. Imagine if Ashoka were ruling Delhi today. Would he shy away from the war imposed by Jihadis? Never. He would have taken them on frontally. He would have brushed aside the peace-at-any-cost peacemakers with contempt.

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articles on hinduism

Madam, will they be shamed by your blunt words?

By S Gurumurthy

http://www.newindpress.com/Newsitems.asp?ID=IEH20020301124139&Title=Top+Stories&rLink=144

Commenting on the roasting alive of 60 persons inside the Sabarmati Express in Godhra in Gujarat, she said, ``it is saddening and strange that when such acts are perpetrated against the minorities all political leaders rush'' to condemn. But when the majority is attacked, ``not a single political leader'' condemns it.

She rubbed it in further. ``It is not as if crime is a crime only if it is committed against the minorities, and not so if it is committed against the majority community.'' She is also a politician. She is all set to become the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu again. That is Jayalalithaa.

Indeed a stunning admonition of the secular pack by one from within. She has exposed and shamed the entire political class by this single statement. She has shown the courage to speak out on the malaise in our secular polity. But the malaise runs deeper.

It is not confined to politics. It extends to the entire secular class. And a large intellectual class. It is founded on pseudo-intellectualism and pseudo-secularism that presently form the foundation of the public discourse. Let us analyse this in its full dimension.

The reaction of Indian seculars to the gruesome killing of over 58 persons in the train in Godhra was predictable. From Star TV, for which anti-India campaigns are a hobby, to every small English newspaper, virtually it is the dead, that is, `the Ram sevaks', who provoked the mob to kill them. Their thrust: ``The Ram Sevaks shouted provocative, abusive slogans.'' So goes their report. ``The local people in Muslim-dominated Godhra got irritated'. This virtually rationalises the rest. It means this: ``Yes, the roasting of a hundred men, women and children is unfortunate, wrong, condemnable, but inevitable.'' That is, the Ram sevaks invited it upon themselves.

Look at the first facts. The Sabarmati Express stops in Godhra for just three minutes. In three minutes a large mob of thousands of people cannot gather. It has to be a planned attack. From what the Home Secretary of Gujarat says and the news reports, a common thread emerges.

First, when the train approached Godhra, some people had thrown stones at it. At this point there was no question of any provocative slogans being heard by anyone. Because, from a moving train nothing decipherable can be heard.

Second, as soon as the train started moving out of the station, after its three minutes' halt, some one _ unknown _ pulled the chain and stopped it. It is said that it could be the handiwork of an attacker who had got into the train. The train stopped near the signal point. It is unlikely that passengers who were being stoned would stop the train to invite being hit. Particularly when the train had many women and children. They would have only liked the train to move away as fast as possible from the place. So the miscreant who stopped the train could

not be the victim. He could only be the attacker.

Third, as soon as the train stopped the mob did the rest. It rained stones on passengers. One of the coaches was doused with kerosene and petrol and set on fire. The fire, say reports, spread to more compartments. Many passengers jumped out. But those who could not, some 25 women and 15 children, were burnt to death.

The sequence establishes not a spontaneous outburst as the seculars in the media attempt to make it out. It does establish a pre-meditated plan to attack the train. The secular media virtually rationalises the killings.

Imagine it was the other way round. The passengers had been Muslims, and the attackers Hindus. **All hell would have broken loose. ``Hindu fundamentalists, blood thirsty Bajrang Dal goons on the rampage.'' ``National shame.'' There would have been a national shutdown. Leader after leader and party after party would have trooped towards Godhra and Ahmedabad. There would have been global condemnation. The nation as a whole would have stood condemned.**

As chance would have it, those killed were only Hindus, irrelevant to secular India. If a Christian church in thatched roof were attacked, Christian governments in the west to US would pounce on us. If it were Muslims the entire Muslim world would converge on us. Because the burnt were Hindus there was no such danger of any one protesting too much. Even more fortunately, those killed were after all Ram sevaks, Hindu bigots. After all those who attacked them had enough justification because the Ram sevaks were provoking them. So no one was at fault, except those who provoked their own death. Like a victim of rape having invited it upon her.

Compare the Godhra carnage with what happened when some tribals torched Staines and his children in Orissa. Hell broke loose. The entire country was set upon and came to a halt. ``Hindu Fundamentalists, RSS-VHP-Bajrang Dal'' goons have snuffed out a great social worker, shouted the secular megaphones _ the media, leaders and parties. Thanks to the media in India and missionaries, the entire world abused India as a country.

Then came the report of the **Wadhwa Commission** on the Staines murder. The former Supreme Court judge ruled out the involvement of RSS or VHP or Bajrang Dal. **He also held Staines responsible for effecting conversions, which was disliked by the local tribals**. The findings completely falsified the concoctions of the secular media and the minority religious leaders. But the damage had been done. We were projected as a nation of religious bigots. **Not a single word of regret from the media, which destroyed the nation's image in its enthusiasm to finish off the Hindu movements.**

The same was the case in Jhabua rape. It was established to be an intra-tribal and intra-Christian affair. But the secular media and the minorities blamed the Hindus and RSS. Even after the truth was established the secular media would not report it, much less express regret.

Every such concocted charge demeaned India and destroyed its brand. All thanks to the despicable role of the seculars in the media and the minority religious leaders. Christian nations of Europe who had in the past baked over 9 million women as witches and eliminated over 140 million native Americans to create the present Christian US - a historic fact which Bill Clinton recalled in the wake of the World Trade Center attack as what is haunting the US even now _ are advising us about religious harmony.

So unlike the Jhabua rape, and the hyped Staines murder, the killing of a hundred Hindus will fortunately not smear the honour of India. For, those women and children, who have been reduced to ashes alive in Godhra,

are not Christians or Muslims. So the nation's name will not be tarnished. No one outside India will ask a question, as fortunately there is no Hindu nation in the world. No one will ask a question for they happen to be not just Hindus, but also Ram sevaks. Their right of existence is lost once they provoked the attackers. So even after being torched alive, the Ram sevaks will have to share the blame for their death.

This is the real face of secularism as practised in India, of the secular media, of the secular leaders and of the secular polity. This is what the Ayodhya movement questioned. It is not just a movement for a temple. A temple could not integrate the Hindus as it has done. It is far more. Thanks to this the nation woke up to the pseudo among the seculars. But still the pseudo masquerades as the real. Perhaps the Ayodhya movement will continue as long as the very notion of secularism _ and who is the real secular and who is the pseudo _ is not defined, only to question it. If Gujarat is on fire today, and the country is witnessing fits of communal outburst the secular class has to accept its own share of blame.

Jayalalithaa has implicitly condemned the entire secular class, not just the political leaders. Rightly. Will they be shamed into accepting the truth?

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Assaulting India's pluralist ethos (Letter)
Author: D. Harikumar, Kochi
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Sir, - This has reference to the articles, ssaulting India's pluralist ethos (The Hindu, Oct. 26) by Ms. Malini Parthasarathy and "BJP belies hopes of moderation" (The Hindu, Oct. 28) by Mr. Inder Malhotra. The core of their argument is that the (so-called) Indianisation, nationalisation and spiritualisation of our education is the worst thing than can happen to the nation. The reasons are many - dilution of minorities' rights, negation of the constitutional spirit, Hindutva overtones and compulsory teaching of Sanskrit are a few.

Let us take the dilution of minorities' rights first. It is amazing to find that whenever a social or historical evaluation is done, these progressive intellectuals have invariably kept the mirror towards Europe and Germany, in particular. According to them, we needed so and so articles in our Constitution because history warranted them in the Constitutions of the European countries. But they conveniently forget that, since time immemorial, it is only in India that the minorities - be they religious, linguistic or ethnic - have never been discriminated against. And even the controversial new proposals of the Government have nothing in them to curt Bail the rights of the minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. On the contrary, it is proposed to extend them to all religious orders of this country. One fails to understand how a move to extend a right to all citizens can be counted as divisive.

Then comes the negation of the constitutional spirit. Ms. Malini Parthasarathy has taken pains to buttress this point. The enlightened groups of people who pored over the draft of the Constitution 50 years ago also included a directive in it that the citizens of this country shall have a uniform civil code. It was also explicitly made known by Nehru himself that Article 370, giving special status to J & K, was a temporary one. But unfortunately in the eyes of secular intellectuals, all those who ask for a common civil code or deletion of Article 370 are
fundamentalists and fanatic zealots. It is this kind of selective interpretation that has done maximum harm to the cause of secularism.

Regarding the Hindutva overtones, whether one likes it or not, it has been a Hindu nation, it is so even now and will remain so; not because the Hindu religion is in a majority, but the ethos which has shaped our nation has come to identity itself with Hinduism. Hinduism is nothing but a geographical-cum-cultural concept. **The Church of England is the official religion of the U.K. The U.S. President-designate has to swear by the Bible and in 1983 the American Senate unanimously voted to celebrate 1984 as Bible Year. Yet we do not hold them as fundamentalists because they only conform to the ethos on which these nations were evolved.** Though it is only 50 years since we
got political freedom, it is a fact that both the fundamentalists and the secularists alike boast of a history of at least 5,000 years. In our case it is the Vedas, the Upanishads and the epics which have shaped the ethos on which this nation is evolved. For those who think that the word "Hindu" is religious and is of a recent origin, let me quote from Agama Purana: Himaalayam samaarabhya / Yaavad Indu sarovaram / Tham deva nirmitham desom / Hindustaanam prajakshatheth.

It means, "This God's own land which extends from Himalaya to Indu sea is called Hindustaanam." Still,

the son of this soil, irrespective of his religious belief, finds it difficult to call himself a "Hindu." The fault lies in our education system.

The Vedas and the Upanishads have nothing to do with the Hindu religion. They only expound the theories of the existence of the
world and the do's and don'ts for the creatures living in it. We just cannot wish away the fact that everything that we consider our contribution to mankind lies in Sanskrit. Until and unless we, learn that language how can we come to know the greatness and pitfalls of our tradition?

As Max Mueller, the propagator of the Aryan invasion theory, wrote to his wife, "It took only 200 years for us to Christianise the whole of Africa, but even after 400 years India eludes us, I have come to realise that it is Sanskrit which has enabled India to do so. And to break it I have decided to learn Sanskrit." The soul of India lies in Sanskrit. And Lord Macaulay saw to it that the later generations are successfully cut off from their roots.

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Adi Sankara's philosophy

CHENNAI NOV. 13. Followers of all religions have a common goal, which is universal in nature. The ultimate aim of every individual is to reach the Supreme Lord. In order to achieve it, the core need for human beings is to escape the cycle of births and deaths. Pointing out to a devotee the right direction as the role of religion in its entirety from time immemorial,there has been only one desirable way of leading one's life — that of following the path of virtue. While in earlier ages it was easier to remain steadfast in the pursuit of the goal, with the advent of Kali Yuga the attendant distractions on the human mind are a major factor to contend with. Helping the devotee out of this self-created maze becomes the role of preceptors and saints.

Sri Jayendra Saraswathi, Kanchi Sankaracharya, in a discourse paid glowing tributes to Adi Sankara as a beacon light to the spiritually floundering flock. At a time when there was a multiplicity of spurious cults Adi Sankara's life and philosophy was a turning point in the spiritual ethos. His commentaries on Vyasa's works and other scriptures put spiritual knowledge within the easy reach of the ordinary devotee. The cornerstone of Adi Sankara's philosophy, Adwaita, is enshrined in the Upanishads. What are the difficulties that a devotee faces in his quest for the ultimate? On the one hand it is the challenge of grasping the abstruse and the subtle; on the other it is the ubiquitous struggle in transcending one's ego and achieving union with God.

If one follows the spiritual recommendations, then God-realisation becomes but a natural extension of one's life. Both Saivism and Vaishnavism, which have been in place since the origin of earth, also lay emphasis on the supremacy of the Lord. Saints like Ramanuja and the Nayanmars, have played a stellar role in perfecting the formula for purifying oneself through devotion in order to qualify for the kingdom of God. Sankara's philosophy advocates attaining pure consciousness or ultimate reality in this life itself. Such a guideline is however not to be mistaken for "quick fix" method. Rather it is a state of being to be achieved by resolving inner confusions with knowledge and conflicts through devotion with the added aid of absolute control of senses. In the ultimate analysis, truth is one, philosophy is one; the difference lies only in the manifold choices and approaches available to a devotee. Adwaita is of universal import, broad based on the Divinity of the Self and does not conflict with other schools of thought.

source: **http://www.hindu.com/2003/11/13/stories/2003111300450900.htm**

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History as Hoax
By the Editor
Editorial
Hinduism Today, December 1994

This issue of Hinduism Today is like none other. We set aside some usual features to publish our seven-page Hindu Timeline, a rich collection of the major events and people that have shaped India. We hope you will keep it, use it as a resource, refer to it when someone asks a question or when writing an article for your local paper.
As complete as it is, our Timeline does not tell the whole story.

What it fails to mention is that history, as it happens, never happened. History is a hoax. "What?" you say, "Who licensed you to belittle so proud a profession, so indispensable a discipline as human history? What do we have of the past except the cherished chronicle of what, not to mention who, went before us?" Okay, okay. History is important, but historians know of what I speak. Listen to the preeminent Will Durant who spent a lifetime studying the record of civilizations: "History is mostly
guessing; the rest is prejudice."

It is certainly formidable to ponder the whole of human history (said to be somewhere between 500,000 and two million years) and to assess just how much we really know of the past, how well a few bone fragments and distilled lines in a book reflect the truly awesome complexity of billions of human beings interacting with each other, with other tribes, with their environment and geography. To humanize it, consider your own life. Take all you did, all you endured and attempted, all you said, learned and forgot. What is the bottom line? "Anjali Patel, 1938-2022. Beloved wife and mother. Rest in peace." Less than a dozen words. It's easy to see that history is but a frail record of reality. Multiply this individual example by the ten billion souls that have lived in India during the past 10,000 years (an interesting number a local mathematician helped us find), divide that by the 14,339 words in our (fairly thorough) history, and you get one word for every 697,398.7 people who made that history
happen. Hmmm! It's getting easier to see why historian Richard Cobb concluded that "The frontiers between history and imagination are very little more than Chinese screens, removable at will."

History may be a mental monument to human achievement and progress, but it is equally a repository of our prejudices, a museum of our mistakes. It keeps feuds alive beyond their time, it impedes progress more than it impels, and it restrains many of us from living in the here and now, so consumed are we with what happened there and then. History is millstone as much as

milestone.

The bad news, then, is that history is always inaccurate and often injurious. The good news is that India and Hinduism live beyond history. Other nations know exactly who they are, when they began, who their first president was. Their history is compact, unambiguous. Not India. She has too much history to be pithy, too complex a career to avoid ambiguity. Nowhere else do people live in so many centuries at the same time. Where else do past and present exist side by side-Sun worship with atomic research, astrology with space exploration? Where else does the old add itself to the new rather than relinquishing its hold and departing?

This issue's timeline chronicles exciting discoveries about the Indus Valley/Saraswati River civilization and the present effort of historians to wrest India's self-understanding away from Europeans who long ago left behind a false biography of Bharat. Whereas the past provides others with the all-important basis of identity and self-importance, India enjoys a leisurely, even careless, relationship with history. British historian Christopher Dawson explains: "Happy is the people that is
without a history, and thrice happy is a people without a sociology, for as long as we possess a living culture we are unconscious of it, and it is only when we are in danger of losing it or when it is already dead that we begin to realize and study it scientifically."

Hinduism also lies beyond history. Other faiths, excluding some tribal and pagan paths, are rooted in events. They began on such and such a day, born with the birth of a prophet or the pronouncements of a founder. Thus they are defined, circumscribed, by history. Not Hinduism. She has no founder, no birthday to celebrate.
Like Truth, she is eternal and unhistorical. Even if we compel Hinduism to admit of some immanence in history, she merely smiles and brushes aside the few thousand years that most of humanity takes as the crucial narrative. To the Hindu those few years are a pittance, and they too perish. While all known human history lies within a few hundred millennia, Hinduism speaks of unspeakably vast epochs, of earthly yugas that last millions of years, of days and nights of Brahma that span
billions, of a universe that lives and dies and lives again. Such is India's expansive reading of history.
Ultimately, history is contemporaneous with the present, in the form of karmas by which all actions of the past live in the now. That is a living history, much more precious than any dead one.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Beauty of the Sari
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January 1999

It's the only ancient dress to remain fashionable in the 21st century.



Fashion in clothing is a kind of living archeology, a wash-and-wear history. It tells us much about who we are and where we came from, and maybe not a little about where we're going. Modern clothes tell a story of simple pragmatism. Throughout the world clothing has become more spartan, more practically polyesterish, less elaborate. Men, especially, have made some dismally utilitarian decisions about their wardrobe. Around 1666 the present-day suit was first stitched in France and England, and by 1872 it was widespread enough in India to be fiercely satirized. Somewhere in that era men from all cultures made the very bad decision to abandon other attire in favor of the egalitarian grey suit, white shirt and necktie. What could they have been thinking?

Sadly, men around the world lost their national and personal character when they adopted the Western business suit as manhood's global garb. Japanese men, who once looked so very Nipponese in their graceful robes, now look like Europeans. South Americans, once so distinctive in their hand-woven costumes, now look like the Japanese who look like the Europeans. Indian men, who 200 years ago had regional raiment that was earthy and full of elaborated colors, now look like the Brazilians, who look like the Japanese, who look like the Europeans. Grown men everywhere look like that. Check out the marriage photo to the right. She's elegant, he's--there's a word in the world of fashion--boring!

I know of what I speak. Visitors to our Hawaiian editorial offices know our staff is not sitting around their PowerMacs in jeans and T-shirts. We are all swathed in saffron and ochre cotton--hand-spun, hand-woven and unsewn--draped in the old South Indian style.

I can never forget the first time, three decades ago, that a Jaffna elder helped me wrap a veshti, and then took us to the bustling main marketplace. Every step was terrorizing, the unwieldy garment threatening to fall, with me cinching up the subversive sarong several times a minute, both hands never more than a few swift inches from my waist. How awkward I felt, and certainly looked. As time passed and the fabric was tamed, I learned how refined one feels in such attire. It was like floating, living in your spirit more than in your body. To this day, I only feel comfortable

and soulful in these traditional robes. And to this day, Jaffna is one of the few sanctuaries where Western pants and shirt are disdained, and all men, including politicians, go around in their veshtis.



Indian women who wear saris know all this. They have watched their sisters go the way of men, wearing dresses that look like the dresses that every dressmaker dresses her customers in. Okay, women at least have wide options in type and fabric and color. And that is good. But still, women in Japan look like women in Australia, who look like women in China, who all look like women in Europe. There are few kimonos left to announce the passing of a Japanese lady and few ao dai to tell us that the woman shopping over there is a Vietnamese.

So, we pay trib ute to India's women and Hindu women abroad who have not relinquished their elegant dress. They alone have preserved traditional attire, for the sari is the only major apparel to have survived the last 500 years and to remain elegant and voguish daily wear in the 21st century. That's quite an accomplishment. No wonder the Western world has been smitten by the sari, and every woman with a smidgen of sartorial savvy wants one.

Exploring the Worldwide Web on saris, I found this gem, written by Shantipriya Kurada in 1994:



"The beauty of the sari never ceases to amaze me. There is something strikingly feminine about it. Flowing like sheer poetry, graceful in every contour and fold, it's a fascinating mixture of tradition and style. A single stretch of fabric that comes in a range of textures and patterns, the sari is creativity at its best. A cotton sari, charmingly simple, starched and perfectly in place, has such a natural feel. Chiffons and crepes add a glamorous touch. Fragile, utterly soft and delicate, they create an aura of fine elegance. Weddings come alive with the grandeur of silk saris. Painstakingly handwoven to the last detail, the brocade created to perfection by skilled hands, each silk sari is a work of art. A sari has such a special place in every girl's life. It all starts with wrapping around mother's sari, playfully and clumsily tripping on its edges. Then there is the first sari you wear, perhaps to a college function, looking self-conscious and achingly innocent. And, of course, the precious wedding sari that's fondly preserved and cherished for a lifetime. In a world of changing fashions, the sari has stood the test of time. There is something almost magical about it, for it continues to symbolize the romantic image of the Indian woman--vulnerable, elusive and tantalizingly beautiful."



Historians say the sari can be traced back more than 3,500 years! Sanskrit literature from the Vedic period insists that pleats be part of every woman's dress. The pleats, say the texts, must be tucked in at the waist, the front or back, so that the presiding deity, Vayu, the God of wind, can whisk away any evil influence that may strike the woman. Colors, too, are ruled by tradition. Yellow, green and red are festive and auspicious,
standing for fertility. Red, evoking passions, is a bridal color and part of rituals associated with pregnancy. Blue evokes the life-giving force of the monsoon. Pale cream is soothing and represents bridal purity. A married Hindu woman will not wear a completely white sari, which is reserved for brahmacharinis and widows. Life without a husband, it is said, is a life without color.
The sari culturally links the women of India. Whether they are wealthy or poor, svelte or plump, the sari gives them a shared experience, a way in which they are all sisters, forging a link that binds them across all borders, even geographical ones. Women wearing saris in Durban, Delhi or Detroit are part of a social oneness that is nearly eternal and which may, it seems, last yet another thousand years.

In 1997, French anthropologist Chantal Boulanger, published her landmark work, Saris: An Illustrated Guide to the Indian Art of Draping.

France goes Indian: Valentino and dhotis:
Models wore sweaters, Indian dhotis and chappels as part of French Designer
Valentino's 1998 spring-summer men's fashions presented in Paris.

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Namaskar
By Hinduism Today March 1998
http://www.hvk.org/Publications/namaskar.html

THE WORD - NAMASKAR

"Shake hands and come out fighting." It's the referee's final counsel to two pugilists about to beat each other's brains out with clenched fists. Even outside the ring, a handshake can be a little off-putting. When one returns to the West from an extended sojourn in Bharat or elsewhere in Asia, the hand suddenly thrust forward can seem more ominous than friendly, especially if the hand offered is that of a stranger. Of course, one soon acclimatises and the menacing aspect of this salutation subsides.

Perhaps that moment of intimidation derives from the history of the handshake. According to one anthropologist, the handshake evolved in medieval Europe, during the times of knights. It seems not all were laudable Lancelots or gallant Gallahads. More than a few would approach opponents with concealed weapons and when within striking distance do the needful, driving dagger or striking sword into the unguarded paladin.

To fend off the fear of a foe's foul foil, knights took to offering their open and visibly empty hand to each other. It was a kind of surety, a gesture of trust which said, "See, I am unarmed, so you may safely let me approach." As the story goes, soon the gesture itself took on meaning and the less noble, less lethal man on the street adopted the handshake as the proper way to greet others.

In much of the world today, people do not shake hands when they meet. They may hug formally or kiss one another on the cheek, as in eastern Europe and Arab states. They may bow softly, eyes turned to the ground, as in Japan and China. The Hawaiian greeting, termed "honi," consists of placing the nostril gently beside that of the person greeted, a kind of sharing of breath, which is life and Pran(a).

For, Hindu(s), of course, the greeting of choice is "Namaste," the two hands pressed together and held near the heart with the head gently bowed as one says, "Namaste." Thus it is both a spoken greeting and a gesture, a Mantr(a) and a Mudr(a). The prayerful hand position is a Mudr(a) called Anjali, from the root Anj, "to adorn, honor, celebrate or anoint." The hands held in union signify the oneness of an apparently dual cosmos, the bringing together of spirit and matter, or the self meeting the Self. It has been said that the right hand represents the higher nature or that which is divine in us, while the left hand represents the lower, worldly nature.

In Sanskrit "Namas" means, "bow, obeisance, reverential salutation." It comes from the root Nam, which carries meanings of bending, bowing, humbly submitting and becoming silent. "Te" means

"to you." Thus "namaste" means "I bow to you." the act of greeting is called "Namaskaram," "Namaskara" and "Namaskar" in the varied languages of the subcontinent.

Namaste has become a veritable icon of what is Bharatiya. Indeed, there must be a Bharatiya law which requires every travel brochure. calendar and poster to include an image of someone with palms pressed together, conveying to the world Bharat's hospitality, spirituality and graceful consciousness. You knew all that, of course, but perhaps you did not know that there can be subtle ways of enhancing the gesture, as in the West one might shake another's hand too strongly to impress and overpower them or too briefly, indicating the withholding of genuine welcome.

In the case of Namaste, a deeper veneration is sometimes expressed by bringing the fingers of the clasped palms to the forehead, where they touch the brow, the site of the mystic Third Eye. A third form of namaste brings the palms completely above the head, a gesture said to focus consciousness in the subtle space just above the Brahmarandhra, the aperture in the Crown Chakr(a). This form is so full of reverence it is reserved for the Almighty and the holiest of Sat Guru(s).

It is always interesting, often revealing and occasionally enlightening to muse about the everyday cultural traits and habits each nation and community evolves, for in the little things our big ideas about life find direct and personal expression. Take, for instance, the different ways that American and Japanese tool-makers approach the same task. A saw for cutting lumber, if designed in the U.S., is made in such a way that the carpenter's stroke away from his body does the cutting. But in Japan saws are engineered so that cutting takes place as the carpenter draws the saw toward himself. A small detail, but it yields a big difference.

The American saw can, if leaned into, generate more power, while the Japanese saw provides more control and refinement in the cut, requiring surprisingly less effort. Each has its place in the global toolbox. each speaks — like the handshake and namaste greetings — of an underlying perception of man's relationship with things.

In the West we are outgoing, forceful, externalized. We are told in USA (By telelphone company) by Ma Bell to "reach out and touch somebody." We are unabashedly acquisitive, defining our progress in life by how much we have — how much wealth, influence, stored up knowledge, status or whatever. Every culture exhibits these traits to some extent, but in the east Mother is there to remind us, "Reach in and touch the Self." here we are taught to be more introspective, more concerned with the quality of things than their quantity, more attuned with the interior dimension of life.

So, there you have it, the whole of Eastern and Western culture summed up in the handshake which reaches out horizontally to greet another, and Namaste which reaches in vertically to acknowledge that, in truth, that there is no other.

As a test of how these two greetings differ, imagine you are magically confronted with the Divine. The Paramatma, Almighty, walks up to you on the street. What do you do? Reach out to shake His hand? Probably not. Though suitable between man and man, it;' an unseemly expression between man and Paramatma. We never shake hands with Paramatma. I mean, what if your palms are sweating?

So you namaste instead. The reason it feels natural to namaste before Paramatma is that it is, in its

very essence, a spiritual gesture, not a worldly one. By a handshake we acknowledge our equality with others. We reveal our humanity. We convey how strong we are, how nervous, how aggressive or passive. There is bold physicality to it. For these and other reasons, Popes never shake hands. Kings never shake hands. Even mothers don't shake hands with their own children.

Namaste is cosmically different. Kings do namaste, Sat Guru(s) namaste and mothers namaste to their own family. We all namaste before the Almighty, a holy man or even a holy place. The namaste gesture bespeaks our inner valuing of the sacredness of all. It betokens our intuition that all souls are divine, in their essence. It reminds us in quite a graphic manner, and with insistent repetition, that we can see Paramatma everywhere and in every human being we meet. It is saying, silently, "I see the Deity in us both, and bow before Him or Her. I acknowledge the holiness of even this mundane meeting. I cannot separate that which is spiritual in us from that which is human and ordinary."

And while we are singing the praises of Namaste, it should be observed how efficient a gesture it is in an age of mass communication. A politician, or performer can greet fifty thousand people with a single Namaste, and they can return the honor instantly. In such a situation a handshake is unthinkable and a mere waving of one hand is somehow too frivolous.

There are other, more mystical meanings behind Namaste. The nerve current of the body converge in the feet, the solar plexus and the hands. Psychic energy leaves the body at these junctures. To "ground" that energy and balance the flow of Pran(a) streaming through the nerve system, Yogi(s) cross their legs in the lotus posture, and bring their hands together. The Anjali Mudra acts like a simple Yog(ic) Asan(a), balancing and harmonizing our energies, keeping us centered, inwardly poised and mentally protected. It closes our aura, shielding us psychically. It keeps us from becoming too externalized, thus we remain close to our intuitive nature, our super consciousness.

Here are some insights into Namaste from a number of Hindu(s):

* Namaste elevates one's consciousness, reminding one that all beings, all existence is holy, is the Almighty. It communicates, "I honor or worship the Divinity within you." Also it draws the individual inward for a moment, inspires reflection on the deeper realities, softening the interface between people. It would be difficult or offend or feel animosity toward any one you greet as Paramatma.

* Namaste is a gesture of friendship and kindness, also of thanks or special recognition. Mystically it is called "Namaskara Mudra" in the Agami(c) Pooja, and it centers one's energy within the spine.

* I've heard it means "I salute the Almighty within you." The true Namaste gesture is is accompanied by bowing the head and shoulders slightly. This is a gesture that lessens our sense of ego and self-centredness, requiring some humility to do it well — whereas shaking hands can be quite an arrogant event.

* Touching the hands together puts you in touch with your center, your soul. Namaste puts you forward as a soul, not an outer personality.

* The gesture has a subtle effect on the aura and nerve system. bringing focused attention and a collection of one's forces, so to speak. It also protects against unnecessary psychic connections

which are fostered by shaking hands. This might be called a form of purity also — protecting one's energies.

This form of acknowledgment is so lovely, so graceful. Just look at two people in Namaste and you will see so much human beauty and refinement.

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Uneasy heads that wore the crown

http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/nizam/nizam.shtml

In the middle of 1940s, while Indian leaders were hard at work uniting Hindus and Muslims, the British were opening another, "more explosive front", to divide India. Hitherto, their targets were the 562 princes for whom Indian independence meant running the risk of losing title, territory and royal privilege.

For Britain, the princes were sitting targets. Their royalty and their divine rights still swayed 90 million Indian subjects. Together they had with them an area larger than the size of Western Europe. Some of them had full nations to themselves - Kashmir, for instance, was larger than France, Travancore more populous than Portugal. Some even had their own armies and currencies. "Their interests needed to be protected in free India as much as the interest of the Muslim minorities in Hindu India."

Whereas the British continued to play the royal card in their attempt to postpone the transfer of power to India, they did not realize, until quite late, that the princes were unpopular and that Indian people had little sympathy left for their kings.

In fact, by the end of the 19th century, after the British had snatched the last vestiges of control from the Indian rulers, there were really no royal duties left for the latter. Though they had feudatory control over their territories, they were always under the watchful eyes of the colonizers. The princes were even barred from continuing their favourite pass time of waging war on their neighbours. Thus deprived, the out-of-work rulers fell upon wasteful ways and were cut-off completely from their subjects and their problems.

Some of the rulers directed their energies into building palaces modeled on Windsor or Versailles and stocking them with trophies from the jungle or luxury goods from Europe. They developed a reputation for eccentricity and depravity. The Nawab of Junagadh, who was loath to spend money on public projects, squandered a small fortune to celebrate the "wedding" of his favorite dog. Annoyed by a salesman's snub, the Maharajah of Bharatpur bought all the Rolls-Royces in a London showroom and turned them into garbage trucks back home. The Maharajah of Alwar, notorious as a sadist, poured kerosene over his polo pony and set the poor animal on fire. The Nizam of Hyderabad, acknowledged as the world's richest man, used egg-sized diamonds as paperweights, while the Maharajah of Gwalior built a 90,000-sq-m palace in which he never lived.

"The British systematically alienated us from the real world. They demolished the capability of the order," laments Arvind Singh of Udaipur, scion of a 1,400-year dynasty that could be the

world's oldest.

So when the British realized the futility of their 'royal scheme', they withdrew their support and left the princes to devise their own ways of dealing with the new dispensation under Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel.

Left without a mentor, the rulers were hopelessly outfoxed during the negotiations on the transfer of power in 1947. Finally, they had little choice but to cede their kingdoms to the new Indian union. They were allowed initially to retain administrative control, except over communications, defense and foreign affairs. But by 1949, contrary to the assurances given earlier by Nehru's government, they were forced to merge their territories with the Indian provinces.

Maharajas of free India

Unlike the sultans of Malaya, who retained a constitutional position after the British left in 1957, India's maharajahs could retain only their titles and personal assets. To make the surrender less painful, however, they were accorded a few privileges, such as exemption from income tax and the right to a state funeral.

The princes soon discovered, though, that they still could win the respect of their erstwhile subjects. Apart from renewing their claim to "descent" from gods and goddesses and placing themselves at the centre of religious ceremonies, many of the princes also began improving their image as annadata (grain-giver)

"My grandfather used to be under canvas (in a tent) for more than six months of the year, touring his kingdom. He was a man of the people," recalls Madhavrao Scindia of Gwalior, a Congress politician who gets elected regularly to Parliament from the former capital of his princely state.

Feeling betrayed by New Delhi in 1949, the princes decided to show Nehru that they could be as adept at the game of democracy as at billiards or polo. When free India's first big elections were called in 1952, several maharajahs jumped into the fray. One even succeeded in giving Nehru's party a fright.

However, when Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi came to power in the late 1960s, she quickly moved against the royals. A public campaign was launched to tar the princes as exploitative and anti-democratic. Breaking pledges given at the time of independence, the government abolished all royal titles and privileges in 1971 and stopped payment of special pensions, called privy purses. Gandhi also set the tax sleuths on her blue-blooded opponents and threw a few in prison. Gayatri Devi was one royal who paid for annoying India's new empress: she served time in New Delhi's notorious Tihar Jail.

Consider the fate of Pravirchandra Bhanjdeo, the 20th Maharajah of Bastar in India's tribal heartland. The Bastar rulers trace their ancestry not just to the moon, but also to Prithviraj Chauhan, the last Hindu king to rule from Delhi in the 12th century. In the 1960s, Bhanjdeo organized impoverished tribals and became immensely popular. The government responded first by declaring him "insane" and stripping him of his royal title. Then, in 1966, as tribal supporters armed with bows and arrows milled around him in his crumbling palace, he was shot and killed in cold blood by police.

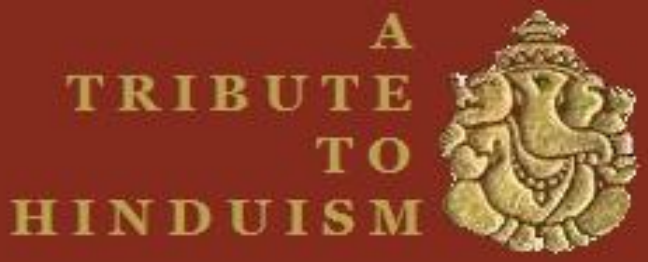
Despite such setbacks, the royals had shown they could play a role in democratic India. One study

found that blue-blooded candidates enjoy an extraordinarily high success rate of 85% in elections. Amrinder Singh, whose father was the last ruling Maharajah of Patiala, resigned from the Indian Army to enter politics, serving briefly as a minister and working to help end Punjab's secessionist Sikh insurgency in the 1980s. Still an active politician--he left the Congress to join the regional Sikh party, the Akali Dal--he remains committed to his people. "The underlying cause for the insurgency remains," he says. "Educated unemployed youth have been beaten into submission, but how long can they be kept down?"

At the eastern extremity of a far-flung nation lies Tripura, a backward state long neglected by New Delhi and now threatened by angry tribals. As he examines a massive bust of Mussolini presented to his father by the Italian dictator in 1936, Kirit Bikram Dev Burman, former Maharajah of Tripura, observes sadly, "I joined politics because I thought I could help Tripura. After all, it was my state."

The 186th ruler in a thousand-year-old dynasty, Burman had stepped aside to let his second wife, Bibhukumari Devi, take the political spotlight. Though defeated in the Parliamentary elections because of a split within the Congress, she remains confident about her political future. "For a section of the people, we are very dear," she says. "Basically, they know we won't cheat them, won't make money at their expense." That point is endorsed by Jagat Mehta, former Indian foreign secretary whose father worked for the Maharajah of Udaipur: "Maharajahs appear so much more benign, so much more restrained than today's corrupt politicians."

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articles on hinduism

Vastu is latest Indian rage in the West

http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/010602/dlfor24.asp

First yoga and meditation mesmerised the West. Now it's the turn of vastu, with stores here showcasing a new book whose author spent 12 years in India studying Vedic sciences.

Kathleen Cox's "The Power of Vastu Living: Welcoming Your Soul Into Your Home and Workspace," is the second she has authored on the subject.

"I believe I am a messenger and I am doing my best to spread the word," Cox said about vastu. Cox describes vastu as organising your home or workspace to improve your well-being and says it is vital in these times, especially in the West.

"Our lives have become so fragmented," she says "that we need to find a way to rediscover our balance, to re-centre ourselves, and to rediscover our connection to what really matters."

Cox studied Vedic sciences, such as yoga and ayurveda, for nearly a decade and studied vastu for over three years.

Cox explains these sciences are all inter-connected. "While yoga and ayurveda focus on our body to increase our well-being, vastu works on the external environment in which we live and work to achieve this same goal.

Cox also believes that vastu, like all valid sciences, is logical and was meant to evolve over time. "No science is static," she says. In her own adaptation for the West, Cox has substituted the use of ayurveda in place of astrology.

"Vastu is not-a-one-size-fits-all science, and ayurveda works as well as astrology. Ayurveda also has practical benefits that are easier for Westerners to grasp and appreciate."

So how does one practice vastu? Cox says that first a person's ayurvedic constitution is determined, which allows specific needs to be addressed. Then three vastu principles are followed.

The first principle asks one to respect the rhythms that govern the universe by honouring the five basic elements that exist in all creation.

"We try to honour the assigned location of each element in our home or workplace. By doing this, we end up aligning our own biorhythms with the universal rhythms. We live in sync with the rhythms that flow through each daily cycle."

The second principle asks us to draw the world of nature into our home and workspace. Nature is calming and its presence in the home reminds us that everything that exists is interconnected.

The third vastu principle asks us to celebrate our own identity and willingly put it on display. "We too are divine," Cox says, "and we must learn that the respect that we offer nature should extend to our self as well. We must take care of ourselves and appreciate who we are and what we love."

By following these three principles, we create environments that are supportive and welcoming. Our home and workspace increase our inner-harmony.

While setting up a home or workspace so that it is properly aligned with the elements can be difficult, Cox explains that one can fix problems that may arise when the elements are not in their correct location through the use of healthy colours or through the therapeutic use of nature.

"Vastu is very forgiving. The Vedic scholars who developed this great science understood that we mortals are imperfect," says Cox, who also runs Web site www.vastuliving.com

"Only homes for the deities are ever perfect in vastu. So if we can fix our home or workspace so that it is 51 percent vastu-correct, we're on the winning side. We reap the benefits. We feel better, we work better, and we are in a much better position to achieve our goals-whatever they are."

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Ghaggar flows in Saraswati's place

http://pub6.ezboard.com/fhinduunityhinduismhottopics.showMessage?topicID=8337.topic

Bangalore, May 5: Unveiling the mystery of ancient river Saraswati, which many archaeologists believe had vanished, remote sensing experts reveal that the present day river Ghaggar in northern Rajasthan was the main course of the Vedic river.

Utilising remote sensing data obtained from IRS satellites, experts at the regional remote sensing service centre in Jodhpur have plotted the drainage of the river Saraswati, according to Isro.

The experts said the river further flowed to Rann of Kutch and a channel of the main river course passed through Jaisalmer district while a major part of the river was drained further west inside Pakistan.

According to Isro sources a team of experts from the Jodhpur centre said from the prominence and the width of the palaeo channels on the satellite data, supported with data from archaeological finds, age and quality of ground water and sediment type data it could be concluded that Saraswati indeed flowed in ancient time with the main course passing through river Ghaggar in north Rajasthan.

Mention about river Saraswati could be found in the Vedic and ancient literature such as Rigveda, Brahmana and Srautasutra, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagvat Purana and Vamana Purana.

Many seats of learning and ashrams, inhabited by rishis such as Yagyavalka, were situated on the banks this holy river. The Jodhpur centre of Isro carried out a detailed study to map the palaeo channels to establish the course of the river.

Data from wide field sensor of IRS, which had a spatial resolution of 188 m and a swath of 810 km, had been used for mapping prominent palaeo channels.

Imageries generated from specific areas were used to select sites over the palaeo channels for drilling 11 borewells in Jaisalmer district to check the ground water and the analysis of the age of ground water samples had confirmed the presence of palaeo channels.

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Shiva worship in ancient Arabia
By Muzaffar Hussain

CULTURAL affinity is stronger than even national unity. Because any chunk of land comes alive only when culture infuses life into it. Two hostile nations can be brought back to amity only when the cultural bonds between them are activated. This was the thread Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee picked up to revive the pre-partition cultural bonds between the two scions of the Akhand Bharat. He, therefore, chose artistes and poets to accompany him on his occidental odyssey in quest of amity with Pakistan, because only the cultural appeal could touch the right chord. Thus the sympathetic resonance alone can be expected to replace the chronic mutual distrust with mutual trust and friendship. The style of prayer or the method of worship can always be shorter in life than a nation. Therefore, the particular way of living that has evolved on a particular stretch of land is recorded in the history of that land. This history concretizes that country's heritage, and that country preserves this heritage and bases its plans for future development on this legacy.

Pakistan may have declared itself an Islamic State. But it cannot shed its ancient heritage dating back to the Mohenjo Daro and Harappa civilization. And its most famous national hero can only be the great grammarian Panini. The fanatic religious madness called Taliban may attempt to destroy every vestige of pre-Islamic Civilization, but it cannot deny the historical reality of Afghanistan's ancient religions of Vedic or Parsi fire-worship. In spite of Iran's embracing Islam, Cyrus, Sohrab and Rostam are even today hailed as Iranian icons. Gandhar (modern Kandhar) cannot disown Gandhari and the Mahabharat. Iran may observe the most militant form of Islam, but when the question of their ethnic origin arises, the Iranians proudly claim their Aryan descent.

Kafvinak Zikramin Ulumin tab aseru
Kaluvan Amatatul hava a lazakkuru
Na tazasveroha udan elelavada-a lilavra
Valuka ene zatallahe aum tab aseru
Va aha lolaha Azah aramian Mahadev
Manozel ilamuddine Minahum va savatt aru

That means :

"Can the person, who indulged in bad deeds and lustful and angry activities, be granted salvation if he repents, atones for and proposes to embrace dharma and follow righteous path?

If he worships Lord Mahadev with true devotion he can attain the highest position in spiritual

attainments."

The name of Mahadev is mentioned in the Arabic original exactly as it is pronounced in Sanskrit or other Indian languages.
Umer bin Hashsham further says, "Oh Lord! Grant me a day's stay in India in exchange for my entire life, because by reaching there a man attains salvation."

Va sahabe ke vam fim kamil Hinde you man
Yakulun na lajaha jan fainnak tavajjaru
Another poet is cited in this same book on p. 257 who says,
Aya mubarekal araz vashaive nohaminar Hinde
Va adarakkallah majye vashaiye nazzale zikaratun

The means :-
"Oh holy land India, you are great
Because God has made you to spread His Wisdom."

The above lines are enough to show what sentiments the Arabs entertained regarding Lord Shiva and India. Lord Shiva was held as God of knowledge, and India the land of knowledge and both were respected for their benign influence.

"Hind" is the name Arabs gave to India. They considered India almost like paradise and so they endearingly called their beloved daughters "Hindus" (intention was the daughters were heavenly fairies). They borrowed the figures "0 to 9" from Indian mathematicians. They called the numerals "Hindsa". Arab traders were impressed with the mouth-watering taste of Indian "tamarind". The English word itself has been a corruption of Arabic—"tamar-i-Hind" which means the "fruit of India" in Arabic. The Arabs' trade with India has been going on from ancient ages. Those guides who guided Vasco-da-Gama, the Portuguese explorer who found a new route to India in early sixteenth century, were the same Arab traders. The noted archaeologist, Shri Wakankar, has described this extensively in his book.

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Hindu, Jew tell world of their marriage

India Abroad News Service

http://www.timesofindia.com/today/20worl24.htm

TORONTO: After five years of a blissful marriage, a Canadian Jewish man and his Hindu wife have put their experiences on paper to tell the world that liaisons between people from vastly varied cultures can work wonderfully.

Ehud Sperling and Vatsala, who came together under the Indian system of "arranged marriage", took their wedding vows after an eight-month correspondence through letters. They have put those letters together, chronicling their courtship, and published it in the form of a book titled 'A Marriage Made in Heaven: A Love Story in Letters'.

After two failed marriages, Sperling had decided the Indian system of arranged marriage would work best for him.

Sperling, 51, runs a publishing company. Vatsala, 34, who belongs to a traditional Hindu Brahmin family in Tamil Nadu, used to run the microbiology department of the largest private children's hospital in Chennai before their marriage.

Sperling has travelled across India extensively. Once he stayed in the interiors of Uttar Pradesh with a friend and watched his daughter Sapna opt for an arranged marriage. "I was part of her wedding. I stayed with my friend for over one month, actively participating in giving of gifts, receiving gifts, participating in all wedding rituals and ceremonies," the Canadian recalled.

"I went through the whole experience of sexual revolution, feminism, the radical transformation of the Western culture from the culture in the 1960s," Sperling said of his past. "I heard about idealism. I was looking for happiness at home as well....Men and women didn't understand how to relate to each other," he found.

After closely watching arranged marriages in India, Sperling decided to opt for one himself. It wasn't an altogether alien concept for him as his grandmother had been paired off in similar fashion. Sperling's family is originally from Poland and many of his relative were killed in the holocaust preceding World War II.

Sperling inserted an advertisement in the matrimonial column of The Hindu newspaper in India. Vatsala saw the advertisement and discussed it with her parents and then responded to it. That marked the beginning of their correspondence through letters.

Vatsala showed all of Sperling's letters to her mother before responding. "Each time I showed the letter, I looked at her face and I saw peace on that face...She was at peace and that was her

blessing and the reason that gave me courage to go ahead and get married," she said.

Sperling said that in their correspondence they discussed at length "how to work out a relationship, who's responsible for what, how to be a man and how to be a woman. What are the ideas about the Western man and how can they harmonise with the traditional Indian point of view."

After their long correspondence, the met, got engaged and married. "When I met him in person after this long correspondence I didn't have to go through the drama of romance. I had already in me a person for whom I have pure worship," Vatsala told IANS.

But how did two people from such diverse cultures come together? "If you are respectful of cultural diversity and human beings, then human values will connect us all over the world and those in my views are the most important things in marital relations," Sperling said.

"No matter what beliefs you hold, your basic expectations from life are the same," Vatsala said. "You can follow any religion....no matter which background you come from, whatever be your religion, that basic expectation is the way to work out to achieve that."

Sperling remains a Jew and Vatsala a Hindu. And their four-year-old son follows both faiths.

To Ehud Sperling, India is the most tolerant society in the world despite strife and violence. "I have never met people more tolerant than Indians of others and others point of view," he said.

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For God's sake, let it be

A prayer from Middle India

http://www.indian-express.com/ie20020318/ed3.html

There cannot be a dry eye in our land, nor many people sleeping well. The children's voices call us from inside the burning train, and the ex-MLA's home, hoarse with begging for protection on the phone for six hours. What did the Godhra mob hope to achieve? Or the kar sevaks? Another Partition? Why is Narendra Modi still in his chair when he has failed to protect the rest of his state?

The English press blames the VHP. But, logically, don't we need to look back even further? Who had the media and academia in a death-grip for four decades since Independence? The Left. Going by its line of reasoning, if the train victims can thank the VHP for their ghastly fate, then the rest of us can thank the Left for creating the VHP, for midwifing this monster with their godless, sterile, fascist ideas.

The Left wanted to take away people's religious faith, but what did they offer in return, except an arid wasteland of borrowed ideas that they themselves were the first to exploit on the international seminar circuit? All that bleeding concern about poverty and inequity, that perennial government-bashing, in order to obtain grants and stipends from the West, but contributing precious little to the actual betterment of the country.

If thinking was their 'pesha', did they employ either imagination or creativity in suggesting alternative ways to be? No, the bandar-log rarely did. It took Manmohanomics to give a hardworking middle class some sense of reward for effort. It was India's misfortune that worldwide recession hit this new chance to create wealth and, consequently, jobs.

Meanwhile what did the Left offer India? A failed state in West Bengal. Education without employment in Kerala, leading to the highest national suicide rate. Not that the others were perfect. Successive governments lost generations when they did not focus on primary education. But the only thing the Left offered was shrill ideology.

And lectures! They knew how to lecture everybody else, and mock the legitimate desire of a people for kama and artha. In fact we were not supposed to hanker after moksha either, but only follow a pattern of dharma decided by the Left over a lal salaam and rum in a thick Yera glass.

We don't mean the sincere ones in the field who took on the feudals, or people's poets like Ghadar. No, it is the opining armchair Lefties in the press and in big universities who hurt people's sentiments and irritated moderate Hindus into casting their lot with the kaccha brigade. How have their many unreadable books on tribals, on agrarian systems, on social relationships, been of any practical

use in either policy or legislation?

At the end of the day it comes down to committed NGOs and the initiative and sincerity of individual citizens, either in the bureaucracy or in private life, does it not? People who possibly never read an OUP book in their lives? Middle India needs to draw a deep breath at this horrible moment and reconsider. Have we Hindus held onto our ancient faith despite the last 800 years merely for this? The Left's totalitarian approach has only made the wounds of history bleed further.

Can't we in Middle India now speak up and undertake a personal mission to defuse the anger of neighbours, friends and family? A one-point programme to patiently convince one Hindu each to let go of hurt and anger at what happened hundreds of years ago.

We can't presume to tell mourners what to feel. Nor do macho nations like the USA forgive. But Gladys Staines and Marianne Pearl forgave. Can't we be like them, not like the jehadis? And for God's sake, **can't educated Muslims persuade the ghettos to join the mainstream instead of sustaining medieval Arabistans in a Bharat that will never lose its Hindu majority, despite mullah fantasies?**

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TALKING WITH PAULA RICHMAN

http://www.indianexpress.com/archive_frame.php

'Ramayana is important to people because it's tied up with the truth'

Paula Richman has studied the Ramayana for the last 15 years. She is a Professor of Religion at Oberlin University in the USA and put together the book Many Ramayanas about the diversity of this narrative tradition. Currently on research leave, Richman lectured on her subject at the Sahitya Akademi in New Delhi last weekend. Excerpts from an interview with Renuka Narayanan.

What drew you to Indology?

Professor A K Ramanujan at Chicago University. I met my husband (Persian scholar and author Michael Fisher) there. We were both attracted by the sparkle in Ramanujan's eye, his enthusiasm, the way he made classical Indian literature come alive for us.

With such a wide choice of subjects in ancient India, what attracted you to the Ramayana, a text with which many modern people have huge problems?

There is no other story on earth that comes close to the Ramayana in the extraordinary way it is lives as a vital, fluid, narrative tradition. I'm sure everyone knows that there are many Ramayanas. It is important to go through these many versions to understand the problems others had with it in the past and how they retold the tale.

Did they too have problems, like we do today, about the ambivalences—the less-than-perfect behaviour of Lord Ram in the episodes of Vali, Surpanakha and Sita's Agnipariksha?

Yes, absolutely. But that is the marvellous thing in the Ramayana. These issues are present in the very first Ramayana, by Valmiki. They were not edited out but allowed to stay and yet, unlike the Vedas which had to be memorised exactly so, with not a word that could be changed, the Ramayana was treated as a beloved epic open to re-interpretation in regional texts and in the oral tradition.

Why do you suppose it was so important to somehow make sense of the Ramayana and hang on to it, despite the grey areas?

I love what Telugu scholar Narayana Rao once said, which sums up this situation. He said, ''Fiction has only one form; truth has many''. The Ramayana is so tied up with truth that it is important to people. A novel by Jane Austen is just one text. The Ramayana is less a single text than a tradition of tellings. It reflects the concerns of people at different stages in time, in different places. The Ramayana your grandmother heard will be different from her granddaughter's, but all the stories of the past will be in it.

How many Ramayanas are there exactly?

There are over 300 traditional versions and I've read (in English translation) more than 200, not counting the hundreds of oral narratives.

Are there any patterns discernible in these 'types'?

I think there are two strands visible—Ramayanas which deal with happiness in union and those which deal with the sorrow of separation.

That sounds like the emotional dynamics of classical dance—the counter-pull between vipralamba (separation) and sambhoga (union).
Exactly. Sita's either banished or there's a mangalam ending. There are more Ramayanas that favour a happy ending, in fact, as many know, there's this theory that the Uttara Kandam (Agnipariksha) was added later. But sadness is truer to life, perhaps? Ram is never happy after Sita's banishment.

Does anyone have a theory on why Lord Ram really sent her away?

I can tell you it's upset lots of people in the past! In fact, some of the best stories relate to Lakshman's wife, Urmila. In the modern Malayalam play Kanchana Sita by Srikantan Nair (made into a film by Aravindan), Urmila whiles away her separation by going to college! She sits with the most learned pundits to study the Dharma Shastras and by the time the 14 years are up, she's an expert. So when Rama banishes Sita, she has a big debate with him. He justifies the banishment as ''the will of the people'' and not his own dharma as a husband. But then, says Urmila, what about your own banishment? That was against the will of the people. But you insisted on upholding the king's personal commitment.

What kind of happy ending could there be?

Bhavabhuti has them meet and forgive each other. Ku Vem Pu's Kannada story has Rama and Sita both going into the fire to purify themselves, because who is really free in human birth from mistakes?

What other patterns do you see in the tradition?

The regional influences are very interesting. In the Eastern areas the Shakta Ramayanas have Sita going in to battle to kill off a hundred-headed cousin of Ravana's who suddenly shows up after

the battle, when Rama is too exhausted to fight. The South Indian Ramayanas like Kambar's or Ezhuthacchan's tend to be more lyrical and poetic. Kerala and Karnataka, because of Kathakali and Yakshagana, have the most talented Ramayana actors. Ravana gets a lot of respect in South India as a warrior, scholar, veena player and devotee of Shiva. No way is he demonised, in fact he tells Vibhishan, ''I know Rama is a good person, but I have to avenge my sister Surpanakha.''

In the north, there is an anthology of devotees' questions to Tulsidas called the Sankhavali which asks things like ''What did they eat in the forest,'', ''Which mother did they bow to first?'' Every region has some format in which the complexities of this epic are repeatedly raised.

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Where Sanskrit is a way of life
http://www.indianexpress.com/full_story.php?content_id=19997

Rajasthan village switches to ancient language

Ganoda, Banswada, March 10: From the walls of Shambhunath Jha's house, plastered posters vie for attention. But the one that catches the eye is a conversation chart that goes something like this: ''Welcome. Please sit down. Would you like some water? Nice to meet you. See you again. Goodbye.''

The chart doesn't just tell you how to make polite conversation. It also tells you how to do it in Sanskrit.

Jha's little daughter rapidly replies to her father's questions, all in Sanskrit. Near the kitchen, the Jha household has put up another chart, this time listing the name of cooking ingredients and food items.

''We use it as a regular glossary. Sanskrit is not our mother tongue, so sometimes we need to look up the chart. But most of the time, we manage without it,'' says Jha proudly.

The professor is one of the many residents in Ganoda village who are confident that they can carry on an entire conversation in Sanskrit without a problem. The grocery shop owner claims he can rattle off shlokas in Sanskrit while in the adjoining utensil store, the owner informs that he helps his children with their language homework.

''Almost everyone can speak or understand the language here,'' Naresh Doshi says. ''I studied only till class VIII but I still manage in Sanskrit. We don't speak it at home all the time, but we understand and if someone comes to my shop and asks for something in Sanskrit, I'll know what to give.''

In this tribal-dominated village, Sanskrit is slowly becoming a way of life. Slogans in Sanskrit make the village walls, the language spoken in practically every house and every school-going child rattling off a few sentences.

The entire process actually started by default. Until about 10 years ago, Ganoda village was like any other in Banswada district of Rajasthan. Tribal dominated, average literacy levels and a non-descript entity.

But the growing number of students passing out of the government Sanskrit college in Ganoda changed all that. Over 1,000 students in the three Sanskrit institutions of the village — a primary school, middle school and the college — have joined hands with a group of their teachers to try and make Sanskrit the second language of the Wagdi-speaking population.

In 14-year-old Dharmesh Joshi's house, almost everyone understands a smattering of the language. ''My mother can't speak very well but everyone else manages. Now I have attended a few Sanskrit camps and we are slowly trying to teach others.''

Kanhaiya Lal Yadav is a first generation learner from his tribal household in Dukhvada. ''We speak Wagdi at home but with my friends I often debate in Sanskrit,'' says the undergraduate student.

Jha adds: ''We decided recently to try and take the language to as many people as possible. There's

already an atmosphere of learning that has been created over the years. Now we are trying to reach out to people in remote villages and initiate them into the world of Sanskrit.''

And to spread the good word, the teachers and students are practically going door-to-door, teaching, putting up posters and impressing many with their synchronised recital of shlokas.

For the motivated Sanskrit-speaking lot of Ganoda, the ulitmate aim is to make it a unique and model Sanskrit village. Their punchline is ''don't say hello, say *Hari Om*.''

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Inter-Community Relations
New Conclusions Likely After Latest Excavations
By Meenakshi Jain
India Today

Frightened by the growing avalanche of archeological evidence which threatens to pulverize historiography, the desperation of leftist academics to salvage their rendition of the past is entirely understandable. Decades of labor expended in effacing references to the destruction of Hindu temples, shifting the focus instead to sectarian Hindu conflict, is now in jeopardy.

The emphasis in the so-called "Rightist discourse" so far was mainly on the demolition of Hindu sacred structures by iconoclasts. But, in the heart of Akbar's Fatehpur Sikri, a mounting debris of Jain statues is currently being un-earthed. Given the Jain community's impeccable non-militant credentials and Akbar's reputation as the best face of Indian Islam, this casts an entirely new light on inter-community relations in medieval India. That is why, though Jain-Hindu reactions have been muted so far, Marxists have rushed in to defend their carefully sanitized version of the past.

They have questioned the legitimacy of the excavations on the ground that as Fatehpur Sikri is a famous monument and tourist site, there was no justification for reopening the site to discover an old settlement.
They have argued that Brahminical intolerance could well account for the mutilation of the Jain idols. That would, they say, also explain the near-perfect condition of a Saraswati statue, given the goddess' clear Brahminical associations.

Unfortunately for leftist academics, the time for such crude theories
is fast running out. A re-examination of religious texts, historical records, and literary treatises has forced a growing body of non-Marxist scholars to reach entirely different conclusions about India's religious culture.

For instance, they now believe that undue stress has been laid on the so-called orthodox—heterodox religious divide. In historical practice, the division between Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism was never so fundamental as to fore-close the possibility of mutual exchange. Explaining the presence of Hindu gods and
so-called Hindu "elements" in Jain temples, the scholars highlight a shared religious culture wherein divine figures and even ritual forms were reincorporated, reformulated and re-situated. In the Jain context, the distinction was that Hindu gods were given a lower place in the hierarchical classification of souls, and this was visible in the layout of images in their temples.

The doctrinal, ritualistic and institutional similarities between Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism were too marked to be overlooked. The Jains and Shaiva Siddhantis, for example, believed in the plurality of souls fettered by maya, which could be liberated through karma. They also believed in the separate existence of liberated souls after moksha. Both placed great emphasis on material austerity. The Shaiva sadhaka
moreover, bore a striking resemblance to the Jain atmacintaka nirapeksa, as did the Shaiva math to Jain monasteries. All of this points to a highly interactive spiritual environment.

Buddhism, too, is being recognized as an integral part of the Indian religious tradition. Buddha's biography incorporates many of the characteristics of the Rig Vedic god Indra, as also of the Jain tirthankara, Parasvanath. Buddhism was closely allied to the Upanishads, in its advent and philosophy. Brahmins constituted the largest group of monks and supporters of early Buddhism and were strongly represented in most religious movements in India. Several key Jain philosophers were Brahmins.

The claim of Brahminical intolerance is mischievous and dishonest. The Brahmins were known for their tendency to absorb, assimilate and upgrade deities, not for exhibiting animus towards them. Krishna, who has been linked by scholars to a deity of the Vrishni tribe, was elevated by them to the highest godhead. Rudra, identified with low-caste cremation ground cults, has been recognized in the Svetasvatara Upanishad as the Absolute Reality.

While leftists have accused Brahmins of intolerance, they have downplayed, if not purged, evidence of Muslim bigotry. Even the "great Akbar" flirted with the most orthodox forms of Sunni Islam. He persecuted Shias and Mahadawis, forcibly converted Hindus, rechristened Hindu holy cities, and levied the jazia. Though
he did seek a neutral legitimization to rationalize his rule, the state under him remained, unmistakably, a Muslim state.

The harsh truth is that the level of integration between the two communities remained pitiful even in the best of times. The Hindustani composite culture that one constantly hears about involved the assimilation of the Hindu administrative elite into Muslim culture and the Islamization of Muslims away from Hindu culture. The pattern was continued by Muslim provincial rulers after the decline of the Mughal empire. Prayag, Ayodhya, and Benaras became cities which were "Mughalized" under the Nawabs of Awadh, who continuedthe culture established by the Mughals.

Given the Hindu disposition, many of them worshipped at the shrines of Muslim saints, but the guardians of the shrines ensured that they could never get too close to the central enclosure. A distinction was always maintained between Hindu and Muslim devotees. The latter were never encouraged to visit Hindu temples. The history of the Hindu-Muslim encounter before the British period has led some scholars to concede that if communalism was "constructed" during the colonial period, it was constructed in part from already existing material. The excavations at Fatehpur Sikri seem to reinforce this view.

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articles on hinduism

Sanitizing Temple Destruction by Islam

By Meenakshi Jain

http://www.sulekha.com/articledesc.asp?cid=142374

Politics may or may not be the art of the possible, but historical writing on the Muslim community in India is certainly fast approaching that exalted state. It is truly extraordinary that as echoes of *jihad* reverberate through the sub-continent, western and Marxist scholarship should be desperately segregating present battles from past contests and in the process, willfully exonerating Muslims of acts of commission traditionally laid at their door. The sanitization of Islam's public profile is all the more intriguing given the west's own growing preoccupation with problems of fundamentalism and terrorism.

Be that as it may, there is a continuing thread between India's historic experience and contemporary predicament, which we can ignore only at our peril. At the heart of the matter is the long drawn-out unresolved and stalemated civilizational struggle, which refuses to blow away, and in fact demands final resolution. This is not simply a clichéd clash between Islamic monotheism and Hindu polytheism as is made out in standard accounts on the subject. The issue is far more visceral, which explains both its extended duration and bearing on mankind.

Scholars of religion would see merit in the proposition that India is the last refuge of a once universal spiritual tradition that has everywhere been replaced by Semitism of varying varieties. **Given that Islam is the extreme form of Semitism and India the greatest expression of 'paganism', the formula of accommodation can logically have no appeal for the former. This remains the painful reality, however well historians may camouflage it.**

The intolerance of idolatry was first exhibited in Arabia and by the Prophet Mohammad, who had never set eyes on India. That was the inexorable logic of the religious movement he had set in motion. (Muslims, like many others, confused the Hindu practice of image worship with idolatry. **Hindus were never idolators. The image was always perceived as a means of focusing on the Almighty, it was never equated with the Almighty. Elaborate rules governed the consecration of a statue into an image of worship, and its disposal in case of damage).**

Since the issue of temple destruction has acquired a fresh leash of life in the wake of the Babri Masjid – Ram Janmabhoomi controversy, it is understandable that academics should have directed their considerable talents to clearing up this particularly messy bit of the past. It is not possible here to take note of the rich literature generated on this vexatious issue. A reference to Richard Eaton's essay on 'Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States', published in his book, *Essays on Islam and Indian History*, (OUP 2000), would suffice to highlight the main theses of this genre of historical writing.

The preliminary argument expounded holds faulty use of Persian chronicles and treatises responsible for the unflattering depiction of Muslims down the ages. British administrator-scholars, so the story goes, consciously produced inaccurate translations of Persian texts in a bid to contrast their beneficent rule with that of their bigoted and intolerant predecessors. The historical truth, present-day apologists of Muslims argue, is that Persian chroniclers of medieval times widely exaggerated and sometimes even invented, the temple-demolition sprees of their patrons.

But surely this raises more questions than it solves. **One does not need to be communally-minded to infer that desecration of Hindu holy sites was held to be meritorious activity in the entire Muslim world, which is why the writers in question felt the need to glorify such acts, whether they actually took place or not.** Certainly, even the most pro-Muslim historian would be hard put to name a single medieval writer of whatever stature, who disapproved of such vandalism or regarded it as un-Islamic. Further, the fact of a level of destruction is not contested by any scholar, though there is debate on its possible motives.

Pertinent in this context is the Muslim community's perception of the manner of its spread in the sub-continent, and the pivotal role played by temple destruction in the 'remembered past' of the Muslim state and people. Local legends invariably eulogize a small band of the faithful who arrive as torch-bearers of the faith in the hostile terrain and face the resistance of the infidel populace. The ensuing bitter struggle climaxes in the take-over of the area temple by the army of Mohammad, its transformation into a mosque, and the conversion of the principal pagan leaders to Islam. The mosque thereafter serves as the disseminator of Islam in that region, in course of time contributing to the establishment of a sizeable Muslim population in the environs. However modern historians may interpret such narratives, they are indicative of the Muslim community's preferred account of its expansion.

The ingenuity of modern scholarship is most severely put to test in the case of Mahmud Ghazni. Even in the Muslim world, it is difficult to rival his record in temple destruction, he belonging to a breed apart. Yet we are asked to believe that these were 'secular exploits,' waged with a view to financing political ambitions in Khurasan. His plunder of Iranian cities is cited in defence of this argument. But, skeptics may well ask, did he also attack Muslim sacred architecture in erstwhile Persia? Further, what fraction of the wealth of India was actually concentrated in temples, and what proportion did it constitute of Mahmud's total haul from this country? Did the indemnity and spoils of war from Indian princes not far exceed the loot from temples? If wealth to pursue an expansionist programme were all that was needed, would not the booty obtained from Hindu rajas have sufficed?

Since temple destruction did not cease with Mahmud Ghazni, this is obviously not a wholly viable interpretation of events. Indeed, every single Muslim ruler after him till Aurangzeb indulged in this past time, with similar or lesser frequency. So, modern scholarship defines temple destruction in this era as a purely political activity intended to 'de-legitimize and extirpate' defeated Hindu ruling houses. Scholars like Eaton argue that it was only in instances where Hindu rulers had linked their political authority to royally patronized temples that destruction was resorted to. This activism, he says, was not prompted by the 'theology of iconoclasm', but by the desire to sweep away all 'prior political authority' in the newly conquered territory. Further, Eaton says, attacks on images patronized by enemy kings was well integrated into Indian political behaviour from the

sixth century AD itself, long before the Islamic advent in the sub-continent. The Muslims, he contends, only followed and continued established sub-continental norms.

This is a skilful dressing-up of events, but alas, grievously faulty on many counts. As is abundantly obvious, its fundamental thrust is to reduce, if not altogether eliminate the religious dimension in the world-view of Muslim conquerors. But the supposed secular orientation of the Sultans is not easy to reconcile with their consistent endeavours to remain on the right side of Islam's religious divines. Logically, the goodwill of the latter entailed compromise with the former stance. The two were diametrically opposed perspectives.

Indeed, Eaton himself draws attention to the intimate links forged between Muslim religious divines (he mainly focuses on the *Chishti Sufi* order) and the Islamic state. In every instance of the establishment of a Muslim state in the sub-continent, Muslim divines, he says, injected a legitimizing 'substance' into the newly created body politic at the moment of its birth.

It would be natural to infer from the steady association of Sufis with Islamic state formation that Muslim empires had a pronounced religious dimension. In the Hindu world, by contrast, religion and state never acquired such a symbiotic relationship, there being few instances, if any, of Hindu pundits actively participating in state formation. Separation of religion and state was a fact in the Hindu world from the very outset. Certainly, its spiritual leaders did not pontificate on matters of state or on the policies to be pursued vis-à-vis state subjects belonging to other denominations. Buddhist *bhikshus,* for instance, never advised Emperor Ashoka on his dealings with his Hindu subjects, just as Brahmins refrained from directing the initiatives of Gupta kings towards the *sanghas*.

Further, though Hindu rulers patronized temples, they did not uproot existing modes of worship or impose their own favourite gods on their people. In a significant number of cases, in fact, they elevated already existing local deities, a phenomena which accounts for the great spurt in temple building from the 6th century onwards, that Eaton refers to. Lord Jagannath, widely acknowledged as the state deity of Orissa, was, for instance, originally worshipped among some tribal communities, and was later adopted as the regional deity by successive ruling dynasties.

Even if it is conceded that temples had become sites for 'contestation of kingly authority' before the coming of Muslims, the fact remains that Hindu kings were thereby attempting to *appropriate the identity symbols of their rivals*, and not to crush or destroy them, as in the case of Muslim conquerors. The difference in the two intentions is important.

It is also not inappropriate to question why Muslim rulers fighting rival Muslim contenders never vandalized Muslim sacred architecture, sponsored or patronized by the enemy party. If temples were destroyed merely to 'sweep away' prior political authority, mosques, *mazhars*, *dargas* and *madrasas* associated with renegade, rebellious or usurper Muslims should have been meted the same fate. That this was not so was because they were part of a shared religious culture that was common to Muslims on both sides of the political divide. Hindu temples, not partaking of this spiritual tradition, and in fact constituting the despised 'other' in Muslim theological discourse, inevitably met a different end.

Lastly, Prof. Eaton makes the point, that once the territory of a Hindu *raja* was incorporated into the Muslim realm, the temples within it were treated as state property and left unmolested.

However, he hastens to add, that any suspicious activity on the part of the Hindu ex-ruler rendered the temples immediately vulnerable to attack.

Surely this admission exposes the chinks in Prof. Eaton's argument. If, as he had earlier claimed, Muslim Sultans attacked temples because they were a source of legitimacy, then surely the link between the Hindu ruler and the temple had snapped on annexation of the kingdom and its absorption into the Muslim dominion. Why then was this form of punishment now resorted to? Such behaviour on the part of Muslim sovereigns is eloquent testimony to the hollowness of the so-called synthesis that allegedly evolved under their dispensation. It is farcical to talk of a Hindu-Muslim political, material and spiritual culture when the first and set response of every Muslim ruler on however slender a pretext, was to attack the holy sites of their infidel subjects.

What emerges starkly from the tour de force of modern scholars on temple destruction in medieval India is that though the motives of the Muslim Sultans may have 'evolved' and 'advanced' over the centuries, there was no variation in the end result. On the admission of modern scholars, be it financing expansionist programmes, consolidating political authority, punishing formerly loyal Hindu princes, Muslim rulers without exception responded with one standard solution -- temple destruction. It is astounding that modern scholarship should gloss over this fact.

Further, the issue of temple destruction cannot be relegated to the backburner, given its hold on the Muslim psyche. In the last half century, temple destruction has been liberally indulged in, in Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Kashmir Valley, to name just three prominent arenas. Since Muslims constitute the dominant majority and political community in all the three areas and face no threat from the Hindus, temple desecration here cannot rightly be attributed to the alleged political compulsion to contain infidels.

Leftist Indians who talk of the futility of righting medieval wrongs exhibit complete insensitivity to the fact that temple destruction is not just a past hobby in the Muslim world, but a continuing modern trend, and that, its underlying motivation is religious not political. What makes the Babri episode so galling for Muslims is that it constitutes a rare instance of them being at the receiving end, though even here Hindu actors in the drama had taken care to select a non-functional masjid as the ground on which to join this issue.

The Islamic problem in India cannot however, be reduced to a single point issue of temple destruction. That was only symptomatic of the deep chasm between the two antithetical belief systems. Genuine synthesis was never a feasible proposition given the Muslim religious fraternity's profound horror and disdain of native traditions. No school of Islamic theology in the sub-continent ever advocated dialogue, much less rapprochement with the native faiths, which is the pre-requisite of a synthetic culture. Hinduism and Islam were never placed on an equal footing throughout the period of Muslim political domination.

Scholars who treat Muslim rule as just one of the routine dynastic shuffles in India show inadequate appreciation of the cataclysmic nature of the change that occurred in 1196 AD with the establishment of the first Islamic state in the sub-continent. **Hindu and Buddhist rule never acquired the brutal edge that remained the trademark of Muslim domination; they never entailed forcible conversions, the imposition of a foreign political elite or the ascendancy of an alien language and culture. India had known foreign rulers in her ancient past as well, but they had completely immersed themselves in the spirit of the land and become**

propagators of her civilizational greatness. No one can honestly claim that Muslim rulers sought to emulate such predecessors.

By now sufficient documentary evidence exits of the Muslim religious classes' resolve and determination to ensure that Islam retained its pristine purity in this land. Scholars who harp on the Hindu practices of Muslim converts refer to an interim period during which such behavioural patterns were gradually replaced by Islamic ones. Though one can list endless number of Muslim revivalist movements, one is hard put to name any that advocated that the faith strike local roots.

On the basis of available evidence, it is difficult to support the contention of Marxist scholars that a composite culture eventually evolved in the land. It would, however, be equally erroneous to conclude that either faith triumphed over the other. The implicit struggle resumed during colonial rule with the overwhelming majority of Muslims refusing to countenance the possibility of Hindu political ascendancy. Partition flowed from the logic of events, but in the nature of things it, too, was an expression of the continuing civilizational deadlock. The Hindu political community in independent India fudged the larger dimension of the struggle and embarked on a policy of identity-dilution and Muslim appeasement. In other words, it ensured the continuation of the civilizational stalemate, rather than its termination. This monumental lapse of the Indian political elite has facilitated Islam's burning quest to re-join battle with its millennial foe. Kashmir is an expression of that renewed struggle, as is the silence of most Indian Muslims on this new theatre of the war.

Viewed in the context of implacable Islamic hostility towards paganism and the expansionist nature of the faith, Pakistan 's policies towards India assume a frightening coherence. Its espousal of the cause of Kashmiri Muslims and silence on Muslims in the rest of India is indicative both of its strategy and objective. It stands to reason that if Muslim rights are ensured in the rest of India, they cannot be endangered in Kashmir, where in any case, the Muslims are treated by the Indian state as more equal than their co-religionists in the rest of the country. Clearly this dimension of the problem needs to be explicated.

Today, there is a two-way battle being fought in the Indian sub-continent. There is, most prominently, the old millennial struggle between Islam and the kafirs. Less noticed, but not less crucial, is the contest between predominantly *Sunni* pan-Islamism with its international dimension and disdain of local cultures and a non-*Sunni* Islam that is wary of being swamped by the former and in search of allies and indigenous links. This latter Islam is yet very much a fledgling struggling for survival. Not surprisingly, its pre-eminent exponent hails from the strife-torn state of Jammu & Kashmir, where both the battles are acutely joined. He is the state's present Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah.

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Non-saffron history unnerves reads

By Meenakshi Jain

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Leftist intellectuals are of late busy defending the Marxist contribution to history writing in India. Frightened by a perceived threat to their hegemony following the loss of formidable positions of intellectual power and patronage, they are gearing up to resist the inevitable challenge to their version of history.

Sneering at 'saffron historians' whose views have begun to command some attention in intellectual circles, the Leftists claim that the former will be unable to present a history that can seriously overturn their account.

Their cockiness is baffling since 'saffron historians' have no need to engage in such an endeavour at all. A formidable pre-Marxist history already exists; it has merely to be restored to its former glory. Marxists claim to have widened the spectrum of historical research to include economic, social, subaltern and sundry other perspectives, to create a more complete narrative.

However, archaeologists, anthropologists, sociologists, linguists, philosophers, and specialists on comparative religion have put together a far richer rendition of the Indian reality. What is more, it seriously contests the Marxist version in several key areas.

The asymmetry between archaeological findings and Leftist treaties on early Indian history is now too great to be ignored by serious scholars, though it Must be admitted that Marxists are taking a valiant last stand; they are fanning out to various colleges with ever-greater vigour in a bid to impress susceptible audiences of the strength of their theses.

It would be interesting to know whether members of the Archaeological Survey are also being courted in university campuses, which are more or less still Marxist bastions. However, it is empirical archaeological data, not normative saffronist fancy, that has disproved an Indo-Aryan or European invasion in the pre-or proto-historic periods. There is simply nothing to prove that the Vedic-speaking people were intruders in the Indus-Saraswati region. The 'big bang' theory of Indian Civilization - the so-called seismic clash between Aryans and Dravidians - has bitten dust, without RSS historians having to lift a shovel.

Philosophers and experts on comparative religion have also cast the weight of their scholarship in favour of an integrated Indian Civilization long before saffron intellectuals came on the scene. **S N Dasgupta's magisterial History of Indian Philosophy** marshalled an amazing body of

religious documents to present a powerful argument for the Vedic basis of Indian Civilization. Sadly, but perhaps predictably, this authoritative study has been edged out of the recommended reading, at least in Delhi University.

Even writers of such eminence as **Mircea Eliade, Rene Guenon, Hanrich Zimmer**, who elevated Hinduism to a level unpalatable to Marxists, have suffered eclipse. These scholars have written forcefully of Hinduism as the oldest of the mystery religions of the world: A form of Philosophia Perennis, embodying those universal truths to which no people or age can make exclusive claim. Its doctrines, they have said, can neither change nor be perfected, only viewed and formulated afresh, "each successive formulation always remaining completely faithful to the traditional spirit." **It is to Hinduism that these scholars credit Indian's coherence**, even in the absence of outward structure and authority, again without any prompting from the Parivar and its affiliates.

Then there is **Ananda Coomaraswamy** who detected in India "a strong national genius... since the beginning of her history." He found Indian art and culture "a joint creation of the Dravidian and Aryan genius." Of Buddhism, he wrote:' "the more profound our study, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish Buddhism from Brahmanism, or to say in what respects, if any, Buddhism is really unorthodox. The outstanding distinction lies in the fact that Buddhist doctrine is propounded by an apparently historical founder. Beyond this there are only broad distinctions of emphasis." No right-wing historian could dare put it so boldly in Indian today.

Unfortunately for Marxists, sociological and anthropological works on Indian social structures are also overwhelmingly at variance with their tomes on the subject**. In sociological accounts, the caste system, projected by Marxists as the archetype of oppressive institutions, appears as not-so-villainous.** Non-Marxist accounts bring out the high degree of fluidity in the caste system, with upward mobility the greatest pursuit.

It is sociological and anthropological accounts that have fully alerted us to the irrelevance of varna hierarchy in day-to-day life, where power was a crucial determinant and was exercise more often than not by dominant castes belonging to the fourth varna. At the local level at least, the varna order was turned on its head with agricultural castes serving as benefactors and role models for all in their vicinity.

Sociologists and anthropologists like, M N Srinivas, C J Fuller, Jonathan Parry and Marcel Mauss have unraveled (without help from rightist quarters) the ritually limited role of Brahmins, their complete dependence on their lower caste patrons, and the contempt and ridicule they generally evoked in tile countryside. In Marxist historiography, in sharp contrast, the Brahmin has been consistently equated with Shylock.

Sociological accounts of the Indian village community also contradict Marxist pontifications on the subject. The former have laid far greater stress on 'inter-caste complementarily,' the sense of community that was reiterated in joint celebration of festivities, rituals, worship, and in combined efforts to raise the crop and defend life and property from freebooters and natural calamities. Institutions of caste come across as vibrant and supple in sociological and anthropological writings, as opposed to their oppressive and status quoist depiction in Leftist literature. Here too, it may be noted, saffron writers have played a negligible role.

On Islam, too, there is little need for a saffron academic effort. Enough work has been done by such renowned scholars as Bernard Lewis and Patricia Crone for us to fully appreciate the significance of the Islamic revolution in the world context. Crone has adequately explained the centrality of conquest in 'the Muslim scheme of things. Mohammed's God" she writes, endorsed a policy of conquest, instructing his believers to fight against unbelievers wherever they might be found. In short, Mohammed had to conquer, his followers liked to conquer, and his doily told him to conquer; do we need any more?'

Bernard Lewis, in turn, has dwelt at length on the "radical change" and "discontinuity" that Islam brought wherever it went in the Middle East. The pre-Islamic states, scripts and languages were wiped out.

There was a violent break "in the self-image and corporate sense of identity, and the collective memory of the Islamic Peoples in the Middle East" We should not expect that things could have been differently intended for India.

On Indian specifically, we have works such as those of the late Prof. Aziz Ahmad, whose Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment provides a devastating account of the magnitude of the rift between the two religious in the subcontinent and speaks of the inevitability of Partition.

Prof. Ahmad's works have been supplemented by those of a number of American academics whose researches have led them to similar conclusions.

In the light of such a formidable intellectual corpus just waiting to be rehabilitated, Marxist intellectuals should refrain from taunting saffronists to pick up the gauntlet. Their time would be better spent scrambling for cover. The bubble is about to burst.

(The author is a Reader at Delhi university.)

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Swadhyaya: A Global Indic Phenomenon - Contributed to this site By Pankaj Jain

Swadhyaya is one of the most prominent living phenomena of Indian culture in 21st century. We have read and heard a lot about the Indian culture, well, here is Indian culture in action. A role model for the entire world based on indigenous Indic concepts. *Swadhyaya Parivar* is a global family of volunteers who follow Swadhyaya, a holistic Vedic philosophy based on *Gnaan* (knowledge), *Karma* (Action) and *Bhakti* (devotion). Swadhyaya, in the true spirit of Indic Traditions, is neither a sect nor a cult. It neither tries to define Hinduism nor defend it. It matches with the broad based definition of *Dharma* rather than "Hinduism" as defined by orientalists and post-colonialists. Its admirers include Muslims and Christians also.

Neither the founder of Swadhyaya nor the current leader is S*anyaasi*. All Swadhyayi (practitioners of Swadhyaya) are householders. Number of Swadhyayis now ranges more than 20 million people around the world. Swadhyaya never asks or appeals for any form of donation. There is never any “fund-raising” done for any Swadhyaya events in any part of the world. Swadhyaya has never built a single temple anywhere in the world. It has never asked for any outside support from government or from wealthy people. It has no concept of membership, hierarchy or formal office. It has never done any advertisement or propaganda and so it remains a low key (best kept secret according to one of my friends!). Even though it is a spiritual and cultural Parivar, the followers are not given any *Mantra* to meditate, nor is there any concept of maala or *Taaweez*. Rather the focus is on the intellectual aspects of Dharma.

It was founded by Shri Pandurang Shastri Athavale who himself was an authority on Sanskrit, Vedas, Upanishads, Gita and other Indian scriptures. He was also a scholar of western knowledge including Marxism, Hegel, Khalil Jibran, Freud, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity etc. He was honored with doctorates by two Indian Universities. According to him, "*Swadhyayis* are merely *Bhaktas* (devotees)" and "*Bhakti* (devotion) is social force." Indeed this novel concept of devotion married with intellectual and activistic zeal has created a massive force by launching a *Panchrangi Kranti,* a quiet revolution on five fronts, political, social, economical, cultural and psychological.

What Swadhyaya is not and what it is:

- It strives to uplift women but Swadhyayis are not “feminists” since they don’t reject the traditional roles of women even though they have devised many novel concepts for them.
- It builds bridges across castes and classes but they are not “social workers”, since their perspective is of being spiritual workers.
- It interprets traditional Vedic concepts in modern ways but they are not “religious reformers”,

since they prefer to call their ideas as experiments rather than reforms.

- It inspires patriotism in youth but they are not “nationalistic leaders”, since it is not involved in active politics.
- It focuses on innovative experiments in the field of education in all levels and ages of society but they are not “educators”, since that is not its sole criterion to spread knowledge.
- It is involved in charity work at a massive level in thousands of Indian villages but Swadhyaya is not a “charity organization”, since it rejects the usual definition of charity in which wealth is used to donate to earn name and fame.
- It develops new theological concepts but it is neither a “sect” nor a ”creed” nor a “cult”, since it does not encourage blind devotion to any ideology or personality.
- Major emphasis of teachings is derived from Vedic scriptures but it is not a typical “Hindu organization”, since it is not bounded by the regular definition of Hindu or Hinduism.
- One of the most important aspect is to spread the Vedic philosophy in remote areas of society by active out-reach efforts but it is not a “Missionary Proselytizing church-like movement”, since there is no conversion involved.

Swadhyaya In International/ Interfaith Forums:

Swadhyaya has already left its mark on international/interreligious platforms. Consider following examples:

1. In Jan 2002, when **Pope John Paul organized Assisi Peace conference** in the wake of 9/11, Swadhyaya was given the first place to deliver the keynote speech. An irony to note here, when Dharma conference or any Hindu/ Indian conference occurs, nobody even has heard of Swadhyaya, but when Pope does a similar event, Swadhyaya is the most prominent presence. It is time for us all to take a serious look at Swadhyaya.

2. In May 2002. When **UNICEF** organized a conference on Children education, once again it was only Swadhyaya, which was invited from Indian/ Hindu community. Imagine a similar conference organized by Indians/Hindus; Swadhyaya is still Greek and Latin for them!

3. This is the only Vedic Parivar, which was awarded world's biggest monetary award Templeton Prize in 1997 for progress and innovation in religion. This prize was founded by Sir John Templeton about thirty years ago to create a prize in the field of religion, since Nobel Prize does not include religion as a category. What makes it even more remarkable is the fact that Templeton Foundation’s major emphasis is to spread the Christianity by emphasizing its scientific appeal. Yet, they could not ignore the innovative zeal of Swadhyaya and had to give this award to a non-Christian thinker. The founder of Swadhyaya was also given Magsaysay Award in 1996 for Community Leadership. It was only after these awards, that Indian Government woke up and awarded Padma Vibhushan to him in 1999.

4. Two North American universities have courses about Swadhyaya, Concordia University, Montreal and University of Iowa. In addition, Swadhyaya is appreciated by scholars such as T S Rukmani, Subhash Kak, Arvind Sharma, Majid Rahnuma, Daniel Gold, Betty Unterburgar, Paul Ekins, Arun Shourie, and Vidyanivas Mishra etc.

Above examples show that Swadhyaya has achieved many milestones with very little effort on publicity, since their focus is more on internal strength and development. It remains a dormant thread in the public sphere because it has never depended on the media for publicity. Swadhyaya is emerging globally as a strong Indic phenomenon unbound by traditional Hindu definition, but based on truly dharmic definition. It is neither sectarian nor dogmatic nor ritualistic; rather it is based on Indic concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,* world as a family.

It is time for all of us to take a serious look at Swadhyaya and do a deep analysis of it and say it with pride in international forums of our practical example of Indian culture. On the one hand, we worry that

India is not producing enough global leaders and on the other hand we tend to be ignorant of our own leading initiatives.

References

1. http://www.swadhyay.org

2. Concordia University Course on Swadhyaya: From Satyagraha to Swadhyaya, a religion course taught by David Lawrence comparing the life and work of Gandhi and Athavale

3. Majid Rahnuma, Daniel Gold, Betty Unterburgar, Paul Ekins, Arun Shourie, Vidyanivas Mishra and many others have written about Swadhyaya in the book Vital Connections, published in 2000

4. Various media coverage of Swadhyaya

For more refer to chapter on **Unknown Hindu Revivalists**

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Mahavira's Message Of Ahimsa & Anekant

By PRADIP KUMAR JAIN

http://www.timesofindia.com/today/04edit5.htm

IN the Jain calendar, tirthankar Mahavira's birthday is celebrated as Mahavir Jayanti. This year it becomes special as the whole world joins the Jains, a 5-million strong minuscule community in remembering Lord Mahavira and his immortal teachings in this, his 26th birth centenary year which is being observed as `Ahimsa Year'.

Lord Mahavira, born as Prince Siddhartha, was brought up amidst immense wealth and luxuries. Never inclined towards worldly pleasures, he renounced everything when he was thirty and became a wandering monk in search of knowledge of the Self. He kept his bodily needs of food and water to the bare minimum, often observing fasts. He became a digamber monk practising the highest level of penances in the wilderness. He attained Kevaljnana (self-enlightenment) after over 12 years of severe penances. On gaining self enlightenment he became a tirthankar or propagator of faith. Thereafter he devoted his life in re-establishing and preaching dharma and showing the path of liberation to the masses.

Tirthankar Mahavira asked people to vanquish four Kasayas or great vices - Krodha, Moha, Mada and Lobha (anger, desires, vanity and greed) and practise the panchayama dharma or five principal virtues - Ahimsa, Satya, Achaurya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha. He reiterated that freeing the Atman of Kasayas is one's greatest triumph. The Atman can then follow unhindered the panchayama dharma to attain self realisation or eternal bliss.

Lord Mahavira preached the path of peace, ahimsa, equality and Anekant. His philosophy aims at welfare of both the individual and the society. Everyone is equal in Jainism and the utmost importance is given to refining the individual character and behaviour to achieve the knowledge of the self.

Jainism is unique in according equality to women in the practice of religion and other social spheres. Women were actively encouraged to get themselves educated and playing social roles equal to men. The roots of this empowerment of women can be traced to the teachings of Lord Mahavira on religious organisation and the respective roles of householders and monks.

Ahimsa is the most distinct contribution of Jainism and tirthankar Mahavira to the society. Ahimsa implies a love of life in all living beings and a firm belief in the principle of "Live and let live". Lord Mahavira said that thoughts of attachment and aversion i.e. raga and dwesha and any action under their spell constitutes violence. He propounded that complete detachment from worldly possessions and vanity is a pre-requisite for the perfect practice of non-violence. Ahimsa, i.e. non-injury and non-offence to the maximum extent possible to all living beings, has become

synonymous with Jainism. In modern times, Ahimsa in its most convincing form along with truth and love for humanity was practised by Mahatma Gandhi. Nelson Mandela has been another famous practitioner of the path of Ahimsa.

Lord Mahavira put forward the doctrine of Anekantavada, that is many-sidedness. He always advised his disciples to discover the truth after taking into account all aspects and giving them due weight. This broadens one's outlook and trains the mind to accommodate the feelings and the way of life of other faiths and communities.

Anekant encourages interpersonal and communal harmony by promoting tolerance in the community. The same principle of tolerance can be extended to intellectual, social, religious and other fields of activities. Tolerance as enunciated by Anekant, will end all inter-caste strife and communal violence. Anekant is thus the pillar of religious and social harmony and the sheet anchor of secularism. Anekant ensures peaceful coexistence of all shades of philosophical and religious opinions, paths as well as as their followers.

Mahavira regarded the individual and his social responsibilities as the key to the progress of both the individual and the society. The teachings of Lord Mahavira are as useful and timely as they were 2600 years ago. They point to a new era of hope and promise for the masses delivering social equality, peace, empowerment of women, non-violence, tolerance and social justice.

Lord Mahavira was a towering personality who has left a lasting impact in the form of his teachings for the spiritual advancement of the individual, protection and conservation of all forms of life, and a rational, just, peaceful and secular social order.

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Political lesson of demography

By Sandhya Jain
August 26 2003

The tasteless offensive by certain groups in London against Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, the motivated uproar against the release of the accused in the Best Bakery carnage following perjury by a series of witnesses from one community, **the studied silence against the massacre of Hindu fishermen in Marad, the demonisation of those who object to evangelical activities in their communities, and numerous such daily occurrences draw attention to what we must honestly concede are communal fault lines.** We must also admit that, in recent times, inter-community relations have been marked more by irritability and suspicion than by harmony.

This growing communal tension merits serious introspection from academics and analysts alike. **When a culture as famously tolerant and inclusivist as India's native tradition has been through centuries, begins to show stress and anguish in its modern dealings with exclusivist traditions that nonetheless claim to be peaceful and secular, there is need to examine how things have come to this pass.** Obviously, there cannot be an easy answer to the question, but an honest inquiry will throw up interesting variables.

Changing demography in specifically targeted regions is one possible answer. It would be dishonest to deny that sharp changes in the demographic patterns of certain areas is not perceived as alarming by ordinary citizens, or even administrators. Given the fact that this is also a politically sensitive issue, the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) deserves kudos for daring to fund a study on the changing religious profile of India by the Centre for Policy Studies, Chennai. Titled 'Religious Demography of India', this voluminous work is the fruit of the academic courage of Drs AP Joshi, MD Srinivas and JK Bajaj.

Striding terrain over which angels fear to tread, the trio has attempted to trace the rise and decline of religious populations in undivided India, as also present-day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and make projections for the future. Understandably, they have raised hackles in our effete and 'secular' groves of academia. While their methodology and statistical projections are a matter for subject experts, I feel they have drawn attention to issues of immense significance, which have hitherto been ignored in public discourse. For this reason alone, their effort deserves to be commended.

The authors have chosen to be straightforward, without being offensive, in stating the fundamentals of the matter. Simply put, their argument is that **India has had a unique culture and civilisation for millennia, anchored in its native sanatan dharma, which was accepted even by foreign invaders until the advent of monotheistic creeds disrupted this ancient inclusivity and catholicity.**

What is more, for all its apparent diversity and variety, Indian culture was homogenous. This is a point that deserves to be emphasised as it has been studiously effaced from public consciousness in the decades since Independence. Yet as the renowned demographer Kingsley Davis perceptively observed (1951): "Indian ideas and institutions ... resemble those of no other people. They have a peculiar shape and flavour of their own ... This peculiar culture has to some degree penetrated and pervaded nearly every part of what is geographically India. It has everywhere been affected by local, indigenous variations ... But neither the geographical nor the social barriers inside the subcontinent have been sufficient to prevent the widespread diffusion of a common, basic culture, which despite great variation is peculiar to India."

This common basic culture received its first serious rupture when Islam reached the heartland of India towards the end of the 12th century AD, with the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan. Given the nature of the study, the authors have wisely avoided the contentious issue of forcible conversions. They have, however, observed that all Islamic rulers were unswerving in their commitment to maintain a distinct Islamic identity. Acculturation into the spiritual milieu of India was stubbornly resisted; the rulers for the first time professed a faith different (indeed, it was also opposed) to that of the populace. And with time, they sponsored the growth of a community that was similarly at variance with the native cultural ethos.

The British added a chapter to this religious heterogeneity by their systematic patronage and propagation of Christianity. But their abiding, and far more dangerous legacy, was the negation of India's civilisational homogeneity and de-legitimisation of its hoary civilisational principles.

What is equally pertinent is that Christian evangelisation has been extremely aggressive and unapologetic in the post-Independence period, as witnessed in the North-east under the patronage of Jawaharlal Nehru and his successors, and in other parts of the country. That there is a design behind conversions can be readily gauged from Pope John Paul II's acerbic remarks against the Tamil Nadu Government's recent legislation against change of faith through force, fraud or inducement.

Given the statistical parameters of the study, the authors have refrained from commenting on some of the interesting socio-economic and cultural issues that arise as a result of their projections. They have avoided the issue of India's failure to assert its ancient civilisational ethos after Independence. They have, however, candidly pointed out that religion, particularly the large presence of a religious community in compact border regions, was the cause of Partition less than six decades ago. And they have graphically established the current build-up of such religious concentrations along sensitive borders, which any police station in-charge could tell you is the result of design, not accident.

Much of the information is not new. Yet, when presented with a map and statistics, only a cynic can be unaffected by the alarming growth of Muslim presence in the border belt comprising Bahraich, Gonda, Basti, Gorakhpur and Deoria of eastern UP; Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Saharsa, Purnia and Santhal Pargana districts of Bihar; West Dinajpur, Malda, Birbhum and Murshidabad of West Bengal; Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Nagaon of Assam. Muslim population of this belt is said to touch 28 per cent, an increase of seven per cent in just four decades. Other pockets of high Muslim growth include western UP, Cachar (Assam) and Kolkata (West Bengal).

Among other sensitive border regions, Kerala has 23 per cent Muslims and 19 per cent Christians. The Lakshadweep Islands are predominantly Muslim (approximately 94 per cent). The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are largely Christian, as is the Northeast. Tripura has resisted evangelisation and Christians

comprise less than two percent of the population (1991 figures). In Arunachal Pradesh, there is cause for alarm. Though there were no Christians in 1961, they now constitute 10 per cent of the population. Meghalaya also had a sprinkling of Christians in 1901, but by 1931 both Meghalaya and Nagaland had 10 to 15 per cent Christians. By 1951, Mizoram was almost completely Christian, as was half of Nagaland. In Manipur, Christians form 34 per cent of the population, but most outer districts are Christian.

Clearly, there is a message in the statistics which we can ignore at our own peril. In recent years, East Timor has separated from Indonesia because of religious demography. Thus, the lesson of history is that monotheistic creeds have difficulty coexisting even with sister monotheisms, let alone gentler traditions like the sanatan dharma. Barring this reality from public discourse would be a destructive ostrich-like attitude. We need to recognise the gravity of the situation, defend our civilisational presence on our borders and interiors, and take pride in our national genius.

(source: dailypioneer.com - August 26 2003 http://dailypioneer.com/indexn12.asp?main_variable=EDITS&file_name=edit3%2Etxt&counter_img=3).

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The manacles of monotheism
By Sandhya Jain, June 2000
http://www.americanfriends.org/prejudice/monosandhya_p3.html

The recent controversy over the RSS conducting training camps in Punjab has brought the issue of the nation's defining ethos to the fore once again. As was only to be expected, the vociferous proponents of the so-called 'composite culture' (an euphemism for the cultural supremacy of Islam) observed a deafening silence in support of Sikhism's pathological links with Hinduism, and the anti-Hindu chorus emanating from some sections of the state's religio-political hierarchy was loud enough to cause concern to discerning citizens.

Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal has made a valiant attempt to put Sikh, or rather Akali, particularism in a national framework. But even apart from his legitimate concern with his own political survival, Mr. Badal is intellectually ill equipped to grapple with the fundamental and multi-faceted civilizational issues thrown up by the debate. Indeed, the reported reluctance of some tribal communities to identify themselves as 'Hindu' in the forthcoming census is also relevant in this context.

The genesis of the present conflict lies in the horrible negation of the unique Hindu civilization (sannatan dharma) at independence, when Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru reversed the freedom struggle's unwritten consensus that the Hindu ethos would be the emerging modern nation's foundational ethos. Nehru subverted the Hindu political consciousness assiduously crafted by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, and Sardar Patel, and substituted the soulless communist ideology for India's rich spiritual traditions. He de-legitimized the country's striving to reclaim her ancient heritage and, on the pretext of promoting a 'scientific temper,' sought to create a new nation divorced from her civilizational moorings in the resultant spiritual vacuum. The false propaganda that Hinduism is only one among the many religions of India, unworthy of special treatment, followed as a natural corollary, along with the thesis that the distinct dharmas that arose from her belly were 'revolts' against Hinduism, and hence separate, opposed.

The hallmark of Marxism is monotheism, and the Hindu spirit, badly bruised from a thousand year encounter with Islam, was ill-prepared for the new menace unleashed by Mahatma Gandhi's anointed heir. The trouble with Marxism is that, although conceived by a Jew, it is essentially a Gentile faith, with all the failings of the Gentile versions of monotheism, and none of the virtues of the original Jewish monotheism. Nehru's Marxist monotheism made it possible for the other monotheistic faiths to assault the Hindu tradition by claiming the right

to convert adherents of a 'false' faith, and demanding that resisting Hindus practice 'tolerance.' I do not blame either Gandhi or Patel for failing to adequately comprehend how Nehru was emasculating India. They were both ideologically illiterate, and remained untouched by any ideological fashion sweeping Britain during their respective stints at the Inner Temple.

As such, it is quite understandable that they should have mistaken the Stalin-style interventionist state structure erected by Nehru as simply a 'wrong' economic policy, when the reality was both deeply ideological and highly political. Indeed, it was Nehru's great fortune that none of his critics ever fully realized exactly what was going wrong in India. That is why the opposition to his rule could not be convincingly articulated, and even stalwarts like C. Rajagopalachari and J.B. Kripalani looked like churlish dropouts when they parted company with him.

I have, through letters on this column, often been accused of trying to impose a Hindu dominion in the name of the nation's foundational ethos. Nothing could be further from the truth, though I concede that this perception may be partly due to a failure to adequately define the essential genius of the sannatan dharma in terms that can be understood by those who fear its rise to pre-eminence.

The sannatan dharma does not describe itself in the seductive certitudes of monotheistic faiths, and in fact cloaks itself in enigmatic parables. Yet if we look for one distinct quality, it is that none of the religions born in India has been monotheistic in nature. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, even the myriad tribal cults adorning the land, all lay less emphasis on forms than on the promotion of self-realization and consciousness. Indeed, it is my thesis that India's unique spiritual genius emphatically rejects monotheism.

Hinduism is a subtle, complex, multi-dimensional spiritual cosmos. Although it spawned a great and powerful religion with profound philosophies and daring intellectual constructs, it never ceased to be a 'way of life.' It never wholly identified with the religious forms it gave birth to (Shaivism, Vaishnavism, et al), nor was it subsumed by them. This is how it remains a living civilization: the individual seeker is accommodated theoretically and actually. Even today a seeker may reject the world of man and the world of formal religion, and pursue a solitary salvation on the banks of the Ganges or in the Himalayan mists. None may chastise him for deviance (for there is none), nor catechize him about the path to take (for there are as many paths as there are seekers).

I may be wrong, but available evidence suggests that India experimented with monotheism under Emperor Ashoka who made Buddhism the state religion and even called a council to codify the basic tenets of the dharma and exclude beliefs held to be 'heretical'. Zimmer has recorded dissenting views of monks at the codification. It is worth pondering if the monotheist cast given by Ashoka was the reason for Buddhism's decline in India, and the ungenerous, uncompassionate, uncompromising nature of the faith in Sri Lanka, where it migrated via the emperor's good offices.

Judaism, the original monotheism, has little in common with the Gentile-Christian variant. The Jewish covenant was with a God who was personal and exclusive to His people. From Moses to Jesus, through centuries of persecution culminating in the holocaust, this singular belief has sustained Jewish piety. **Yet this crucial limitation was emphatically rejected by Christians who claimed a mandate to wreck mayhem on the world in order to bring it the 'light'. Notwithstanding the rupture of the Catholic Church into a plethora of sects and denominations, the monotheistic conviction in the superiority of its 'truth' has promoted unmitigated hostility to other faiths, particularly non-monotheistic creeds. Islam followed this**

hallowed tradition of forcing the 'true' path on kafirs.

The irony is that modern religious scholarship on Christianity and Islam is inexorably establishing that these faiths, supposedly based on a complete revelation to one prophet, are actually syncretic traditions. That is, the religious forms and theology were crafted onto a supposedly 'core' revelation. And since the first interpretation and codification began at least a century after the death of the founder, there is endless scope for disagreement about what was actually said, let alone what it truly meant.

The history of monotheistic faiths is witness to the truth that no single interpretation of 'truth,' howsoever profound, suffices for all mankind, for all eternity. But history also reveals that the search for spiritual bondage (through monotheistic certitudes) can be as intoxicating as the search for spiritual freedom (through self-realization). Ultimately, the faithful must charter their own course. Sikh religious scholars, intellectuals and free thinkers will be giving thought to the issue in the coming days. They would do well to accept that notwithstanding the perceived compulsions of Punjab politics, the corpus of religious literature that comprises the faith is undeniably syncretic. As such, Sikhism can only enrich itself by maintaining a lifeline with the civilizational genius that has spawned its unique expression.

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The Indic tradition is catholic
By Sandhya Jain, October 2000
http://www.americanfriends.org/prejudice/indicsandhya_P32.html

The Vatican's reiteration, in the wake of the recent UN Summit of World Religious Leaders, that its real agenda is to convert every person in the world to the Roman Catholic variant of Christianity, is a sharp reminder of the divergence between the world-views of Western and Eastern civilisations.

On the one hand, the Roman Catholic Church has retracted from the summit's basic premise that all religions are equal and entitled to the right to exist in peace and dignity. On the other, its adherents in India are aggressively hawking the fallacious notion that their constitutional right to practice their faith without let or hindrance is tantamount to a carte blanche to press ahead with conversions. They are pretending that the Hindu community's resistance to conversions is an infringement of their right to practice and propagate their faith.

What is truly disturbing in this scenario is that, notwithstanding the unfortunate tension this position has generated across the country, a number of intellectuals and political leaders have adopted a stand at variance with the sensitivities of the majority community. It is true that in esoteric matters, it is exceedingly difficult to decide which side is right. Nevertheless, a comprehensive elucidation of the Hindu position on both religion and religious freedom, could enable discerning citizens and scholars to appreciate that the community, too, has a case. A legitimate one at that.

India has existed for several millennia; it is rooted in history and enshrined and encompassed by a civilisational ethos based on the attainment of Consciousness (self-realisation). India s ancient religion, Hinduism, is not a codified creed in the manner of other world religions. Properly known as the Sanatan Dharma or the Eternal Tradition, it is simultaneously a religion and a living civilisation or way of life, and is inspired by the ideal of universal welfare of all beings, both human and other creatures. Dharma is natural (cosmic) law. As Hinduism, it takes on a formal structure, creed and ritual; yet it is never the captive of absolutism. The sanatan dharma recognises even the atheist as morally valid, and does not deny him space in the religious-spiritual spectrum. This is because sanatan dharma is all-embracing: it is righteousness, duty, and the eternal law that is not fixed (in time or space) but eternally renews itself in response to changing times and provides for as many paths to salvation as there are individual souls who seek it.

Dharma demands that all faiths be treated with respect and courtesy, as they are all attempts to attain Godhead. Its quintessential argument is that each soul must chart its own evolutionary course, and that it is not given to any human agency to arbitrate a final truth for all mankind. Hindus do believe that the Vedas are the revealed truth that was heard by the Vedic rishis (Sruti). But that is no reason

that they should be imposed upon the world by human regents who claim to be sole prophets of the only true revelation. This is the reason why, despite the belief in One Supreme Being, non-monotheism has been the hallmark of all Indic religions. Our polity and innate secularism has flowed naturally from these values; it is not for nothing that Aristotle observed that the Hindus were the only people to have successfully made dharma the basis of their public life (Politics).

Being a living civilisation, Hinduism is by definition multi-dimensional, multi-layered. It is inherently distrustful of the one-dimensional approach towards religion, and does not perceive other faiths as alien, threatening or unacceptable.

This natural respect for all faiths has traditionally made India the perfect nurturer of all. When the small Parsi community fled Persia, they were not only offered protection by local Indian rulers, but invited to build a Fire Temple for their worship and rituals, so that they could observe and preserve their unique culture. This courtesy was extended to the Dalai Lama and his followers when they arrived in India some decades ago, and India now has a very substantial Tibetan refugee population. More recently, when the Bahai community fled persecution in Iran, India again upheld dharma. The Bahai s world-famous Lotus Temple in New Delhi bears eloquent testimony to the grandeur of India s universalist vision and its embodiment in the flowering of a foreign religion. Christian and Muslim communities established themselves in India hundreds of years ago, as did the Jews.

Indian political culture has been similarly sensitive to the need to accommodate all groups. When the wounds of Partition were still fresh and refugees were pouring in from both borders, the very first Cabinet of independent India included Maulana Azad and Dr BR Ambedkar. Christians were represented through Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and John Mathai. **One has only to consider that despite the formidable power of American Jewry, the United States has taken more than 200 years to have a Jewish running-mate for President, in order to appreciate that this is not a small achievement.**

What is noteworthy is that because the sanatan dharma permeates the whole culture, India is comfortable with the idea of co-existence with ethnic, racial and religious groups that do not desire assimilation to its unique civilisational-cultural ethos, but desire political space while maintaining a distinct identity on the plea of preserving their special culture. This is something that the West is only just beginning to learn under pressure from immigrant groups of different racial and religious composition.

The spirit of the sanatan dharma is to respect identity, but avoid fixing rigid lines of division. **As Prof Arvind Sharma, Birks Professor of Comparative Religion, McGill University, argued before the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, the notion that one can belong to only one religion at a time, and that one s dominant identity derives from such affiliation, is an entirely Western concept.** Perceptions are markedly different among Eastern peoples. For instance, in contemporary Japan, the 1985 census showed that 95 per cent of the population declared itself as Shinto, while 76 per cent of the same population simultaneously declared itself as Buddhist.

Hindu tradition similarly permits multiple religious participation and affiliation. The Indic religions Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism are not perceived as mutually exclusive, and freely overlap across the country. If Indian census-takers did not persist with the colonial fallacy that citizens declare adherence to only one religion, Indian religious statistics could well resemble the

Japanese. The merit of this argument can be seen from the experience of the Bombay Census Superintendent in 1911, who felt harassed by the `inextricable combination of multiple practices, beliefs, and even self-definitions' among the 35,000-strong community of Hindu-Muhammadans in Gujarat. Pulled up sharply by Census Commissioner EA Gait, he was ordered to locate the persons concerned to one or other as best as he could.

The Indian reality was thus falsified to conform to a notion that belonging to a religion implies exclusive adherence to it. The lived experience of Indians, however, has been different. Most Indians are probably unaware that ordinary Muslims in the countryside functioned within the orbit of the Hindu worldview upto the eighteenth century, when Shah Waliullah, followed by Sayyid Ahmad Barelvi in the nineteenth century, launched the project of purging Indian Islam of its Hindu elements. Indian Christians also lived quite non-aggressively, until the perceived political fortunes of an individual co-religionist, **coupled with resurgent evangelism emanating from both the Vatican and Protestant missionary groups, provoked them to up the ante.**

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Buddha battered, dharma grounded
Sandhya Jain
http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon3.asp?cat=\edit3&d=EDITS

The most distasteful aspect of Taliban's military offensive against the Bamiyan Buddhas and other pre-Islamic relics in Afghanistan is the **ill-disguised glee of our predatory radical secularists** who have worked overtime to subvert the significance of this civilisational assault and provide an alibi to its perpetrators.

Delighted at this unexpected exoneration of Islamic fundamentalism, Muslim intellectuals have jumped on the bandwagon to unjustly equate Hindu and Muslim fundamentalism. Worst are the puerile jokes about Buddha smiling.

By justifying the ballistics at Bamiyan in terms of the reclamation of the Ram Janmabhoomi by Hindus, secularists have taken unacceptable liberties with truth. But in their haste to absolve the Taliban, they have ceded valuable ground on the very issues they seek to fudge. **Thus, by linking Bamiyan with Ayodhya, they have held Hindus responsible for Taliban's retribution and placed the Sakya muni firmly on the Hindu/Indic firmament, contradicting their own canard that Buddhism is a faith separate from and opposed to Hinduism, that was "driven out" of India by scheming Brahmins. After all, if Buddha statues can be battered in response to Hindu misdeeds, he must have a contemporary relevance to the community.**

The Hindu tradition (scholars prefer the term Indic) reveres Buddha as an avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu. Buddhism is rooted in India's dharmic tradition and constitutes an essential part of the invisible yet tangible unity of the Indic narrative. Dharma is natural (cosmic) law, and has, through the ages, assumed various forms. It is not a static notion espousing values of a bygone era, but accepts and adapts to change. **Moreover, just as India is a living nation, so Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism are strands of its living civilization - the sanatan dharma (Eternal Tradition).**

This civilisation is now in peril - in Kashmir, in Kerala, in the environs of Kabul. It is in acute danger of being cannibalised by marauding hordes armed with more deadly weapons, and even more lethal intent, than ever in the blood-splattered past. This is why there is a stark difference in the perception of Indians and non-Indians to the destruction of the statues. Buddhist countries have reacted with anguish, viewing it as a humiliation of their creed; they wish to save and retrieve the icons. The western countries, including the United Nations, are concerned at the loss of valuable cultural heritage.
Both

have failed to perceive Taliban's action as a new, more vicious chapter in the old civilisational conflict with India. This is why, even in the absence of a Buddhist community there, Taliban feels sufficiently deranged by the lingering sanctity of the images to take up cudgels against them. I hope Taliban's unpaid envoys will not insult us with the claim that Afghanistan's miniscule Hindu-Sikh community enjoys full freedom of religion and worship, when even today Indians working in Gulf countries cannot carry images of their Gods with them for private worship.

For India, Bamiyan cuts much deeper. For us, civilisation, culture and religion are a continuum; a strike against one is violence on the whole. When you dynamite an icon, you wage war on Dharma itself. At Bamiyan, the wheel of Dharma (dharma chakra) set in motion by Buddha when he proclaimed his new teaching to the world has been grounded; the monetary or artistic value of the relics being destroyed stands belittled before this grim truth. The Taliban and its secular allies can claim that the desecration is retaliation for the Masjid-i-Janmasthan (Janmabhoomi Masjid) only because Buddha is inseparable from our living spiritual tradition. This is a universal tradition; it stands and strives for Consciousness, Truth, Beauty, Wisdom and Compassion, and is India's true, eternal legacy to mankind. The West - which takes its religion from Palestine and culture from the Graeco-Roman world - must learn to appreciate this; it will need India to combat the threat Islamic fundamentalism poses to the civilised world.

If the West is serious about such an endeavour, it must prove its credentials by withdrawing funds and patronage to Christian missionaries and the questionable practice of conversions; these, too, outrage dharma. Without labouring the point, I would like the US to introspect about the status of Native Americans living like wild game on sanctuaries (called reserves), and the situation of Blacks since the days of Uncle Tom's Cabin. As for European nations, the horrendous destruction of Latin American civilisations and peoples has few parallels in history. By the time wisdom dawned, even the most strenuous efforts by the white man himself could not recollect the lost traditions (not save or revive, mind you), so complete was the devastation. Octavio Paz has written of the identity crisis gripping his society, Christianity having failed to compensate for the loss of the old way of life. The efforts of Carlos Castaneda and his nagual (mystic) masters do not amount to the recovery of the tradition; it is gone forever. As for Africa, it does not even bear thinking about.

I may add that Muslim nations and intellectuals who formally condemn Taliban's action as "un-Islamic" are engaging in subterfuge as they are addressing an exclusively non-Islamic audience. None of them can dare raise the issue of the destruction of Gods of another faith within the Islamic world (with the clergy and civil society), which is where it must be debated and decided if the world is to be spared such sacrilege again. Scholars of Islam are aware that the community closed the doors on ijma (consensus) and ijtihad (interpretation) centuries ago; that no dialogue has taken place in the Islamic world since, while the clergy has intensified its stranglehold over the faithful. As the clergy recognises only the reign of the Prophet and the first four pious Caliphs as valid, it can hardly be persuaded to respect other faiths. Islamic society has no secular space in which so-called liberals can operate and prevail; their role is only to deflect attacks on and negotiate space for fundamentalists.

Before the bogey of Hindu fundamentalism is raised, let me state that in the modern period, there

is not a single issue concerning Hindu society that its leaders have not confronted directly. Even setting aside the centuries-old tradition of Bhakti saints and their efforts to uplift lower sections of society, Hindus from the days of Raja Rammohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar have not hesitated to take entrenched orthodoxy head-on - be it sati, widow re-marriage, child marriage, female infanticide, education and emancipation of women, or more modern evils such as dowry, bride-burning, and now female foeticide. In fact, by the time Mahatma Gandhi launched his public crusade against Untouchability, the orthodox had already lost the capacity to fight against reforms on the hitherto secure ground of tradition and shastric (scriptural) sanction.

This is not to say that Hindu society has become perfect. However, all debates and reforms in Hindu society are internal to itself and consistent with the demands of dharma, which must renew itself in every age. We also have our share of obscurantists. But we know how to sideline even Shankaracharyas if they defend sati or any practice repugnant to modern sensitivities. I do not know of a single Islamic scholar, religious divine or political leader who can debate upon modern-day sensibilities with mullahs in Cairo (which has a pro-west benign despotism that deals harshly with fundamentalism), leave alone Kabul.

This is what makes the equation of non-existent Hindu fundamentalism with doctrinaire Islam so obnoxious.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

To Hell with them!
By T R Jawahar
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A clay idol of Ganesha and a carved wooden cross are thrown into the muddy pond under the sanguine supervision of a white-robed gentleman. As the throng of illiterates inhabiting the remote hamlet watch with bated breath, the clay idol sinks without a trace, but lo, the wooden thing floats for all to see. The robed gentle(?)man, now turns around to face the crowd, a benign smile adorning his facade but not betraying the malignant intent, and announces the triumph of the true god over the illusory idols. Having thus proved the superiority of the Son of God over the Son of Shiva, by this remarkable miracle he now very magnanimously leaves it to the innocent, illiterate simpletons, for whom seeing is believing, to decide on their faith ...on their own, to be sure. Through the miracle of the floating cross, the stage is thus set for the crossover of those at the crossroads of their conscience! Then follows a subtle, but insidious sermon that details the benefits that would accrue to those who had the good sense to launder their sins for salvation. Invariably, the potential targets are those who have already been softened by sustained social service over a period and the miracle was only the last straw. Yet another group of errant sheep join the flock, with mutual benefits for the converts as well as the convertors --salvation from sins for the former and a ticket to heaven for the latter not to speak of material benefits for both.

One is at a loss whether to call the above ruse a fraud, inducement, immoral force, exploitation or all of these. These are common tricks that are routinely conjured up by the conscience-hunters whose divine vocation it is to enlist mercenaries for their unholy schemes. However, not all such experiments to prove the superiority of the Son are as laborious and painstaking. With the conversion market booming, what with foreign funds for the asking if only an evangelist could prove the worth of his work in numbers, haste, very indecent at that, is the name of the game. Also, with awareness about the missionary mischiefs increasing by the day even among timid or indifferent Hindus, it is now a matter of making hay while the sun shines and so material inducements are blatantly used as instruments of conversion. With commerce rather than conviction forming the bedrock of such activities increasingly, it is a question of one evangelist beating it to the pile before the other round the next street corner does. And to be sure, there is an army of such white robed gentlemen roaming the countryside in search of wholesale soul-sellers whose penury and illiteracy could be traded for well-packaged religious detergents that could wash away stain and sin, better than even Super Rin!

But to brand these conversion exercises as solely commercial ventures would be to belittle their dangerous portents. Though the package comes with the coating of material allurement, it is only a clever ruse to lure the gullible; really conversions are motivated by deeper religious and political factors. For one, while Hinduism recognises the validity of all paths to attain God, Islam and Christianity clearly condemn all non-believers as kafirs or heathens and quite explicitly exhort their practitioners to convert those of other religions to their own faith. For them it is a religious duty to do so, and it does not recognise social niceties and common courtesies. Armed with such a religious sanction, the missionaries of both these faiths over the centuries have evolved or varied only in their methods in order to suit prevailing social and political milieu: at the core, the zeal if anything has only hardened. And Hinduism with all its plurality and self-defeating secularism, is too soft and dicey a target to be left unattacked. Even the Pope, who was let into this country in all innocence by a BJP government that rolled the red carpet for him in his capacity of a head of State, could not resist his genetic religious

instinct and issued a call, standing on this very soil, for a massive harvest of faith! It is a different matter that the crop has largely failed, but the slip is quite revealing. If that is the wont of an honourable gentleman who was actually a guest, imagine what would be the cumulative zeal of resident missionaries who are rooted in this land, possessing intricate knowledge of its social fissures and upheavals and having at their disposal several instruments like money, media, Marxists and myopic secularism. To ignore the threat posed by this combination to communal harmony and national security, would be a sin that no Father & Son duo can salvage us from!

The differences between Hinduism which is pluralistic and Islam plus Christianity which are exclusivist, are very basic and cannot be reconciled. The militants of one and the missionaries of the other are just the two sides of the same coin, as far as the Hindus are concerned. Heads or Tail, the Hindus stand to lose and greater the peril, if the one who tosses the coin or adjudicates, happens to be a secularist. While one guarantees instant death, the other is slow poison, programmed to kill. Well, what about the secularist? He stands for suicide! It is really a miracle, a greater wonder than the floating cross alluded to above, that Hinduism is still around despite the onslaught of this diabolical trio. All these centuries it is only the tolerance of the Hindus that has ensured whatever communal peace that had prevailed in the country, despite dire provocations from these other religionists and the subversive secularists. But the Hindus of the land have paid a heavy price for that in the form of not only desecration of their places of worship but also putting up with insults and innuendos that are always being heaped by the preachers who also double up as poachers, in all piety, for sure. Why do these men seek to convert? Apart from the commercial spin-offs, it arises from their basic belief that Hinduism is a contemptible religion and Hindus need to be salvaged if they were to walk into heaven. They have utter hatred for anything Hindu. Now in the face of such unconcealed derisive intent, would not allowing conversions be tantamount to conceding that such contempt is correct and justified? Let alone the religious angle, should India, in utter disregard of the sentiments of its majority, invite such an ignominy upon its own people just to put up a tolerant face or to satisfy the itches of blind maniacs and blinkered secularists? When even just-born nations seek to trace their roots and cultural identities, in India which can boast of a far richer and ancient heritage, its dominant religion which also reflects its character, whether one likes it or not, is sought to be treated as a boxers punching bag and made to accommodate rank rabid faiths that entertain neither any pretension of religious tolerance nor are weighed by compulsions of reciprocity!

Talking to them is futile; one has to only deal with them. Indeed, the ordinance to check conversions, though a small step, is a bold initiative in the right direction. Checking conversions may not be the cure-all panacea for the social tensions prevailing presently, but at least one major *agent provacateur* would be under scrutiny and control. It is high time this menace is given some attention. To be sure, there would be a cacophony of protests on this assault on secularism and religious freedom, and of course, wails of pandering to communal, read Hindutva, forces. But that is an old gag and in any case it is difficult to fathom what Archbishops and Imams have got to do with secularism and tolerance. Such words do not figure in their Books! So why complain?

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Secular Boomerang!
By T R Jawahar
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It is heartening to know that secularism can fire both ways. If not handled with care, it can blow up in the face of even its expert proponents, like a bomb in the making. Of course, such occasions are rare in this very tolerant' country, given the one-sided secular-sermons that the people are customarily and consistently subjected to, but a wonder has indeed happened.

The **Madras High Court** while ruling that the closure of schools and colleges run by minorities in the State for a day is not clothed with legal sanction', has also **dropped a few pearls of secular wisdom that the inveterate secularists can do well to pick.** After declaring that the Court knows no religion, the learned Judge goes on to say: No student who is studying in minority institutions, regardless of religion, shall be involved in this kind of protest and we hope that they shall not be dragged into any kind of controversies, religious or political, and be spared only for the purpose of developmental activities like education, sports, etc. so that they grow up as healthy secular students'. Note the catch phrases: ...knows no religion' and ...secular students'. These are normally hurled by the secularists and of course, the minorities to hound and humble the Hindus. Now the very same verbal weapons have felled these habitual deployers who had appropriated them so long for their sole use. And they cannot complain because it is the court which has put them in place, not the communal Hindus. As they sow, so do they reap!

The secular boomerang has struck at them with greater force than they had unleashed it with. The Court had wanted to know from the defendent secularists why at all the schools run by them have to be closed when there were several other ways of expressing their protest, particularly when the ordinance was applicable only to conversions through force, allurement or fraudulent means. The Judge also queried if he had the jurisdiction to test the veracity of the ordinance or annul it in the absence of any Supreme Court judgment sanctioning it and then advised the defendents to shun other modes to express the protest and wait as a writ challenging the ordinance itself has been filed for specific relief. Of course, the last word is yet to be said with the case having been posted for further hearing to January, 2003, but do not the Courts observations echo a familiar pang in every parents, nay, every, citizens heart?

The Christian community leaders and their secular sponsors were obviously suffering from a high degree of presumptuousness - that they can get away with anything. This in turn has been wrought by decades of over-indulgence to them, their whims and their religion, by everybody who is somebody, both in politics and society. So, any step to rectify anomalies, balance the scales or check their activities is met with stiff resistance and dubbed as an

anti-minority atrocity which has to be shunned forcefully and shelved forthwith! Sure, but if the anti-minority syndrome itself could be so potent, then what if some move is deemed anti-majority? By the same token and proportion, should not the earth beneath the nation shake? But in India that is Bharath, not a leaf will ruffle! Because we are secular and tolerant, while as pet, adamant children, the minorities have to be pampered, fed, nourished and nurtured so that they are healthy enough and emboldened adequately to keep asking for more. Now can anyone be satiated by appeasement? On the contrary, it can only increase the appetite, particularly if the hungry ones know the giver to be a sucker who can be milked dry. Little wonder that, having secured hefty aids and grants from the money of the tax payers, a majority of whom are secular Hindus and so sinners, and then thriving on the fees paid by students, a majority of whom are again off-springs of those wretched sheep, the Christian managements still had the temerity to order closure of the schools.

But for once their bluff has been called with the State government making it clear that if they went ahead with the closure of the schools run by them, (and not wholly funded by them, mind you), then the aid would be cut forthwith. **Very few people know that most of the so-called Christian-run institutions are heavily aided by government doles.** These educational institutions and even those which are self-financed, rely heavily on secular students for sustenance, charging them fees that are in no way less than the market rates. At best, they can be deemed custodians of public money, secular money at that, vested with them for imparting knowledge and at worst can be classified as enterprising entrepreneurs engaged in the business of education, their holy attire notwithstanding. That is, there is very little of service involved for their acts are akin to paying one with ones own coin and all this lofty talk of the missionaries great service to the cause of education is one of the longest surviving lies. And by resorting to the closure, they have only reinforced the common suspicions about their motives, a self-indictment that is more eloquent than a thousand judicial verdicts. If secularism and service are their avowed motives as they claim, why should they seek to drag the secular students and even their teachers into a protest that they have no stake or interest in? But more basic is the question why a law banning only forcible conversions should be any business of Bishops and managements who are solely engaged in voluntary service with no religious strings attached?

Rendering of Saraswathi Vandhana was deemed a blashpemy in this secular country, but day in and day out lakhs of students, majority of them Hindus, studying in the thousands of schools that have downed shutters today, are made to begin their day with an invocation to the Holy Father and Holy-whateverelse. And this happens in educational institutions that are funded out of the money of their parent whose purse it exits either as tax or fees. And these donors do not even know that and instead have all along been led to believe by the past masters of propoganda that they, the parents and students, are at the receiving end of benign charity. And now comes the ultimate insult, that the robed religionists masquerading as educationists will not hesitate to hold society to ransom if they are not allowed to have their secular way. Indeed, it should be a revelation for many on the extent to which public funds has been diverted as grants and doles to promote this sort of perverse secularism. The State government should press ahead with its warning to withdraw the grants, now that the Christian institutions have carried on with their closure threat. Let the gauntlet be thrown back at them. We should never pay a blackmailer, for it is not in him to say stop!

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articles on hinduism

CRUCIFYING MORALITY

T R Jawahar

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'Convert me if you can', challenged Mahathma Gandhi, when confronted by a missionary who was quite incensed by the great man's strident opposition to conversions. And missionaries being what they are, they must have certainly tried. But we all know that Mohandas Gandhi did not become Malcolm Gandhi and remained a Hindu till death with 'Hey Ram' on his lips because he was very firm in his spiritual convictions besides being well aware of missionary machinations. The provocation for the Mahatma, who knew the Bible inside out, to throw the gauntlet at the Missionary was simply this: the relentless targetting of the tribals and harijans by the evangelists. Gandhi was convinced that this was pure exploitation of an oppressed people and had nothing to do with real spirituality. So to expose the utter immorality of their acts as well as the hollowness of their 'truth', he invited the missionary to first convince and convert him before preying upon hapless and desperate people who have neither the means nor the mind to verify the claims of evangelists.

Now, imagine a typical filmy scenario that is also rooted in reality. A destitute woman approaches a man for succour. Her poverty and privation has even prepared her to place her chastity on the altar. She might also have been emboldened so by a wayward, often drunkard, husband and hungry children. The woman therefore has her reasons and since she has decided to cross the threshold, the merit of her act is irrelevant any more; the focus is rather on the man. Now what would a man when confronted by such a woman do? Obviously, whatever he does, will tell on his character, irrespective of the fact that the situation was not his making. He can either turn wolf and grab the opportunity as well as the woman or tell her to keep her chastity intact and still help her out, to the extent he can. The former is commonplace and condemnable, while the latter is true charity and reflects character. Even a man of lesser morals would still turn her away because he will know that the woman's soul would not accompany her body to bed. In short, it would require a truly depraved bent of mind to exploit the woman's penury and frustration. And it constitutes rape, of both body and soul.

It would be difficult not to draw a parallel between the above and conversions of the oppressed. Religion is an intensely personal matter and is as sacrosanct as chastity. For someone to change his religion of birth requires enormous mental effort and thorough overhaul of conscience and this cannot happen in a jiffy. It calls for intense contemplation which cannot be achieved on an empty stomach or with creditors knocking at the doors. And again, how can this

solitary pursuit happen on a mass scale? But in India we see the spectacle of people willing to shed their religion of birth in droves aided by an equally eager faith waiting to gobble them up. And the reasons touted by those threatening to convert as well as the ones itching for the communion are social oppression and economic deprivation: the same factors that propelled the woman alluded to above to shed her inhibitions. By their own admission, the conversions are not prompted by any play of conscience or pursuit of spirituality, but owing to frustration and anger, genuine though they may be. In fact a leader of a Dalit outfit even says that he believes in no religion but would still want to convert just to express his anger!

It is not just the poor and those at the lower rungs of society who are targets. Any one who is weak owing to whatever reason is a potential convert.The predators are always on the lookout - scouting in the streets, waiting outside temples, stalking stable households, perching on hillocks, scanning the hospitals and even fanning out in funerals - for that isolated soul in torment which is deemed ripe for the picking. The infirm and the dying are 'saved' from their sin by being made to move their lips just to utter 'Christ' before breathing their last. Even corpses are not spared with many getting buried instead of being cremated after a pliable relative, often an errant son, is compensated adequately for the 'funeral expenses'. And he too gets 'saved' in the process. Indeed, emotional blackmail and psychological pressure are potent weapons in the evangelical armoury.

Now, why this ugly haste and frantic fanaticism? Does it not betray an empty vessel? Otherwise, what sort of a true religion is it that casts a blind eye to real conscience change and instead acknowledges mere cosmetic makeovers and seeks to accommodate an emotional crowd wading in on empty stomachs and broken hearts? What kind of grouping would that be that exploits the deprivation of the masses to pander to its own depravity? What character or credibility could be attached to these soul-hunters who make it their wont to encourage and enlist renegades, deserters, defectors and desperadoes as well as entice and engulf the gullible to their fold without regard to motives or morals? Will true men of morals succumb even if these are proffered on a platter? But our evangelists commit these with impunity, without remorse but with zeal instead! Well, such acts are worse than the rape of a destitute woman. It is spiritual mass rape - inflicted upon a depressed class by those whose own consciences had been conveniently despatched for a sabbatical! It is perversity without peers.

The Constitution's sanction for religious freedom comes with the caveat of morality. For those who claim that morality is a grey area and subjective, it would suffice to say that so are the terms 'secularism' and 'tolerance'. But really, morality is a very powerful and unambiguous concept if only one has one's conscience intact. Helping the poor and the weak who come to them is real charity which is moral and therefore constitutional. But making them walk to the nearest church to thank the 'saviour' amounts to crossing the moral threshold rendering the same unconstitutional. Thus, by no stretch of imagination could exploitation of the anger and hunger of a class of people be deemed moral. There is another danger lurking. Today, it is just switching faiths, but tomorrow it may be a case of changing national loyalties, with anger and hunger remaining the culprits. If we accept the rationale today, can we later contest the outcome which could be disastrous and even too late? It is therefore imperative that the gauntlet is thrown back at the offenders. But for starters, religious conversions of the kind that are now rampant will have to be stopped on the count that they are immoral. And this can be achieved constitutionally. Doubting 'Thomases' are advised to check notes with the Father, I mean, the Father of the Nation. After all, he was a very tolerant and secular man and we know what he felt. And we also know

that he had read the Book and still did not feel impelled to change his name from Mohandas to Malco...No, let's leave it at that!

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'TRUE' FAITH, FALSE ALIBIS
By T R Jawahar

"Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and
give unto God what is God's"
- Bible

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Societal inequalities and economic deprivation are evils that haunt all people, irrespective of their religion. It is a misnomer to imagine that religion can address these issues and it needs real courage to admit this. Particularly so when the missionaries are looking for just this confession so that they can make their entry with doles and false promises. But admit we must, despite the evangelical eagles hovering overhead scavenging for festering souls for the picking, if we are to put an end to the despicable scourge of conscience-kidnaps. Unless the purpose of religion is put in the proper perspective, false faiths and their champions are bound to exploit the gullible.

Ensuring food, shelter, medication and education for the people is the duty of the State. It was the case with monarchy and remains so with democracy too. Let alone Welfare States where the government's role needs no elucidation, even in capitalist economies the State maintains a constant vigil over these areas despite privatisation of virtually every activity. Having said that, it has also to be stated that it does not preclude other agencies from extending or enhancing these services to the people, but the point is that the primary responsibility still vests with the State. It is the State that should be put in the dock for its inability to take care of its subjects on those counts.

Religion on the contrary caters to the spiritual aspirations of a person and helps him in his quest for god and such other higher truths. Its concern should be the eternal and it must not get bogged down by the temporal. Though it may be argued how spirituality can thrive on empty stomachs, the only counter that can be placed is that hunger is quite secular in nature and stalks all humans irrespective of their faith. But it could never be deemed the duty of religion to provide for the basic needs alluded to above. Pitting religion against economics is like asking a hockey team and cricket team to play against each other. The resultant confusion needs no description. Under no stretch of imagination could it be claimed that it is the responsibility of temples to first provide food and education to devotees. Temples are primarily for prayer and even if the aforementioned activities are carried out there, they are purely incidental and secondary, lofty and welcome though they may be. This has been the case in India over centuries with piety remaining an inner quest while bread, butter and its spread are ensured by a combination of economic activity and State intervention. However, Hindu scriptures being exhaustive have also produced extensive

treatises on these aspects, charting out clear guidelines for people w.r.t their conduct in society, politics and business too. But the goal remained and remains God.

But the advent of the Church and Missionaries marked a significant and decisive shift. The missionaries took over these key areas of social action as their main tools to spread Christianity in India. Whatever service was proffered was touted as gifts from Jesus, the ubiquitous string that was always attached to charity and this was, not surprisingly, accompanied by campaigns of calumny against Hindu gods and practices. It would require tons of perversity to describe their acts as even remotely religious. But the charade came to stay in all its vile potency. The prevailing systems of education and medicine were meticulously dismantled on the pretext that they were primitive, when they were actually not, and a vacuum was consciously created by the colonial regime for the missionaries to step in. The usurpation of this role of the State by the missionaries went unchecked owing to the active support of the English rulers for whom the Church was the most potent force, more reliable than even the army or navy, in securing and strengthening their imperial stranglehold over India.

And this hangover continues in the secular dispensation of independent India till today, something though outwardly benign all the same cocks a snook at the very foundations of governance. This was evidenced when Christian institutions in TN closed the schools run by them for a day, when actually they were funded by grants and fees of secular taxpayers and secular students respectively, to protest an ordinance that sought to call their religious bluff. They had the gumption to do this, and most unabashedly at that, because they held, or they thought they held, absolute sway over what should rightly be a State's prerogative.

In this context, how can conversions be deemed a panacea for social evils or economic disparities? It is understandable if someone gets converted after losing faith in his religion as a means of attaining higher spiritual truths. But can social oppression or economic deprivation be deemed a legitimate cause for switching religion when it is not the job of religion to ensure food and shelter? How can Hinduism be responsible for the impoverishment of a people or the inequities when it is actually the secular State -- India not being a Hindu rashtra - that has failed to correct them, particularly when it is vested with all the constitutional powers for alleviating the same? If these are the yardsticks for the success of a religion then can it not be concluded that all religions have singularly failed the faithful, given the global spread of destitution and racism?

Again, at a micro level, can it be proved that there is a societal uplift for those who have converted or that their economic status has changed for better for good? Never. If anything, the converts carry their social baggage to the new religion and any prosperity that comes their way remains purely temporary, often confined to the conveyance to and fro the nearest church, besides some pocket money for the day, not to mention the pocket-sized book. But on the day of conversion, it is a major media event, a display of social revolution, a political watershed and of course, for the beneficiary religion, a grand groundswell of its flock. But after that it is business as usual for the converts, whose toil now continues under new masters - shall we call them 'Caste Christians' in line with the secular media parlance namely, 'Caste Hindus'? And instead of that ignominious tumbler it may be a ceramic cup now, but which not certainly is the same cup their new master sips his morning tea from. No saving grace, here either!

Conversion by exercise of conscience is the only real conversion and is bound to be a rarity. All

others, be they owing to anger, poverty, social ostracisation etc etc are nothing but cosmetic changes, as they are not accompanied by any change of heart as often vouchsafed by the potential converts as well as their mentors themselves. Pray, how many well-fed, socially mobile, happy people have the missionaries converted so far? How is it that only under-nourished or uneducated people get converted invariably? Those citing economic and social reasons for converting are actually challenging the State and not the religion, here, Hinduism. Also, the loyalty of those getting converted is directed towards the new faith for 'saving' them with a proportional hatred for the old faith as well as the State for 'letting them down'. Condoning such conversions would not only be tantamount to conceding the prerogative of the State to Bishops, but also giving way to insurgency in the long run, as we are witnessing in the North-East. Instead, does it not become the duty of the State to ensure that the challenge is taken head on in national interest as well as for preserving public order? But for this to happen the country has to first emerge out of the secular smokescreen!

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

The stones of Hampi
By MAYA JAYAPAL.
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The ruins of Hampi can make your imagination run riot. In these surroundings there was a cultural efflorescence, when musicians, artists, and artisans gathered to create poetry and fulfill the grand vision of their kings, says MAYA JAYAPAL.



The banks of the Tungabhadra river in Bellary district, Karnataka are strewn with massive boulders, scattered like the playthings of giants. These granite boulders, estimated to be millions of years old, were used to construct the magnificent city of Hampi, capital of the Vijayanagar a empire which held sway in the Deccan for 250 years from 1336 A.D. to 1565 A.D., when at the Battle of Talikota, four Muslim kingdoms ingloriously routed its armies.

The rulers the river to form aqueducts, drains and tanks used. Their ruins remain at Hampi, evidence of the might and sagacity of the city's rulers. One spectacular excavation is the stepped tank, about three metres deep, into which water was fed by a series of stone channels. The steps are effectively arranged, in small pyramids, each block of stone bearing an inscription in Kannada detailing its exact location in the scheme of construction.



The opulent palaces, the magnificent temples and the massive fortifications appear very natural among the rock formations, as if they have just grown out of these theatrical, barren, craggy surroundings. A foreigner said of the stones: ``they are piled one block on another in a manner most singular, that it seems as if they stood in the air, not connected with each other''. The stones have been used for many purposes, some of the slabs are shaped like banana leaves with depressions for food, a stone trough with a hold for drainage, probably for horses and elephants to drink water from.

My favourite is the Hazara Rama temple, an exquisite structure for private worship of the Vijayanagar kings. Standing within a walled enclosure, it exudes an air of elegant serenity either when the moonlight softly washes over the friezes, or when it glows in the sunlight. The herds and bands of elephants, horses, dancing girls and musicians, and scenes from the Ramayana come alive on the outer walls of the temple. The eye lingers on the fine features of a musician, or the graceful limbs of a dancing girl or the noble prancing of a caparisoned steed. Inside, the four black polished pillars invite you to run your fingers over their smoothness. Their geometrical square blocks alternate with cylindrical shafts, all luxuriantly carved in tangible loveliness.



The large stone chariot in the Vithala temple is a marvellous testimony to the skill of the stone carvers - its wheels can rotate on the axle. The carved pillars in the Hall of Musical Pillars resound like musical instruments. The Hampi ruins include the monolithic statues of Ugra Narasimha (Vishnu's incarnation of the man-lion creature), badly mutilated by the invading Moghul armies and Ganesa. The 22 ft. high statue of Narasimha had Lakshmi seated on his thigh - unfortunately it was hacked to pieces. The Virupaksha temple has beautiful gopurams, and on the way there is the King's Balance on which he was weighed against gold and diamonds which were then distributed to the people.

A massive platform known as ``Mahanavami dibba'' has a floor area of 5,300 sq. ft. rising by a series of sculpted terraces. On this the king and queen would sit to watch the festivities below. Seated with them were other aristocratic women, who, according to Domingo Paes, a visitor from Portugal, ``wore collars of gold and bracelets so heavy that they had to be supported on either side''. The platform has densely carved bands of horses, soldiers, a couple of foreign looking dignitaries, and a scene showing girls sprinkling water during Holi. From here a bird's eye view of the ruins is impressive, and one can only wonder at how spectacular it must have been for Paes 400 years ago when he climbed up to gape and wonder at the opulence and the grandeur of the festivities.

The Zenana enclosure is an eclectic blend of Hindu and Islamic styles, for the Vijayanagara kings had Muslim horsemen in their cavalry and traded in horses with Arabia, Persia and Portugal. The elephant stables are a majestic row of 11 domed stalls, with arched connecting doorways. There are lofty watchtowers, the queen's bathing enclosure and plinths of erstwhile palaces, and the Lotus Mahal, an ethereal structure which in the moonlight gives the impression of a floating palace. Here the cusped arches open to the playful breeze and the women whiled away their time here.



The Persian ambassador Abdul Razak, (1443) describes the crowded bustling bazaars of Hampi with their pillared galleries. ``In the long bazaars, flowers are sold everywhere ... the jewellers sell publicly pearls, rubies, emeralds and diamonds.''

Who was the man who created a legend with his capital Hampi, and made the nine day festival, Mahanavami, a wonder? The most brilliant of the kings, Krishnadeva Raya, has been described by Domingo Paes as of medium height and fair, a man who was an athlete, who could appreciate horsemanship. He was a good commander who ensured the stability and prosperity of his kingdom, and sensitive enough to encourage the arts in this atmosphere.

The ruins of Hampi can make your imagination run riot. In these surroundings there was a cultural efflorescence, when musicians, artists, and artisans gathered to create poetry and fulfill the grand vision of their kings.

What is left of the Hampi ruins is evocative of what it must have been, the pomp and glory which brought visitors from across the seas to marvel and write about it.

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Hung(a)ry for Sanskrit

www.hvk.org

By Priya Jestin

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There's a small land-locked nation in faraway Europe whose people mouth Sanskrit shlokas and devour Kalidasa's Shankutala and Jayadeva's Gita Govinda. Unbelievable? Probably, but Hungary is really like that. Though most Indians don't know much about it, this is a land where the Vedas and Upanishads have been religiously read for the past two centuries.

"We have always been interested in the literature of the East, especially India. However till a few decades ago, these texts were available only to a select few." Says Jozsef Vekerdy, a leading Sanskrit scholar in Hungary who has single-handedly popularised Sanskrit among the Hungarian masses. Vekerdy was in Mumbai recently to receive the Dayawati Modi Award for this achievement.

The twinkle-eyed 74-year-old explains how he adapted the Sanskrit texts to suit Hungarian tastes. "My love story with Sanskrit began when I was a teenager," he reminisces. "My first contact with Sanskrit literature was through fictionalised versions of the Mahabharata and Ramayana written by E. Baktay, one of Hungary's prominent writers. His versions of the epics enraptured me. That was when I decided to take up a career as a linguist."

Though there were translated versions of Sanskrit works, they were third-hand-translated from the English and Germans copies, says vekerdy. "I wanted to go to the roots and get an accurate Hungarian translation of the original works," he states.

Fuelled by this ambition, Vekerdy went on to become the first Hungarian Sanskrit scholar. Peppering his story with a few anecdotes, Vekerdy recollects the time he was left directionless as the only Sanskrit teacher at the University fled the nation after the Soviet Union overtook the country in 1956. "Since I was the only student, I finally had to teach myself," he chuckles.

However, being the only Sanskrit scholar had its benefits, as the Russians "viewed anything Western with a suspicious eye". "We were encouraged to have ties with countries that were friendly with Soviet Russia like China and India," he says. Soon, Hungarian publishers were seeking out people who could translate the literary works of China and India. And some publishing houses approached Vekerdy to translate Sanskrit epics.

However, when Vekerdy's first book, a translation of Kalidasa's Meghdoot was published, he was cooling his heels in a jail. "I was arrested with a copy of a letter written by students to then Indian

prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru," he says in a stage whisper. "Over 2000 students were deported or hanged after a student uprising against the Soviet occupation. That was when I sent the letter to Nehru explaining the conditions in our country and soon, through Nehru's personal intervention, the atrocities against us stopped." However, the letter led to Vekerdy's spending three years in prison.

"Prison life has its own advantages," he says with a naughty grin and hastily explains how he read and translated quite a few of Kalidasa's works during his prison tenure. It was during this time that he tried to innovate and make Sanskrit texts more interesting to the lay reader. "All Sanskrit texts are long and laborious to read. Hence to retain reader interest, I first translated only selections from the Vedas, Upanishads and versified them. Later, I began selecting a few sentences from a paragraph and then put them together to make a cohesive text;" he explains.

Adhering to the original text was a must and Vekerdy even got some poets to put the translations to verse. "All metric translations strictly follow the original Sanskrit verse format. Since Hungarian is phonetically similar to Sanskrit, the essence of the verses can be retained in the language," he explains. To date, he has translated at least 28 Sanskrit texts, including the Vedas and the Upanishads. Vekerdy's labour of love seems to have paid off. "Today, many Hungarian youngsters can recite verses of the Gita Govinda in Sanskrit," he says proudly.

Apart from Sanskrit works, Vekerdy also studied and later translated the sayings of the Buddha from Pali. For a man who loves Indian culture and literature, isn't it strange that is Vekerdy's first trip to the land? "I am a lazy man," he explains candidly. Now that he has translated quite a few ancient texts, Vekerdy proposes to begin translating another Sanskrit tome, a relatively modern one this time: a poem on Indira Gandhi.

And when does he plan to stop? "When there are no more Sanskrit works left to translate."

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

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Invoking God

by Bharat Jhunjhunwala
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US President George Bush is quite certainly a deeply religious person. Mr Bush was a heavy drinker in the early phase of his life. A report in the Newsweek says that he could be obnoxious at parties. He later joined a Bible-study group. Slowly worship grew on him and he kicked-off the habit after his 40th birthday. "It was 'goodbye Jack Daniels, hello Jesus'," said one of his friends from those days. Now Christianity and Jesus have become integral parts of Mr Bush's life.

The famous "Axis of Evil" was originally phrased as "Axis of Hatred" but Mr Bush replaced it with "evil" as it had a more Christian ambience. "If people want to know me," said Mr Bush during his campaign for President, "they've got to know that's an integral part of my life-my acceptance of Christ."

This religious attitude runs through the Bush presidency. Bible-study groups are held frequently in the White House. He has provided Government grants to teach abstinence to school-going teenagers and cut grants to NGOs that promote abortion. Why is it then that such a deeply religious person is being perceived by the world as a tyrant lusting after Iraqi oil?

The difficulty is that devoutness and righteousness are two different things. In other words, bhakti can go with adharma. Two examples will make this clear.

The Christian Crusades in the 11th to the 13th century were based on a similar worshipful attitude. Christians had been persecuted in Palestine and made to flee to mainland Europe. The "famine and plague-ridden" peasantry, says the Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia, was oppressed by the nobility and was anxious for foreign conquests. In this situation Pope Urban II exhorted Christians to take up arms to reconquer Jerusalem. Deep religious fervour permeated all sections of the population. Participation in the Crusade was said to have great spiritual value for the individual crusader. The result was that for 300 years Europeans waged relentless wars against the Muslims in West Asia. A large number of people were killed and cities pillaged. But in the end Palestine remained in Muslim hands. These wars are, in part, responsible for the aversion to war that is presently being seen in Europe.

Worse, the Crusades had degenerated with time. Movements directed against the political foes of the popes too were termed as "Crusades". British journalist Victoria Clark writes in her book, The Far-Farers: "A Journey from Viking Iceland to crusader Jerusalem that notion of a 'soldier of Christ' changed during the Crusades. The earlier meaning was that of a monk battling inner demons. Now Christ's soldier was one who was waging bloody wars against Muslim infidels. The worshipful attitude and commitment to Christ was pervasive throughout this period. Devotion to Christ did not prevent such a perversion of the true message of Christ, which was love and compassion."

Another example from closer home is more expressive. One of the chief disciples of Ramakrishna Paramhamsa was Nag Mahashay. Those were the times when the British were plundering India and killing the freedom fighters. His biographer Sharatchandra Chakravarti says: "Nag Mahashay would respectfully honour the Government servants. He used to say that the King's powers were working in them. The divine mother is unhappy if they are disrespected. He used to say - The Queen has been born from a part of the

shakti, by her punya alone the people will be happy." Here we have a devout disciple of Ramakrishna bowing equally devotedly to the Queen who was exploiting and impoverishing the Indians.

The common point in both narratives is that devout commitment to a God - whether Jesus or Shakti - is not a guarantee that one is on the right track in worldly matters. Thus both Mr Bush and his opponents claim they are fighting in the name of God. In his State of the Union Address the US President declared confidence in "the loving God behind all of life and all of history... May he guide us now." Clearly Mr Bush has an inner conviction that he is doing God's will in fighting terror and Saddam Hussein. On the other hand, Osama bin Laden is an equally devout Muslim who exhorts Muslims to rise in the name of Allah and expel the Americans from West Asian soil.

Devoutedness to one's own God leaves no space for dialogue with the opponents. Bhakti does not answer the worldly questions of politics.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy had clearly grasped this problem. In his first book, A Gift to the Monotheists, he wrote: "I have traveled in many areas of this world. I have seen that generally there is consensus about one God or brahman, but there is no agreement in the specific features of that God and religious principles. I have thus concluded that every sect follows some devotional practices that which are acquired by training and habit. The followers of these sects follow their ancestors. They are ever willing to question the beliefs of other sects though their own ancestors made mistakes like other people. Thus these sects are either all true or all false. If they are all true then their mutual differences are not explained. If they are all false then none can be followed."

The problem can be resolved only by acknowledging that the "one God" manifests in various ways, which, though mutually incompatible, have their own merits that are rooted in their specific circumstances. The **Mandukya Upanishad** (1.1-3) makes this distinction between the iswara and brahman. Iswara is the specific manifestation of the one brahman at the level of the individual.

Every religion loses its moral sanction to wage war on others at the level of the iswara because it is incomplete or less than the whole. In this context Mr Bush's morality becomes questionable. In 1993 Mr Bush claimed that only believers in Jesus go to heaven. Similarly he has said that the US has been "chosen by the God and commissioned by the history to be a model to the world." These pronouncements smack of a new crusade. This conflict cannot be resolved by recourse to one's faith howsoever true it may be, for every faith or sect makes a basic folly of dividing the world into "us" and "they". If there is one all-pervasive God then he cannot be divided.

It's time that all religions of the world sit together and acknowledge that none has exclusive claim to God. Every religion will have to accept that its iswara is as much his manifestation as the iswara of others. The inter-religious conflicts cannot be, therefore, resolved by reference to one's iswara. We will have to use our discriminative capacity to asses whether a particular action is beneficial for the whole world. It will not do, therefore, for President Bush to try to combine "American interests" with religion. Religion has to be para-national. Human history has many examples of needless wars made under the false belief that one's iswara is the final authority. Jesus, likewise, cannot be the final authority. If Mr Bush still wages war in the name of Jesus, he will rightly be called a "hired Christian thug" as done British playwright Harold Pinter.

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The fascination with Ayurvedic medicine

By Peg Jordan

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Noted fitness expert PEG JORDAN examines the global resurgence of interest in natural healing methods and answers queries from readers.

THERE is little question that centuries of colonisation takes a toll, its tragic toll on a country's people, religions and languages, but one of the most lasting effects is the attack on its original healing arts. Both Muslim invasions in the 11th and 12th Centuries and later British colonisation imposed their own medical beliefs to the point where both Indian folk medicine and Ayurvedic medicine were suppresssed. The British Medical Journal from the 1920s labelled the oldest healing system in the world as "unsupported metaphysical dogma". But despite being marginalised for decades, Ayurvedic medicine is the final victor. Today, there is a global resurgence of interest in natural healing methods, and Ayurvedic medicine tops the list in terms of the West's latest "alternative" health fascination.

While Ayurvedic remedies are sold through many new companies through Europe and the United States, there are numerous Ayurvedic clinics and treatment centres arising as well in the West, where a single treatment balancing doshas draw celebrity clientele willing to pay thousands of dollars. The popularity of plant-based healing systems is even evidenced in new shopping malls.

An international franchise known as the Body Shoppe has launched a new line of Ayurvedic-herbal lotions and skin care products with a mass marketing campaign that aims at younger consumers interested in natural botanicals.

Similarly, the other ancient healing systems of India are gaining credibility among plant researchers. As drug companies encounter more resistant strains among bacteria and viruses, older methods of treatment such as the Ayurvedic recipe of dita tree bark to treat malaria, chronic diarrhoea, fevers and skin diseases, become valuable as non-toxic options.

Not only Ayurvedic medicine, but other forms of folk medicine have suddenly attracted researchers for their vast knowledge of leaves and poultices to treat anemia, heart disease, cough, intestinal colic and diabetes.

Medical anthropologists have recently convened panels on the ancient medical system of the Tamil culture, Siddha, and its use of herbs to reduce the toxic effects of metals in remedies.

An ironic twist to this worldwide clamour for India's ancient healing philosophies is the fact that

India itself has become a premier supplier for low cost pharmaceuticals drugs. Ranbaxy Laboratories, in New Delhi, pours out generic drugs , such as popular antibiotics like amoxicillin, as a central player in India's low cost pharmaceutical industry. Churning out inexpensive copies of generic drugs due to its strategy of reverse engineering know-how, Ranbaxy's earnings were reported over $500 million and it has expanded operations to China and the U.S..

Herbal sources for sleeping well

My last column described the pervasive problems of sleeplessness for millions of people, and offered some natural herbs and techniques. It must have struck a chord among readers, because over 60 of you wrote to me, asking for local names of herbs, sources and other types of remedies.

I was able to find an excellent natural herbal formula by a company in Bangalore, The Himalaya Drug Company. Their propietory herbal blends are based on ayurvedic plant knowledge, and are being studied in clinical trials. A company spokesperson reported that seven decades ago, the founder of The Himalaya Drug Company discovered people feeding some roots to pacify elephants on a trip to Burma. The root was Rauwolfia serpentina, a plant known for its calming properties in this Burmese region. Upon further research, it was discovered that the plant was not only a natural tranquiliser, but it lowered high blood pressure as well.

Other herbs researched by the company include Commiphora mukul (Guggul) for helping the immune system, Garcinia Cambodia for promoting normal lipid metabolism and helping with weight control, and Capparis Spinosa for improving liver function. One of the finest collections of herbs is offered in their "StressCare" formula, containing chyawanprash, Emblica officinalis (Indian gooseberry), ashwaganda, asparagus root, and gotu-kola (Centella Asiata Urban).

Otherwise, your search for herbs that promote a good night's rest may be facilitated by knowing their botanical names: Kava kava (Piper myethysticum), Valerian root (Valeriana officinalis), Passion flower (Passiflora incarnata) and As for the other recommendations: Melatonin supplements (three mg at bedtime) or 5-http (50 mg at bedtime) are available online throughwww.mothernature.com, www.allherb.com, and www.drugstore.com.

If you have muscle cramps or "restless legs" that disturb sleep, try taking magnesium (250 mg at night) and vitamin E (400-800 IU daily.)

Other recommendations include avoiding caffeine and alcohol later in the day. Starting your day with some protein, then eating carbohydrates such as whole grain cereals and breads in the evening may help sustain nighttime serotonin (a brain neurotransmitter) activity through the night, and assure a good sleep.

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The Divine Feminine In Indian Tradition

By Jagdish C Joshi

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Ancient Indian culture as revealed in Sanskrit texts was strongly oriented towards masculine goals. The social system was overwhelmingly patriarchal and Sanskrit works largely devoted themselves to giving an account of male hierophanies, a phenomenon that occurred over most of the world.

However, from the fourth century AD the religion of Goddess become as much a part of the Hindus as the religion of God and about the same time female hierophanies develop. In these we have a reasoned exposition of the nature of Goddess, of her process of creation, of her relation to God and of her relation to her worshippers.

The phenomenon of feminine theology in the Brahminical religious tradition is unique because all over the world the female gods were replaced by male gods. Diana and Berecynthia, Isis and Cybele were exiled with the coming of Christianity although female hierophanies reappeared in the figures of Mary and the female saints. However, the figure of the virgin and its supporting theology are subordinate to her son.

It is therefore quite interesting to analyse the Hindu religious tradition, which discusses the feminine theology in detail. It is important to note that it is not a description of female icons. On the other hand it strives to express possibilities of the Goddess rather than her iconic limitations. It seeks to construct a theology that does not restrict feminine values in the world of the sacred by the strictures of subordination to which women were and are still subject in the secular world.

Of all the religious practices and beliefs concerned with feminine divinities it is Shaktism which gives the Goddess a place of supreme importance. In this tradition female is raised above the male as Durga is described as Shakti, the energy of cosmos. Without her, we are told in one of the texts that the world is lifeless and even Shiva, the great god (maha deva), is merely a corpse (shava). It is further remarked that the world without her ``though living is dead as it were''. An analysis of these legends, doctrines and abstract philosophies indicates that first, the Goddess is portrayed as power, and the female Shakti element is identified as the essence of reality, the male element playing a subservient role. Secondly, she is identified with Prakriti, the primeval matter. As such she is identified with existence itself or that which underlines all existent things. The emphasis is not on the restricting aspect of the matter but on the feminine principle, the Goddess as the ground of all existence. Thirdly, she is described as giving food to nourish all life and yet she is said to take life and to cause decay. Life and death, therefore, is the process through which the female energy is continuously recycled according to the myths associated with the Goddess. Fourthly, the Goddess, according to the various religious texts, incarnates in herself all the brilliance and power that the gods collectively possess and her pervasive magic gives them sufficient definition to be able to do battle with the power of evil.

It is an exuberant celebration of the various forms of Devi, the Goddess, and their role in her victory over demons who are supposed to be tormenting the people of this earth. Besides, she is described as the embodiment of supreme eternal knowledge (vidya) which becomes the cause of release (mukti) from bondage. Moreover, the Goddess is described as the primary ontological reality. The gods derive their bodily forms from her and all material existence proceeds from her.

Similarly, Goddess Kali is said to be an embodiment of maya, prakriti and shakti. Thus she may be understood to express the nature of these qualities or the truths inherent in these ideas. Maya is often understood in terms of the

magical quality of creation, which lends to reality a mysterious and unpredictable quality leading at times to destruction. The darker aspect of reality as maya is represented in Kali's wild appearance and behaviour. Moreover, prakriti is the basis of the material word and is lush and teeming; so is Kali who symbolises eternal time and thus represents growth, decay, death and rebirth. Besides she is shakti, power or might and represents the tendency of the divine to action and to displace. In the midst of eternal night she stands upon `non-existence', the static but potentially dynamic state that precedes manifestation. In that capacity she is able to allay the terrors of those who invoke her and also bestow gifts of true perception leading to liberation.

Thus we see that the Indian tradition preserves and constantly reaffirms the idea of pervasive and dominant female divinity, an idea which was a widespread and early religious experience of humanity.

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India: The Home of Gunpowder and Firearms – By G R Josyer

(source: **Diamonds ; Mechanisms ; Weapons of war ; Yoga sutras - By G.R. Josyer**).

In every inquiry which is conducted with the object of proving that a certain invention has been made in any particular country, it is of the utmost importance to show that so far as the necessary constituents of the object invented are concerned, all these could be found in the country credited with such invention.

The ordinary components of gunpowder are saltpeter, sulphur, and charcoal.

1. It is now generally admitted that the nitrum which occurs in the writings of the ancients was not saltpeter, but natron, i.e. sodium carbonate; the latter word is nowhere extant in Greek or Roman literature, though the words nitrum and natron are no doubt in their origin identical.

The word neter occurs twice in the Bible. It is described as an alkali, which was used as soap: “For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much sope, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God.” (Jerem. Ii. 22); and “As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.” (Proverb xv. 22).

Herodotus mentions nitrium as litron in his description of the embalming of dead bodies as practiced in Egypt. Pliny repeatedly speaks of nitrum, and Galen records that it was burnt to strengthen its qualities. This would have had no effect if applied to saltpeter. There is no doubt that, had the ancients known saltpeter, its oxidizing properties would soon have been discovered by them, which is the most important step towards the invention of gunpowder.

The word natron was introduced into Europe from the East by some European scholars who had been traveling there about the middle of the sixteenth century, and who had thus become acquainted with this salt; and though the word natron was originally used there for denoting saltpeter, its other form nitrum has been since assigned it; however, as we have seen, the nitrum of the ancients is quite different from our nitre, which is saltpeter (potassium nitrate).

Native saltpeter, i.e. saltpeter produced by entirely natural processes is very scarce, so much so that the inventor of nickel, **Freiherr Axel friedrich von Cronstedt** (1722-65) was unacquainted with it. It is found especially in India, Egypt, and in some parts of America. Since the introduction of gunpowder in European warfare saltpeter has been manufactured wherever native saltpeter could not be obtained from the difference on walls (sal murale) and other sources; this exudation, together with all the other artificial modes of producing saltpeter, became a perquisite of the sovereign, and this saltpeter regale grew in time into as obnoxious a burden to the people as the hunting regale. The saltpeter regale is first mentioned as having been exercised in 1419 by Gunther, Archbishop of Magdeburg.

The little knowledge possessed by the ancients of chemical science, their utter ignorance of chemical analysis, accounts for their not improving, or rather for their not being able to improve the materials at their disposal and discovering the natural qualities of the different alkalis in their possession.

Throughout India saltpeter is found, and the Hindus are well acquainted with all its properties; it is even commonly prescribed as medicine. India was famous for the exportation of saltpeter, and is still so. The Dutch, when in India, traded especially in this article.

In Bengal, it is gathered in large masses wherever it efforeces on the soil, more particularly after the rainy season. In the “Sukraniti” saltpeter is called suvarcilavana, well shinning salt. The Dhanvanatri – nighantu describes saltpeter as a tonic, as a sonchal salt; it is also called tilakam (black), krsnalavanam and kalalavanam. It is light, shiny, very hot in digestion, and acid. It is good for indigestion, acute stomach ache, and constipation. It is a common medical prescription.

2. Sulpher, the second ingredient of gunpowder, is also found in India, especially in Scind; it is, and was, largely imported into India from the East. It is well known and received its name from its smell, being called gandha or gandhaka smell, or in this case as it has not a good smell, rather from its stench. Its quality differs with its color, according as it is white, red, yellow, or bluish. Though sulphur is a very important part of gunpowder, gunpowder is in some parts in India even prepared without it. Sulphur was always in great demand in India, and in medicine it is often made use of.

3. Charcoal is the third component of gunpowder. Its constitution varies necessarily with the plants which in the different countries are used in its manufacture. In Prussia the coal of the alder, limetree, poplar, elder, willow, hemp, and hazel is used for powder. The charcoal of willow trees is especially esteemed on account of its excellent qualities. In the Sukraniti the arka (Calatropis gigantean), the snuhi, snuhi or snuh (Euphorbia neriifolia), and the Rasona (Allium saticum) are given as the plants whose charcoal is best fitted for gunpowder.

(a) The arka, gigantic swallow wort, is a common bush growing in great quantities all over the country. It has a very good fiber, and is regarded by the natives as possessing most powerful and useful qualities. If the arka is used with discretion when iron is being forged, it contributes greatly to the excellence of the Indian steel. It is applied against epilepsy, paralysis, dropsy, etc. Its milky juice is smeared on wounds. It is a common sight in India to see suffering people applying it. The root is also used against syphilis. Its charcoal is very light and much used for pyrotechnical preparations, and its qualities in this respect are so well known that every school boy is acquainted with them and prepares his own powder and mixture from this plant. Its name in Tamil is erukku, in Malayalam eruka, in Telugu jilledu, in Bengali akund, and Hindustani mudar or ark.

(b) The snuhi, snuh, (triangular spurge, kalli in Malayalm pasan kalli in Tamil, bontajammudu in Telugu, narashy, seyard in Hindi and narsy in Bengali) grows like the arka in waste places all over the Indian Peninsula. The qualities of this plant for pyrotechnic displays are as well known as those of the Calatropis gigantean. Dried sticks of this plant are scarce. It is widely used as a medicinal plant, externally against rheutmatism, and internally as a purgative; it is given to children against worms.

(c) The rasona is a kind of garlic; the Marathi equivalent is lasuan. Its botanical name is Allium sativum.

The prescription for making gunpowder is, according to the Sukraniti, as follows:

Mix 5 parts of saltpeter with 1 part of sulphur and 1 part of charcoal. The charcoal is to be prepared from the arka snuhi, and other similar plants in such a manner that during the process the plants are so covered that the smoke cannot escape. The charcoal thus obtained must be cleaned, reduced to powder, and the powder of the different charcoals is then to be mixed. After this has been done, the juice of the arka, snuhi, and rasona must be poured over the powder which is to be thoroughly mixed with this juice. This mixture is to be exposed and dried in the sun. It is then finally ground like sugar, and the whole mixture thus obtained is gunpowder!

The proportion of saltpeter varies, as some take 4 or 6 parts instead of 5, but the quantities of sulphur and charcoal remain unaltered. These two are the usual recipes. Nevertheless the mixture is often changed when the gunpowder is to be of a particular color or if it has to serve a special purpose. The three principal ingredients are mixed in different proportion, and realgar, orpiment, graphite, vermilion, the powder of magnetic iron oxide, camphor, lac, indigo, and pinegum, are added to the compound according as they are required.

It seems peculiar that gun-powder should not be mentioned in some Sanskrit works, but it is most probable that the very common occurrence of gunpowder interfered with its being regarded as something extraordinary and worth mentioning. The actual mode of preparing the different sorts of gunpowder may, on the other hand, have been kept a secret in certain classes. Explosive powder either used for rejoicings as fireworks for discharging projectiles was known in India from the earliest period, and its preparation was never forgotten.

In an extract taken from the Mujmalut Tawarikh – which was translated in 1126 from the Arabic, into which language it had been translated a century previously from a Sanskrit original – we read:

“that the Brahmins counseled Hal to have an elephant made of clay and to place it in the van of his army, and that when the army of the king of Kashmir drew nigh, the elephant exploded, and the flames destroyed a great portion of the invading force. Here we have not only the simple act of explosion, but something very much like a fuse, to enable the explosion to occur at a particular time.”

Vaisampanyana mentions among the things to be used against enemies smoke-balls, which contained most likely gunpowder, and which are according to the explanation proposed by his commentator made of gunpowder.

The following stanza, which is taken from the Rajalakshminarayana-hrdaya, a part of the Atharvanarahasya, is no doubt a clear proof of the fact that the Hindus were familiar with gun powder at a very remote period:

“As the fire prepared by the combination of charcoal, sulphur, and other material depends upon the skill of its maker so also may thou, O! representative of knowledge (Lakshmi), by the application of my faith manifest thyself quickly according to my wishes.”

The Sanskrit word for gunpowder is agnichurna, firepowder, which is occasionally shortened to churna. The Dravidian languages have all and the same word for medicine and gunpowder; in Tamil marundu, in Telugu mandu, in Kanarese maddu, and in Malayalam, maruna. Occasionally the word gun (tupaki) is prefixed to remove any doubt as to what powder is meant. In Malayalam, the word vedi, which means explosion, is prefixed. The Chinese crackers are called by the Tamilians Sini vedi – Chinese crackers – to distinguish them from the Indian crackers. The word marunda is most probably derived from the Sanskrit past participle mardita, pounded, in the sense of different ingredients being pounded together, as a medicine powder. The meaning of gunpowder is then in a special sense derived from the general expression. The Dravidian equivalent of churna is Sunnambu in Tamil, Sunnamu in Telugu, chalk.

Two kinds of firearms are described in the Sukraniti, one is of small size and the other is of large size. The former is five spans long, has at the breech a perpendicular and horizontal hole, and sights at the breech and muzzle end of the tube. Powder is placed in the vent, near which is a stone, which ignites the powder by being struck. Many dispense with this flint. The breach is ell wooded and a ramrod compresses the powder and ball before the discharge. This small musket is carried by foot-soldier.

A big gun has no wood at its breech; moves on a wedge in order to be directed towards the object to be shot at, and it is drawn on cars.

The distance which the shot travels depends upon the strength of the material from which the gun is made, upon the circumference of the hole, and the gun’s compactness and size. The ball is either of iron or lead or of any other material. Some big balls have smaller ones inside. The gun itself is generally of iron, occasionally also, as we have seen in the Nitiprakasika, of stone. The gun is to be kept clean and must be always covered.

The term used for gun nalika (nalika) is derived from the word nala a reed, a hollow tube, which is another form for its synonyms nada, nadi, or nadi; in the same way nalilka corresponds to nadika. Considering that the guns were in ancient times made out of bamboo, and that some bamboo guns are still used in Burma, the name appears both appropriate and original. That the idea of bamboo being the original material for guns was still in the mind of the author of the Sukraniti seems to be indicated by his calling the outside of the stock of a gun bark (tvak).

In all European Sanskrit dictionaries the word nalika has been rendered as stalk, tube; arrow, dart, etc, but the third significance is not given; though it is one which is known to every learned Pundit. At the outset every body can easily see that the meaning of arrow and of gun can be rightly applied to a reed; the arrow is a reed which is discharged as a missile, and a gun is a reed out of which missiles are shot.

In the sholkas 21 and 24 of our extract of the Sukraniti we read that a king should keep on a big war chariot two large guns, and in sholkas 31, we are further informed that his beautiful iron chariot should be furnished with a couch, a swing, and among other things also with sundry arms and projectile weapons.

This tallies with an account concerning the fortifications of Manipura, as described in **J. Talboys Wheeler's History of India**: "On the outside of the city were a number of wagons bound together with chains, and in them were placed fireworks and fire weapons, and men were always stationed there to keep guard." The above mentioned statement appears to rest on good authority, as the Sukraniti declares, that the wall of a fortress "is always guarded by sentinels, is provided with guns and other projectile weapons, and has many strong bastions with proper loop-holes and ditches."

In the second stavaka of the Bharatacampu composed by Anantabhatta, some three hundred years ago, we find the following simile: "The fierce warrior who killed his enemy with heaps of leaden balls, which emerge quickly from the gun lighted by a wick, is like the rainy season which killed the summer with hailstones which descend quickly from the gun lighted by a wick, is like the rainy season which killed the summer with hailstones which descend quickly from the rows of black clouds lighted by lightning."

While the verse just quoted from the Bharatacampu reveals an intimate knowledge of firearms, yet its apparent recentness may be alleged as an objection against its being produced as an authority for the existence of firearms in India at an early period. To obviate such further objections as sloka will now be given from an undoubted early poem, the Naisadha which describes the adventures of Nala and is generally ascribed to one Sriharsa, a Brahman, who must not be confounded with Sriharsa, the King of Karmira. It s date goes back to the twelfth century. i.e., before the introduction of firearms into Europe. The verses in question run as follows: "The two boys of Rati and Manmatha (Cupid) are certainly like her (Damayanti's) two elevated nostrils." To leave no doubt that guns are meant here, the learned commentator Mallinaatha explains nalika as the Dronicaapa, the projectile weapon from which the Dronicapaastra, a dart or a ball is discharged, an expression, we have already noticed in Vaisampayana's Nitiprakaasika.

On the other hand it is doubtful whether the asani missile, which was given by Indra to Arjuna and which made when discharged a noise like a thunder-cloud, alludes to firearms, as Von Bohlen explains it.

In the first book of the Sukraniti we find it stated that the royal watchmen, who are on duty about the palace, carry firearms. The Kamandakiya, acknowledged as one of the earliest works on Nitisastra, says that "confidential agents keepingnear the king should rouse him by stratagems, gunfiring and other means, when he is indulging in drinking bouts, among women, or in gambling. It seems from this statement that the practice of firing guns as signals was in vogue among the ancient Hindus, if we can trust the evidence of one of the older Sanskrit writings.

In the preface to a **Code of Gentoo Laws or Ordinations of the Pundits**: **From a Persian translation, made from the original, written in the Shanscrit language,** occurs the following passage: "It will no doubt strike the reader with wonder to find a prohibition of firearms in records of such unfathomable antiquity; and he will probably from hence renew the suspicion which has long been deemed absurd, that **Alexander the Great did absolutely meet with some weapons of that kind in India as a passage in Quintus Curtius seems to ascertain. Gunpowder has been known in China, as well as in Hindustan, far beyond all periods of investigation.**

The word firearms is literally Sanskrit **Agnee-aster**, a weapon of fire; they describe the first species of it to have been a kind of dart or arrow tip with fire and discharged upon the enemy from a bamboo.

Among several extraordinary properties of this weapon, one was, that after it had taken its flight, it divided into several separate darts or streams of flame, each of which took effect, and which, when once kindled, could not be extinguished; but this kind of agnee-aster is now lost. Canon in the Sanskrit idiom is called Shata-ghnee, or the weapon that kills a hundred men at once, from (Shata) a hundred, and (ghnee) to kill; and the Purana Shastras, or Histories, ascribe the invention of these destructive engines to Vishwakarma, the architect who is related to have forged all the weapons for the war which was maintained in the Suttva yuga between Devta and Asur for the space of one hundred years."

And again we read in page 53 of the same works: "The Magistrate shall not make war with any deceitful machine, or with poisoned weapons, or with cannon and guns, or any other kind of firearms; nor shall he slay in war a person born an enunch, or any person who putting his hands together supplicates for quarter, nor any person who has no means of escape, nor any man who is sitting down, nor any person who says. " I am become of your party," nor any man who is asleep, nor any man who is naked, nor any person who is not employed in war, nor any person who is come to see the battle, nor any person who is fighting with another, nor any person whose weapons are broken, nor any person who is wounded, nor any person who is fearful of the fight, nor any person who runs away from the battle."

As these passages are so often quoted without their origin being stated, it may at once be remarked that the prescription about the use of arms and the treatment of persons is a free translation from the seventh book of the **Institutes of Manu**, vv. 90-93.

The meaning of arrow (sara, baaba) is much wider than is generally supposed. It was, and became more so in time, the usual term for any missile, whether it had the shape of an arrow or not; in the same way as the word Dhanu signified, in course of time every missile or weapon, so that the Dhanurveda, the knowledge of the bow comprised the knowledge of all other arms.

For instance, the shot out of a gun is called a sara, as we have seen when describing the nalika, but it may be a ball and not an arrow. A rocket is generally styled a baana (compared the Hindi term bana rocket); and banapattrai in Tamil, or banapatra in Telugu denotes a gunpowder or firework factory.

A comparison of the context of the Manavadharmasastra with those of the Sukraniti and the Nitiprakasika make it clear that Manu alludes to firearms. The Sukraniti runs in our extract as follows:

A king, bearing in mind the six principles of policy and the designs of his enemy and his own, should always kill his enemy by fair and unfair fighting.

When the king gladdens his soldiers on the march with a quarter extra pay, protects his body in the battle with a shield and armor;

Has induced his soldiers to drink up to a state of intoxication, the strengthener of bravery, the soldier kills his enemy with a gun, sword, and other weapons.

A charioteer should be assailed by a lance, a person on a carriage or elephant by an arrow, an elephant by an elephant, a horse by a horse.

***

G R Josyer is also the author of **Vymaanika Shaastra Aeronautics of Maharshi Bharadwaaja - By G. R. Josyer International Academy of Sanskrit Research 1973**). For more refer to chapter on **Vimanas**

(source: **Diamonds ; Mechanisms ; Weapons of war ; Yoga sutras - By G.R. Josyer**).

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articles on hinduism

The stamp of India

By Lini S. Kadaba
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

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Bindis, mehndi, samosas, chai: Indian words, styles, flavors are permeating popular culture. A writer muses on how her "weird" heritage has become the rage.

When I was growing up, I wouldn't willingly go near a sari or a samosa. My mom would try to persuade me to wear the traditional dress of her native India to the school dance. No way!

Indian food? Too spicy. Indian stuff? Too weird. Kids would constantly ask me why my mom's forehead was bleeding when she wore the traditional red bindi. If she wore a sari back in Lexington, Ky., people just plain stared.

Now, Main Line teens show off silver toe rings. Naomi Campbell and Madonna wear bindis. Tony stores are selling those long tunics-with-loose-pants outfits that resemble the Indian salwar-kameez to society ladies. And images of Hindu deities grace lunch boxes sold at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Yo! The Acme in Newtown Square even sells potato-filled samosas and tandoori sauce.

"Everybody is going Indian," said Clare Ramsey, a trend-spotter for Youth Intelligence in New York.

Figures all things Indian would be cool 20 years too late for me. No longer a hippie relic or, worse, furrin', the trappings of Indian culture are chic and quickly moving into mainstream America.

Masala stories by Indian or Indian American authors are spicing up best-seller lists, with more due this year. Movies with South Asian themes (most recently, Cotton Mary, East Is East) are attracting non-Indians. The rhythms of traditional bhangra music are heard at clubs.

Deepak Chopra is guru to the stars and masses. Yoga is an aging yuppie's best friend.

Not that long ago, Miss India never made the cut in the beauty pageants I loved to watch as a child. Every year, I'd search for the raven-haired contestant, hoping to catch a glimpse as she sashayed by on TV. I'd usually be disappointed. Now, Miss World and Miss Universe are both

Indians.

"I think people are tired of everything having the McDonald's stamp," Ramsey said.

Maybe this love affair with India reflects America's embrace of multiculturalism, or the impact of nearly a million Indian immigrants across the country, or the arrival of a global economy that relies on Indian software techies to keep Silicon Valley humming.

Maybe the movies and books that explore India's cultural curiosities are ultimately universal, age-old tales of trying to find meaning in a changing world.

"America has always had this fascination with the East," said Leonard Norman Primiano, a folklorist at Cabrini College who studies American popular culture.

"Fifty years ago, the influence of Indian culture in America was very much colonialist in nature," said Primiano, also an assistant professor of religious studies. "This was a British colony and there was an exoticism to it."

Times have changed. The American fabric now includes Jhumpa Lahiri's Pulitzer Prize-winning short stories, and chai, the spicy Indian tea, is sold at Starbucks.

"We've gone from a colonialist idea to a neocolonialist idea - a new idea of India," Primiano said. "I think it's a celebration of a new America."

Walk the city, and a taste of India is suddenly everywhere.

At the Reading Terminal Market, vegetable vendors stock mangoes and Indian lentils. The Cook Book Stall displays dozens of Indian cuisine titles, from A Taste of Madras to The Sultan's Kitchen. Amazulu sells incense sticks, toe rings and om pendants. And at Viva Imports, mirrored handbags and recycled saris made into jackets, dresses and skirts sell like, well, samosas.

Over on Walnut Street, Urban Outfitters hangs saris from the ceiling, to be worn sarong style or used as a tapestry. (Maybe I'll raid my mother's closet full of heavy silk beauties!) Mehndi, the intricate henna designs worn mostly by new brides in India, is a funky temporary tattoo stateside, with transfers sold at hip stores. Even that American staple, the blue jean, has knelt at the Indian altar, trimming its cuffs in gold brocade reminiscent of sari borders.

Linley Stroud, 15, and Alex Kinzig, 14, shopped recently at Urban Outfitters for the latest fashions, many of them inspired by sari prints and the colors of Indian spices, such as saffron and turmeric. The Shipley School sophomores who live on the Main Line both wore toe rings.

I hid away my plain silver toe ring almost immediately after my traditional Hindu wedding. It was entirely too old-fashioned and un-American for me.

But neither Linley nor Alex even knew about the adornment's place in Indian marriage rituals. "I just thought it was cool," said Linley, whose ring has the unorthodox design of a buckle on it. "I

wear it all the time."

For me, the popularity of Indian stuff is more complicated than cool can encompass. Whether yoga or mehndi, each comes with a long tradition and sometimes with the baggage of expectation.

When my mother came to America, she eventually discarded saris, toe rings and bindis, symbolically liberating herself from the traditional roles expected of an Indian woman - and, truth be told, sidestepping the stares.

Now, we have what writer Shekhar Deshpande calls "the packaging of India" - something the Indian immigrant views with ambivalence. He takes offense at pop stars' wearing mehndi. "In some ways, those symbols are quite sacred. They mean something to us," said the writer for Little India magazine who also directs the communications program at Beaver College.

"In the '60s, I think there was a genuine fusion," Deshpande said. "Americans in the West had discovered India in a very real way." Transcendental meditation was popularized. The Beatles traveled to India.

"Now," he said, "India is purely a commodity" for bored Americans in search of a safe but still "exotic, awesome" alternative.

But as even Deshpande allowed, we with connections to India shouldn't be so possessive of our culture that we cannot share it with others. And, while it would be nice if the toe-ring-wearing girl knew its significance, I can't help but smile, with a bit of pride, at the very notion of my culture as chic. Maybe I'll even dig out my wedding-day toe ring.

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Macauley's Children

By Subhash Kak

http://www.sulekha.com/cgi-bin/column.cgi?resource=ms_macaulay

Imprinting is the key that explains many of our peculiarities. Imprinted birds and mammals act as if they were human. Goslings, when reared by a person, become imprinted to the caregiver, and they will ignore geese. Imprinted people live in their own world of symbols, and their behavior to an outsider would appear strange.

Imprinting occurs during a sensitive window of development. Imprinted animals will mate with their own kind but will prefer the animal to which they have been imprinted. In extreme cases they will refuse social contact with their own kind. Imprinting is fixed for life; it occurs also in motor patterns, as in birdsong. Humans are also imprinted--- to ideas and beliefs they are exposed to in their childhood.

All this has been known for a long time. Herodotus tells us of how hostage children raised in court became loyal to their captors. In the US, Canada, Australia, the children of the natives were forcibly taken from their parents and put in foster homes for this reason.

The Ottoman Empire built a bizarre but effective system based on this idea. It created the institution of the *Kapi Kullari* ("Slave" or "Ruling Institution"), whose members were legally slaves of the sultan: they were born Christians but were converted to Islam primarily through the practice of *devsirme*, where able-bodied young children were recruited as child-tribute and immersed in Islamic culture.

The *kullars* were forbidden to contract legal marriage, to have acknowledged children, and to own private property. They served solely at the pleasure of the sultan, at whose will they were promoted and executed. The slave status divested the *kullars* of any personality outside the service of the master.

The *kullars* as Janissaries were the best regiments of the Ottoman army; they also served in the palace jobs and as provincial governors. The Grand Vizier was invariably a *kullar*. They constituted a superlative bureaucracy: they were devoted to their duties, were completely loyal and since they were isolated from the general population, they were fair. Their non-hereditary status prevented the formation of a ruling elite that might threaten the sultan.

With time, the *kullars* began seeking reforms in their inhumane system. By the end of the Empire, they had won the right to matrimony. But as their circumstances changed they became venal; what was their strength as an isolated community now became a license to do good only for themselves.

If the *kullars* constituted the backbone of the Ottoman Empire, an institution, similar in spirit but somewhat different in form (but more subtle and resilient), was formed to safeguard the British Empire in India. This was the institution of the *brown sahib*, the colonial apologist, formed under the directive of the famous Minute of Macaulay (1835) who wished to create "a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." These Indian *kullars* may be properly called *Macaulay's children*.

The central idea in the imprinting of the Indian *kullars* was Macaulay's assertion that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India." The British, following Macaulay's ideas, dismantled the traditional *pathshala* system of village education, which had provided universal literary to the people. William Adam, a Scottish missionary in Bengal and Bihar during 1835-7, estimated that there were 100,000 *pathshalas* which were popular with all classes of people, "irrespective of their religion, caste, or social status," and the "curriculum was designed towards meeting the practical demands of rural society."

The village school had great room for improvement but it was very effective and was one of the institutions of local power. When it was superseded by the new system, controlled by the British bureaucracy using an alien language whose benefit ordinary people could not see, children of the poorer classes simply pulled out. This led to the illiteratization of the great masses of the Indian population.

The Macaulayite bureaucracy worked against other traditional knowledge also. For example, it targeted the millennia-old system of water tanks, which had been serviced by village councils. In its place was instituted a system of canal irrigation. This was done even where it was unsuitable, and the local councils were disbanded. Soon, the tanks fell into disuse and the water table dropped; this had disastrous effects for agriculture.

In the colonial state, the idea of profit was replaced by that of service of the British empire. The new system of education was instrumental for the socialization of this view. The idea of the other-worldly Indian was promoted.

In 1947, there was hope that India would create a progressive nation-state, but Macaulay's children quietly seized power. Taught to hate India's past and lacking a defining center, they took the fashions of the day--such as Socialism and Marxism--, and elevated these to their religious ideology. The terms Socialism and Secularism--but with a perverted meaning--were even written into the Indian Constitution during the Emergency of the mid-1970s.

In awe of the British and insecure of their positions, those of the Macaulay children who went into governance were good administrators. But as the system of checks and balances eroded after independence, they lost their reputation for incorruptibility.

Blind adherence to an ideology can stunt intellectual and emotional growth. Such people are forever seeking approval from those whom they idolize, and they are unable to grasp the incongruity of their behavior. Emotionally stunted people are like imprinted children, who can be very cruel. (The Khmer Rouge massacres of Cambodia, amongst the most horrific of the past century, were carried out principally by teenagers imprinted to one brand of Marxism.) Adults, with the minds of children, also brook no opposition, although their ways may not be as drastic.

The Macaulayite establishment in India is especially intolerant: it also knows a few tricks of Stalin. It silences its opponents using censorship and a system of patronage. But recently, independent minded American-style Internet magazines have provided a means to side-step this censorship.

Take Arun Shourie's experience: Although India's most famous and recognized journalist and author, winner of the Magasaysay award, he was black-listed by mainstream publishers and the media as soon he turned his attention to subjects considered taboo by the establishment. During the last ten years he has been compelled to self-publish his books and newspapers have banned him. But thanks to his Internet column he remained hugely popular until he joined the Vajpayee administration as a minister and stopped writing.

Having been black-listed once, his books are still not reviewed, and his speeches as a minister are rarely reported unless his words can be twisted to paint him as a monster. He is like a non-person of the apartheid South Africa. The favorite abusive label to pin on the opponent is to call him "communalist" or "fascist", and Shourie has carried these labels frequently.

As another example consider Mark Tully, the distinguished British journalist and author, who was for a long time the bureau chief of BBC in Delhi. Just because one of his books was perceived as somewhat critical of the Macaulayites, he was called names and declared a sell-out. His books have also stopped receiving notices.

This is quite unlike the rivalry between the liberals and the conservatives in the West, where the most partisan writers concede that their opponents have the right to be heard through the print and the TV media.

Some have suggested that the current turmoil in India is just a struggle between the traditional and modern approaches to governance. Nothing could be further from the truth. The opponents of the Macaulayites and Marxists do not wish for a religious state. They want to build a modern society somewhat like that of the United States: forward-looking but yet connected to its culture.

Reading the reportage of the culture wars of India by Western journalists in a hurry, one gets the feeling that the only sane people in India are these Macaulay's children. The reformers are labeled nationalists, swamis, traditionalists, or worse. These journalists do not understand the real nature of the struggle.

It is funny. The West proclaimed a certain imagined view on India, and now its pupils insist this is the real thing, even though there is evidence to the contrary for everyone to see. Could there be a better case of the tail wagging the dog?

Resources: For those who wish to take part in meaningful debate on the nature of the Indian civilization, consider joining the IndianCivilization egroup. If you are interested in changing India's portrayal in the media and in textbooks, participate in the programs of ECIT and the discussions of the IndicTraditions egroup

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articles on hinduism

A Distant Looking Glass

By Subhash Kak ~ March 10, 2000

http://www.sulekha.com/cgi-bin/column.cgi?resource=ms_glass

Indian ideas have prospered greatly in the West. Consider yoga, meditation, the notion that reality transcends the divides of body and mind. Indian ideas were the foundation of the Transcendentalist movement of Emerson and Thoreau that has played a great role in shaping the American world-view. Indian immigrants have not matched the fervor of the Westerners for these ideas. Going through a period of adjustment and consolidation, their efforts have focused on the building of temples and establishing dance and music schools.

But even these efforts can lead to deeper meaning, if we ask the right questions. Speaking just of temples, why do temples have a characteristic look? Can we build temples that are functionally modern, and still not lose touch with our tradition? What role should a temple have in the life of the community?

The answer can be gleaned by peering into a looking glass -- distant in time and space -- that best embodies, in brick and stone, the meaning and role of a temple. I am speaking of the great Vishnu temple of

Angkor Wat in Kampuchea (Cambodia), one of most impressive and enduring architectural monuments of the world. The plan of this incomparable temple reveals to us many secrets that were lost to India for centuries. These are secrets about the nature of temple design and, ultimately, about the fundamental bases of Indian culture.

Together with my friends, the historian of astronomy Graham Millar of Halifax, Canada, and Lokesh Chandra, India's foremost scholar of Asia, I have investigated the architecture of this temple during the past few years and discovered amazing continuity with Vedic knowledge. But this is not the appropriate place to speak about the technical details of this surprising continuity, so let me give you a broad outline of what we know about this temple.

The Angkor Vishnu temple was built by the Khmer Emperor Suryavarman II, who reigned during AD 1113-50. One of the many temples built from AD 879 - 1191, it arose when the Khmer civilization was at the height of its power. Although Vishnu is its main deity, the temple, through its sculpture, pays homage to all the Vedic gods and goddesses, including Shiva.

Apart from its other uses as a place for ritual, dance and drama, study and scholarship -- it had many libraries -- , the temple served as a practical observatory where the rising sun was aligned on the equinox and solstice days with the western entrance of the temple. The temple architecture reflects calendric and cosmological time cycles.

The most impressive aspect of the design of this temple is that the representation of the universe -- which is what a temple is supposed to be -- occurs in several layers in a recursive fashion, mirroring the Vedic idea that the microcosm symbolizes the macrocosm at many levels of expression. This is done not only in the domain of numbers and directions, but also using appropriate mythological themes, and historical incidents. The mythological scenes skillfully use the oppositions and complementarities between gods, goddesses, asuras, and humans defined over ordinary and sacred time and space.

The temple complex is vast: it is a bit less that a square mile in size. At the heart of the temple are three rising, concentric galleries. Bordering these is further space, and a rectangular moat. About 40 m in from the moat is a laterite wall, 4.5 m high, with large single entrances from the east, north, and south, and five entrances on the west.

The dimensions of the temple reflect various astronomical numbers. For example, the west-east axis represents the periods of the yugas. In the central tower, the topmost elevation has external axial dimensions of 189.00 cubit east-west, and 176.37 cubit north-south, with the sum of 365.37. This division of the almost exact length of the solar year into unequal halves remained a mystery for some time until it was found to be based on the Vedic numbers for the asymmetric motion of the sun.

The Khmer kings of Kampuchea (Cambodia) trace their ancestry to the legendary Indian Kaundinya and to Soma, a Khmer princess. At first there were several warring kings. The state was unified by King Jayavarman II, who in 802, in a ceremony near Angkor, declared himself a ``universal ruler'' (*chakravartin*).

The kings of the Khmer empire ruled over a domain that, at its broadest, reached from what is now southern Vietnam to Yunan, China and from Vietnam westward to the Bay of Bengal. The structures one sees at Angkor today, more than 100 temples in all, are the surviving religious remains of a grand social and administrative metropolis whose other buildings -- palaces, public buildings, and houses -- were all built of wood and are long since decayed and gone. As in most parts of India where wood was plentiful, only the gods had the right to live in houses of stone or brick; the sovereigns and the common folk lived in pavilions and houses of wood.

Over the half-millenia of Khmer rule, the city of Angkor became a great pilgrimage destination because of the notion of Devaraja, that was a coronation icon. Jayavarman II (802-850) was the first to use this royal icon.

The increasingly larger temples built by the Khmer kings continued to function as the locus of the devotion to the Devaraja, and were at the same time earthly and symbolic representations of mythical Mt. Meru, the cosmological home of the Hindu gods and the axis of the world-system. The symbol of the king's divine authority was the sign (*linga*) of Shiva within the temple's inner sanctuary, which represented both the axes of the physical and the psychological worlds. The worship of Shiva and Vishnu separately, and together as Harihara, had been popular for considerable time in southeast Asia; Jayavarman's chief innovation was to use ancient Vedic *mahabhisheka* to define the symbol of government.

Angkor Wat is the supreme masterpiece of Khmer art. The descriptions of the temple fall far short of communicating the great size, the perfect proportions, and the astoundingly beautiful sculpture

that everywhere presents itself to the viewer. Its architecture is majestic and its representation of form and movement from Indian mythology has astonishing grace and power. The inner galleries of the temple have depiction of the battle of Kurukshetra, procession of King Suryavarman and his ministers, scenes from heavens and hells, churning of the sea of milk, the battle of Vishnu and the asuras, victory of Krishna over Bana, battle of the devas and asuras, Ravana shaking Kailasa with Shiva and Parvati atop, and the battle of Lanka between Rama and Ravana. These and other scences are drawn with great artistic beauty. No wonder, the temple ranks amongst the greatest creations of human imagination.

To understand the astronomical aspects of Angkor Wat it is necessary to begin with the Indian traditions of altar and temple design on which it is based. And since the Angkor Wat ritual hearkened to the Vedic past, that is where we must begin. Vedic astronomy was decoded very recently. The Vedic altars had an astronomical basis related to the reconciliation of the lunar and solar years. The fire altars symbolized the universe and there were three types of altars representing the earth, the atmosphere and the sky.

The altar in its grandest form becomes the temple, now considered a representation of the Cosmic Purusha (Man), on whose body is displayed all creation in its materiality and movement. Paradoxically, the space of the Purusha is in the sanctuary only ten fingers wide, although he pervades the earth.

The temple construction begins with the *Vastupurusha mandala*, which is a yantra, mostly divided into 64 or 81 squares, which are the seats of 45 divinities. Brahma (symbolizing the origin of time) is at the centre, around him 12 squares represent the Adityas (the twelve months of the year), and in the outer circle are 28 squares that represent the *nakshatras* (the constellations of the moon's orbit). The *Vastumandala* with its border is the place where the motions of the sun and the moon and the planets are reconciled. It is the Vastu in which the decrepit, old Chyavana of the Rigveda asks his sons to put him down so that he would become young again. In this story Chyavana is the moon and Sukanya, whom he desires, is the sun. Clearly, astronomy, an understanding of the physical universe, is the very basis of temple design.

The altar or the temple, as a representation of the dynamism of the universe, requires a breaking of the symmetry of the square, which stands for the heavens. In particular, the temples to the goddess are drawn on a rectangular plan. In Shiva or Vishnu temples, which are square, change is represented by a play of diagonal lines. These diagonals are essentially kinetic and are therefore representative of movement and stress. They embody the time-factor in a composition.

Alice Boner, art-historian, writes that the Devi temples ``represent the creative expanding forces, and therefore could not be logically be represented by a square, which is an eminently static form. While the immanent supreme principle is represented by the number ONE, the first stir of creation initiates duality, which is the number TWO, and is the producer of THREE and FOUR and all subsequent numbers upto the infinite." The dynamism is expressed by a doubling of the square to a rectangle or the ratio 1:2, where the *garbhagriha*, the sanctum sanctorum, is now built in the geometrical centre. For a three-dimensional structure, the basic symmetry-breaking ratio is 1:2:4, which can be continued further to another doubling.

The constructions of the third millennium BC in India appear to be according to the same principles. The dynamic ratio of 1:2:4 is the most commonly encountered size of rooms of houses,

in the overall plan of houses and the construction of large public buildings. This ratio is also reflected in the overall plan of the large walled sector at Mohenjo-Daro called the citadel mound. It is even the most commonly encountered brick size. Structures, dating to 2000 BC, built in the design of yantras, have been unearthed.

As a representation of the macrocosm, change in the temple is described in terms of the motions of the heavenly bodies. But the courses of the sun, the moon and the planets are unequal, so the temple design represents all characteristic time sequences: the day, the month, the year and the wider cycles marked by the recurrence of a complete cycle of eclipses.

But astronomy only fixed the framework for the temple, the details were related to social and spiritual function. The temple was more than an observatory and ritual ground, it was also the drama and dance school, the arts society, yoga academy, library, school and college and publishing house.

Angkor Wat has revealed to us the grammar of the Hindu temple. Given this knowledge, it should be possible to create new forms and designs. The modern temple will facilitate the understanding of old symbols; more importantly, it will have functions that help us fathom the mysteries of our own beings.

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A Lover of Indian Wisdom

By Subhash Kak

http://www.sulekha.com/cgi-bin/column.cgi?resource=ms_indwis

Although the recent success of Indians in the knowledge industries has changed perceptions quite a bit, it is common to consider Indians to be other-worldly folks, stuck in outmoded ways. Likewise, it is often said that Indian traditions offer nothing of value to our times. Indian thought is considered overly mystical, and disciplines such as yoga considered just a means of keeping the body fit.

It is because of these views, internalized by educated Indians over several generations, that Indian universities offer literally nothing on Indian science and knowledge. Just to give an example, consider IIT Delhi, my own old school. It has 14 professors in the department of humanities and social sciences. Of these professors, seven are experts in English, two in philosophy, one in economics, one in sociology, and two in psychology. There is no expert in Indian languages, art, design, history, or Indian science. There is no Sanskrit, or Tamil, or Hindi. The colonized minds of modern Indians reject things Indian much more stridently than was done by the English.

Actually the negative attitudes about Indian traditions are not justified and these ideas are not only of relevance to modern thought but they may have already shaped it to a remarkable degree. To make this point let me talk of a savant who benefited from Indian ideas and transformed the world.

I have in mind the Austrian physicist Erwin Schrodinger, who was arguably one of the two greatest scientists of the 20th century. If Albert Einstein is celebrated for his creation of the theory of relativity, Erwin Schrodinger is equally famous for his creation of quantum mechanics, the deepest theory at the basis of outer reality. Quantum mechanics went so far beyond the already radical framework of relativity that Einstein refused to accept it to his last day.

It is a fact that the great European scientists have searched for truth by first abandoning the narrow theologies of the religion into which they were born. But for Schrodinger Indic ideas provided the very foundation for his uncompromising search for meaning.

It is not generally known that before he created quantum mechanics he expressed his intention to give form to central ideas of Vedanta which, therefore, has had a role in the birth of quantum mechanics. In 1925, before his revolutionary theory was complete, Erwin Schrodinger wrote:

> This life of yours which you are living is not merely a piece of this entire existence, but in a certain sense the "whole"; only this whole is not so constituted that it can be surveyed in one single glance. This, as we know, is what the Brahmins express in that sacred, mystic

> formula which is yet really so simple and so clear: tat tvam asi, this is you. Or, again, in such words as "I am in the east and the west, I am above and below, I am this entire world."

Schrodinger's influential What is Life? (1944) also used Vedic ideas. The book became instantly famous although it was criticized by some for its emphasis on Indian ideas. Francis Crick, the co-discoverer of the DNA code, credited this book for key insights that led him to his revolutionary discovery. According to his biographer Walter Moore, there is a clear continuity between Schrodinger's understanding of Vedanta and his research:

> The unity and continuity of Vedanta are reflected in the unity and continuity of wave mechanics. In 1925, the world view of physics was a model of a great machine composed of separable interacting material particles. During the next few years, Schrodinger and Heisenberg and their followers created a universe based on superimposed inseparable waves of probability amplitudes. This new view would be entirely consistent with the Vedantic concept of All in One.

Schrodinger was born on August 12, 1887, so we celebrate the 113th anniversary of his birth. He became a Vedantist, a Hindu, as a result of his studies in his search for truth. Schrodinger kept a copy of the Hindu scriptures at his bedside. He read books on Vedas, yoga, and Sankhya philosophy and he reworked them into his own words, and ultimately came to believe them. The Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita were his favourite scriptures.

According to his biographer Moore, "His system -- or that of the Upanishads -- is delightful and consistent: the self and the world are one and they are all. He rejected traditional western religious beliefs (Jewish, Christian, and Islamic) not on the basis of any reasoned argument, nor even with an expression of emotional antipathy, for he loved to use religious expressions and metaphors, but simply by saying that they are naive."

Schrodinger was a professor at several universities in Europe. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1933. During the Hitler era he was dismissed from his position for his opposition to the Nazi ideas and he fled to England. For some years he was in Ireland, but after the conclusion of the World War II he returned to Vienna where he died in 1961.

Quantum mechanics goes beyond ordinary logic. According to it reality is a superposition of all possibilities which restates Vedic ideas. It is quantum mechanics which explains the mysteries of chemical reactions and of life. In recent years, it has been suggested that the secrets of consciousness have a quantum basis.

In a famous essay on determinism and free will, he expressed very clearly the sense that consciousness is a unity, arguing that this "insight is not new... From the early great Upanishads the recognition Atman = Brahman (the personal self equals the omnipresent, all-comprehending eternal self) was in Indian thought considered, far from being blasphemous, to represent the quintessence of deepest insight into the happenings of the world. The striving of all the scholars of Vedanta was, after having learnt to pronounce with their lips, really to assimilate in their minds this grandest of all thoughts."

He considered the idea of pluralization of consciousness and the notion of many souls to be naive. He considered the notion of plurality to be a result of deception (maya): "the same illusion is produced by a gallery of mirrors, and in the same way Gaurisankar and Mt. Everest turned out to be the same peak seen from different valleys."

Schrodinger's ideas continue to be fundamental in a variety of new fields. The wonders of modern science, such as electronics, biology, chemistry, wouldn't have been possible without the insights of quantum theory. The possibilities inherent in quantum theory have not all been realized. Schrodinger remains one of the most discussed figures in modern scientific thought. His ideas will continue to inspire science.

Schrodinger was a very complex person. But he had a sense of humor and paradox. He called his dog Atman. Perhaps he did this to honour Yudhishthira whose own dog, an incarnation of cosmic justice (Dharma), accompanied him on his last march to the Himalayas. More likely, he was calling attention to the unity that pervades the web of life.

It is frustrating to note that the Indian educational system will not let students know of the centrality of Vedantic thought in the works of scientists like Schrodinger or our own Jagadish Chandra Bose. Is it possible that at some future time Indians will have to travel to the West to know about their own heritage?

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Our school books talk about Socrates, Plato and Aristotle but don't mention Yajnavalkya, Panini and Patanjali'
Dr Subhash Kak/Interview
http://www.rediff.com/news/1999/nov/18inter.htm

'Our school books talk about Socrates, Plato and Aristotle but don't mention Yajnavalkya, Panini and Patanjali'

Dr **Subhash Kak** *is a professor of electrical and computer engineering at the Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. He is also a renowned authority on ancient Indian science and technology. Originally from Kashmir, Dr Kak has worked at IIT Delhi, Imperial College, Bell Laboratories and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. He has authored ten books and over three hundred journal articles in areas as varied as neural networks, quantum physics, artificial intelligence, and the philosophy and history of science. Dr Kak's websites www.lsu.edu/ee/kak and ftp://www.lsu.edu/pub/kak provide links to some of his articles.*

Rajeev Srinivasan *interviewed him by email in connection with his research into Indian science.*

You are a practising electrical engineer who holds patents in leading-edge areas such as neural networks. Yet, you are also a published poet and writer, as well as a Sanskrit scholar and expert on ancient Indian science. You are a Renaissance man, in other words. How did all this come about?

I was interested in both writing and sciences in school but when I finished I was leaning toward becoming a writer. My mother warned me it was no way to make a living and she packed me off to an engineering college. I am glad for that because before long I discovered that literary and scientific imaginations are not all that different. For sure there is much that is tedious and mechanical in science, but the same is true of literature as well.

My work in ancient science developed when I tried to find an answer to the question of the milieu in which Panini's 2500-year-old grammar, a work of most astonishing subtlety, arose. The more I consulted the standard texts, it became clear that the paradigm in which Indian history of science, and ancient Indian history in general, had been examined was wrong!

What is your background? Is this C P Snow-like conflation of science and the arts something that happens a lot in your family?

My initial research -- at IIT Delhi -- was on information theory. Now information is something that we all deal with, whether we are engineers, physicists, or businessmen; or even if we are artists or poets. We are in the midst of the information age where knowing how to manipulate information is worth money! Basically, I have applied the idea of information to questions in different disciplines.

It was lucky that I grew up in small towns of Jammu and Kashmir; we moved as my father, a veterinarian, was frequently transferred. My father was a scholar, with interests in a wide range of subjects -- from mythology to history to politics. We also met other people with similar encyclopaedic interests. These were professional people who were also connected to traditional wisdom. Perhaps they followed the old Indian dictum that considered one properly educated only if one was trained in the 64

arts, and sciences besides. I had good role models.

Actually, a lot of people in the West also straddle the CP Snow-divide of the science and the humanities. The best scientists are also competent philosophers, well-versed in their Greco-Roman heritage. Many of them even know more of the Indian heritage than most Indians! It is only the India of the past fifty years that has turned its back on its own heritage and our scientists literally know nothing about our intellectual history, excepting the distorted second-hand accounts written by colonial historians and their Indian followers.

You have done a good deal of research into the history of Indian science. But there will be sceptics who ask, what good is all this? It is in the remote past -- and today's Indian science is at best derivative and at worst grossly behind the times. How would you respond?

There are several reasons. First, curiosity; we should know the facts about our history. Second, there is the puzzle that our ancestors made astonishing advances in certain fields -- as in grammar or in consciousness studies -- where we moderns are yet to catch up! Third, for lessons; so that we may know where we went wrong.

You're right that recent Indian science is derivative and worse. It is particularly true of Indian science post-independence. But look at the first five decades of this century; some of the greatest names were those of Indians: S Ramanujan, J C Bose, S N Bose, C V Raman, Meghnad Saha, S Chandrasekhar, and so on. But these were people who were confident, who thought they were as good as any; most importantly, these people were connected to our own knowledge tradition. A study of history will reveal to us why our own scientific renaissance of the first five decades fizzled out in the next five.

And then there is another reason to study ancient Indian science. One of the greatest scientists of the 20th century, Erwin Schrodinger, was directly inspired by Vedanta in his creation of quantum mechanics, a theory at the basis of all our advances in chemistry, biochemistry, electronics, and computers! Is there more in our ancient science that is yet relevant?

How do you separate the mythology from the real science? Indians are famous for not being observers -- it appears our forebears were content to speculate (admittedly it was interesting speculation) rather than do exact measurements and record them.

We must look at ancient science with a critical mind and be sure to separate hard science from speculation and mythology. But it is a modern myth that Indians did not make exact measurements. This myth has been repeated so often we have started believing in it. In the field of astronomy, it was the Frenchman Roger Billard who showed this belief was totally wrong! We were excellent experimentalists in medicine, chemistry, metallurgy, agriculture, and so on. Before the Enlightenment that took place in Europe in the 17th century, we were still ahead in most intellectual fields. The Enlightenment came as a by-product of the turmoil set in motion by unprecedented wealth that was appropriated from America and by a rejection of Church doctrine. India of that period did not have favourable economic or political conditions for a similar flowering.

In your research, where have you been most amazed? Where, in other words, were the serendipitous and wholly unexpected 'Eureka' experiences?

My discovery that the organization of the Rigveda was according to an astronomical plan was a truly 'Eureka' experience. It came upon me rather suddenly, but once everything fell into place it was clear that I had been led to it by the many direct and indirect references in the Vedic texts. The 'Eureka' of it was the realization that I had the key to unlock the ancient mystery of the Veda. Ritual and mythology made sense! And it opened up a hidden chapter of Indian science with the greatest implications for our understanding of India and the rest of the ancient world.

You have done a fair amount of work on the Indus-Sarasvati Civilization and on the conjecture that the Sarasvati did in fact exist, and that what has been known as the Indus Valley Civilization in fact was on the banks of the Sarasvati River. Can you elaborate on this? What new evidence has come to the fore?



Archaeological digs have confirmed that the Sarasvati river flowed down to the sea, parallel to the Sindh (Indus), before a major earthquake in about 1900 BCE robbed it of its two tributaries, the Satluj and the Yamuna, which were captured by the Sindh and the Ganga rivers. Since this river is praised as the greatest river of the Rigvedic times, it is clear that the Rigveda predates 1900 BCE in the least.

There are other scholars who say that 1900 BCE only marks the final drying up of the Sarasvati, and it had ceased to flow to the sea around 3000 BCE. If that were to be the case, the traditional chronology which dates the end of the Rigvedic period to about 3000 BCE is correct.

I have read of a number of new sites being excavated, including Lothal, Kalibangan, Dholavira, Balu, Banavali, Bhagwanpura, Manda, Amri, Kunal.... There is even some speculation that Lothal -- with its port and dry dock for large ocean-going ships -- was the site of the legendary Dwaraka that was submerged after an underwater earthquake and resulting tidal wave.

Yes, an enormous amount of new information is coming in from the new sites. We must not forget Mehrgarh which goes back to about 8000 BCE which was excavated in the late 70s. The most exciting thing is that major sites of Ganweriwala and Rakhigarhi are yet to be excavated. Could Lothal be the Dwaraka of the Mahabharata? It is plausible, but we don't know for sure yet.

You have also argued against the Aryan Invasion Theory. What specific evidence has come to light recently?

There is absolutely no evidence of a break in Indic tradition, going back 10,000 years. No break in ceramic styles, artistic expression, skeletal remains, and so on. Now if you compare that with regions that have suffered invasion, such as the Americas, you will see a clear break in all these things. This apart, all the recent iconographic finds confirm that key elements of what is generally called Classical Hinduism were present in the Indus-Sarasvati civilization before 2500 BCE. Examples are: ritual bathing, vermilion, bangles, conch-shells in religious ritual, a buffalo-killing goddess, abstract symbolism, the centrality of cattle in the economy.

You have argued that the Aryan-Dravidian divide simply doesn't exist, and that the superficial differences between North and South India are overlaid on a unified cultural foundation.

The concept of an Aryan-Dravidian divide is a by-product of the racist discourse of the 19th century. It was this racism that postulated a single language from which all modern languages were derived. Linguists now acknowledge that there must have existed very many language families in the past and what has survived represents complex interactions between different peoples and languages, many of which have left no trace. It is also being recognized that while by one reckoning Sanskrit, Greek and Latin belong to a family; by another, Sanskrit and Tamil and Telugu belong to another. Linguists are now talking of the concept of a linguistic area and the whole of India is one such area.

Culturally, India shows great unity as far back as we can go. If the art historian David Napier is right about Greece having received a major artistic impulse from South India in the 2nd millennium BCE, we find this unity to be at least 4000 years old. Remember also that Tamilian kings in South India and Sri Lanka called themselves Aryan. The word Aryan in Sanskrit simply means "cultured". There is a famous slogan in Sanskrit saying "Make the whole world Aryan". The term "Aryan" has nothing to do with race or language.

One of the things you have mentioned is the Gundestrup Cauldron (*Scientific American, March 1992*), something that was unearthed in a peat bog in Denmark. Apparently it shows strong evidence -- including goddess-images similar to Lakshmi and Hariti and a god-image similar to Vishnu -- of cross-cultural connections between Indic civilizations and those of far northern

Europe. You have also noted the apparent connections between Celtic/Druidic pre-Christian cultures of Europe and Hindu practices. Is this merely circumstantial evidence or does it prove conclusively that there was a migration of peoples westward from India, rather than eastwards into India (the Aryan Invasion Theory)?

There is whole host of evidence that proves that Indian ideas, if not people (that is apart from the Gypsies), travelled from India to Europe. Indic people were apparently present in Palestine, Turkey, Babylon in the 2nd millennium BCE. The names of the ruling dynasties of these places and some Sanskritic inscriptions tell us this. The father of the beautiful Nefertiti, Queen of Egypt, was a king of the Near East named Tusharatha or Dasharatha.

The Puranas also say an Indian tribe called the Druhyus emigrated West. Whether they emigrated all the way to Europe, we cannot say. What is likely to have happened is that an Indic element became the political and religious aristocracy in many countries, all the way up to Europe. This may also explain the parallels between Indian and European mythology.

What are the parallels between Indian and European mythology?

We have these parallels at many levels: in names and in the grammar of the myths. Let's begin with names. There are two Rigvedic skygods, Varuna and Dyaus; the corresponding Greek skygods are Ouranos and Zeus. Similar to Agni and Bhaga we have the Slavic Ogun and Bogu. For Aryaman and Indra we have the Celtic Eremon and Andrasta; Ribhu and Ushas are the Greek Orpheus and Eos. The list goes on and on, and the most interesting thing is that the Vedic list is comprehensive and we see parts of it remembered in different parts of Europe suggesting that the Vedic is the original.

The Vedic gods belong to three categories: the terrestrial, the atmospheric, and the celestial, if we see them superficially, as the Indologists of the 19th century saw them. In reality, they represent categories in the spiritual firmament: they are shadows of the One. The Europeans also saw their mythology in similar terms which is why when the Greeks came to India they declared that Shiva and Krishna were like their own Dionysius and Herakles.

There are still deeper connections, and these have been examined by the scholar Georges Dumézil in a series of fascinating books. In Rome, the raj-brahmin dichotomy of India was paralleled by the rex-flamen division. The injunctions to the flamen -- the keeper of the flame -- are very similar to those to the brahmin. The gandharvas in India had a shadowy role related to music and fecundity; in Rome this was assigned to centaurs. Dumézil found enough parallels to fill five or six books. Joseph Campbell also wrote about these connections in his books, as have many others.

After the Old Religion of Europe was extinguished, Indian myths continued to influence Europe. From the lives of Krishna and Buddha a nascent Christianity adopted the stories of miraculous conception and birth, the star over the birthplace, the twelve disciples, and the various miracles. Parables such as that of the pious disciple whose faith makes it possible to walk on water, or the story where the master feeds his numerous disciples with a single cake or bread were borrowed. Medieval Christianity took some Indian Jataka tales and transformed them into accounts of Christian saints. The most famous of such instances is how a Buddha legend from the Lalitavistara became the story of Barlaam and Josaphat!

If there were was no Aryan Invasion, then what exactly happened to the Indus-Sarasvati civilization? A major civilization that spread some thousands of square miles and was apparently quite sophisticated cannot simply vanish.



It never vanished. There was a shift of population after the economy around the Sarasvati river collapsed due to the drying up of the river. People moved to the east and to the northwest and to the south. There was no break in the cultural tradition. The same ceramic styles continued. Only the level of prosperity went down. The Vedic books also speak of a period when the rishis went to the forests, the age of the Aranyakas. The Puranic books speak of a catastrophe in 1924 BCE.



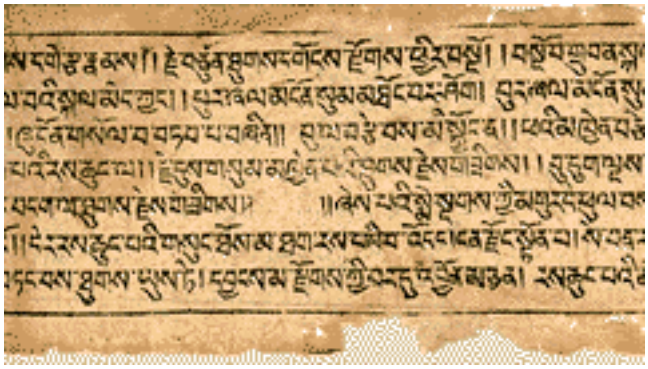
Your work in archaeo-astronomy suggests unambiguously that the Max Mueller chronology of the Vedas must be rejected and that the Rig Veda must be dated not to ca. 1500 BCE, but to ca. 3000 BCE. What is the impact of this?

Well if not 3000 BCE, certainly prior to 2000 BCE. Max Mueller was absolutely wrong. What is the impact of the new dates? It changes the history of ancient India and that of the rest of the ancient world. It gives a centrality to India in world history.

Your recent book with Georg Feuerstein and David Frawley, *In Search of the Cradle of Civilization* (Quest Books, Indian edition to be published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi), suggests that in fact India was the site of the very first civilization, not Sumer in Iraq. If this is true, then India has not only the oldest continuous and surviving civilization, but in fact it is the birthplace of civilization. Could you elaborate on this?

Look, India has had cultural continuity for at least 10,000 years. Before that we had a rock-art tradition which, according to some estimates, goes back to 40,000 BCE. Not only are we one of the most ancient civilizations, we have found in India the record of the earliest astronomy, geometry, mathematics, and medicine. Artistic, philosophical and religious impulses, central to the history of mankind, arose first in India.

You have done considerable research on the structure of the fire altars in Scriptural ritual (*The Astronomical Code of the Rigveda*, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi), and you have demonstrated that there was a very formal and mathematical basis to the construction of these. Could you explain?



Vedic Indians were scientific. They believed in laws of nature. They represented their astronomy in terms of the altar constructions. One problem they considered was that of the synchronization of the lunar and the solar years: the lunar year is about 11 days shorter than the solar year and if we add a round number of days every few years to make up for the discrepancy, we find we cannot do it elegantly unless we have a correction cycle of 95 years or its multiples. This 95-year cycle is described in the earliest Vedic prose books.

The altars were to be built to slightly larger dimensions each year of the cycle to represent the corrections. There were other symbolic constructions. Like building a square altar (representing the sky) with the same area as a circular altar (representing the earth), which is the problem of squaring the circle. This led to the discovery of the earliest geometry. They were aware that the sun and the moon were at 108 times their own diameters from the earth.

These fire altars are at this time obsolete, right? Nobody uses them any more, or is that not so? The only time I have heard of them before reading your work was when I read of an impoverished Nambudiri (Kerala brahmin) family whose *illam* or house was being sold, and they had fire altars in the shape of a falcon, and the old head of the household said this 5,000-year-old tradition was dying because they couldn't afford the rituals any more.

It is a great pity that we are letting our cultural and civilizational treasures die right before our eyes. We must do whatever we can to preserve and celebrate this heritage.

You have mentioned a connection, apparently evident in the Vedas, between internal and external things -- for instance between the rhythms in the human body and astronomical cycles. Could you elaborate?

A central Vedic belief was that there are connections between the outer and the inner. The rishis declared that it was due to these connections that we are enabled to know the world. One dramatic aspect of these connections are the biological cycles which run the same periods as various astronomical cycles. For example, the Purusha Hymn of the Rigveda says that the mind is born of the moon. Just recently, by research on volunteers, who stayed in underground caves for months without any watches or other cues about time, it was found that the natural cycle for the mind is 24 hours and 50 minutes. The period of the moon is also 24 hours and 50 minutes. Our clock is reset every day by daylight!

The connections between the outer and the inner were also represented by other symbols. The 108 sun diameters from the earth of the sun were paralleled by the 108 beads of the rosary for a symbolic spiritual journey from the normal state to one of illumination.

I have read the book edited by you and Dr TRN Rao (*Computing Science in Ancient India*, University of Southwestern Louisiana Press) on some surprising mathematics: pi to many decimal places, Sayana's accurate calculation of the speed of light, hashing algorithms, the binary number system of Sanskrit meters -- are these mere coincidences or is there conclusive evidence of advanced mathematics?

The binary number system, hashing, various codes, mathematical logic (Navya Nyaya), or a formal framework that is equivalent to programming all arose in ancient India. This is all well known and it is acknowledged by scholars all over the world. I shouldn't forget to tell you that a most advanced calculus, math and astronomy arose in Kerala several centuries before Newton.

In particular, I am amazed, as a layman, by the evidence that Sayana, circa 1300 CE, who was prime minister at the court of the Vijayanagar Emperor Bukka I, calculated the speed of light to be 2,202 yojanas in half a nimesha, which does come to 186,536 miles per second.

Truly mind-boggling! The speed of light was first measured in the West only in the late 17th century. So how could the Indians have known it? If you are a sceptic, then you will say it is a coincidence that somehow dropped out of the assumptions regarding the solar system. If you are a believer in the powers of the mind, you would say that it is possible to intuit (in terms of categories that you have experienced before) outer knowledge. This latter view is the old Indian knowledge paradigm. If it were generally accepted it would mean an evolution in science much greater than the revolution of modern physics.

It is also well-known that the Vedic or Puranic idea of the age of the universe is some 8 billion years, which is of the order of magnitude of what has been estimated by modern astrophysicists. Is this also a mere coincidence?

Again, either a coincidence, or the rishis were capable of supernormal wisdom. Don't forget that the Indian texts also speak about things that no other civilization thought of until this century. I am speaking of air and space travel, embryo transplantation, multiple births from the same embryo, weapons of mass destruction (all in the Mahabharata), travel through domains where time is slowed, other galaxies and universes, potentials very much like quantum potential (Puranas). If nothing else, we must salute the rishis for the most astonishing and uncanny imagination.

You also suggest that that the modern computer science term for context-free languages, the Backus-Naur Form, should more accurately be called the Panini-Backus Form, since Sanskrit grammarian Panini invented the notion of completely and unambiguously defined grammars (and devised one such for Sanskrit) as early as about 500 BCE.

Oh yes, all this is well established and well known, as also the Indian development of mathematical logic.

How has the reaction been in scholarly circles to some of these discoveries and conjectures of yours, which do turn conventional wisdom on its head? In India, you are aware, some of your views would have you branded as "reactionary", "Hindu fundamentalist", etc.

My work has been received most enthusiastically in scholarly circles both in the West and India. I have written several scores of scholarly articles and reviews and am in the process of writing major essays for leading encyclopaedias. School texts in California and other American states have been rewritten. Likewise, new college texts in the US speak of these new findings. We are talking here of hard scientific facts, they can neither be "fundamentalist" nor "reactionary". But I am aware that some ignorant ideologues in India may actually pin pejorative labels on this work. This only creates opportunities to bring facts to the attention of such people. I am ever hopeful of converting more and more people!

How has your work in the history of science affected your research in computing science?

Surprisingly, it has strengthened my technical work. It has provided me a focus and a perspective. It has also given me the courage to work on fundamental problems.

What do you attribute this to? Is this because it is a matter of self-image? Indians have always been self-effacing, and perhaps not believing in themselves much?

Self-image is a central factor in our development. We eventually become what we want to become. We need faith in ourselves. That is why a cultural focus is so crucial. I think our current self-effacement is a result of the negative stereotyping we have experienced for generations. Our school books talk about Socrates, Plato and Aristotle -- and rightly so -- but they don't mention Yajnavalkya, Panini and Patanjali, which is a grave omission. Our grand boulevards in Delhi and other cities are named after Copernicus, Kepler and Newton, but there are no memorials to Aryabhata, Bhaskara, Madhava and Nilakantha!

Is self-image, then, sufficient reason for us to explore the past?

It could be a sufficient reason for some. For others, it is one of the many impulses that guides them in their personal journeys.

Is there something that your Web readers can do to take some of this research forward? Any references or other suggestions?

There is so much to be done to spread the knowledge of Indian history. For at least 50 years, Indian intellectual life was stifled by a Stalinist attitude. And before that, for two centuries, colonialist historians appropriated Indian past for their own purposes. What they left for us was a mutilated version of our past. We are barely emerging from that hell. We need more people to actively carry forward this research. We also need institutions -- private foundations, perhaps --that ensure that our historiography will remain vital, critical and devoted to truth.

Any messages from you for your diasporic readers?

Pay attention to Indian and world history, there is much to be learned from the past. Also go to the springwells of Indian tradition, you'll find great treasure. Indian ideas provided central themes to the American transcendentalists in the early 19th century which led to American culture as we know it. I believe even more vital Indian ideas will transform world culture in the coming decades, and if you choose to be the interpreters of these ideas to the modern world you would have participated in the most wondrous drama of our times!

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THE WISHING TREE: The Presence and Promise of Hinduism

by Professor Subhash Kak

http://www.caribbeanhindu.com/Hinduconf200_launch.htm

In the imagination of the West, India is the land of magic and mystery, wisdom and religiosity, tradition and ritual. India is exotic; its arts, literature, music, cuisine appear different.

But, at the same time, there are aspects to India that speak straight to the heart of the West.

This shouldn't surprise us because India and the West have had a shared prehistory. Sanskrit is the oldest remembered language of Asia and Europe. That the Indians and the Europeans shared the same homeland in remote antiquity has been the grist of ceaseless speculation. The Indians are still connected to their past, so is India a doorway to discover the long-forgotten past of Europe and America? The art historian and philosopher Heinrich Zimmer, put it thus: ``We of the Occident are about to arrive at a crossroads that were reached by the thinkers of India some seven hundred years before Christ. That is the real reason why we become both vexed and stimulated, uneasy yet interested, when confronted with the concepts and images of Oriental wisdom."

Columbus set out to find a new seaway to India and he ended up discovering America. Since then America and India have met in the realm of the spirit. In the 19th century, the transcendentalists, inspired by India, gave a characteristic orientation to America's self-definition. In our own century, Mohandas Gandhi's ideas influenced the civil rights movement. Most recently, Hindu wisdom about yoga, mind-body connection, and self-knowledge has swept the West. It appears that we are nearing the time when the quest of Columbus will be taken to its logical conclusion, by understanding the heart of the Indian civilization.

America is a country of great spaces and great appetites--- both material and spiritual. The machines that are the foundation of America's material wealth compel conformity to their rhythms, leading to alienation, carpal tunnel syndrome, and angst about meaning. Americans are the most church-going nation of the world, but they are increasingly becoming aware of the limitations of organized religion and now they seek psychologists and religious masters. Indian spirituality, an unbroken sequence that goes back to hoary antiquity, holds a special fascination for the American. It is a spirituality that is non-sectarian, universal and unconnected to ritual. Addressing the deepest questions of meaning and knowledge, it seems to speak to man's innermost concerns in this age of science.

Indian wisdom has been replenished for each generation by its epics, literature, fables, and aphorisms. India, with its ancient remembered past, is a counterpoint to an America whose history is no more than five hundred years old. Through epics, literature, fables and aphorisms from the sacred and secular texts of India, Indian Wisdom exemplifies the great promise that the universal truths discovered by the sages of India will find resonance in America and the rest of the world.

But in India this tradition has been under relentless attack by the Indologists and Marxists, who have controlled the public discourse and contents of the textbooks. The intention to destroy India's own traditions of knowledge was articulated in Macaulay's famous Minute of 1835 which

led to the establishment of a colonialist system of education that is still in force. Macaulay justified this by saying, ``I am quite ready to take the Oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves.

I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India...It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say, that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England...We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect."

Macaulay's ignorance about India was matched by his arrogance. His ideas were challenged in his own times, but they were adopted because they suited Britain in its creation of a system which would make India dependent not only physically but also intellectually. Indian tradition was now interpreted for Indians by Western scholars who were ill-equipped to understand its complexity.

Their synthesis cast Indian history in a mold that did it disservice. And outside the halls of the ivory towers, the tradition was described as being devoid of any real scientific achiements. The complexity of the social institutions was represented in the ill-fitting categories of hierarchical caste, and this, together with speculative philosophy, were declared to be the hallmarks of Indian civilization.

Those, especially in the cities, who learned about India from these textbooks soon came to hate their past. After independence, the Nehruvian socialists seized control of institutions of education and the process set forth by the British was much accelerated. It is only now, fifty years after political independece, that an objective understanding of the foundations of Indian culture is emerging.

A Bridge to the Future

There is a legend about a magic tree, [kalpataru], that fulfills all wishes. Indian civilization is this tree of riches and wisdom. Kings and emperors sought to conquer India for its material wealth; the campaign of Alexander, the unceasing attacks of the Turks, the voyage of Columbus, the British empire—these all had India as the focus. On the other hand, Indian sages, philosophers and mystics have held out a shining vision that has inspired the world. Even Alexander took Indian yogis back to Greece with him.

Indian thought transformed not only China and Southeast Asia, it may also have provided key impulses to Western thought. We find the Indic people in West Asia in the second millennium BC, in the Kassite kingdom of Babylon and the Mitannis of Israel.The father of the famous Queen Nefertiti of Egypt was the Mitanni king Tushratha (or Dasharatha). The Indic element has been seen in the beginnings of Greek art. It is quite conceivable that the religious traditions of West Asia preserve a remembrance of their Indic past.

The modern mind was shaped after adoption by the West of the twin Indian beliefs of living in harmony with nature and search for a scientific basis to reality. In the past 300 years, these ideas of universality and a quest for knowledge have transformed European and American society. Many of the greatest writers and scientists of the past 100 years have taken inspiration from Indic ideas.

Perhaps the most remarkable intellectual achievement of the twentieth century was quantum theory, which is at the basis of our understanding of chemistry, biology, and physics and, consequently, it is at the basis of the century's astonishing technological advances. One of the two creators of this theory was Erwin Schrodinger (1887-1961). In an autobiographical essay, he explains that his discovery of quantum mechanics was an attempt to give form to central ideas of Vedanta which, in this indirect sense, has played a role in the birth of the subject. In 1925, [before] his revolutionary theory was complete, Erwin Schrodinger wrote:

This life of yours which you are living is not merely apiece of this entire existence, but in a certain sense the whole; only this whole is not so constituted that it can be surveyed in one single glance. This, as we know, is what the Brahmins express in that sacred, mystic formula which is yet really so simple and so clear: [tat tvam asi], this is you.

Or, again, in such words as ``I am in the east and the west, I am above and below, [I am this entire world.]''

Schrodinger's influential [What is Life?] (1944) also used Vedic ideas. The book became instantly famous although it was criticized by some for its emphasis on Indian ideas. Francis Crick, the co-discoverer of the DNA code, credited this book for key insights that led him to his revolutionary discovery.

According to his biographer Walter Moore, there is a clear continuity between **Schrodinger's understanding of Vedanta and his research:**

The unity and continuity of Vedanta are reflected in the unity and continuity of wave mechanics. In 1925, the world view of physics was a model of a great machine composed of separable interacting material particles. During the next few years, Schrodinger and Heisenberg and their followers created a universe based on superimposed inseparable waves of probability amplitudes. This new view would be entirely consistent with the Vedantic concept of All in One.

He became a Vedantist, a Hindu, as a result of his studies in his search for truth. Schrodinger kept a copy of the Hindu scriptures at his bedside. He read books on Vedas, yoga, and Sankhya philosophy and he reworked them into his own words, and ultimately came to believe them. The Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita were his favourite scriptures.

According to his biographer Moore, ``His system---or that of the Upanishads---is delightful and consistent: the self and the world are one and they are all. He rejected traditional western religious beliefs (Jewish, Christian, and Islamic) not on the basis of any reasoned argument, nor even with an expression of emotional antipathy, for he loved to use religious expressions and metaphors, but simply by saying that they are naive."

Schrodinger was a professor at several universities in Europe. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1933. During the Hitler era he was dismissed from his position for his opposition to the Nazi ideas and he fled to England. For some years he was in Ireland, but after the conclusion of the World War II he returned to Vienna where he died in 1961.

Quantum mechanics goes beyond ordinary logic. According to it reality is a superposition of all possibilities which restates Vedic ideas. It is quantum mechanics which explains the mysteries of chemical reactions and of life. In recent years, it has been suggested that the secrets of consciousness have a quantum basis.

In a famous essay on determinism and free will, he expressed very clearly the sense that consciousness is a unity, arguing that this ``insight is not new... From the early great Upanishads the recognition [Atman = Brahman] (the personal self equals the omnipresent, all-comprehending eternal self) was in Indian thought considered, far from being blasphemous, to represent the quintessence of deepest insight into the happenings of the world. The striving of all the scholars of Vedanta was, after having learnt to pronounce with their lips, really to assimilate in their minds this grandest of all thoughts."

He considered the idea of pluralization of consciousness and the notion of many souls to be naive. He considered the notion of plurality to be a result of deception ([maya]):

``the same illusion is produced by a gallery of mirrors, and in the same way Gaurisankar and Mt. Everest turned out to be the same peak seen from different valleys."

Schrodinger's ideas continue to be fundamental in a variety of new fields. The wonders of modern science, such as electronics, biology, chemistry, wouldn't have been possible without the insights of quantum theory. The possibilities inherent in quantum theory have not all been realized. Schrodinger remains one of the most discussed figures in modern scientific thought. His ideas will continue to inspire science.

Schrodinger was a very complex person. But he had a sense of humor and paradox. He called his dog [Atman]. Perhaps he did this to honour Yudhishthira whose own dog, an incarnation of cosmic justice (Dharma), accompanied him on his last march to the Himalayas. More likely, he was calling attention to

the unity that pervades the web of life.

So there are several reasons for us to be interested in India. Some relate to the past to the origins of science and religion, others concern our yearning for knowledge of self and future of mankind. The Indian culture area provides us extensive material, across a very broad time-span, to help us understand some of the the earliest history of ideas. The ancient Indian texts are layered in such a fashion that we can see the gradual development of mathematical, physical, linguistic, and psychological ideas. We find that the ancient Indians were greatly interested in geometry, astronomy, grammar, music and other fields. They were also interested in cognitive science where they were so advanced that their insights may yet be useful to modern science.

The understanding of the chronological framework of the Indian civilization has changed greatly in the last few years due to revolutionary discoveries in archaeology. The archaeological record has been traced in an unbroken tradition to about 8000 BC. The earliest textual source is the Rigveda which is a compilation of very early material. There are astronomical references in this and the other Vedic books which recall events in the third to the fifth millennium BC and earlier. The recent discovery that Sarasvati, the preeminent river of the Rigvedic times, went dry around 1900 BC due to tectonic upheavals implies that the Rig Veda is to be dated prior to this epoch. According to traditional history, the Rig Veda is prior to 3100 BC.

Tbe beginning of Indian writing has been traced to about 3300 BC. The original writing was called Sarasvati and it is this that was given the name the Indus script in the last century, when inscriptions in this writing were unearthed. The later historical script called Brahmi evolved out of this writing. The invention of the symbol for zero appears to have been made around 50 BC to 50 AD.

The earliest Indic art is preserved on rocks in the paleolithic, mesolithic and neolithic stages (40000 BC onwards) and the seals and the sculpture of the Indus-Sarasvati phase which lasted from about 8000 BC to 1900 BC. The beginnings of the rock art have been traced to 40,000 years BP (before present) in the decorated ostrich eggshells from Rajasthan, dated using radiocarbon techniques. Subsequent phases have been determined using evolution of style and other radiocarbon dates. The mesolithic period has been dated as 12000 to 6000 BP. The sites of the rock are found distributed all over the country, although the most impressive sites are to be found in Madhya Pradesh.

The earliest drawings of this tradition are characterized by dynamic action, vitality in form, and an acute insight into abstraction and visual perception. It has been found that there is significant continuity of motif in the rock art and the later Indus-Sarasvati civilization indicating an unbroken link with the paleolithic and the mesolithic cultures of India. A striking aspect of the early rock art is its drawing of tessellations, which show infinite repetition. This repetition may occur for a basic pattern or, more abstractly, the lines extend spatially in a manner so that a basic pattern is repeated in two directions. An understanding of this abstract concept must have been a part of the thought system of the artists. This is in continuity with the central place of the notion of infinite in later Indian thought.

The abstract and the iconic elements in Indian rock art are different from the more naturalistic ancient European cave paintings. There is also difference in the nature of the community and state in the Western and the Indian civilizations in the earliest urban phase. The West has monumental temples, tombs, palaces whereas the society in India appears to have been governed by a sacred order.

One aspect of the Indian literary tradition, which is several thousand years old, is its imagination. The epic Mahabharata mentions embryo transplantation, multiple births from the same fetus, battle with extra-terrestrials who are wearing air-tight suits, and weapons of mass-destruction. The Ramayana mentions air travel. The Bhagavata Purana, a medieval encyclopaedic text, has episodes related to different passage of time for different observers which is very similar to what happens in the theory of relativity. The notion of self in the Upanishads embodies a very subtle understanding of observers and of reality. The Yoga Vasishtha and the Tripura Rahasya present a deep discussion of the nature of consciousness.

In this lecture we will present several new findings about ancient India. But before we do so, we outline

the main periods of Indian archaeology and literature. The archaeological periods are:

1. The Rock Art Period: 40,000 BC onwards to historical times
2. The Indus-Sarasvati Tradition: 8000 BC to 1300 BC
3. Early Harappan: 3300 BC to 2600 BC
4. The mature Harappan period: 2600 BC to 1900 BC
5. Late Harappan: 1900 BC to 1300 BC
6. The Second Urbanization: 900 BC

The Puranic genealogies start with mythical events and the early Saptarshi calendar starts from the epoch of 6676 BC which is taken to be beginning of the genealogies; a later Saptarshi calendar, still in use in different parts of the country, begins from 3076 BC. Other old calendars are Kaliyuga (3102 BC), Vikrama (58 BC), Shaka (78 AD).

The Mahabharata War was the epochal event of ancient India. Later astronomers assigned it to 3137 BC or 2449 BC. Still another tradition assigns it to 1924 BC. The main actors of this War belong to generation number 94 in a list that is supposed to begin in 6676 BC.

The early Indian Sanskrit literature falls in the following main layers:

The Vedic collections: pre-2000 BC by the Sarasvati river argument. Traditionally assigned the period pre-3000 BC. The Brahmanas (prose commentaries on the Vedas): 1900 - 1600BC, because they speak of the drying up of Sarasvati river as a recent happening. The Aranyakas (forest books): 1500 - 1200 BC, this period followed the Brahmanas.

The Upanishads (wisdom books): 1900 - 1000 BC appears to be the period of the earliest Upanishads. The Bhagavadgita appears to belong to the the end of this period. The Sutras (aphoristic books): These were written in the centuries before and after the Buddha. The Puranas. The original Purana was coterminous with the Vedas, but this later gave rise to several texts. The Puranas are encyclopaedias of Vedic mythology and spirituality.

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The original Mahabharata dates to the Mahabharata War. A series of enlargements made it attain its size of 100,000 verses about two thousand years ago. The Ramayana is epic verse that deals with events earlier than those of the Mahabharata.

There was another problem related to the finding that Indian and European languages belonged to the same family. Indians and Europeans must have, at some remote time in the past, lived in the same homeland. Since India was poor and ruled by the British, it was easy to hypothesize that the original European blood of the ancient Indians was weakened by admixture with the dark races. Modern science has debunked this theory connecting race and language but this was the standard view in the 19th century. In their extreme form, these ideas led to the racism of Hitler. A more subtle telling of the same racist ideas continues in many books on India.

The myth that Indian astronomy is derived from those of the Mesopotamians and the Greeks arose from similar racist thinking. Indian geometry texts were dated to a period after Euclid solely on the grounds of assumed priority of Greek geometry.

A similar logic was applied in astronomy and the theory that Indians knew very little astronomy was considered corroborated by a passage in an ancient text called the Panchavinsha Brahmana, The Knowledge-Book of Twenty-five Chapters.'' It says, The world of heaven is as far removed from this world as a thousand gava stacked one above the other.'' What does the word gava, which is the plural of gauh, mean? If we consult Nirukta, the earliest book of etymology from India, we find two primary meanings of the word gauh in the following order:

1. The planet earth

2. The animal, cow.

Now guess which of the two meanings was used by the famed Dutch translator of this book: The cow! His translation reads:

The world of heaven is as far removed from this (earthly) world as a thousand cows standing the one above the other.

How do we know that this translation is wrong? Weren't the ancients primitive and even though the statement that the sky is one thousand cow-heights sounds ludicrous to us, it may very well have been believed then. We can be sure of our meaning by seeking independent evidence from other texts. These other texts tell us that the sun (taken to be halfway to the sky) is about 500 earth-diameters from the earth, so the second meaning, the commonsensical meaning, is the right one. The Greeks and the Babylonians also took the sun to be at this same distance. Nevertheless, the textbooks base their histories on the first

meaning!

If one looks at the order in which the meaning of the term gauh is given, it reveals to us that the sacredness of the cow may just have symbolized the sanctity of the planet earth? The Greeks also visualized the earth as Gaia, the cow!

VI MYSTERY OR CHANCE

Imagine that archaeologists, digging a thousand year old virgin site in Antarctica, come across an inscription deep underground that shows the sun, and next to it the numbers 186,000 miles per

second, the speed of light. What would the world do? More likely than not, this find will not be accepted by scholars. A fraud, they would say, committed for cheap fame. The reputation of the archaeologists will be ruined.

Only lunatics will support them, claiming that this proves that aliens have visited the earth from time to time. The high priests of the academy will say that even if the find was genuine it proves nothing; at best it is a coincidence. But what an astonishing coincidence! Just the right number out of an infinity of different numbers!

The speed of light was first determined in 1675 by Roemer who looked at the difference in the times that light from Io, one of the moons of Jupiter, takes to reach earth based on whether it is on the near side of Jupiter or the far side. Until then light was taken to travel with infinite velocity. Even Newton assumed so.

The reason why we are talking about the absurd scenario of the archaeologists in Antarctica is because we are confronted with a situation that is quite similar!

I am an archaeologist of texts. I read old texts from the point of view of history of science. One such book is the celebrated commentary on the Rigveda by Sayana (c. 1315-1387), a minister in the court of King Bukka I of the Vijayanagar Empire in South India.

Of a hymn addressed to the sun (RV 1.50), he says that it is "remembered that the sun traverses 2,202 yojanas in half a nimesha. "

This statement could either relate to the speed of the sun or to that of light. The units are well known. For example, the Puranas define 1 nimesha to be equal to 16/75 seconds; 1 yojana is about 9 miles. Substituting in Sayana's statement we get 186,000 miles per second.

Unbelievable, you'd say! It cannot be the speed of light. Maybe it refers to the speed of the sun in its supposed orbit around the earth. But that places the orbit of the sun at a distance of over 2,550 million miles. The correct value is only 93 million miles and until the time of Roemer the distance to the sun used

to be taken to be less than 4 million miles. This interpretation takes us nowhere.

What about the possibility of fraud? Sayana's statement was printed in 1890 in the famous edition of Rigveda edited by Max Muller, the German Sanskritist. He claimed to have used several three or four hundred year old manuscripts of Sayana's commentary, written much before the time of Roemer.

Is it possible that Muller was duped by an Indian correspondent who slipped in the line about the speed? Unlikely, because Sayana's commentary is so well known that an interpolation would have been long discovered. And soon after Muller's Rigveda waspublished, someone would have claimed that it contained this particular secret knowledge. The fact that the speed in the text corresponds to the speed of light was pointed out only recently. Also a copy of Sayana's manuscript, dated 1395, is available.

Further support for the genuineness of the figure in the ancient book comes from one of the earliest Puranas, the Vayu, conservatively dated to at least 1,500 years old. (The same reference is to be found in the other Puranas as well.)

In Chapter 50 of this book, there is the statement that the sun moves 3.15 million yojanas in 48 minutes. This corresponds to about 10,000 miles per second if considered as speed of light, and 135 million miles for the distance to the sun, if considered as the speed of the sun. Sayana's speed of light is exactly 18

times greater than this speed of the sun! Mere numerology?

We must also not forget that the Puranas speak of the creation and destruction of the universe in cycles of 8.64 billion years, that is quite close to currently accepted value regarding the time of the big bang.

For the rationalists these numbers are a coincidence. Given the significance of these numbers, they'd look very carefully at the old manuscripts of Sayana's commentary. There are others who would say that consciousness, acting on itself can find universal knowledge. Look, they'd say, by examining biological cycles one can know the periods of the sun and the moon. So why shouldn't it be possible to know other universal truths? They'd add that ancient texts speak ---and this is true --- of embryo transplants, multiple births from the same fetus, air and space travel, slowing or speeding of time, weapons that can destroy the entire world. They'd say that it is more than ancient science fiction, it shows that the human imagination can envision all that can happen.

VII THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

The tree of knowledge may answer our wishes, but it is so dense that one can get lost in it. The Upanishads tell us that the gods love what is paradoxical (paroksha) and detest what is straightforward (pratyaksha). Not surprisingly, the Upanishads also tell us that those who worship only the material end up in darkness, and those who worship only the spirit end up in greater darkness.

The path of wisdom is a narrow path. The pulsations of reality may be subtle, but appearances are structured. Great scientists, who work at the frontier of their field, are aware of the limitations of their knowledge and its transitory nature, but most other scientists are no more open-minded than religious

bigots.

When I was a boy, I heard my father tell me about his extraordinary experience during his years of quest. He chose to mention some of these in his fragmentary autobiography, Autumn Leaves. I heard and marvelled but didn t know what to make of it. I shut my eyes and tried to envision everything or nothing but it didn t take me far. So I chose science.

I started out by studying information; this eventually led me to quantum theory. It was good to see that, at its deepest, science asked as many questions as it answered. I was also interested in grammar, linguistics and machine translation and before long I marvelled at the magnificent creation of Panini. I also found a long-lost astronomy in the Vedic books.

The ancient rishis were incredibly prescient and creative. A lot of what they said is still relevant. After all, their main concern was consciousness, precisely what modern science is trying to understand.

This brings us to yoga-- the union of our ordinary awareness with our true self. The promise of Indian wisdom is the realization of our potential. This is done through yoga as a discipline that complements the way of looking at the outer world through academic science. We get gleanings of the spark within by learning to observe ourselves.

The universe is woven together and interconnected. The symbol of the interconnectedness of the physical universe is the invisible axis (pillar) around which the stars move; likewise, the unity of our experience is established by the axis of consciousness to which we bind our associations.

We are so used to the routine of the everyday that we become oblivious to the extraordinary nature of our commonest experience. It is not just the coming of new life that is magical, every experience when our senses are truly open is magical. The dance of Shiva happens not only at the cosmic level, it occurs also at each moment, and as one grain of time is gone and dead, the next grain comes along and there is new creation!

There lie many adventures in the path to the unfolding of the mystery of consciousness. Each human being is a scientist and historian of sorts: we reason and gather knowledge, we structure all that happens around us. If it all doesn't add up, we must step back and wonder.

Mind is the last frontier of science. We observe the physical universe through our mind, yet we have

no clear idea how mind functions, how memories are stored and recalled and what is the origin of

our subjective feelings. Is this level of ignorance a result of the reductionist nature of the tools that

have been used in the study of mind and consciousness? If that is so, will an approach that has a different

philosophical basis help? It is for this reason we turn to the Vedas, where the central concern is self and awareness.

The Vedic texts consider reality to transcend the duality of matter and mind. This non-dual reality is termed [Brahman]. Although seen to be present in all its material manifestations, Brahman is understood best as the knowing subject within us. The space of this knowledge is called [chit], consciousness. Later literature, like the Yoga Vasishtha and the Tripura Rahasya, self-consciously describes itself as dealing with the nature of consciousness.

The Vedas, and later the yogic and tantric texts, speak of the cognitive centers as individual, whole entities which are, nevertheless, a part of a greater unity. The vocabulary used in these texts challenges the modern reader, but once one has learned the definitions of the operative terms, the structure soon becomes apparent.

Vedic mythology is often an explication of understanding of consciousness, and so mastering the Vedic vocabulary provides us a means of unlocking the hidden meaning behind the myths.

In the Vedic discourse, the cognitive centers are called the devatas or devas-- deities or gods, or luminous loci. The Atharvaveda (10.2.31) calls the human body the city of the devas. This passage also speaks of the body consisting of eight cognitive centers which, other references suggest, are hierarchically organized.

The devas are visualized in a complex, hierarchical scheme, with some being closer to the autonomous processes of the body and others being nearer creative centers. In analogy with outer space, inner space of consciousness is viewed to have three zones: the body (earth), the exchange processes (prana, atmosphere), and the inner sky (heavens). The number of devas is variously given, the most extravagant passages count 3.3 million. The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad (3.9.1) remembers a hymn that praises 3306 of them, arguing there are 33 major deities, distributed in three groups of eleven among the three zones. All these devas are taken to embody the same light of consciousness. The mind consists of discrete agents, although it retains a unity.

Since each deva reflects primordial consciousness, one can access the mystery of consciousness through any specific deva.Thus there is a deva for reading and learning, one for recognition, one for friendship, one for generosity, and so on. Physics and the Vedas agree that reality is consistent only in its primordial, implicate form. The Vedas insist that speech and sense-associations cannot describe this reality completely. In quantum physics, use of ordinary logic leads to paradoxes such as the present can influence the past! At a less technical level we may ask: How do we reconcile the determinism of science to the subjective sense of free will?

The modern discoveries that are based on a study of consciousness states and the deficits caused by lesions, stroke, injury, or surgery that disrupts the normal functioning of our senses and cognitions appears to uphold the Vedic view. For example, we have the case of alexia without agaphia, in other words, a patient who, due to injury or a stroke, is unable to read, yet able to write. These discoveries suggest that the mind is a complex structure of various localized functions held together by a unitary awareness.

To conclude, Indian has had a glorious past, but that, in itself, is no reason for us to do anything more than take notice. The more interesting reason for our fascination with Sanatana Dharma is the possibilities it offers to the modern man, curious to know the nature of his self. It is for this reason that we celebrate the tradition, and for this reason alone that this tradition will eventually triumph all over the world.

Note:

For more information on the material in the essay, see the following books:

1. O. Alvarez, Celestial Brides: A Study in Mythology and Archaeology. Stockbridge, 1978.
2. G. Feuerstein, The Yoga Tradition. Prescott, 1998.
3. G. Feuerstein, S. Kak, and D. Frawley, In Search of the Cradle of Civilization. Wheaton, Illinois, 1995.
4. D. Frawley, Ayurveda and the Mind. Twin Lakes, 1997.
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6. A. Napier, Foreign Bodies: Performance, Art, and Symbolic Anthropology. Berkeley, 1992.
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articles on hinduism

American finds home in Hindu India

S Mitra Kalita

http://www.rediff.com/news/2000/jan/20us3.htm

When Stephen Huyler speaks of his upcoming trip to India, he describes it as a journey home



The 48-year-old author and photographer, raised in southern California and Wyoming, fell in love with India more than a quarter-century ago and has spent three or four months in different regions of the subcontinent every year since.

"India is as much my own as America. I am going home in two weeks," he said in a recent interview with *rediff.com*

Indeed, Huyler's life, both personal and professional, reflects this familiarity. His most recent book *Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion,* stimulates a reader's eye with colorful photographs of daily rituals in Indians's lives from sunrise to sunset, from bathing themselves to conducting business.

The book, published by the Yale University Press, contains 160 color photos taken by Huyler. Its intentions are lofty: to illustrate how devotion to God is incorporated into the daily life of India's estimated 800 million Hindus, according to Huyler.



"We lack that in most Western cultures," Huyler said. "In Hinduism, you get a sense of the way in which the divine is made accessible and recognized as a part of all existence. It is not separated, as in the separation of church and State." In the preface to the 250-page book, he writes of his efforts in capturing the commonalities of "an extremely complex and diverse religion."

He didn't start out captivated by the religions of India. This art historian, cultural anthropologist, photographer and author initially traveled to and spent time in India to conduct a cross-cultural survey of Indian arts and crafts. His prior works include *Village India* (1985), the only book to survey rural Indian life and cultures across the subcontinent and *Gifts of Earth: Terracottas and Clay Sculptures of India* (1996). His book *Painted Prayers: Women's Art in Village India* (1994) documents women's ritual wall and floor decoration, which he discovered on his first visit to India.

Huyler, who received his BA in Indian Studies from the University of Denver and his Ph D from

the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, also curated an exhibition of photographs with *Painted Prayers* that traveled to numerous museums throughout the Germany, India and the United States, including the Smithsonian Institution.

The designs are also featured in *Meeting God,* as Huyler recalls the first time he observed women using powders and water to sprinkle designs on the damp earth in the shape of leaves, birds and flowers. 'When I questioned the meaning of this extraordinary process, I was told that these paintings are sacred designs intended to protect the home from evil and to encourage benevolent spirits to enter it,' he writes. 'In more than a million homes, these *kolams* are created daily, and the women pride themselves in never repeating a design!'



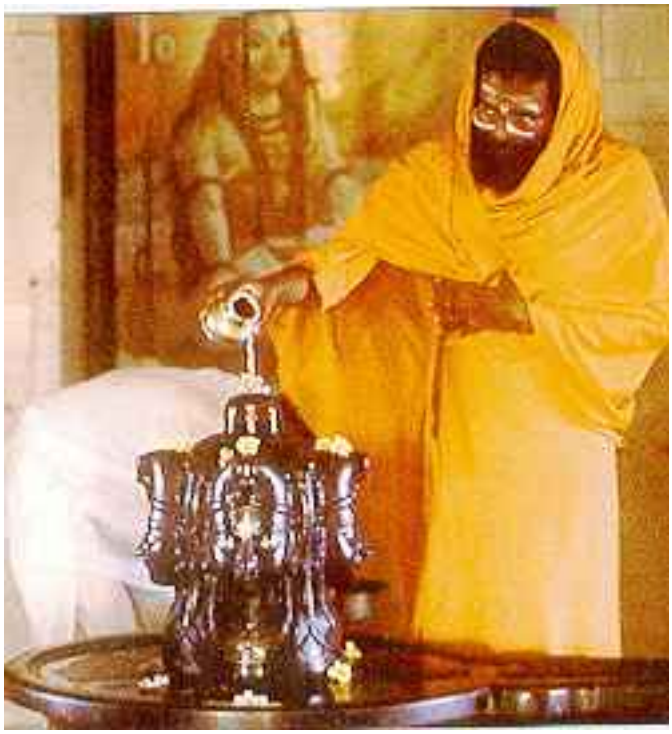
Huyler is outspoken on the important role Indian women have played in his introduction, immersion and enchantment with the country. He arrived on his 20th birthday, invited and accompanied by Dadaist Beatrice Wood, his mentor, who was then 77 years old.

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya and Rukmini Devi Arundale arranged for him to stay in homes throughout the country. "My first introduction to India was through the home and the heart rather than the hotel," he said. "I was exposed to the remarkable generosity of the Indian people and that had a remarkable influence on my interest in country."

Over 28 years and hundreds of stays in Indian homes, Huyler said he is repeatedly struck by the strong role of the Indian woman in both family and religion. "One of the reasons that we misunderstand Indian culture is that Hindu society is divided into public and private spheres. Most outsiders don't have any contact with the private sphere," he said.

"But it is in the private sphere where women make the decisions and choices for the family's livelihood, the choices of their male children's careers, the purse strings, the rituals." He tempered his remarks by saying female infanticide and bride burning are unfortunate realities and atrocities, albeit practiced in a minority of Hindu homes.

In his introduction to the private sphere, Huyler learned that his area of study -- folk arts and crafts -- in India was intertwined with the people's devotion. "I came into the study of Hinduism through the back door. It was not through intent, but because I discovered that none of the arts and crafts could in any way be divorced from spiritual content and aspects of ritual."



He writes and speaks intimately of the role Hinduism has played in his life. "Now when I am invited to attend a sacred ceremony, I no longer withhold myself in critical appraisal. I am fully present with all of my senses to absorb the ritual, to feel the full experience. I realize now that my earlier distance was merely the consequence of my own limitations. The many Indians with whom I have interacted have always invited my full participation. I can admire and even be in awe of the ways in which the sacred permeates the lives of the Hindu people while still maintaining strong attachments to my own home, family, friends, culture and ideals. Awareness of one only enriches awareness of the other."

A testament to his faith and devotion to both Hinduism and Christianity is the *puja* room in the home Huyler shares with his wife Helene in Camden, Maine. Alongside Jesus and Mary are statues of Ganesha, Laxmi, Shiva, Shakti and Vishnu. "My understanding of Hinduism has only enhanced the understanding of my own heredity," he said. "I incorporate many Hindu beliefs in my prayer and worship."

In India, Huyler said he is almost never asked to explain himself or his religion. His blend of faiths benefits from Hinduism's tolerance, he says. "In America or in Europe, a non-Christian in a Christian environment would be challenged often."

Through his book and an accompanying exhibit, Huyler said he hopes to "demystify one of the primary belief systems in the world." A traveling exhibition of photographs and interactive wooden shrines that complement *Meeting God* just finished a run at the Houston Museum and is expected to travel around North America and abroad over the next few years. Huyler also co-curated an exhibition about sacred rituals in India entitled *Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion,* on display at the Smithsonian's Arthur M Sackler Gallery from May 1996 till 2001.

Huyler asserts that this tolerance is what has allowed Hinduism to thrive in an increasingly modern, Westernized society. 'In India I am frequently in awe of the sense of personal peace in the midst of apparent turmoil. A station crowded with ten thousand milling commuters, the cacophony of tea and coffee sellers and the cries of vendors,' he writes. 'In the midst of this riot of activity, a small man stops to pray silently by himself. For these five minutes, he is oblivious of his surroundings, immersed in his personal relationship with God.'

Hinduism is not under threat by modernization because it changes with times and embraces all walks of life, Huyler said. He denounced recent attacks on the religion by the Southern Baptist Convention. The group published a prayer guide that made said, among other things, 900 million Hindus lived under darkness and they did not have the concept of sin or personal responsibility. Indians in Atlanta, Boston and Houston staged rallies and protests in response.

Huyler said the Southern Baptists's statements demonstrate Western misunderstandings and

misconceptions of Hinduism and a failure to see commonalities among religions.

"Because they think their system is the only way, they think others must be less," he said. "That is just arrogant prejudice. I think Christians, Jews, Hindus and Muslims have a lot to learn from one another."

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White Man's Burden: Indian Holocaust
By A. P. KAMATH
2/18/2001
www.rediff.com

In trying to buttress his thesis about the death of 32-61 million people from famines in India, China and Brazil in the 19th century, author and political activist Mike Davis poses the question: **"How do we weigh smug claims about the life-saving benefits of steam transportation and modern grain markets when so many millions, especially in British India, died along railroad tracks or on the steps of grain depots?"**

Davis, a winner of the $315,000 Mac Arthur Foundation grant given annually to "exceptionally creative individuals," answers his question in the book *Late Victorian Holocausts* (Published by Verso, $27). Its second title: *El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World.*

He argues that while the El Nino weather phenomenon contributed to the droughts in the last third of the 19th century, the death of millions was due to the arrogance and callous policies of imperialist powers. He slams the official British explanation that millions were killed by extreme weather.

The killer, Davis argues, was imperialism.

If the governments had made serious efforts to use transportation system to benefit the poor, he says, there would not have been a famine holocaust. He notes that the British rulers launched public work programs to fight famine in India but the workers, already emaciated, got such poor food that their health deteriorated further.

Davis asserts that what is known as the Third World today was born in the late 19th century; the seeds of underdevelopment were sown during the height of imperialism. The price for capitalist modernization and the industrial revolution was paid in the blood and toil of farmers' lives.

Mike Davis, 52, is one of the most controversial political writers in America. The son of a meat cutter, Davis dropped out of high school to follow his father's profession.

But he went back to college when he was in his late 20s studying economics and history at University of California, Los Angeles, became active in leftist organizations such as Students for Democratic Society, and moved to London in the early 1980s to edit the *New Left Review.*

Among his widely discussed books is *City of Quartz*, a bitter indictment of the whites who run Los Angeles—and the economic disparity and racial politics. His critics have slammed him for

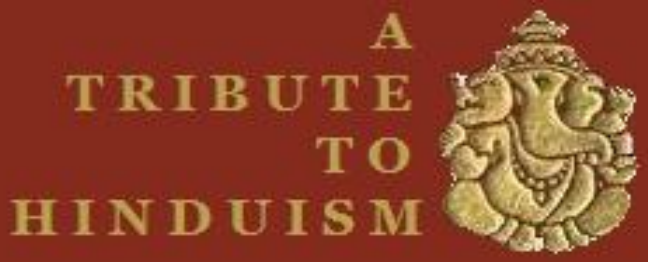
exaggerating racial and political issues confronting the city. But his backers see him as a perceptive critic and a conscience keeper who does not hesitate to speak out his mind.

Winning the Mac Arthur award helped Davis to continue the research that resulted in the present book. Though *Late Victorian Holocausts* was published by a small avowedly leftist press in New York, it is getting plenty of attention in mainstream publications.

Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, who gave it a page-long review in *The New York Times Book Review*, found the book “gripping” and “highly informative.”

Sen, however, also points out that imperialist and capitalist countries are not the only ones who failed in combating famine. In the 20th century, the Soviet Union and China faced famines; in China, an estimated 30 million people died in a famine that raged for three years from 1958.

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articles on hinduism

Secularism - American style
By M V Kamath
Free Press Journal
February 15, 2001
http://www.indiavotes.com/elections/news/feature781.html

India is about the only country in the world where secularism is a problem. This is precisely because it is a multi-religious country with substantial segments of he population professing various religions like Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and Buddhism. This is not to say that other countries do not have their own religious minorities.

There are Muslims and Christians in China, not to speak of Buddhists, but the prevalent philosophy of state is Communism that doesn't take religion at all into consideration. Indonesia has a substantial percentage of Christians, not o speak of Hindus and Christians of late in Indonesia have been under pressure from Islamic fundamentalists. But most European countries don't need to worry about minorities.

Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries are all Christian though there may be varied proportions of Roman Catholics and Protestants among them. The United Kingdom is Christian with the Church of England being supreme. The head of the Royal Family is crowned according to Christian rites by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the oath is taken on the Bible but nobody dismisses the country or the people as communal. Secularism in those countries has a separate connotation. In Germany a party can call itself the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) or the Christian Socialist Union (CSU) but it does not invite opprobrium from secularists. A citizen may refuse to pay a small tax for the upkeep of churches but that is left to the good sense of the tax-payer whether to pay or not. When President de Gaulle of France and Chancellor Adenauer of then West Germany prayed together at Koln Cathedral in a gesture of reconciliation, no one suggested that they were 'communal'. Both France and Germany were Christian countries and praying in a cathedral seemed the most natural thing to do. **It is only in India that singing Saraswati vandana at an official function comes under severe damnation by our 'secularists'.**

The general belief is that the United States of America is 'secular', even if the President-elect of the country may take his oath of office on the Bible and attend Church. Is the United States truly 'secular'? The question has been raised - and sought to be answered-interestingly enough, in the current issue of Span (January/February 2001) by one Wilfred M. McClay. He speaks of two concepts of secularism. He says that despite "impressive victories in the courts and in the halls of government and academe, prayers (in the US) are still uttered at the commencement of Congressional sessions. God's name appears in our currency and in the oaths we take in court, chaplains are still employed by Congress and the armed services (and) the tax-exempt status of religious institutions remains intact". "The fact is" avers McClay, "America is still not an entirely secular country, one sanitized of any form of public sanction for religion".

The pressure of religion on the individual could be very heavy as Yellapragada Subba Row, a great scientist working at Lederle Laboratories in the United States found, being alone in a Christian community in the thirties. To escape his uniqueness Row who was born Hindu first turned to atheism only to accept Christianity later to get a feeling of belonging. In the United States, McClay insists, one "comes face to face with a crowd of paradoxes" And he adds: "And none is

greater than this: that the vanguard nation of technological and social innovation is also the developed world's principal bastion of religious faith and practice. The United States has managed to sustain remarkably high levels of traditional religious beliefs and affiliation, even as it careens merrily down the white water rapids of modernity".

Sociologists from Max Weber to Peter Berger have insisted that secularisation is one facet of the powerful monolith called "modernisation", trusting that secularisation would come along bundled with a comprehensive package of modernising forces such as urbanisation, rationalisation, professionalisation, functional differentiations and bureaucratisation. The more the modernisation that society underwent, the presumption was that secularity, in all its fullness would arrive "as naturally as adulthood". Apparently this has not yet happened in the United States. McClay argues that perhaps the religious efflorescence that one sees in America today is merely defensive and fleeting. Indeed, he remarks, it could be argued persuasively that the United States has never been more thoroughly under the command of secular ideas than it is today" and that "the nation's elite culture, as it is mirrored in mass media and academe, is committed to a standard of antiseptically secular discourse, in which the ostensibly value-neutral languages of science and therapy have displaced the value-laden language of faith and morals". As he further notes, a steady stream of court decisions since the 1940s has severely circumscribed the public manifestation of traditional religious symbols and sentiments, helping to create what has been called 'the naked public square.

For all that there is the view that "secularism, rather than religion" is the power that is ebbing away. Noting that, McClay feels that it is "small wonder, then, that religion has responded to the challenge of secularism with a vigorous defence of its role in public life - a role that, whatever one thinks of it, shows no sign of going away quietly". Indeed, he adds, and this is very significant, "there is a growing sense that religion may be an indispensable force for the upholding of human dignity and moral order in a world dominated by voracious state bureaucracies and sprawling trans-national corporations that are neither effectively accountable to national law nor effectively answerable to well-established codes of behaviour".

If this is said of the United States where the majority of Christianity-professing people have never felt the suffocating power of an elite professing a minority religion, should it be surprising that Hindus in India should hark back to their own centuries old faith to find an anchor for their lives?

McClay speaks of two kinds of secularism: a negative one and a positive one. When, under the guise of separating church and state, secularism seeks to exclude religious belief and practice, as much as possible, to the realm of private predilection and individual taste, it is negative. Positive secularism has aims that are higher and nibbled, seeking, as it does, to free human beings to fulfill the most exalted elements of their nature. This understanding of two secularims, McClay suggests, may help explain the paradoxical situation in which secularism seems at one and the same time both victor and vanquished. As he sees it, Americans have by and large accepted negative secularism as an essential basis for peaceful co-existence in a religiously pluralistic society. Furthermore, he adds: "Religious activity and expression (in the United States) will likely continue to grow, further eroding the rule of positive secularism - but it will do so largely within the container of a negative - secularist understanding of the world. The return of religious faith is not likely to be a fearsome 'return of the repressed' at least not in the United States".

If religious faith can return to the United States without a fearsome "return of the repressed", why should it not return similarly to India in the same manner? Whatever the shortcomings of the majority faith-Hinduism - in India (and, alas, it has several), attacks on the minority faith is not one of them. McClay makes an interesting point. He says: "It follows, however, that religious faiths must undergo some degree of adaptation in accommodating themselves to negative secularism. To begin with, they must, as it were, learn how to behave around strangers. But there is more to it than that. The key question adherents must ask is whether such an adaptation represents compromise of their faith or a deepening and clarifying of it". What does adaptation mean in the Indian context? In India the majority faith is Hinduism. For centuries it has been the target of first Islam and later evangelical Christianity both of which were resented. Living under Islamic rule, Hindus in past centuries hardly could resist

conversion. Who, in the circumstances, should adopt to whom? Can Christianity, under the presumed right to propagation, give offence to Hinduism by indulging in conversions, howsoever sophisticatedly described? These are points to ponder over.

Secularism, in essence, means respect for all religions. Respect involves not giving offence to another religion or faith in any way whatsoever. The line dividing propagation and conversion is very thin and in India, at least, it can give rise to a lot of epistomological confusion, which is best avoided in the larger interests of communal peace. To insist that propagation is of the very essence of Christianity which has to be conceded under the articles of the Constitution is to demand allegiance not to the spirit but the letter of the law. A wise minority will have to learn to adapt to the society in which it functions in order to live in peace and harmony. The Sanskrit concept of sarva dharma samabhava must be upheld in all its nuances if secularism has to be truly meaningful in India. That, truly, would be positive secularism worthy of applause.

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Secularists be warned

M V Kamath

http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/150302/detpla01.asp

May I make a sincere request to my fellow Hindus to give a respite to the use of the word 'secular' for the next five years? The word stinks to high heavens.

It smells of hypocrisy, cowardice, an attitude of holier-than-thou and a singular ignorance of history unparalleled in the annals of our sorry times.

There were **no secularists** around when Ghazni invaded India 13 times, smashed the *lingam* in the Somnath Temple and took the pieces to be scattered in front of a masjid in his hometown for his kinsmen to merrily trample over. Nor were there any secularists living when, during the long Islamic reign in India, 3,000 temples were demolished. It was considered part of medieval behaviour and so to be taken in one's stride.

If not Babar it was his general who destroyed a temple in Ayodhya, and despite the hysterical denials of our demented historians, a temple did exist where the Babri masjid once stood and there are enough records — and architectural evidence — to prove the fact. Only the determinedly blind will refuse to accept the testimony of writers like Mirza Jan (1856), Mohammad Asghar (1858), Mirza Rajah Ali Beg Sarur (1787-1867) and Sheikh Md Azmat Ali (1869) who have had no reason to tell a lie.

But even if, for the sake of argument, there was no temple in Ayodhya, it ill-behoved anybody, let alone a murderous marauder like Babar, to build a masjid in what is considered a Hindu holy city any more than a theoretical Hindu invader of Saudi Arabia would have in building a temple in Mecca close to or on the site of the Kaaba. Ram is as much meaningful to Hindus as Allah is to Muslims. **The Babri masjid was raised in Ayodhya to tell the Hindus who the rulers were.** The VHP does not have to be apologetic to anyone, least of all to the secularists, for wishing to raise a temple to Ram at a site they believe he was born.

The real issue is not Ayodhya as much as it is the secularists' dogged determination not to face up to history. The attitude of the average secularist is either to bury his head, ostrich-like, in the sands of time in the face of embarrassing facts or to say that the Hindus deserved what they got. By their cowardly behaviour, the secularists have both directly or indirectly encouraged the hardliners among Muslims to refuse to consider any sensible compromise with the VHP, and if anybody is to be blamed for all the disturbances of the past decade, it has to be the secularist with his contempt for Hinduism.

What happened in Ahmedabad is no different from what happened in Delhi when Indira Gandhi was assassinated or what happened in Punjab following Partition. The Gujaratis are as law-abiding as anyone else and don't deserve to be maligned. Does anyone remember Rajiv Gandhi's remarks about the killings of Sikhs following Indira Gandhi's death? Did the Congress pull him up for his thoughtless comment? The Ahmedabad rioting was not pre-planned unlike the Godhra killings by Muslim fanatics or the killings of innocent Kashmiris by ISI-supported jehadis.

The Ayodhya issue is not for the court to decide but for the Muslim community to concede to the VHP what rightfully belongs to the Hindus — graciously. And who will believe this community when it says it will abide by a court verdict? What happened in the Shah Bano case? For the Muslim community, it is a win-win situation. If it wins the case, it can have the last laugh. If it loses the case, it can always say that the BJP government has bought the judges.

Such is the power of blackmail that the secularists, in their blind hatred of the BJP and the VHP, wield. Why should anyone blame the VHP? Hasn't it shown exemplary patience for 10 long years?

The blame for the VHP's and the kar sewaks' militancy lies entirely at the doors of the secularists. It is not the kar sewak who is destabilising the country. The fault is that of the secularist and a weak and indecisive government which is afraid of its own shadow. Ten years is a long time to wait. That is why the kar sewak is blandishing his *trishul*.

How long are we going to appease the irrational among the Muslim community to show how secular and law-abiding we are as a people? It serves the rabid among the Muslims to see how the BJP is being reduced to a joke. And the secularists' stand has only served to strengthen the rabid Muslims to hold on to their own and watch the *tamasha*.

The Babri masjid was of no great architectural wonder. *Masjids* are routinely levelled to the ground in Muslim countries including in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to make way for development. No Hindu protested when ancient temples had to be submerged in the course of raising dams. The VHP would have happily agreed to build a special *masjid* for Muslims to pray in peace in Ayodhya — but in some other location, away from the *janmabhoomi* site.

But that wouldn't convince the secularists, who would rather see the country reduced to ashes than worship at the altar of reason. For them, bashing the Sangh parivar has become an end in itself. The nation is heading for a major crisis of unprecedented proportions that would make the Ahmedabad riots pale into insignificance. The secularists are warned.

They are driving a frustrated people to desperation. And when that comes to pass, logic and good sense are stood on their head and the entire nation will suffer. And then let not the kar sewaks be blamed for what is not their fault. There has to be a limit to secular pig-headedness.

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Why are Hindus angry?

V KAMATH

http://www.newstodaynet.com/guest/2402gu1.htm

In a snap election, the BJP Alliance would secure 320 seats in Parliament, according to the India Today-ORG-MARG Mood of the Nation Poll taken in January 2003. The Poll noticed that the popular vote for the NDA may touch 42 per cent, giving the ruling coalition a clear majority of between 310 and 320 seats. And, noted in the Poll, if the BJP and the BSP strike a poll alliance in Uttar Pradesh, the NDA tally may even reach 340.

This finding must be sending shivers down Congress spines. Furthermore, according to the Poll, 'most heartening for the BJP is that the surge is most marked in its traditional strongholds and particulary in the Hindi heartland states where Assembly elections are due late this year'.

How come? Reeling from the after-effects of Gujarat the Sonia Gandhi Congress seems to be in a state of total disarray. Indeed, it is clear that the Congress has lost its bearings, and does not know which way to go.

In Gujarat it tried 'soft Hindutva' and Sonia Gandhi started her campaign from Ambaji Temple when she might have done so from Sabarmati Ashram. But she must have felt it necessary to appease Hindu sentiment, which had been deeply hurt over what the party and the Secular media said about Hindus in Gujarat.

And may this be said: it is not just the Gujarati Hindu whose anger has been aroused. The Hindus throughout the country spread across castes and creeds, languages and ethnicities are in revolt against what they consider unfounded charges levelled at them by secularists, and by minority spokesmen.

They have become sick of secular humbug and they are out to teach Congress and the so-called secularists the lesson of their lives. The secularists went overboard in criticising Hindus generally and the BJP particularly, accusing Narendra Modi of all sorts of crimes.

Many newspapers (and journals) revelled at publishing the photo of a Muslim, hands folded, stalking fear in his green eyes, pleading for his life. It epitomised the unleashed terror in Ahmedabad as nothing else did.

It was an indictment of the rioting Hindu and the media lapped up the picture with undisguised glee. Unfortunately no photographer took any picture of the last minutes of 58 innocent women and children, as they coughed and choked and felt the stinging heat of the surrounding flames, shouting to God to save them.

How did the faces of those women look like as they clasped their children to their bosoms as the heat and the smoke slowly ate through their skins and their young died in their arms screaming till they were silenced? Alas, there was no photographer around to immortalise the fiery scene. What is now remembered is the callousness and bias of the secular press and the utter indifference to Hindu suffering of Sonia's Congress.

No wonder Narendra Modi's BJP won the Assembly elections in Gujarat with astounding ease.

Yes, the Hindus are boiling mad at the Congress which has had its heydey in Nehruvian days. Nehru had little use for Hinduism which he held in contempt. And under his leadership there grew a generation, western in thought, word and deed that Macaulay would have applauded. Macaulay's children were everywhere, ensconced in seats of power.

Over the decades Hindu thought dared not openly surface; it would have been quashed if freely expressed. To be 'secular' was fashionable. Rajiv Gandhi unconscionably exposed the hypocrisy of it all in the matter of the Shah Bano Case.

The Babri Masjid episode showed another aspect of Congress hypocrisy. The Shias to whom the Masjid belonged would have happily given up their claim to the Masjid but our secularists would have none of that. They wanted BJP blood. And they had it.

It only enraged majority Hindu sentiment. The average Hindu is more secular than anyone else. But constant denigration of Hinduism has done more than what partition could not do: It has made Hindus conscious of their culture and heritage.

They are getting united as seldom before in the past, despite major efforts by Congress to play the caste game. In Gujarat all castes were united, as were even Scheduled Castes and tribals in their opposition to Congress. For the first time in post-independence history Hindus as a whole stood together in opposition to the shady secularism of the Congress.

There is a message here. Hindus would go a long way to be accomodative of other religionists. But when their sensitivities get continuously trampled upon, their goodwill taken for granted or deliberately misunderstood or wilfully exploited, does it come as a surprise that their cup of frustration and anger boileth over. One minority columnist even has gone to the extent of advocating the weaning of tribals and Scheduled Castes from the collectivity of Hindu society and condemning ayudh pooja during dussehara as indicative of Hindu bloodthirstiness! Another such columnist continues to heap abuse at the majority community in a Mumbai daily. That, apparently, is considered fair. Only, the Congress seems either blissfully ignorant of gathering Hindu anger or believes it can be assuaged by taking recourse to artificial means such as party leaders taking to wear Gandhi caps, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Digvijay Singh conceding that the Congress is not against buildng the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and members of the Rajasthan Cabinet nestling cozily at the feet of Gujarat's famous sant Murari Bapu as he recited Ram Katha in Jaipur at the invitation of the State's Governor Anshuman Singh.

Minority leaders are propagating against Hindutva refusing to accept that the word is not linked to religion but, in the words of Atal Bihari Vajpayee 'encompasses all sections of society, irrespective of caste, creed' and is timeless. Hindutva has been defined in terms of cultural nationalism but apparently as much with the support of secularists as on their own, minorities are rejecting it only to add fuel to Hindu fire.

What is saddening is that even as an effort is being made to bring all people together under a cultural umbrella, Congress states are trying to prop up Muslim separatism as in evident in a proposal to set up a Muslim University in Bhopal. So fed up with the bogus secularism are many Hindus that they are quietly turning to the BJP on the theory that 'enough is enough'; they are equally quietly demanding that their suppressed voice be heard, a voice that expresses resentment at being called 'fascist' and 'communalist' when Hindus are neither.

The record of one thousand years of history shows it. In all these years it was the Hindu who was being terrorised and suppressed by rulers from alien lands. The Congress would do well to listen to the voice of anger. Very novel for Hindus, they are beginning to assert themselves at the polls in hitherto unexpressed sense of oneness. To continue to mock at them is for the Congress to invite disaster. What minorities should remember is that it is under a majority - not majoritarian - rule that they can get the greatest protection and safeguards. So it was under Shivaji, so it was under all Hindu kings that ever ruled India.

(The author is a veteran journalist and chief of the Prasar Bharati)

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articles on hinduism

Help us bear the burden of secularism

By M. V. Kamnath

http://www.organiser.org/31dec2000/mfinger.html

Recently, a distinguished columnist, **T.V.R. Shenoy**, made a point in relation to the Babri 'Masjid' affair that beautifully summed up the dilemma of the Hindus in India. He said: **"Help us bear the burden of secularism."** He was addressing the minorities. It must have come straight from the heart. It was, as the French would say: cri de coeur. The cry of the heart. **For no other country in the world from east to west, faces the agony that the Hindus in India have to face. They are the injured party; but they are crucified by the secularists—most of them themselves Hindus—at every stage. No country in the world has been so ravaged and raped by outside forces as India has been down the centuries: Not Japan, not China, not Russia, none of the European countries, neither the Arab nations and certainly not the United States of America. Krishnadevaraya of the Vijayanagar Empire did not send his forces to Portugal to tear down churches, use force to convert Christians to Hinduism and indulge in religious terrorism. Prithviraj Chauhan did not invade Afghanistan nor Central Asia and raise temples.**

No Chola, Chera or Pandya ruler sent a fleet to Saudi Arabia to tear down the Ka'aba and build a temple to Meenakshi on its ruins or even next to it to demonstrate Hindu might. India and Hinduism have been ravaged beyond belief. Hindu missionaries did not accompany a conquering horde to Britain and under their benign rule set to convert Scottish peasants to Hinduism—or even Buddhism. Whatever their million faults, Hindus in this matter have their hands clean. When Christian rulers fought back the Moors in Spain, they destroyed every vestige of Islamic influence in the country save the Alhambra in Grenada and no one, not even the most fanatic Hindu, would dream of duplicating Spanish behaviour. All that they have so far asked is the restoration of the Ramjanmabhoomi site that was—it is recorded in history—desecrated by an alien ruler. Even presuming that to say so is historically incorrect—what should count is popular faith, which has kept that belief alive for decades if not a couple of centuries. In their hatred of the Bharatiya Janata Party, the secularists have done untold damage to the Hindu psyche.

The time has come to place the blame for the bloodshed in India because of the Babri 'Masjid' dispute on the hands of the secularists. These are red with the blood of the innocents. What happened on December 6, 1992 was not a breakdown of law and order; what happened was a cataclysmic event which was an outpouring of the anger of five centuries that nobody could have stopped. Not Atal Behari Vajpayee, not L.K. Advani, not even God Almighty could have stopped that event. Our secularists with no roots in Hindu society have just no understanding of the Hindu

psyche. The bringing down of the Babri 'Masjid' was not a physical act; it was an emotional necessity. It has nothing to do with Islam: it has everything to do with a peoples' self-respect. The gravest damage to Hindu-Muslim unity was done by the secularists by making it a Hindu-Islam issue. That it is not. It was the cry of a people whose wound of being ruled first by Muslims and then by a Christian nation called for healing. The greatest service that Muslims in India can do to themselves and to their Hindu fellow-countrymen is to understand that angst and to make amends by voluntarily agreeing to the rebuilding of the Ram Mandir on the site where the Babri 'Masjid' once stood.

Secularism is not a burden to be borne only by Hindus. The Muslim populace —indeed the entire 'minority' populace— has divine duty to share that burden. And it is not the Babri 'Masjid' issue alone that calls for burden-sharing. There are several issues over which the majority community—and a long-suffering community it has been—would appreciate minority understanding. And such understanding is long due. Sonia Gandhi, as the president of the once-great Indian National Congress—there are no rival Congress factions of any substance today—has a great responsibility to bear. She should realise that had not Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel shied away from tackling the Babri 'Masjid' issue way back in the late forties, the dispute would not have persisted. No matter what the jaundiced eyed secularists may say, Hindus have a genuine claim on the Ramjanmabhoomi site. That fact was tacitly acknowledged by the Hindu populace during L.K. Advani's famous rath yatra and it was that acknowledgement that was reflected in the victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party at the hustings. Atal Behari Vajpayee owes no apology to anyone—least of all the Congress—for saying that the building of the Ram Mandir on the site that rightfully belongs to it, is his party's unfinished business. Unfinished business it is.

The Muslims must help him in his endeavour, instead of constantly harping on secularism. Secularism is a burden not for Hindus alone to bear. The Muslims have a solemn duty to share that burden. It is a point that cannot be emphasised too strongly. For the Congress and Leftist opposition to lay the blame for the demolition of the Babri 'Masjid' on L.K. Advani, Atal Behari Vajpayee and Murli Manohar Joshi is the height of impertinence. Factually it is incorrect. According to Nirmala Deshpande, a Gandhian social activist and former Rajya Sabha Member [quoted by The Pioneer (December 5)] and secretary to Acharya Vinobha Bhave who was present at the site when the demolition took place, "the situation was beyond their control" and she could "see and hear Advani and other leaders shouting on the mike asking people to come down from the domes". But none of the BJP leaders need feel ashamed of the event. It had to happen because of historical reasons. But how can the burden of secularism be shared by the minorities? It has been pointed out that Nawab Shuja-ud-din in his time donated 50 bighas of land to Hindus to build a temple—the second holy one in Ayodhya—to Hanuman.

According to Mohd Hashim, the Hanuman Garhi always had a Muslim worker in it till 1932 who used to get a share in its offerings. Hashim has been quoted as saying: "The practice, if continued, will improve relations between the two communities." High-minded though it may be to demand of the majority community to alone bear the burden of secularism, the minorities must do some heart-searching on their own to ask whether their expectations are fair and equitable. It comes easy to damn the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Bajrang Dal, the RSS and the BJP and it may warm the cockles of minority—and secular—hearts to run them down as fascists, fundamentalists or whatever. But in their turbulent way they reflect the thousand-year agony of Hindus. The

minorities may do well to remember history and give some credit to the majority community for whatever their tolerance—enforced or otherwise—is worth. Secularism is a cross to which the minorities and secularists want to nail the Hindus. It is time they realize the enormity of their intolerance—and crime.

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Accupuncture origin in Ayurveda

Author: K. Kannan

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In what could bring about a change in the current perception of Ayurveda, a practising Ayurvedic doctor from Haldwani has claimed that the roots of Chinese acupuncture are to be found in this ancient Indian science.

According to Dr. Binod Kumar Joshi, who has been conducting research for some years now on the undisclosed subjects of the ancient treatise ``Sushrut Samhita'' , there was perfect corroboration between ``Marmas'', vital energy points in the body, and acupuncture points.

Along with his colleagues -- Dr. Ram Lal Shah and Dr. Geeta Joshi -- Dr. Joshi has been working on this for quite some time now. While interpreters have thus far said that the ``marmas'' were masses of tissue surrounding vital organs, they actually represented the stimulating points that contained the vital force, the trio claim.

In acupuncture, it is believed, there are channels and meridians that traverse the body along certain important points that hold the vital energy. The three doctors now claim that these are very well described in ``Sushrut Samhita'' in exactly the same manner. Their significance was, however, lost due to wrong interpretation and translation of Sanskrit texts, he said.

In the Capital recently to share his findings, Dr. Joshi said they stumbled on this discovery when they found that the size of the heart described in the ancient text does not match its real size as described by modern science. In fact, it was quite small, almost representing a point. The same was true of other organs as well as was revealed in their study.

Ayurveda, therefore, seems to hold a mirror to a holistic health management system with the vital points, or ``dhamnis'', controlling the body mechanism and its functions. Together with the ``siras'', which number around 700 and were akin to the various other microscopic points of acupuncture, they represented the vital energy flow.

``Earlier, it was thought that the ``dhamnis'' and the ``siras'' represent arteries and veins and, therefore, whenever a damage used to occur, the first move was to preserve the concerned tissue. But then, these are actually the channels and meridians controlling the vital energy flow,'' Dr. Joshi said.

According to the practitioner, the 107 ``marmas'' described in the ``Sushrut Samhita'' were the topographical points of the inner vital organs. These ``marmas'' were important groups of ``siras'' and not just tissues to be saved during surgical operations.

``Our conclusion is that the ``Sushrut Samhita'' is the base of the so-called Chinese acupuncture. It is actually the `Siravedhan of Sushrut', he argued, adding that their research could shed light on the as-yet unexplained theories of Ayurveda as well as acupuncture.

The trio also claim that even the approach to Ayurveda will change as a result of this discovery. They are publishing their research in the form of a book which is to be published by Motilal Banarasidas. ``We

are practising these theories on patients with wonderful results", Dr. Joshi says.

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Upanishads and the Universe

By Hiranmay Karlekar
August 22 2003

In his absorbing book Uncommon Wisdom: Conversations-with Remarkable People, Fritzof Capra, talks of an after-dinner conversation in Berkeley, the United States, among him, his wife Jacqueline, the designer of the Bell helicopter, Arthur Young, his wife, Ruth, the head of the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratories and an outstanding physicist, Dr Geoffrey Chew, his wife Denyse. The subject was the notion of certainty in science. As Chew showed that the successive examples of scientific facts presented by Young were really approximate notions, Young cried out in frustration, "Look, here are absolute facts. There are six people sitting around this table right now and this is absolutely true." Chew said, smiling gently at Denyse, who was pregnant then, "I don't know Arthur. Who can tell precisely where one person begins and the other ends?"

Wrote the English poet, John Donne, "No man is an island, entire of itself; / Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main./ Any man's death diminishes me because / I am involved in mankind; and therefore/ Never send to know for whom the/ bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Geoffrey Chew, and John Donne spoke of interconnectedness of human beings. The Upanishad's propounded the concept of an inter-connected world as a part of an inter-connected cosmos. The common presence of the Brahman or the Universal Consciousness linked all things, animate and inanimate. It created and put itself into everything which, as a result, was its manifestation and, therefore, sacred and had to be treated according to the principles of Dharma.

Says the Isha Upanishad, "He who sees all beings in the self, and the / self in all beings, hates none/ To the illumined soul, the self is all./

"For he who sees everywhere oneness, how/ Can there be delusion or grief?" (Translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Frederick Manchester).

The Brahman, unborn and deathless, invisible, without colour and formless, one and without a second, was present in human beings as the Atman or the individual self, whose attributes were identical to those of the Brahman. More, the essence of the Atman and all other things was the same. Thus in the Chandogya Upanishad, the sage Uddaloka Aruni asks his son, Svetaketu Aruneya, to bring the fruit of a banyan (nyayagrodha) tree. He then makes him get the seeds out by breaking the fruit, and break the seeds into invisible parts, and says,

"Good lad, on this subtle part-the/ subtle part you do not see-rests the great banyan tree. Good lad, have faith.

"This subtle part is what all this has as self. It is the truth; it is the self. You are that Svetaketu." (Translated by Valeric J Roebuck).

Earlier, Uddaloka Aruni had talked of "this great tree" pervaded "by the life, by the self" that stood "happy, ever drinking", and added, "When separated from the life, it dies, but the life does not die. This subtle part is what all this has as self. It is truth. It is the self."(Roebuck).

If the self, that is life, identical with the Brahman of which it is a part, is consciousness, are these subtle parts repositories of consciousness? Is consciousness life? Is life the common presence in cosmos? If so, where do inanimate objects, obviously a part of the cosmos, fit? Is life inherent in matter? The Upanishadic concept of the all-pervasiveness and nature of Brahman was intuitive. The sages whose wisdom the Upanishad's embody, had neither the accumulated corpus of knowledge nor the analytical tools and equipment for observation and experimentation that scientists the 18th century onwards had at their disposal. The question arises: To what extent is their intuitive vision borne out by modern science, which originated in the West in the post-Renaissance period?

The seventeenth century saw the demolition of the concept of a living universe, that was based on the application of Aristotelian system of logic to Christian theology, within an epistemic framework that has historically come to be known as the scholastic, and that had subordinated the temporal to the spiritual, reason to faith. What took its place was the Newtonian idea of a mechanistic, law-governed universe that functioned eternally according to its own gravitation-based dynamics and had nothing to do with any kind of divine or spiritual entity. So great was the prestige of Isaac Newton, whose landmark discoveries of the working of nature led to its emergence, and so much in harmony with it was with the post-Renaissance humanist Weltanschauung with its emphasis on the supremacy of reason and relegation of the spiritual and religious, that it influenced thinking in almost every sphere of knowledge, the most striking example being the Marxian emphasis on the inexorable laws of a dialectically unfolding history.

It took its first major knock when the second law of thermodynamics, enunciated in the 19th century by Rudolph Clausius and Lord Kelvin, stated that there was an inexorable loss of thermal energy in the universe as disorders measured in terms of entropy had a natural tendency to increase in closed systems. There was, therefore, an inexorable, movement towards "death" from loss of heat. Another knock came in 1897 when Joseph John Thompson discovered a fundamental particle smaller than the atom, called it the electron, and inaugurated the chapter of particle physics. Niels Bohr's theory of Complimentarity showed that a phenomenon could be viewed in two mutually exclusive ways, both valid in their own terms. Max Planck showed that like matter, energy existed in particles or packets or quanta, and Louis de Broglie that sub-atomic particles-even atoms-could sometimes behave as waves. Erwin Schroedinger mathematically proved the existence of De Broglie's waves and that electrons were a kind of matter waves-and Max Born that what Schroedinger showed was not an electron but its statistically possible location because some electrons could go through a barrier, some could not. And then Werner Heisenberg's famous Uncertainty Principle showed that the exact position and the precise location of an electron could not be simultaneously determined, nor could one be certain where an electron would go if hit. Albert Einstein doubtless rejected the Uncertainty Principle but his Theory of Relativity viewed space and time as a continuum and implied that the universe looked different from different places.

Whatever the differences among the scientists, the tumultuous developments of 1920s shook the foundations of Newtonian physics, which believed that all physical phenomena could be reduced to solid material particles. The solid particles are now seen to turn, at the sub-atomic level, into wave-like patterns of probabilities of inter-connections among parts of a unified whole. If this leads one back to the Upanishadic concept of an interlinked universe, a new dimension has been added to the discourse by Ilya Prigogine, the well known physicist and Islabelle Stengers, a chemist, philosopher and historian of science, who show, in their book Order out of Chaos that while some parts of the universe may operate as separate, closed systems of the Newtonian type, most parts-particularly biological and social systems-function as open ones exchanging energy and matter with their environment. Besides, all systems have subsystems which are constantly fluctuating and sometimes reach a "bifurcation point" when they disintegrate into "chaos" or reorganise themselves into new, higher levels of order, and it is impossible to predict which course it will take.

Prigogine and Stenger's efforts to include social and biological systems into the study of the universe indicates that the latter is a living whole which cannot be understood in terms of physics alone, that scientists are a part of the phenomenon they observe. This is in keeping with the holistic approach which has gained an irreversible momentum with the coming of age of the life and environmental sciences which posit a living, interlinked and interdependent world where life is latent in all matter. We are again back to the Upanishads according to which life of the atman pervades everything.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Jesus Lived in India
By Holger Kersten



Thus begins Holger Kersten's book "Jesus Lived in India". This German book is a thorough, methodical and authoritative examination of the evidence of Christ's life beyond the Middle East before the Crucifixion and in India and elsewhere after it. This article is a summary of Kersten's exhaustive research into Christ's travels after the Crucifixion, his arrival in India with the Mother Mary and finally his death and entombment in Kashmir. Kersten notes the many parallels of Christ's teachings with other religious and cultural traditions and suggests that at least some of these figures may have been one and the same personality. It is not possible, Kersten asserts, to disprove that Christ went to India. The current information documenting Christ's life is restricted to the gospels and the work of Church theologians. One can hardly trust these sources to be objective considering their obvious interest in maintaining the authority of their Church and its grip on the masses.

The Russian scholar, Nicolai Notovich, was the first to suggest that Christ may have gone to India. In 1887, Notovich, a Russian scholar and Orientalist, arrived in Kashmir during one of several journeys to the Orient. At the Zoji-la pass Notovich was a guest in a Buddhist monastery, where a monk told him of the bhodisattva saint called "Issa". Notovich was stunned by the remarkable parallels of Issa's teachings and martyrdom with that of Christ's life, teachings and crucifixion.

For about sixteen years, Christ travelled through Turkey, Persia, Western Europe and possibly England. He finally arrived with Mary to a place near Kashmir, where she died. After many years in Kashmir, teaching to an appreciative population, who venerated him as a great prophet, reformer and saint, he died and was buried in a tomb in Kashmir itself. The first step in Christ's trail after the Crucifixion is found in the Persian scholar F. Mohammed's historical work "Jami-ut-tuwarik" which tells of Christ's arrival in the kingdom of Nisibis, by royal invitation. (Nisibis is today known as Nusaybin in Turkey) . This is reiterated in the Imam Abu Jafar Muhammed's "Tafsi-Ibn-i-Jamir at-tubri." Kersten found that in both Turkey and Persia there are ancient stories of a saint called "Yuz Asaf" ("Leader of the Healed"), whose behaviour, miracles and teachings are remarkably similar to that of Christ.

The many Islamic and Hindu historical works recording local history and legends of kings, noblemen and saints of the areas thought to be travelled by Jesus also give evidence of a Christ like man; the Koran, for example, refers to Christ as "Issar". Further east, the Kurdish tribes of Eastern Anatolia have several stories describing Christ's stay in Eastern Turkey after his resurrection. These traditional legends have been ignored by the theological community. Kersten

also suggests that prior to Christ's mission in the Middle East, he may have been exposed to Buddhist teachings in Egypt. After his birth in Bethlehem, his family fled to Egypt to avoid Herod's persecution. Surprisingly some scholars now acknowledge that Buddhist schools probably existed in Alexandria long before the Christian era.

More clues are drawn from the Apocrypha. These are texts said to have been written by the Apostles but which are not officially accepted by the Church. Indeed, the Church regards them as heresy since a substantial amount of the Apocrypha directly contradicts Church dogma and theology. The Apocryphal 'Acts of Thomas', for example, tell how Christ met Thomas several times after the Crucifixion. In fact they tell us how Christ sent Thomas to teach his spirituality in India. This is corroborated by evidence found in the form of stone inscriptions at Fatehpur Sikri, near the Taj Mahal, in Northern India. They include "Agrapha", which are sayings of Christ that don't exist in the mainstream Bible. Their grammatical form is most similar to that of the Apocryphal gospel of Thomas. This is but one example giving credibility to the idea that texts not recognised by the Church hold important clues about Christ's true life and his teachings.

In tracing Christ's movements to India and beyond, Kersten also discovered that many of his teachings, which have been gradually edited out of the modern Bible were originally Eastern in nature. Principles such as karma and re-incarnation, for example, were common knowledge then, and seem to have been reaffirmed by Christ. Imagine the implications that this discovery holds for Western Christianity and its churches, who have kept Christ in their doctrinal top pockets and have constrained the entire Western culture within the narrow teachings of blind faith, organised religion and original sin!

Further clues are cited from The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas, and the Gospel of Thomas which are of Syrian origin and have been dated to the 4th Century AD, or possibly earlier. They are Gnostic Scriptures and despite the evidence indicating their authenticity, they are not given credence by mainstream theologians. In these texts Thomas tells of Christ's appearance in Andrapolis, Paphlagonia (today known as in the extreme north of Anatolia) as a guest of the King of Andrappa. There he met with Thomas who had arrived separately. It is at Andrapolis that Christ entreated Thomas to go to India to begin spreading his teachings. It seems that Christ and Mary then moved along the West coast of Turkey, proof of this could be an old stopping place for travellers called the "Home of Mary", found along the ancient silk route. From here Christ could easily have entered Europe via France. He may have even travelled as far as the British Isles, for in England there is an ancient oak tree called the "Hallowed Tree" which (says local legend) was planted by Christ himself.

In his travels through Persia (today's Iran) Christ became known as Yuz Asaf (leader of the Healed). We know this because a Kashmiri historical document confirms that Isa (the Koranic name for Christ) was in fact also known as Yuz Asaf. The Jami - uf - Tamarik, Volume II, tells that Yuz Asaf visited Masslige, where he attended the grave of Shem, Noah's son. There are various other accounts such as Agha Mustafa's "Awhali Shahaii-i-paras" that tell of Yuz Asaf's travels and teachings all over Persia. It seems that Yuz Asaf blessed Afghanistan and Pakistan with his presence also. There are for example two plains in Eastern Afghanistan near Gazni and Galalabad, bearing the name of the prophet Yuz Asaf. Again in the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas, Thomas says that he and Christ attended the Court of King Gundafor of Taxila (now Pakistan), in about 47AD, and that eventually both the King and his brother accepted Christ's teachings.

Kersten claims that there are more than twenty one historical documents that bear witness to the existence of Jesus in Kashmir, where he was known also as Yuz Asaf and Issa. For example the Bhavishyat Mahapurana (volume 9 verses 17-32) contains an account of Issa-Masih (Jesus the Messiah). It describes Christ's arrival in the Kashmir region of India and his encounter with King Shalivahana, who ruled the Kushan area (39-50AD), and who entertained Christ as a guest for some time.

{Christ's life in India, after the crucifixion, challenges current Church teachings at their very foundation. The theology of Saint Paul, the major influence on modern Christianity, is empty fanaticism in the light of this discovery.

The historian Mullah Nadini (1413) also recounts a story of Yuz Asaf who was a contemporary to King Gopadatta, and confirms that he also used the name Issar, ie. Jesus. There is also much historical truth in the towns and villages of Northern India to prove that Jesus and his mother Mary spent time in the area. For instance, at the border of a small town called Mari, there is nearby a mountain called Pindi Point, upon which is an old tomb called Mai Mari da Asthan or "The final resting place of Mary". The tomb is said to be very old and local Muslims venerate it as the grave of Issa's (ie Christ's) Mother. The tomb itself is oriented East-West consistent with the Jewish tradition, despite the fact it is within a Muslim area. Assuming its antiquity, such a tomb could not be Hindu either since the Hindus contemporary to Christ cremated their dead and scattered their ashes as do Hindus today.

Following Christ's trail into Kashmir, 40km south of Srinagar, between the villages of Naugam and Nilmge is a meadow called Yuz-Marg (the meadow of Yuz Asaf, ie. Jesus). Then there is the sacred building called Aish Muqam, 60km south east of Srinagar and 12km from Bij Bihara. "Aish" says Kersten is derived from "Issa" and "Muqam" place of rest or repose. Within the Aish Muqam is a sacred relic called the 'Moses Rod' or the 'Jesus Rod', which local legend says, belonged to Moses himself. Christ is said to also have held it, perhaps to confirm his Mosaic heritage. Above the town of Srinagar is a temple known as "The Throne of Solomon", which dates back to at least 1000BC, which King Gopadatta had restored at about the same time as Christ's advent. The restoration was done by a Persian architect who personally left four inscriptions on the side steps of the temple. The third and fourth inscription read: "At this time Yuz Asaf announced his prophetic calling in Year 50 and 4" and "He is Jesus -- Prophet of the Sons of Israel"! Herein lies a powerful confirmation of Kersten's theory. Kersten suggests that Christ may have travelled to the South of India also, finally returning to Kashmir to die at the age of approximately 80 years. Christ's tomb, says Kersten, lies in Srinagar's old town in a building called Rozabal. "Rozabal" is an abbreviation of Rauza Bal, meaning "tomb of a prophet". At the entrance there is an inscription explaining that Yuz Asaf is buried along with another Moslem saint. Both have gravestones which are oriented in North-South direction, according to Moslem tradition. However, through a small opening the true burial chamber can be seen, in which there is the Sarcophagus of Yuz Asaf in East-West (Jewish) orientation!

According to Professor Hassnain, who has studied this tomb, there are carved footprints on the grave stones and when closely examined, carved images of a crucifix and a rosary. The footprints of Yuz Asaf have what appear to be scars represented on both feet, if one assumes that they are crucifixion scars, then their position is consistent with the scars shown in the Turin Shroud (left foot nailed over right). Crucifixion was not practised in Asia, so it is quite possible that they were

inflicted elsewhere, such as the Middle East. The tomb is called by some as "Hazrat Issa Sahib" or "Tomb of the Lord Master Jesus". Ancient records acknowledge the existence of the tomb as long ago as 112AD. The Grand Mufti, a prominent Muslim Cleric, himself has confirmed that Hazrat Isa Sahib is indeed the tomb of Yuz Asaf!

Thus Kersten deduces that the tomb of Jesus Christ Himself is in Kashmir!

he implications of Kersten's discovery are monumental. Christ's life in India, after the crucifixion, challenges current Church teachings at their very foundation. The theology of Saint Paul, the major influence on modern Christianity, is empty fanaticism in the light of this discovery. Threatened also are the doctrines of obedience to the Church, original sin, salvation through blind faith and the non-existence of reincarnation, etc. Yet these ideas underlie the morality and ethics, (or lack of them), that govern the entire Western social structure, from the legal system to medical health care schemes. It is no wonder that the modern Churches and their secular interests refuse to consider such a proposition as Kersten's!

The Synopsis of "Jesus Lived In India" by Holger Kersten was written by Dr Ramesh Manocha & Anna Potts.
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Denigrating Savarkar is to insult patriotism

Author: Shyam Khosla
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Uncalled for and unnecessary controversy over the unveiling of Veer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's portrait in the Central Hall of Parliament by President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam last week has deeply hurt all patriotic Indians. It is an ungrateful nation that fails to remember its heroes. It is not a case of not honouring our freedom fighters but worse. Opposition parties and a section of the leftist media are denigrating the great freedom fighter. Cooked up allegations that have been exposed, time and again, as half-truths and blatant lies have been fished out by the these elements to malign the great patriot who underwent grave hardships and is a source of inspiration to generations of Indians. The critics launched a media campaign to dissuade the President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam from unveiling Savarkar's portrait in the Central Hall of Parliament. Opposition leaders wrote letters to the President informing him of their decision to abstain from the ceremony and requesting him to reconsider his decision to associate himself with the ceremony that, one of them alleged, aimed at "re-inventing Savarkar as a national hero".

Things might have taken an ugly turn if a leftist like K.R. Naryanan was in the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Only three years ago, Narayanan sat over the Prime Minister's proposal to posthumously award Bharat Ratna to Veer Savarkar. In an obvious bid to avoid yet another stand off with the Head of the State bent upon embarrassing the NDA Government on every conceivable occasion, the Prime Minister kept the dispute under wraps and let the matter rest. It is a tribute to the vision and nationalistic fervour of President Kalam that he refused to be influenced by the motivated campaign spearheaded by the Communists and their friends in the media. He insisted on going to the Central Hall to perform one of his sacred duties. In addition to top BJP leaders, Vice President Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar and Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Najma Heptulla were among the dignitaries present on the occasion. Conspicuous by their absence were the leader of the Opposition, Sonia Gandhi, and Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha, P.M. Sayeed. They owe an explanation to the nation for showing disrespect to the great patriot.

Opposition parties' backtracking and launching an attack on Savarkar is reprehensible. CPM leader Somnath Chatterjee, Congress leaders Shivraj Patil and Pranab Mukherjee were present in the meeting of the parliamentary committee that took the decision to install a portrait of Savarkar in the Central Hall. The decision was by consensus. No one raised any objection to the proposal. Somnath Chatterjee did ask whether there was any room left for another portrait in the Central Hall to which the Speaker's response was that there was a niche near the entrance. CPM leader did not question the core issue - honouring Savarkar. As an afterthought, the Communist parties and the Congress chose to carry on a campaign of calumny against the great patriot. A political commentator writing in a leading English-language daily says the move to honour Savarkar is an attempt to "whitewash" his role role in the conspiracy behind the Mahatama's assassination. The gentleman is dishing out half-truths. The prosecution had no evidence against Savarkar barring approver Digamber Bagde's statement that he heard Savarkar wishing Godse all success in his mission. The court did not believe him. While all other accused were punished the court honourably acquitted Savarkar of the conspiracy charge. The prosecution did not challenge the special court's decision in the high court. The Government of the day

thought its purpose in implicating the Hindu Maha Sabha leader in the case had been served. How right it was. The mud slinging continues even after the great patriot is dead.

Savarkar's daring escape from the ship in which he was being brought to India as a prisoner is a saga of India's freedom struggle. Congress MPs, Violet and Joachim Alva wrote to Savarkar on February 5, 1966, "We humbly salute your unforgettable daring achievement - swimming the ocean and regaining freedom - will be long cherished in the pages of freedom struggle". Is Sonia Gandhi aware that her mother in law had in 1980 written a letter on the occasion of the great patriot's birth anniversary saying, "Veer Savarkar's daring defiance of the British Government has its own important place in the annals of our freedom movement". The great revolutionary doesn't need a certificate of patriotism from Sonia Gandhi who fled to Italy during the Bangladesh war and didn't apply for Indian citizenship for years after she married Rajiv Gandhi and resided in the Prime Minister's house.

Much is being made of Veer Savarkar's mercy petition to the British Government in 1913 during his incarceration in the Andaman Islands. Bipin Chandra and his group of "eminent" historians, who have raised the issue time and again, may please note that Savarkar petitioned the British not once but eight times between 1911 and 1920 to secure his release from jail. He was no satyagrahi who would not mind spending his entire life in jail waiting for British rulers' change of heart. Revolutionary-turned-Satyagrahi Bhagat Singh had decided to court arrest to propagate his vision. There is no point in comparing the two. Savarkar was a revolutionary and wanted to get out of jail by hook or crook to join the freedom movement. The British rulers knew him better than our "eminent historians". Declassified documents placed in the National Archives show what the British thought of Savarkar and his petition. The British Home Secretary Macpherson's note on Savarkar's petition is revealing. He wrote thus, "It will be dangerous for the British Empire to release Savarkar. His pleas are a ruse to get out of the jail. Once out, he will organise an underground movement against the British. I, therefore, reject the petition on the ground that it will be a danger to public safety". Our "eminent" historians know that tactics do play a role in a freedom struggle. They are not against Savarkar per se but against his philosophy of Hindutava. They are denigrating Savarkar today, tomorrow they may do the same to Shivaji - another icon of Hindutava - who sought mercy from the enemy whenever pushed to a corner but fought back and carried on his campaign for freedom once he was out of the enemy's claws.

It will not be out of place to recall the role of the Communists during the freedom struggle. The CPI, as in well known, supported the colonial rulers' war effort after Germany attacked Soviet Union - the fatherland of all Communists. File No. 7/15/42-Pol (I) is available in the National Archives. It contains a confidential memorandum running into more than 100 pages submitted by CPI Secretary P.C. Joshi to the British Government narrating the role the party played in exposing the "fifth columnists". And who were the fifth columnists, CPI exposed? Senior leaders of the Congress Socialist Party and the Forward block, including Ram Manohar Lohia, Jai Prakash Narain and Achhut Patwardhan. And they have the cheeks to question Savarkar's patriotism!

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Swami Ram Tirath:The Unfettered Thinker

K. K. Khullar

http://www.indiagov.org/perspec/nov99/swami.htm

Swami Ram Tirath was a modern Yogi who gave a new meaning to Vedanta and inspired the youth of India to rise above material wants. He brought a new cheer to the suffering millions. "The highest gift you confer on man is to offer him knowledge", he said. "You may feed a man today, but he will be just as hungry tomorrow. Teach him an art and you will enable him to earn his living all his life." Born in 1873 in a village called Muraliwala (now in Pakistan), he opted for his watery grave while meditating in the Ganges at the age of thirty-three in the hills of Garhwal, in the present Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. According to Puran Singh, his biographer, Vedas were written by men like him.

His father, Hiranand Gosain, was a priest in the temple of the village. The child Tirath Ram was extremely sensitive. His speech was bird-like. He smiled like a babe in his sleep, a smile which he retained till his death. The soothsayers had predicted that the child would be a great scholar and bring glory to his Motherland. Brought up in abject poverty, he considered poverty a blessing. Even when he rose to the dizzy heights of popularity, he remained poor. He stood for renunciation. Like the Sufis of the yore, he possessed nothing and nothing possessed him except the name of God.

A Professor of mathematics at Lahore, a chance meeting with Swami Vivekananda changed the course of his life, He stood for the universal education of girls, as he believed that God resides in the hearts of women. "Neglecting the education of women and children and the labouring classes is like cutting down the branches that are supporting us, nay, it is like striking a death-blow to the roots of the tree of nationality." He presaged Gandhi in a number of ways, the most important being his concept of *Ahimsa* and *Dharma*. *Dharma* is not religion, it is a way of righteousness. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Swami Rama's teachings have got to be propagated. He was one of the greatest souls not only of India but of the whole world. I adore his ideals." His ideals symbolized the wisdom of India. Very few people know that Swami Ram Tirath had predicted one hundred years ago that the 21st century would be India's century and that India would regain its glory and position for the onward march of civilization. Like Buddha, he propagated that the greatest sin was ignorance and the greatest virtue was knowledge.

Schooled by Christian Missionaries and educated at the Forman Christian College, Lahore, Tirath Ram obtained his Masters in Mathematics from Government College, Lahore, with distinction. A favourite student of Prof. Gilberton, he took the latter's classes when he was severely ill. Mathematics was music to him. He wanted to serve God through mathematics. While speaking on Mathematics at Amritsar he met a scholar named Narayan Swami who became his disciple. The

disciple later became Swami's first biographer. In November, 1897, he met Swami Vivekananda in Lahore.

During the summer vacations he used to visit Rishikesh where a dip in the Ganges would make him ecstatic. For hours on end, he would immerse himself in the waters of the Ganges. With each dip he discovered a new vision, a new life. It is here that he found answers to most of his questions. He wandered among the hills, moved among the snows, sat on the highest peaks and thought and read and wrote. His 'Jalwa-i-Kobisar' (The Spectacle of Mountains) in Urdu is the greatest invocation of a poet to the Goddess of Mountains.

In 1899, he resigned from his job at the Government College, Lahore, and announced his decision to explore the jungles of the Himalayas as a mystic. And one day he renounced the world. The scene at the Lahore Railway Station, where thousands had come to see him off, was a moving one. One of those who had come to see him off was Dr. Mohamad Iqbal, his colleague at the Government College. "Tirath Ram, don't go, reconsider your decision", he said. But Professor Tirath Ram had made his decision. It is only in the lap of the Himalayas that he found real peace, spiritual bliss and intellectual enlightenment. It is here that he blossomed and achieved greater perfection. It is here that Professor Tirath Ram became Swami Ram Tirath, the Punjabi monk who gave a new message to his countrymen.

According to Puran Singh, another biographer of Swamiji, Vedas were written by men like him. "Vedanta shows you that your happiness is your own business. Realize the truth and you are free. According to Vedanta, your soul is not impure or sinful by nature."

Puran Singh had met Swamiji in Japan in 1902. He arranged there a series of lectures by Swamiji which evoked tremendous applause. In fact, they were not lectures but divine expressions of a rare soul exalted by suffering. He did not belong to any organized religion. Religion for him was morality - a theme that Gandhi developed later.

This is how Prof. Takakushtra, Head of the Sanskrit Department, University of Tokyo, described him, "I have met many pundits and philosophers at the house of Professor Max Mueller in England and at other places, but I have never seen a personality like Swami Ram, who is a living and significant illustration of his whole philosophy. In him both Vedanta and Buddhism meet. His is the true religion. He is a true poet and philosopher."

And a poet he certainly was, not only in English but also in Urdu. He wrote about a hundred poems in English and a hundred-and-fifty in Urdu. A collection of his poems was published with an introduction by no less a person than C.F. Andrews.

What care for caste or creed
It is the deed, it is the deed,
What for class and what for clan
It is the man, it is the man,
What for crown and what for the crest
It is the heart within the breast.

When Swami Ram Tirath left Tokyo for San Francisco, a Japanese Buddhist remarked, "I see his smile still floating in the air like plum flowers." A Japanese lady remarked, "He has imparted

fragrance to our colourless flowers." Puran Singh in his 'The Story of Rama' narrates several such instances of Ram's popularity in Japan.

He stayed in the United States for two years. The Americans listened to him. When Ram chanted the word "*OM*" many Americans felt they were lifted from the earth. "I swam in the air as a figure of light", said an American lady. "His presence is divine. I felt as if I were the mother of the universe, all the countries were mine and all nations were my own children." A lady whose only child died went to Swamiji for solace. Pointing to a Negro boy, Ram said, "Mother, take him and love him as your own". He met President Roosevelt, by sheer chance, at Shasta Springs on May 20, 1903. Mrs. Welman published Swami's dialogues and letters. They run into eight volumes of four hundred pages each. Titled 'In Woods of God's Realization' these thoughts have provided solace to tens of thousands of readers all over the world.

Swami Ram Tirath stood for knowledge and the total eradication of ignorance and superstitions. His Vedanta is not confined to the man of the mountains. It also embraces the man of the world. He stood for the freedom of thought and independence in thinking. "Independent thinking", he said, "is looked upon in India as a heresy, nay, as the worst among crimes. Whatever comes from a dead language is sacred." Giving a clarion call to his countrymen he said, "Beloved orthodox people of India, put into force the *Shastras* (religious texts) aright. The *Dharma* of the country demands that you relax the stringent caste rules and subordinate sharp class, distinctions to national fellow-feeling. "

According to Lala Hardyal, a freedom fighter, Swami Ram Tirath was the greatest Hindu who ever came to America. Writing from the United States in 1911, he said, "In this part of the country there are many persons who lovingly cherish the memory of Swami Ram Tirath. They tell how he lived like a true ascetic and won the hearts of villagers in the mountain valleys of California. He was a real saint and a sage whose life mirrored the highest principles of Hindu spirituality as his soul respected the love of the universal spirit which he tried to realize."

And yet he said, "My religion is not Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Catholicism or Protestantism, but it is hostile to none. The overlapping area covered by the sun, the stars, the rivers, gravity, mind and body, this is the field of my religion. Are there any Presbyterian lilies? Are there any Methodist landscapes? ... My religion is a religion without a name. It is the religion of nature. I call it the Common Path."

He returned to India in December 1904. On the way, he halted in Egypt where he addressed his audiences in mosques in Persian and Arabic. When he talked of the ancient civilization of Egypt, the Egyptians looked upon him as one of themselves. From Bombay he went straight to the hills, spending a few days in Mathura and Vrindavan. In November, 1905, he selected a place called Vyasa Ashram at a height of 12, 500 feet for his meditation. Here he meditated and wrote his books. In February, 1906, he set up Vashist Ashram, which afforded a panoramic view of the lofty peaks of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Yamunotri and, above all, Mount Kailash.

On October 17, 1906, Swamiji went for a bath in the Ganges. It was a Diwali day (a day considered auspicious in the Hindu calendar). Swami Ram Tirath sat in the lap of Mother Ganga in the pose of a *Samadhi*. His body floated in that pose and returned floating after on week to the very spot from where he had taken a dip. It was still in the state of a *Samadhi*, with arms and feet

crossed. The bier was entrusted to the holy waters where his soul found the eternal bliss.

When Mohamad Iqbal learnt about the end of his friend's earthly journey, he wept. In his immortal poem, on Swami Ram Tirath, he compared him to a pearl among the shells on the seashore of knowledge, a sun among the stars.

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Nalanda - The Ancient City of Knowledge

By PRANAV KHULLAR

http://www.newsindia-times.com/national36.htm

Nalanda, like Rome, was not built in a day. It took several centuries to evolve, diversify and extend its civilizing influence not only to all corners of the country but to lands as distant as China, Japan, Malaysia, Java, Sumatra, Korea, Nepal and Tibet. Originally a mango-grove called Pavarika in the village Bargoan in Bihar, the place was sanctified by the Sakyamuni (Gautam Buddha) himself when the Enlightened One broke journey here to halt and rest, not once but several times. Ashoka built a Vihara (monastery) here and Harsha made it possible for a thousand scholars to delve deep into a hundred disciplines everyday in its numerous halls and more numerous temples.

Contemporary eye-witness accounts testify that there were so many Viharas around Nalanda, Rajgriha and Vikramsila that the whole area was called Bihara, from which the present day Indian state of Bihar derives its name. The transformation of Nalanda Vihara into the Nalanda university was the result of a rich heritage which helped it become an international center of education and culture. Nalanda stood for freedom in learning, thought, expression and action.

This heritage was both non-Buddhist and Buddhist. While the former included the Vedas and the Puranas, the latter consisted of works such as Vinay Pitaka, Dhammapada, Abhidhamma and Majhima Nikaya, with excellent commentaries by scholars such as Nagarjuna, Maiteriya, Asanga, Vasubandhu and Dinnaga, who defined and refined Buddhism in its various facets and dispensations. Nalanda, therefore, honoured thought and men of thought in the best of Indian traditions.

Nalanda was a residential university like so many others in those times, such as Taxila, Ujjaini, Vallabhi, Vikramsila and Amravati.

Yet, it was a university with a difference. The Gate Keepers of Nalanda were scholars of the highest repute, well versed in their subjects and drawn from the best in the country to examine the fresh entrants at the Gate itself. This was a novel method of ‘Entrance Examination’ and deserves admiration when we consider the historical context of Nalanda’s period.

The Gate Examination was very tough. Seven or eight scholars out of every ten were unsuccessful. So the scholars came to the gates of Nalanda again and again, till they were selected. It must have been an extraordinary spectacle to see these scholars, from all parts of the world assemble at Nalanda seeking admission. Merit alone was the criteria and even the Vice Chancellor had no discretion.

There are records of instances where scholars either belonging to or patronized by royal families were rejected, in spite of the fact that the expenses of Nalanda were met with from royal grants of village revenues. There is evidence that the revenues of several villages were granted to Nalanda, for the maintenance of its hostels and the administration of its temples and Viharas.

Several Chinese scholars and monks visited, studied and taught at Nalanda. Their memoirs are a rich and authentic source for the reconstruction of academic life at Nalanda. According to one such scholar-monk, I-Tsing, the minimum age for admission to Nalanda was 20 years. This indicates that scholars who had already passed out from some other university were admitted to Nalanda to pursue higher knowledge.

We also have the evidence from Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim who came to Nalanda in the days of the "Good King" Harsha. He confirms that "learned men from different cities, who desire to acquire renown in discussion, come (to Nalanda) in multitudes to settle their doubts." The Gate-Keepers of Nalanda were in fact, the Gate-Keepers of India's knowledge, her culture and heritage. Anyone was welcome for an open discussion on any aspect of religion, philosophy, law and life.

To be admitted to this great center of learning was a matter of great pride and prestige. Its multi-disciplinary approach to learning attracted students from far off lands. Although the subject of theology was compulsory, Nalanda was not a sectarian or a religious university imparting only Buddhist thought; other subjects were taught as fervently.

Almost all sciences, including the science of medicine were taught. So were the Upanishads and the Vedas. Panini's grammar, the science of pronunciation (Phonetics), etymology, Indology and Yoga were all included in the curricula. Surprisingly, even archery was taught. Hiuen Tsang himself learnt Yogasastra from Jayasena. When King Harsha requested Shilabhadra to send four learned scholars to Orissa to debate with the heretics, Hiuen Tsang was chosen to be one of them.

Hiuen Tsang, who stayed at the university for 17 years, first as a student and later as a professor under the Master, Shilabhadra, came to India via the Gobi desert and entered Kashmir through the Himalayas.

At Nalanda, he was received at the Gate with a thousand lamps, his erudition and reputation having travelled faster than him. Here he studied to obtain the degree of Master of Law and became the Vice-Principal of this great University. The head of the University was called 'Pandita' and Shilabhadra occupied this position when Hieun Tsang came to join as a student. In no time, the new entrant rose in the estimates of Shilabhadra who sent him out on difficult assignments involving long and perilous journeys.

According to Hieun Tsang's description, the daily schedule at Nalanda was packed with rituals. The day began with a call for the morning bath. It seems that a morning bath was compulsory for every inmate; at least it was obligatory to bathe at the prescribed hour. The bath was followed by the ablution of the holy image of Buddha, by furnishing heaps of flowers and incense, a fairly prolonged ritual accompanied by recitation of stotras and singing of hymns. Afterwards, the inmates had their meagre breakfast.

Thereafter, they went to their respective halls for discussion. In the afternoon, another ritual called 'Caitya Vandana' was held, wherein priests assembled at the main mate of the monastery and

sang songs in praise of Sakyamuni. They could go out in the evenings and the night was meant for repose.

Knowledge of Sanskrit was essential and it meant having a complete mastery over Sanskrit grammar, literature and correct pronunciation. The method of teaching was tutorial followed by discussions.

Listening to the discussions was education. It is extraordinary that the discussions continued throughout the day and, indeed, the night. Nalanda scholars never tired of discussions; rather, they welcomed them. Hieun Tsang was deeply impressed with the discipline at Nalanda. In its existence of about 700 years at the time of his visit, there had not been a single case of any strike or disturbance or even commotion (except intellectual ferment) at the University. Besides, there were discourses open to all where all subjects from life to death were discussed.

According to I-Tsing: “They arrange every day about hundred pulpits for preaching, and the students attend these discourses without fail, even for a minute.” There was no writing work for Nalanda scholars except the copying of manuscripts and texts. It may be recalled that both Hiuen Tsang and I-Tsing carried huge loads of such texts back to China upon their return.

Nalanda was an example of the Guru-Shishya parampara, a great Indian tradition. The authority of the Guru teacher) over the shishya (student) was absolute, and yet, dissent was permitted in academic matters. The tradition, although going back thousands of years, flourished at Nalanda more than elsewhere.

Describing the Guru-Shishya relationship, I-Tsing says: “He (Shishya) goes to the teacher at the first watch and at the last watch in the night. First the teacher bids him to sit down comfortably. Selecting some passages from Tripatakas, he gives a lesson in a way that suits the circumstances and does not leave any fact or theory unexplained. He inspects his pupil’s moral conduct, and warns him of defects and transgressions. Whenever he finds his pupil at fault, he makes him seek remedies and repent. The pupil rubs the teacher’s body, folds his clothes and sometimes sweeps the apartment and the yard. Then having examined the water to ensure there are no insects in it, he gives it to his teacher. Thus, if there is anything to be done, he does all on behalf of the teacher.” No fees of any kind were charged at Nalanda for the studies. No price was paid for food or clothes or accommodation. There was no punishment of any kind.

For the faults or the defects of the students, the teachers punished themselves. The teacher-pupil relation was like that of the father and his son. The greatest delight and the highest reward of the teacher came when his pupil outshone him. Sakyamuni had even laid down detailed duties and responsibilities of the teachers and the pupils, from early morning till might when the teacher went to sleep. In the words of Gautama the Buddha, “the pupil is also to act as a check, as it were, upon the preceptor, in keeping him steadfast in the faith.”

The fall of Nalanda at the hands of the Turks is a story too deep for tears. The City of Knowledge, which took several centuries to build, took only a few hours to be destroyed. Legend has it that when some monks fell at the feet of the invaders to spare at least its world-famed library, Ratnabodhi, they were thrown in the fire along with the books. The rest fled, and Nalanda was relegated to a memory. Thus ended the story of Nalanda till it was re-told first by Hamilton and later by Alexander Cunningham. The excavations started in 1915 and continued for twenty years.

Yet much remains to be done. At the Nav Nalanda Mahavihara, which stands close to this ancient site, Sakyamuni seems to beckon all men of knowledge to restore the glory of this greatest center of learning of the yore.

(The author is a freelance writer).

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A Hill of Riches, Worldly and Spiritual

By KIRK KRAEUTLER
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PRESSED to name the world's most visited holy cities, one might think of Mecca or Jerusalem. Rome maybe. But the name Tirupati would hardly roll off the tongue of many people, at least not many outside India.

Still, the temple above this city in southeastern India is reputed to draw more than a million visitors yearly, thousands a day and tens of thousands on feast days. That makes it not only one of the holy places most trafficked by pilgrims in a nation flush with holy places but also the richest temple in the land. It has been said that when Tirupati cashes in its gold, the heart of the Bombay financial markets skips a beat.

When I visited with my girlfriend Radhika on an ordinary weekday, the wait to enter the temple, even given the shortcut provided by paying a few extra rupees, was eight hours. Many of the thousands gathered had already waited far longer, escaping a sputtering rain by sleeping beneath a narrow, pillar-lined enclosure along the temple, or squeezing themselves into a line that snaked its way through a claustrophobic metal corral, like a winding cattle chute, just outside the entrance.

What draws these multitudes to this site is the god Balaji, also known as Venkateshwara, a dark-skinned deity whose eyes are normally depicted partly obscured by a veil of diamonds, and whose following has blossomed in recent times, making him one of the most popular gods of Hinduism, and the wealthiest.

In Hinduism's deep and diverse pantheon, what makes Balaji stand out so? Apparently, he delivers. He is a god, whose name is sometimes translated as "giver of worldly wealth," with a solid track record of coming through for his devotees, so that his followers consider him a font of miracles and compassion that knows no bounds.

One of the odder measures of Balaji's apparent powers is the trade that Tirupati is reputed to make in shorn hair. In return for having their prayers answered, Balaji's devotees often shave their heads and make the pilgrimage up Tirumala — the hill where the temple is situated — many walking more than eight miles up the steep slopes. Some offer their child's first tonsure.

Shaving the head is seen as an offering and a way of purifying the self and stripping away any trappings of vanity and pretense, and atop Tirumala, barbershops and bald heads are almost as plentiful as the narrow vendors' stalls that sell everything from blinking Balaji clocks and Balaji key chains to bangles and baseball caps.

To a Western visitor (of which, on this particular day, there appeared to be just one), the unusual development and "commercialism" of the site, where the modern, gleaming white Hotel Bliss smiles down contentedly on the meanderings of the pilgrims, seemed to imbue it almost as much with the feeling of Disney as of devotion. In particular, the wealth of the temple has provided Tirupati with a level of organization and order that seems unique in India.

Tirumala is approached along a broad boulevard lined by the many banks that are the repositories of the temple's ample tithings and where six lanes of traffic are neatly divided by a landscaped median planted with trees and flowers. The winding road to the temple, which would be treacherous under any other circumstance, is one-way up the mountain and one-way down, with reassuring cement barriers protecting visitors from a dizzying precipice. For those on foot, the paved steps up the mountain are shielded from the punishments of the sun by a constructed canopy.

At the top of the mountain, there is a notable absence of the destitute normally found begging outside temples in India. A menu is posted advising pilgrims of the kinds of prayers that can be made in their name for the price of their offering.

And in a remarkably officious attempt at crowd control in a country as crammed with people as any in the world, visitors are registered with a kind of bar-code scanner as they buy their tickets and issued a plastic bracelet that tells them the time, usually hours away, when they can begin lining up.

These signs of relative wealth are a stunning contrast to the town's surroundings in Andhra Pradesh, one of India's least developed states. The routes to Tirupati, narrow, precarious and pitted, where the 80-mile drive northwest from Madras can take four hours, throb with the kinds of uncategorical chaos that often makes road travel in India a bone-jarring, nerve-jangling experience.

For the determined, the energetic, the intrepid, it is a rushed round trip that can be taken in a day if you hire a taxi (about $70), as we did. That disappointingly, did not leave us enough time to brave the wait to enter the temple, which even non-Hindus may do. But no matter your belief, the drive itself is nothing if not a pilgrimage.

Crossing into Andhra from the southern state of Tamil Nadu, the landscape turns decidedly rural and a few oddly shaped ridges, one eerily sloping like a shark's fin, present themselves as harbingers of the more substantial range that shelters Tirupati. Road signs change from loopy Tamilian script to another more obscure, Telugu, resembling stylized waves interspersed with hieroglyphic pelicans.

In this agricultural expanse, tradition works in strange and sometimes dangerous symbiosis with the intrusions of modernity, as villagers spread the dry chaff of their crops across the road to be pulverized by speeding auto wheels, and then gather up the grains in shallow baskets. Crowding the roads, sluggish oxen, their horns brightly decorated with silver bells and red and green paint, lumber under the weight of rough wooden carts, and women carry on their heads shaggy rafts of hay so immense that they drape down and disguise their saris, until they look like waddling shrubs.

But arduous and uncomfortable as the journey is, thousands daily make this pilgrimage to Balaji. India holds temples that are certainly more beautiful and far grander, but they do not have Balaji, who the devoted believe has turned the old young again, restored vitality to the sick, and brought prosperity to those in need.

Though the origins of the god himself remain obscure, construction of a temple was apparently begun piecemeal between about the 10th and 12th centuries. The mountain, Tirumala, is revered nearly as much as the structure itself as the setting of parts of the intricate and epic tale of the god Vishnu, the preserver in the Hindu trilogy, of whom Balaji is said to be a manifestation.

If ever tempted to stoop to a far lowlier calling, Balaji would make the perfect politician of a fractious country routinely tugged in so many directions by the sheer variety of its regions, traditions and languages.

As Nanditha Krishna, a specialist in ethno-archaeology who wrote a book on Balaji, has described him, he is a Tamil deity situated in Andhra with a name from northern India whose feminine aspect resides in Maharashtra state, on the opposing coast, and is believed to be the manifestation of a pan-Indian god. A sizable minority of devotees are also Muslims.

In other words, he has constituencies across the land.

On this given day atop Tirumala, the features and costumes of the assembled pilgrims, many dressed in their very best for the outing, revealed their origins around the country. As many slept huddled under a canopy on a concrete floor, some curled around their children, other children played and vendors worked the crowd peddling food, postcards and simple toys, hollow plastic tubes punched with holes that could be filled with chalk and rolled on the ground to form playful patterns. A few of the wealthier among those waiting smoked cigars.

Then, though the low gray clouds hovering atop the mountain had decided to vent themselves again, told their designated time had arrived to enter the temple, a clutch of pilgrims scrambled up the stairs through the pelting rain to eagerly take their place in line.

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Images of religion
By Nanditha Krishna
http://www.newindpress.com/sunday/sundayitems.asp?id=SEC20021025095027&eTitle=Co\

After two weeks abroad, I returned to the sound and fury caused by the government of Tamil Nadu's ordinance prohibiting conversion by force, allurement or fraudulent means. Good friends of mine in the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of South India, have told me how the behaviour, particularly the **methods of conversion, of many new Christian sects has embarrassed them. The use of force and financial allurements for conversion is a fact, and I have come across many instances in the course of nearly three decades of work in rural India. Senior Church leaders have even expressed their opposition to these methods in public. The new ordinance does not take away the right of a person who makes a considered decision to change his faith. The current protest is ridiculous and obviously political, considering the fact that only anti-AIADMK. parties have joined the fray.**

Meanwhile, the supreme court has ruled that religion may be part of the curriculum. This ruling has silenced those who claim that religion breeds violence. Religion has been a force for good, for the improvement of the individual and society. However, it is important to ensure the integrity of the information and the communication methods. We must distinguish between Religious Teaching — as done by pathashalas, seminaries and madrasas — and Teaching About Religion. The first should be restricted to religious teachers; the second is essential for people to appreciate the beliefs of others.

While the Christians and Muslims have been at war since the Crusades, medieval Roman Catholics and Protestants also fought each other. But most religious wars were, in reality, fought over land, power and wealth. Even aggressively missionary nations like Spain and Portugal went to the Americas for wealth and territorial expansion. Islamic conquerors were themselves looking for land and wealth. **Religion has been a cloak of respectability for the adventurer.**

Each religion has a great message. **Hinduism teaches the doctrine of nishkaama karma, or duty without desire for reward, and the suppression of the ego.** Buddhism's message is one of right conduct and living. Christianity emphasises the importance of love, compassion and service; Islam, the brotherhood of man and Jainism, compassion to all creatures great and small. The fault line in each religion is the result of social developments. The Rig Veda, the oldest and most sacred book of the Hindus, does not speak of caste (the Purusha Sukta is a later interpolation). Later, caste was decided by occupation, not birth, and was changeable. Yet caste became the curse of the Hindu religion, a medium to monopolise skills and knowledge and suppress people. The

Buddha established a few rules of good conduct. Buddhism was established as a new religion after his lifetime but became so rich and corrupt that it self-destructed. Jesus Christ was a Jew who tried to clean up his religion, Judaism. He never preached another religion - if he were reborn, would he call himself a Jew or a Christian? Today, missionaries and conversion define religion. Islam means peace, but cruel despots and terrorists have changed that meaning. **By teaching children about the evils of each religion, what do we want to do? Turn them into atheists? That would be an ideal leftist agenda.**

Ideally, religion should be a **personal matter**, taught at home. Unfortunately, with the breaking down of the joint family and both parents going to work, this is no longer possible. Schools must step in and teach moral values. The argument that existing schoolbooks have enough information on the Buddha, Kabir and Nanak is no argument. **Religions such as Hinduism and Judaism do not have a single founder, which does not mean that doctrines should not be taught.** As the supreme court has said, value education must ensure equal respect for all religions. The problem is that religious sects produce books that boost their own and put down others.

Tolerance of other religions implies putting up with what we dislike. We need to pass on to integration. The God we worship is an individual choice, born of an accident of birth; the culture we practise must be common and identifiable. A good example of this is seen in Kerala where the Onam festival is celebrated by almost everyone. When the Zoroastrians asked for permission to build a temple to preserve their sacred fire, the Raja of Surat gave them absolute religious freedom, but demanded that their dress and public customs be locally compatible. When our cricketers appear on the field, their blue uniform is a unifying factor. We root for our new age religion and its practitioners. Values are incomprehensible without the support of appropriate images. One textbook defined communal harmony with three schoolboys, Ram, Rahim and Robert — Hindu, Muslim and Christian — distinguished by their turban, topi and hat respectively! I would have defined their commonness by a shirt and shorts for each.

The artistic traditions of religions were used to teach the difference between good and bad. The scenes of the life of the Buddha in early Buddhist monuments were intended to serve as role models. The walls of Hindu temples are decorated with the stories of gods and goddesses who defeated demons, the message being that evil will be destroyed. The Chola bronzes of Nataraja send out an image of peace within ferment. Shiva's face is a picture of detached calm, even as he destroys evil and creates a new world, encircled by fire, dancing to the beat of the drum, fire in hand and the demon of ignorance squirming beneath his foot. The walls of temples were carved with images of Portuguese visitors and Arab traders, of Brahmins honouring the Buddha and Buddhists worshipping Hindu deities. While different occupations are portrayed, the obnoxious system of untouchability is never shown in Indian art. The religion was obviously not proud of this social development.

Art was used to send out messages by other religions too. The Cross is the defining image of Christianity, a reminder of Christ's ultimate sacrifice. Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper and Michelangelo's Pieta convey the message of the tragic inevitability of the Crucifixion. Even an image-less religion like Islam promised paradise in the exquisite decorations on the walls of mosques and tombs. In Persia, the Sufis reproduced the life of Prophet Mohammed in exquisite miniature painting.

Today's popular art is produced by media images - cinema and television. After the Akshardham Temple incident, the most poignant images were of a qawwal singing of the need to build temples and mosques and trust in god and Hindu and Muslim women demanding a stop to further bloodshed. On the other hand, when the television beams images of killers identifiable as belonging to a particular religion and dead bodies of people of another religion, it sends out a very negative message. Media images of gun- and sword-toting Muslim fundamentalists or trishul-wielding Bajrang Dal members are not conducive for harmony. This is what fundamentalists are aiming for - negative messages that will elicit a negative response from the other community.

Images are very important in shaping society. Indian cinema, in the '50s and '60s, sang songs of communal harmony. The people responded accordingly. Unfortunately, the Hindi films of that period also portrayed smugglers and vamps as Christians. That image stuck. Then came the '80s and the cinema portrayed a world of angry young men and contract killings, gang wars and the underworld. Most of the mafia and contract killers are shown to be Muslims. These are the new images, and we know where they have led us. The streets of our cities are filled with cinema posters that carry negative messages. The media shows nasty images for news and sales value. They may be true, but they raise temperatures.

Art imitates life as much as life reflects art. Images, be it in the precincts of a temple or in a newspaper or in a cinema hall or beamed via satellite, shape ideas and behaviour, and their impact is severe. It is thus imperative that today's popular art carries the message of peace and good social values. The written word is read by very few - it must be accompanied by images that are seen by millions. Religion has preserved so many good values for millennia. With the judicious use of images, it can become a powerful force for social good.

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Sri Aurobindo and Indian Civilisation

By Pradeep Krishnan

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Sri Aurobindo, India's greatest Yogi, rishi, poet and philosopher prophesised the rebirth of India's greatness. He had implicit faith in “her mission, her gospel, her immortal life and her eternal rebirth”. His hope lay in the conviction: “In India alone there is self contained, dormant, the energy and the invincible spiritual individuality which can arise and break her own and the world's letters.” His message has tremendous relevance in today's context. Never before has humanity faced a crisis of such gravity. The present crisis is truly multi-dimensional. Sri Aurobindo firmly believed that India is the country providentially ordained and historically prepared for showing the world its right path. Every moment of his life Sri Aurobindo discovered himself and discovered India. The two texts in the book are papers prepared by Michel Danino for recent seminars in New Delhi and Coimbatore. The first paper was presented at a seminar in connection with the celebrations of Sri Aurobindo's 125th birth anniversary held at New Delhi in November 1998 organised by the Department of Culture, Ministry of HRD.

It deals with Sri Aurobindo's view of Indian culture and confronts its state of deep neglect in today's India, though it was precisely what gave the country its special strength and its unique ability to survive the onslaughts of time. The author lays emphasis on the field of education and asks why Indian education should exclude the very materials that could easily transform the child into a rich human being, even as we witness today a worldwide degradation of the human substance. The second paper was presented at a seminar on value education organised by the Chinmaya Mission at Coimbatore on February 1999. It deals with a serious distortion found at the root of Indian history as it remains and is taught today—the so-called “Aryan invasion theory”—and shows how all scientific as well as traditional evidence argues against it. As a result, the motives of the proponents of the old model, which seeks to divide Indian people and languages into supposed “Aryan” and supposed “Dravidian”, become suspect, and in any case run counter to both science and Indian tradition, whether from the North or the South.

Making use of recent archaeological findings, the author gives an overview of the so-called Aryan problem which has distorted the roots of ancient India's history and therefore of Indian civilization. The author Michel Danino was born in 1956 at Honfleur, in France. From the age of 16 he was drawn to India and to Sri Aurobindo and Mother, and in 1977 cut short higher scientific studies to leave for South India, where he has since been living. Working in close collaboration with the Mother's Institute of Research (New Delhi), Mira Aditi (Mysore) and Instituted Researches Evolutives (Paris), he has participated in the English translation and publication of Mother's Agenda (13 volumes) and several other works, in the preparation of India's Rebirth and India the Mother, and has co-authored with Sujata Nahar The Invasion That Never Was.

His other fields of activity include nature conservation and photography. For many years he has also been studying Indian culture and India's ancient history in the light of both Sri Aurobindo's pioneering discoveries and recent archaeological research. The sadhak from France writes that as a young man he found nothing in France or the West-in its science, its philosophies, even in its culture—that could give a full meaning to his life until he read a few pages of Sri Aurobindo. Living in India under the guidance of what Sri Aurobindo has written about the nation's culture has been constantly enriching. It is true that the nation is not "the heaven we would all dream her to be." But Sri Aurobindo always saw behind the appearances and spoke in 1910 to his countrymen, who had become apes of the West, thus: "Was life always so trivial, always so vulgar, always so loveless, pale and backward as the Europeans have made it? This well-appointed comfort oppresses, me, this perfection of machinery will not allow the soul to remember that it is not itself a machine.

Is this then the end of the long march of human civilisation, this spiritual suicide, this quiet putrefaction of the soul into matter? Was the successful businessman, that grand culmination of manhood towards which evolution was striving? After all, if the scientific view is correct, why not? An evolution that started with the protaplasm and flowered in the orangutan and the chimpanzee, may well rest satisfied with having created hat, coat and trousers, the British Aristocrat, the American capitalist and the Farisian Apache. For these, I believe, are the chief triumphs of the European englightenment to which we bow our heads... What a bankruptcy. What a beggary of things that were rich and noble. Ninety years after Sri Aurobindo made this pronouncement, we have reached the final movement in the West's failure. It would be best to turn to him again for his prescription to cure the ills that afflict humanity today.

He never said that outer growth should be discarded, but pleaded for a corresponding growth within. India was itself an example of reaching great heights in material life as well as spiritual, both complementing each other with an integral vision. Quoting profusely from Sri Aurobindo's writings on the cultural past of India, and adding his own experiences, Shri Danino writes: "If we see today that nothing even of the Mahabharata or the Ramayana is taught to an Indian child, we can measure the abyss to be bridged. That the greatest epics of mankind should be thrown away on the absurd and erroneous protext that they are 'religious' is beyond the comprehension of an impartial observer. A German or French or English child will be taught something of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, because they are regarded as the roots of European culture, and somehow present in the European consiousness. He will not be asked to worship Zeus or Athena, but will be shown how the Ancients saw and experienced the world and the human being.

But Indian epics, a hundred times richer and vaster in human experience, a thousand times more present in the Indian consciousness, will not be taught to an Indian child. Even the Panchatantra and countless other highly educational collections of Indian stories—even folk stories-are ruled out". Shri Danino laments that the young Indians were being deprived of their rightful heritage in this manner and were being cut off from their rich roots and were being fed with "some inspid, unappetizing hotchpotch, cooked in the West and pickled in India. He was also anguished to note that the teaching of Sanskrit is systematically discouraged in India, and that "the deepest knowledge of the human being, that of yogic science, is discarded in favour of shallow Western psychology or psychoanalysis; that the average Indian student never even hears the name of Sri Aurobindo". In more 54 pages, the author takes the reader on a journey of Indian culture, or

educational system, vedic civilisation, etc.

The work is a storehouse of new insights. The well-researched and well-documented work is so readable that one surely would like to finish it in one go. It is strongly recommended for readers of every age. While the scholars would be struck by its exactness, depth and simplicity, students and general readers would find it extremely relevant and would be motivated to need read Sri Aurobindo further. This book is the sixth in a series entitled Vande Mataram which has as its goal to make known a number of texts inspired by a similar vision of a new Indian.

For, as Sri Aurobindo saw, **“India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples...”** He further said “Indian is the guru of the nations, the physician of the human soul in its profounder maladies; she is destined once more to new-mould the life of the world and restore the peace of the human spirit.” Thus, “the sun of India's destiny would rise and fill India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world.”

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Dwarka remains to be protected as underwater world cultural heritage site

By RAJESH KUMAR

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NEW DELHI, JULY 13: Old shipwrecks -- like that of the Titanic -- which have been lying buried under the sea with their precious treasure along with the submerged city of Dwarka off the Gujarat coast, for centuries, could soon vie for the status of an underwater world cultural heritage site.

Over 200 experts from 84 countries, who gathered under the aegis of UNESCO in Paris recently to examine a draft convention on the issue, unanimously agreed that underwater cultural heritage was in urgent need of protection from destruction and pillaging.

Currently, structures or properties lying under water can not claim the status of cultural heritage. The absence of any protective mechanism has left them open to pillaging and destruction by treasure hunters and curious deep-sea divers. The experts agreed that the definition of cultural heritage needed to be expanded in order to protect underwater heritage as well.

The submerged city of Dwarka is believed to be an important site having both historical and cultural value for India. Legend has it that the remains -- the wall of a city is clearly visible while the rest is yet to be discovered -- are in fact, that of the ancient city of Dwarka mentioned in stories of Lord Krishna.

The Gujarat government and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) are currently toying with the idea of creating a museum and an underwater viewing gallery once the structures have been protected. After that,Dwarka could also stake the claim for the coveted underwater world heritage status, UNESCO's South-East Asia office here said.

Experts agreed that salvaging operations did tend to be a free for all. Robert Grenier, director of the International Committee on Underwater Cultural Heritage of the International Council On Monuments and Sites, said that while salvage action gave people freedom to look for things, it disregarded the aspect of preserving cultural heritage.

Several British and French ships laden with precious treasure that had sunk on their way across the Atlantic ocean during their voyages in the 18th century have been plundered by the sea pirates for valuables. In fact, some of the ships that were believed to be of immense historical and cultural value for future generations have been completely stripped off all their components by pirates for their antique value. ``With rapid advancement in technology, deep-sea diving and gaining access to heavy articles buried with the shipwrecks has become easy and affordable for pirates. In the absence of any effective protection, these properties of immense historical and

cultural value are being looted and vandalised," an expert from Canada said.

The wrecks at Louisberg Park in Nova Scotia off the Canadian coast are held up as a fine example of how the under water cultural treasures can also be protected with help of legislation and political will, much like other structures of the same importance. The French Ministry of culture too has come out with a comprehensive background material on the underwater cultural heritage that needs protection. The document also cites relevant laws under which they can be protected and how.

Representatives of the United Nations Division of Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea, the International Maritime Organisation, the International Seabed Authority and the World Underwater Federation, along with UNESCO, participated in the meeting.

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Earth's Rotation, its Globular Shape and Gravity

By Vinod Kumar

http://www.swordoftruth.com/swordoftruth/archives/byauthor/vinodkumar/ftpoherigsag.html

When we talk of the earth going around the sun as it has always done, its globular shape, the different seasons, different lengths of day and night, mind goes back to Galileo and Copernicus, scared to death, holding the truth back lest the fury of the church falls upon them for letting the world know the reality of nature. When one thinks of gravity one thinks of Newton sitting under an apple tree watching an apple fall to the ground and Newton proclaiming "Lo! there is gravity."

If I were to say Hindu philosophers talked and wrote about gravity and the globular shape of the earth centuries before Newton and Galileo and Copernicus, I would not only be dismissed as a "fanatical Hindu communalist" by our 'all-knowing-secular intellectuals' but also incur their wrath. And who wants that?

In order to state the truth and make it acceptable to our 'all-knowing-secular intellectuals' let me seek the help of a Muslim scholar from Central Asia. Who around 1030 AD wrote a very comprehensive book "Indica" about India -- its literature, its philosophy, its religion, its culture, its languages, its history, its geography, its customs, its sciences including astronomy. I am talking about Abu-Raihan Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Alberuni -- a scholar and a devout genuine Muslim by all standards.

Before I go into what Alberuni wrote let us take some time to find out more about this man -- Alberuni.

In the words of Edward Sachau -- translator of Alebruni's 'Indica':

"Mahmud marched into the country, not without some fighting, established there one of his generals as provincial governor, and soon returned to Ghazna with much booty and a great part of Khiva troops, together with the princes of the deposed family of Mamun and the leading men of the country as prisoners of war or as hostages. Among the last was Abu-Raihan Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Alberuni. This happened in the spring and summer of AD 1017."

"When he (Alberuni) was brought to Ghazna as a hostage, he enjoyed the reputation of a great 'munajjim' i.e. "astrologer - astronomer". By the time he wrote 'Indica' thirteen years later after his involuntary immigration to Afghanistan, he was a master of astrology, both according to the Greek and the Hindu systems.

"Alberuni felt a strong inclination towards Indian philosophy. He seems to have thought that the philosophers both in ancient India and Greece, held in reality the very same ideas, the same as seem to have been his own i.e. of pure monotheism. He seems to have to have reveled in the pure theories

of Bhagavad-Gita. … There can scarcely be any doubt that the Muslims of later times would have found fault with him for going to such length in his interest for these heathenish doctrines" observes Sachau, but "still he was Muslim, whether Sunni or Shia cannot be gathered from Indica. He sometimes takes an occasion for pointing out to the reader the superiority of Islam over Brahamanical India… He dares not attack Islam but attacks the Arabs."

What was the object of his writing 'Indica'?
"The object which the author had in view and never for a moment lost sight of, was to afford the necessary information and training to any one (in Islam) who wants to converse with the Hindus, and to discuss with them questions of religion, science, or literature, on the very basis of their own civilization."

Alberuni came to India with Mahmud and stayed there. He learnt Sanskrit and Hindu literature and sciences and indeed wrote a very comprehensive book about India of those days. As a Muslim he praises the 'wonderful exploits of Mahmud saying: "Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed those wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions" but as a scholar he laments "this is the reason, too, why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares, and other places."

It seems from above that his study was done in area which was under Mahmud's control, most likely western Punjab. But still what he writes is very illuminating. Let us now see what wrote about our subject: astronomy in India and gravity and the solar system.

Quoting from **Brahamgupta's Brahamsiddhanta,** Alberuni wrote:

"Several circumstances, however, compel us to attribute globular shape to both the earth and the heaven, viz. the fact that the stars rise and set in different places at different times, so that, e.g. a man in Yamakoti observes one identical start rising above the western horizon, whilst a man in Rum at the same time observes it rising above the eastern horizon. Another argument to the same effect is this, that a man on Meru observes one identical star above the horizon in the zenith of Lanka, the country of demons, whilst a man in Lanka at the same time observes it above his head. Besides all astronomical observations are not correct unless we assume the globular shape of heaven and earth. Therefore we must declare that heaven is a globe, and the observation of these characteristics of the world would not be correct unless in reality it were a globe. Now it is evident that all other theories about the world are futile."

Earlier philosophers like Aryabhata, Vasishtha and Lata had also come to the same conclusion and Alberuni goes on to quote Varahmira:

"all things which are perceived by the senses, are witness in favor of the globular shape of the earth, and refute the possibility of its having any other shape."

On the subject of the rotation of the earth Alberuni writes:

"As regards the resting of the earth, one of the elementary problems of astronomy, which offers many and great difficulties, this, too, is a dogma with the Hindu astronomers. Brahamgupta says in the Brahamsiddhanta: 'some people maintain that the first motion (from east to west) does not lie in the

meridian, but belongs to the earth. But Varahmira refutes them by saying: If that were the case, a bird would not return to its nest as soon as it had flown away from it towards the west.' And, in fact it is precisely as Varahmira says." Alberuni agrees with Varahmira that earth does not rotate.

Alberuni goes on to quote Brahamgupta:

"The followers of Aryabhata maintain that the earth is moving and the heaven resting. People have tried to refute them by saying that, if such were the case, stones would and trees would fall from the earth. Brahamgupta does not agree with them, and says that that would not necessarily follow from their theory, apparently because he thought that all heavy things are attracted towards the center of the earth. He says: 'On the contrary, if that were the case, the earth would not vie in keeping an even and uniform pace with the minutes of heaven, the pranas of the times."

Alberuni does not agree with Brahamgupta and is unable to understand the rotation of the earth and goes on to write:

"Supposing this to be true, and that the earth makes a complete rotation eastward in so many breaths as heaven does according to his (Brahamgupta's) view, we cannot see what should prevent the earth from keeping an even and uniform pace with heaven."

Stubbornly he refuses to accept the theory of the rotation of the earth and goes on to say:

"Besides, the rotation of the earth in no way impair the value of astronomy, as all appearances of an astronomic character can quite as well be explained according to this theory as to the other. There are, however, other reasons which make it impossible."

Alberuni says he also has written a book on this subject in which ' we have surpassed our predecessors' but does not tell what his theories are?

On the question of gravity and other issues like top and bottom, high and low, Alberuni quotes Brahamgupta and says:

"Scholars have declared that the globe of the earth is in the midst of heaven, and that Mount Meru, the home of Devas, as well as Vadavamukha below, is the home of their opponents; the Daitya and Dhanava belong to it. But his below is according to them is only a relative one. Disregarding this, we say that the earth on all its sides is the same; all people on earth stand upright, and all heavy things fall down to the earth by a law of nature, for it is the nature of the earth to attract and to keep things, as it is the nature of water to flow, that of fire to burn, and that of wind to set in motion… The earth is the only low thing, and seeds always return to it, in whatever direction you may throw them away, and never rise upwards from the earth."

Varahmira explains it further:

"Mountains, seas, rivers, trees, cities, men, and angels, all are around the globe of the earth. And if Yamakoti and Rum are opposite to each other, one could not say that the one is low in relation to the other, since low does not exist…. Every one speaks of himself, 'I am above and the others are below,' whilst all of them are around the globe like the blossoms springing on the branches of a Kadamba-tree. They encircle it on all the sides, but each individual blossom has the same position as

the other, neither one hanging downward nor then other standing upright." He emphasized: "For the earth attracts that which is upon her, for it is the below towards all directions, and heaven is the above towards all directions."

Now these were the thoughts of Hindu philosophers as recorded by Alberuni in the early part of the eleventh century and these had not changed for centuries. Alberuni quotes heavily from Brahamgupta whose Brahamsiddhanta was composed in AD 628. But it was Aryabhata, born in AD 476, the first to hold that the earth was a sphere and rotated on its axis and that the eclipses were not the work of Rahu but caused by the shadow of the earth falling on the moon. His Aryabhatiya was composed in AD 499.

It is clear from above that it was over a millennium before Galileo, Copernicus and Newton that the Hindu philosophers had formulated the theories about the globular shape and rotation of the earth and gravity.

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A saint vs a patriot

By Arvind Lavakare

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If you're a Catholic, you'll want to get it banned. If you're an atheist, you'll be titillated by it. If you're a truly objective journalist, you'll be shamed by it. If you're an academician, you'll want to award it a Ph D. And if you're a self-respecting Indian, you simply must read it so as to be shocked from stupor into reality.

Yes, it's that kind of a book -- *Mother Teresa, The Final Verdict* (Meteor Books, Kolkata, 2003, pages 427, price not stated) by Aroup Chatterjee, born, bred and educated in what was once Calcutta, who moved to Britain in 1985 and now works as a medical practitioner in London.

The author's rationale for the book lies in the Teresa-induced image of a 'living saint' in his native city being internationally portrayed as one containing an endless number of 'sewers and gutters' where an endless number of dead and dying people lay --- but not for long as they were picked up in smart ambulances by 'roving angels' in the form of nuns belonging to Missionaries of Charity, the multinational body headed by Mother Teresa. (*Page [i] of Introduction*). That Chatterjee is an atheist and a doctor would seem to have fuelled this probe into one who was labeled by the West and its Indian sycophants as the 'saint of the gutters' though 'her only message to the world was that abortion was murder.' (*Page 393*).

The outcome is a virtual demolition job that devastates, to use the writer's own words, 'the intense culture of deception surrounding Mother Teresa' in which 'she herself was the main perpetrator of this deception.' (*Page 387*) Six years of research based on his own video/photographic work, his efforts to seek the truth and published material cited over 15 printed pages are behind Chatterjee's claim that 'Mother Teresa had been a publicity hungry and often hypocritical person…she had not always been honest in her pronouncements' -- (*page 380*) 'she even lied even in her Nobel Prize Acceptance speech' (*page 395*) of December 1979. His disclosure that 'the current Pope has beatified a "person" who never existed -- Juan Diego of Mexico' (*page 400*) and his charge that 'the Vatican is ruthlessly following a well-defined agenda when creating saints' (page 401) form part of the detailed narration of his own mortifying two-year experience of venturing to be a hostile witness to the ongoing process of canonising Mother Teresa.

Charges of Mother Teresa's 'neglect of residents, indifference to suffering, massaging of figures, manipulation of the media and conscious handling of millions of dollars of stolen cash' (*page [iv] of Introduction*) --- are all there in the book that few Indians would have dared to write.

In retrospect, it seems grossly self-demeaning that our country should have awarded Mother Teresa not only the Bharat Ratna (in 1980) but also a state funeral --- gun carriage, cortege and all, including the substantial financial cost. That funeral of September 1997 was attended by the nation's prime minister I K Gujral, by Bengal's veteran Communist chief minister Jyoti Basu as well as by Sonia Gandhi, the Congress' prime ministerial dream.

That same cocktail of political ideology had previously caused President K R Narayanan to sit so long on the Vajpayee government's recommendation of a Bharat Ratna for Savarkar that it was finally forced to wither away. It's the same ideology that recently boycotted the ceremony to install Veer Savarkar's portrait in Parliament and even appealed to the nation's President to refrain from unveiling the portrait.

It was perverse enough that this bunch of democratically elected leaders should have shown total irreverence to the norms of parliamentary democracy by daring to obstruct a decision of a Parliamentary committee that included representatives of that cocktail.

What is worse is that in opposing Savarkar's posthumous entry into Parliament, this bunch of politicking creatures overlooked the totality of the revolutionary and inspiring incandescence of freedom that was lit by him in the early 20th century when the country's British masters were crushing our aspirations and milking our resources.

The life of Savarkar (1883-1966) was so uniquely variegated that it is almost unbelievable that one individual could possess such an intellect, such talent, such intensity as to be a firebrand freedom fighter from childhood, a potential barrister, a writer of history, of poetry and Sanskrit prayers, a social reformer, and a distinctive political ideologue with a prophetic vision on the fate of Kashmir, the formation of Pakistan along with its subsequent hostility, the mass Muslim infiltration from East Bengal into Assam and China's hoodwinking Nehru on his Panchsheel.

He suffered six months of solitary confinement, seven days standing handcuffed, ten days of cross bar fetters and other tortures in the cellular jail on the infamous Andaman islands of old where he was sent in 1911 to serve a total of 50-year life imprisonment for his alleged involvement in two cases: the murder of the English district magistrate of Nashik and efforts in Bombay to 'overthrow the legally formed government of the country.' He was in the Andaman prison till 1921, from where he was shifted first to Alipore jail and then, in January 1924, released from prison but confined in his movements to Ratnagiri district (in present Maharashtra) with stringent conditions. It was in May 1937, when Jamnadas Mehta of the Tilak Democratic Swaraj Party agreed to support the new Cooper ministry in Bombay on the express condition of Savarkar's unconditional release, that Savarkar was finally rid of colonial shackles. And he soon plunged into politics, becoming the president of the Hindu Mahasabha, even as those engaged in the freedom movement sought his views and advice. Included in that lot was Subhas Chandra Bose whom he inspired to make India free through military action.

No wonder there are at least two known biographies on the man: one by Dr Bhagwan Singh Rana in Hindi and the other by Dhananjay Keer, hailing from the 'untouchable' caste, who worked with Savarkar to help build a temple in Ratnagiri, and who was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1971 by the ruling Congress government. In addition, there is a Marathi book devoted to the social reformation which Savarkar effected during his years in Ratnagiri.

But the Congress and Communists of 2003 are not moved by all that Savarkar did or suffered in trying to win freedom for his beloved country, by how Savarkar kindled the minds and hearts of millions, including Bose and Bhagat Singh. They choose, instead, to complain that Savarkar submitted amnesty petitions to his colonial masters for his early release from the Andaman prison and made promises to them of constitutional conduct instead of willing to suffer pain and all, death included, as the price to be paid for upholding his cause. This bunch of politicking creatures also believe Savarkar was a part of the conspiracy which led to Nathuram Godse assassinating Mahatma Gandhi but was let off by the court on a mere technicality. And, finally, this bunch brands Savarkar as a Hindu fanatic, who must have no niche whatsoever in this oh-so secular country of ours. Therefore, they proclaim, Savarkar has no place on the walls of our august Parliament in New Delhi.

What is concealed in the criticism of Savarkar's pleas for release is the remark that McPherson, Britain's home secretary, put on one such petition. As cited by Shyam Khosla in *Rajasthan Patrika* of February 26, 2003, that note said, 'It will be dangerous for the British Empire to release Savarkar. His pleas are a ruse to get out the jail. Once out he will organise an underground movement against the British. I therefore reject the petition on the ground that it will be a danger to public safety.' Need more be said? And if prison life had, as alleged, transformed him into a pro-British imperialist, why did Bose, Nehru and

M N Roy welcome him to full freedom in 1937? Why did S M Joshi and Achyut Patwardhan want him to join their political party? Why did his Hindu Mahasabha vehemently oppose the Cripps Mission proposals of 1942 and the Cabinet Mission's plan of 1946?

Regarding Savarkar's connection with Godse, the Special Court appointed for the trial did not accept the evidence of Digamber Badge who had turned approver and stated that Savarkar had blessed the assassins in their mission. In Godse's reply to the charge sheet against him -- reproduced fully in *May it Please You Honour* (Surya Bharti Prakashan, New Delhi, 1987) -- he had categorically denied the prosecution's stand that he was guided in his action by Savarkar and that, but for Savarkar's complicity, he could not have acted the way he did. What's more, Godse's reply stated 'I take the strongest exception to this untrue and unjust charge and I further regard it as an insult to my intelligence and judgement.' (*Ibid page 45*). Indeed, Godse's reply indicated his disenchantment with Savarkar's belief that free India having got its own government, all parties should conduct their propaganda on constitutional lines rather through anarchical tactics and undemocratic conduct. (*Ibid page 56*).

In any case, the question remains: Why didn't the prosecution under Nehru's Congress government appeal against Savarkar's acquittal? The answer is in the silence.

There's finally that visceral accusation of Savarkar's Hindutva and his alleged two-nation demand.

The riposte to that is the excerpt below from Savarkar's presiding address to the Hindu Mahasabha's Ahmedabad session of 1937 cited at page 117 of *The Tragic Story of Partition* (Jagaran Prakashana, Bangalore, 1984) by (*RSS leader*) H V Seshadri.

'Let the Indian State be purely Indian. Let it not recognise any invidious distinction whatsoever as regards the franchise, public services, offices, taxation on the grounds of religion and race. Let no cognisance be taken whatsoever of a man being Hindu or Mohammedan, Christian or Jew. Let all citizens of that Indian state be treated according to their worth irrespective of their religion or racial percentage in the general population.'

Even 66 years after Savarkar spoke the above words, have you got a better enunciation of what secularism should mean for the Indian nation? Silence is the answer.

In that silence lies the Indian tragedy of prejudiced and pernicious eyes that see a jewel in a pseudo-saint and a thorn in a true patriot.

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Hymns From the Rig-Veda

By Jean LeMee

Excerpts from his book.

Precious or durable materials- gold, silver, bronze, marble, onyx, or granite - have been used by most ancient peoples in an attempt to immortalize their achievements. Not so, however, with the ancient Aryans. They turned to what may seem the most volatile and insubstantial material of all - the spoken word - and out of this bubble of air fashioned a monument which more than thirty, perhaps forty, centuries later stands untouched by time or the elements. For the Pyramids have been eroded by the desert wind, the marble broken by earthquakes, and the gold stolen by robbers, while the Veda remains, recited daily by an unbroken chain of generations, traveling like a great wave through the living substance of the mind.



Whence this extraordinary strength and vitality?
Whence this power to nourish and give form to the religious and philosophical thought of innumerable peoples from time immemorial?

The tradition answers that the Veda itself is the secret of the Veda. The foundation stone that India contributed to civilization, the Veda, is said to embody the regulations, the laws of the universe as "seen" by gifted poets, prophets, or seers, the rishis. Set by them in a special language to be joyfully proclaimed for future ages," it has come down to us through an elaborate oral tradition consciously designed to prevent any distortion. Even today, had we no written record available, it would still be possible to have access to the Veda as it existed when the text was fixed three or four thousand years ago! This supreme monument of an early religion which has left us with no archeological remains, no church, no dogma, no founder, and virtually no history, forms the canon of the Hindu scriptures, the core of which is a collection of over a thousand hymns, more than ten thousand stanzas in all, known as the Rig-Veda.

Hinduism, according to its own tradition and belief, is not a religion belonging to a particular people or country but is what remains of an ancient system of knowledge, the Sanatana Dharma, which, in another age, was the inheritance of the whole of mankind. It therefore sees itself as the holder of a tradition common to all men, encompassing all that revelation and man's effort have produced in terms of knowledge.

Though Western scholarship inclines toward the period extending between the fourteenth and tenth centuries B.C. for the date of composition of these scriptures, the tradition emphasizes their revealed and eternal character, insisting that the seers are expressing that which has always been, is here now, and ever will be as long as this creation lasts. Tradition has it that toward the beginning of the present age, the iron age or kali yuga, about 3000 B.C., when the forces of evil started gathering their momentum and the memory of men began to fail, the great sage Vyasa was entrusted with the task of collecting the hymns. They were compiled under his direction into four different samhitis or collections according to the nature of the hymns and the purpose of the compilation. Thus Vyasa directed the sage Paila to gather hymns of prayer and dedication to the Gods and these formed the Rik-Samhita or Rig-Veda. "Knowledge," "wisdom," science," "vision" are some of the meanings implied in the Sanskrit word veda, while a rik means a verse or a stanza. The compiler organized the various hymns or suktas, the "well-saids," into ten books or mandalas, the "cycles," and it is in this form that they have reached us. These texts had come down to Vyasa from an oral tradition carried on by families of seers whose names are still attached to the hymns. These names, however, including Vyasa's and those of the other compilers, are for us mythical, ahistorical names, each more a description of the stage of realization of a particular rishi than a biographical name. Whoever has this vision or performs this function is called by that name as the tradition affirms it.

Thus, according to the Bhagavata Purana (2.7.36), "Appearing age after age with the True One (Satyavati), Vyasa divides the Tree of Knowledge into parts." The collections of hymns were handed to Vedic schools for safekeeping -throughout the ages, and it is a remarkable fact that since the days preceding the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Babylon, Athens and Rome, they have resounded daily, ever clear, ever new, ever old, without the slightest change. The Rig-Veda text we possess is that of the Shakala school, from the name of the master, Shalaka.

The hymns and texts of the four samhitas are mantras or incantations grouped according to their use in the ritual: the rik or verse collection, the yajus or collection of sacrificial formulas, the seaman or chant collection, and the atharvan, which is chiefly composed of magic spells. Each of the samhitis is the basis of a veda" which, besides the samhiti, comprises related commentaries or treatises among which are Brahmanas and Upanishads. The mystical tradition, however, looks upon the Veda from another viewpoint and establishes only a triple distinction between them, based on the form of the mantras: metrical for the rik in prose for the yajus, chanted for the saman. These three forms are said to correspond to the nature of the cosmos, conceived as a creation governed by a triple force where the yajus stands for the power of rest in the center, the rik for the principle of motion or expansion, and the saman for that of limitation or contraction. Under their mythological forms they are Brahma, lndra, and Vishnu or, in their psychological equivalents, the word of power and right action, the word of I<nowledge, and the word of peace.

The fountainhead of Eastern thought for millennia, the Veda has left a lasting imprint on the West since the end of the eighteenth century, but more particularly during the last thirty years, pervading so much of the Eastern philosophical and religious thought influencing Western society.

It is therefore at first a matter of surprise to observe that though there exist some good English translations of the main Upanishads, no readable translation of the Rig-Veda is available to the general public. All too often the scholarly translations, scattered and buried in learned journals or

anthologies, seem to make little sense, even to the translator himself, Griffith's metrical version, now eighty-five years old, is dated, from both the scholarly and the linguistic viewpoint. A reason for the lack is that the task, of translating the Veda is an exceedingly difficult one and, to quote Sri Aurobindo, "borders upon an attempt at the impossible."

In translating poetry, not only ideas and images but also something of the rhythm and the music of the original should be carried through. When considering the Veda, however, we are confronted with a difficulty of another order of magnitude altogether, due not only to the technicalities of its language, an archaic form of Sanskrit whose principles and usages are very different from those of our own language, but also to its symbolic nature. This symbolism of the language is not simply one of form, relying on images, parables, and myths as other poetic or religious compositions do, but one of substance, based on its mantric character. The language of the Rig-Veda is an extraordinary tool of unsurpassed flexibility and power of expression, richness, and versatility. Claimed as mantra, m-in-d-ins-tr-u-ment, whose rules are the rules of thought, it is said to have the ability to recreate in the prepared hearer the experience of the poet, of the rishi. Thus, the word is not just a sound arbitrarily connected with an object or event, but is, essentially, a voice, a force producing an effect directly on the substance of being. It is a creative, living symbol. It possesses to the utmost the power of any true and genuine poetry or music, to create a resonance in the subtler substance of being and to bring about in the listener a fine attunement to the experience of the seer, poet, or composer. Worked out in great detail by later tantric schools, this view of language is implicit in the utterances of the Vedic seers and forms the basis of their practice.

Sanskrit is a term meaning "perfected," "well-made," "polished." It is the artificial language par excellence, patiently refined sound by sound, bearing in all its details the imprint of conscious work, constructed on the very principle of thought, of creation, in a fashion similar to that of mathematics but more flexible and wide-ranging in its applications. Embracing all the levels of being, physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual, instead of the nearly exclusive intellectual component of mathematics, it is ideally suited to describe and govern the nature of phenomena from the spiritual level to the physical. This range of applicability in the realm of nature paradoxically makes this most artificial language into the most natural language, the language of nature.

One of the devices used by the Vedic poets to give their language the kind of wide-ranging generality that mathematics possesses to a degree is the full use of the multi signiflcance of roots. Sanskrit is built in such a way that virtually every word in the language can be derived from a root, a monosyllabic sound unit having a general significance in the sphere of action.

Its meaning is then narrowed down and specialized by addition of affixes and by certain well-defined processes applied to the root itself The wide spectrum of significance attached to a particular root reinforced by the various modes of recitation gives a chordal effect to nearly every verse, making such a language a perfect instrument for double and multiple entendre and endless possibilities for plays on words. The result is poetry at its purest, filled with resonances. In these poems, nothing is left to hazard or given for mere poetic effect, however. Everything is carefully worked out, engineered with the utmost care: "Like a cartwright [at work] I have conceived this hymn," says Vishwamitra, the seer of Hymn 111.38.

And a hymn is a collective endeavor, designed for the common worship of the

"Men-of-the-Word." Each verse is a formula, precisely measured, which carries the directions, the forces, and the illumination required for the work. Hence the importance of the meter and of the quality of the sound to these engineers of the Divine. For the meter which governs the rhythms of the verse is symbolic of the cosmic rhythm itself. There are three such basic meters which by combination give the seven meters representing the seven rhythms, the seven pranas governing the whole process of life. The sounds that these rhythms articulate are the vibrations traveling through the four substances, the four levels of being or of speech, from the absolute state, transcendent, unaffected by anything, to the causal state, where meanings are universal and undifferentiated, to the mental state, where they are formed into separate thoughts, and finally to the physical state of utterance, where they are heard by the ear. It is in the second stage, the causal, that the vision takes place; this is where the mantra is perceived by the seer. With the third stage, the mental, comes the rhythm, and with the fourth, the articulated sound itself The arrangements of these articulated sounds are the creation of the rishis, while the ideas and their truth are simply seen and heard by them.

From the nature of the language and its use it is therefore easy to conceive that there will be levels upon levels of meaning to nearly every verse, depending on the "level of being" or, perhaps more accurately, the "spectrum of realization" of the listener. For within this spectrum a number of points of view will be possible, depending on the particular context. It is common, for instance, in systems of traditional thought to take a threefold view of the universe, creation being looked upon as having a physical, a subtle, and a causal aspect; sometimes a sevenfold, a nine-fold, or even a twenty-one fold aspect is taken, de-pending on the purpose at hand. Each of these folds, each of these layers, is a world, a loka, a viewpoint, in or at which the words have a certain impact, resonance, and meaning and therefore give rise to a particular interpretation. So it is that we may have up to twenty-one versions of a given Vedic text though only one recension in hand! And so it is also that, de-pending on their philosophies, some will see in these hymns a description of the physical forces of nature at work; some, the mental life of "primitive" people; some, the spiritual journey of highly developed souls; and yet others, some historical events told in a naive, mythical way or the statement of mathematical propositions. None of these interpretations is by nature exclusive of any of the others. All that may be said is that some may not be quite so comprehensive as others and, were the Veda limited to them, would hardly justify four thousand years of constant world, by wise men to keep the record.

Besides the symbolism of the language, a symbolism of structure may be shown to exist in the hymns, reinforcing and completing it. All this to suggest to the reader an idea of the power and complexity of the Rig-Vedic hymns and to make it evident that even with a lengthy commentary on each hymn it is not possible to convey all the implications that it evokes. The purpose in presenting the few hymns contained in this volume- less than one-hundredth of the whole Rig-Veda- is simply to make available a sampling of one of the major scriptures of mankind and to suggest something of its profundity and splendor. But the translator is painfully aware that this is like trying to convey the rich texture of a symphony by hesitantly whistling its theme.

The choice of the hymns has been dictated partly by their relative importance to later development of the speculative and philosophical thought of India hence the predominance of the hymns of the tenth mandala partly on the obligation to present some typical hymns addressed to the most often celebrated gods of the brahmanical pantheon - Agni, Soma, and lndra- and partly on the desire to show the wide range of tone and the variety of style of the ancient poets.

In the samhiti, the hymns are generally grouped according to either the families of rishis who originated them or the gods being celebrated. For instance, the fifth mandala is devoted to the hymns of the seers of the house of Atri, whereas the entire ninth mandala comprises the hymns to Soma. The tenth mandala, however, contains hymns by various rishis and devoted to different gods. The majority of these hymns are of a speculative nature and, according to Western scholarship, are of a less ancient origin. In this selection the hymns have been arranged in a natural sequence to mal<e for connected reading, be-ginning with the hymns of creation and proceeding through the "nature" hymns to the Dawn and the Sun to the hymns related to more abstract principles such as Knowledge and the Word, and concluding with the last hymn of the samhita, an invitation to peace and harmony. As previously pointed out, more than thirty centuries have passed since the hymns were collated. In that long period and in spite of many precautions, though the form has been impeccably kept, some keys have been lost, some meanings forgotten. The text abounds in words of doubtful meanings on which commentators and scholars have glossed for centuries. Often the images are obscure because of a lack of clues- ritual, cultural, or psychological- for all we all now about the religion, society, or history of the men who composed this literature has to be gleaned from the hymns themselves. Furthermore, the poets appear to delight in speaking in riddles, in veiling their meanings in metaphors, in using puns, as constant modes of expression, whether to make their point more effectively or to hide it.

In this translation I have availed myself of the work of previous scholars, students, and masters in the field, particularly McDonnell, Griffith, Renou, Agrawala, Gonda, Coomaraswamy, and Aurobindo. The method I have followed is simple: every single word has been referred to its root and the meaning chosen has been that which in my opinion conveyed most adequately the deepest sense of the passage I could construe while maintaining the integrity of the poetic structure.

Thus for the word go, which, among other things, may mean "cow," "milk," or "light," I have not hesitated to choose "light" where other scholars have taken "cow," though the word "cow" may give a coherent physical image, if I thought that the dominant meaning was either psychological or that the image created by using the word "light" was more in keeping with the general sense of the hymn and hence more comprehensible to the reader. In other words, I have tried to follow the spirit of the text as I understood it without doing unnecessary violence to the images. Along the same lines, since the reader cannot be expected to be familiar with Vedic mythology, I have translated all proper names, going back to their etymologies. One should remember, however, that symbolic etymologies, as distinct from grammatical ones, and often completely at variance with them in terms of meaning, are commonly used or implied in Sanskrit philosophical and religious texts. Admittedly, translations of names present hosts of unsolvable problems of interpretation. I have always endeavored to choose a name consonant with the psychological import of the passage and in line with the epithets that have been used traditionally for these gods. Thus, Varuna, the All-Enveloping One, is Lord of Lords, King of Kings.

Soma, the deified nectar, is the sacred potion but may also refer to "Mind." Translating these names gives more unity and helps clarify the general meaning of the text at a particular level of interpretation. As for the form, I have adopted the meter of the original. When translating poetry, the translator is always in a dilemma: whether to follow the form of the original or a form which suggests something of the original qualities but is native to the language of translation. The choice I made is premised on the belief expressed by the ancient singers themselves that the very sounds and rhythms of their poems are important, that these are part and parcel of their message. I have

therefore made a special effort to adhere to their metrical form without impairing the natural flow of the English language. I have kept strictly to the same number of syllables per line, since their meters are syllabic, and not infrequently it has been possible to keep as well the place of the caesura, thus giving to the verse a similar rhythm. In some cases it has even been possible to match the sounds of the English syllables with the sounds of the corresponding Sanskrit syllables from the point of view either of articulation or of vocalic color. However, there are obvious differences between Vedic Sanskrit and English metrical possibilities. For one, the Sanskrit meter depends primarily on quantity - that is, on syllabic duration - rather than on stress, as English does; also, the riks have a tonal accentuation which cannot be introduced into English without artificiality. All this, naturally, conspires to distort the original rhythm in the translation. But the reader is nevertheless encouraged to read aloud and articulate clearly that he may hear an echo of the sounds that were made some forty centuries ago when the ancient seers "came together, sang together, with their minds in harmony."

Perhaps the deeper and ultimate hope of the translator is to persuade the reader, by showing him a pale reflection of the beauty and depth of the original, to take up himself the study of the "Language of the Gods" that he in turn may experience the wonder, the joy, and the knowledge which are within him but need the mantric impulse to be liberated. The Rig-Veda is a glorious song of praise to the Gods, the cosmic powers at work in Nature and in Man. Its hymns record the struggles, the battles, and victories, the wonder, the fears, the hopes, and the wisdom of the Ancient Path Makers. Glory be to Them!

Hymn of Creation

Perhaps no other Vedic hymn equals in depth and **majesty this famous Hymn of Creation** known to tradition as the Nasadiiya Sukta, from its opening words. Its seer, Prajapati Parameshthin, Supreme Lord of Creatures, chants in the "triple-praise" meter his knowledge and his wonder as he recalls his vision and in these seven immortal mantras -seven like the days of creation - plants the seeds of Vedic metaphysics and mathematics. For this hymn, besides being a cosmogony, is also a beautiful meditation on the properties of numbers from one to nine and zero. As the Vedanta philosophy was to develop it later in great detail, and as other traditions also record, the process of creation can be seen as ninefold, each step, each state of consciousness, being characterized by the properties of a particular number.

Thus, creation begins in the Absolute, the one without a second, "where neither nonbeing nor being was as yet." Then duality creeps in, darkness conceals darkness. And so it all begins. In the fifth stanza is a brilliant example of the mathematical and structural symbolism alluded to in the introduction. The vertical and crosswise directions indicated give in words the substance of a sutra yielding a general and elegant method of multiplication and division while keeping the orders separate - the very mechanism of creation itself.

It reveals the inner properties of five, the number for man, but also for the manifestation of creation in the major traditions. Was it not on the fifth day that, according to Genesis, "God created great whales ... and blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply. . . "? **Pure coincidence?** Hardly, when we know with what care the Vedic poets constructed their hymns.

And then, what of this other coincidence that we find with **Dante's Paradiso?** In virtually the same words as Prajapati Parameshthin, the Prince of Poets sings:

**Order was created and together with it
Were woven the substances;
Those formed the summit of the world In
which pure act was produced.
Pure potency held the lowest place,
In the midst, potency twisted such a mighty
bond With act, as shall never be severed.**

That line, that ray of glory that the vvise stretched between the Will on high and the Potency beneath, that mighty bond, scales all the states of being, uniting in its reach the whole creation.

Yet, from where does it all spring? Who truly knows?

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Om-ing in America
The Western Incarnation of Yoga
http://abcnews.go.com/sections/living/DailyNews/omming_000119.html

By Ephrat Livni

N E W Y O R K, Jan. 19 — Stillness is in.

Treadmills are being traded for yoga mats in health clubs across America, and with the help of some pro-bono celebrity endorsement, a 5,000-year-old Indian tradition is taking hold in Y2K America.

Yoga, which means “to yoke,” is an ancient eight-pronged approach to achieving union with God — only one aspect of which involves contorting into pretzel-like poses — and it has entered the nation’s mass consciousness through the gym door. But as yoga comes of age in the West, some critics say that in a nation obsessed with progress, the very teachings that yoga emphasizes — mindfulness and process — will be lost in a flurry of muscle flexing, calorie counting and ego-driven handstanding.

The Path Is the Goal

“People can only hear what they are ready to hear,” says Beryl Bender Birch, wellness director of the New York Road Runner’s Club and co-founder of The Hard & The Soft Astanga Yoga Institute. Birch, who authored the best-selling *Power Yoga* and now *Beyond Power Yoga*, says she deliberately attached the word “power” to her book titles to attract Americans.

Her students, she explains, come to her with various motivations — injuries and, increasingly, injury prevention, stress and relaxation — but soon incorporate spirituality into their practice.

“A corporate executive type can come in because he is tight from jogging, and he’ll start sweating and start changing, and six months later he will be asking me questions about Zen meditation,” she explains.

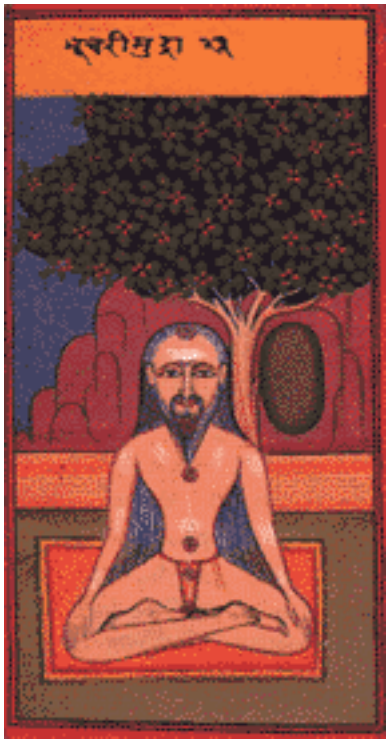
Since yoga has long been considered a last resort after the doctor and chiropractor, Bender Birch believes in gentle introductions, leading students in on the physical level. Her books, however, do stress the spiritual, discussing the “moral preliminaries for waking body and mind to meet each day.”

But if yoga is about coming to know the “divine self” through a commitment to practice, is it still yoga when the commitment is to looking good in a bathing suit?

At New York’s mega-gym chain Crunch, spirtuality is served in smatterings, according to taste. The classes range from the more contemplative kundalini to the nouveau-yoga, yoga-plus-trim. Meditation and more esoteric aspects are incorporated, to varying degrees.

"Some people freak out about om-ing," says Crunch yogini Franzi Reider, referring to the requisite chanting that starts her favorite kundalini class. "But I could be going to an aerobics class, if I wanted to just burn calories."

From Calories to Compassion



But David Life, co-founder of the fashionable Jivamukti yoga center in New York, points out that in India too, yoga is now seen as a way to trim inches off the waist. He disagrees with the notion that Americans are taking over, or distorting yoga, saying, "It's not about co-opting culture. It's about cooperating."

"There is a thirst for guidance in this country," Life contends. If Americans are religious about fitness, than what better place to introduce notions like "right action" and "right livelihood" than at the gym?

An average of 350 students a day attend classes at Jivamukti — Woody Harrelson and Sting among them — and Life reminds them, as they flex, bend and breathe, to forget their personal dramas, and extend compassion to all sentient beings.

Wending his way through a room full of stressed-out city folk, he places a hand on a back and introduces his flock of urban truth-seekers to a notion that is radical for our medication nation: *Sit with the discomfort.*

"It gives a greater sense of one-ness," explains Jivamukti student Tanya Mara Miller, who says she has become more giving, more loving, more focused, and more conscious of all other beings in the three years since she started practicing yoga. Miller suggests the world would be a better place if everyone did yoga, but says, "In some ways it's a fad that will pass like aerobics."

Holier Than Who?

Indeed, another "new" fitness craze eventually will sweep the nation, replacing headstands as the path to our ideal of perfection, but Life and Birch both agree that Americans are enriching the practice. As yoga moves into the everyday lives of more and more Americans, they are turning a once-exclusive spiritual practice into something for laypeople, allowing everyone to evolve.

"Some of the fundamentalists are kicking and screaming," Birch says of those who criticize the Westernization of yoga, with ads suggesting nirvana is just one hour away, but she sees the so-called "new yoga" as part of the universal flow of energy, just another incarnation of the ancient tradition: "America is at center of the most exciting developments in yoga. The heart of yoga is here."

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Mother Goddess (excerpts)
By Anne Lowenkopf

We catch the Godhead much as we catch light. The very structures that enable us to experience both limit how much of each we can experience. Since we catch God with our human hearts and intellect and will, since we reach out to the Godhead because of our human need and desire, it is not surprising that what we catch – our visions of God – have both points of similarity and points of difference.

We experience anything – everything through ourselves. It is all we have to experience with. And so, not surprisingly because we humans are gendered life forms, often our experience of the Godhead has gender.

God the Father is familiar to those of us who have grown up in the Judeo-Christian traditions; round the globe and in the past various peoples have perceived and worshiped father gods and other male deities in love and terror, hope and dread.

Some of us have caught a Mother Goddess who is all-encompassing, beyond role: " I am alone in the world here. Who else is there besides me? Set these goddesses who are but my own powers entering into my own self!" a flat announcement of monotheism from the Great goddess herself in the famous Sanskrit hymn ***Devi Mahatmyam, Glory of the Divine Mother.*** Again and again the Devi (Goddess) of the Devi Mahatmayam is described as the one without another; ultimately no duality of any kind exists, no division between matter and spirit, no division between created and creator. The Great Goddess contains within herself not only all other deities but existence itself. Her children and all things reside within her, are of her substance, and she indwells inside them. The shortest distance to the Mother is within yourself.

The vision of the Mother is exciting attention today when for the first time in history so many young adults live alone, outside family and organized peer groups. As the constrictions of paternalism break down and are replaced by the bewilderments of choice and lack of structure, the concept of a Mother deity who all alone creates and sustains begins to feel right; young people are feeling they can understand such a deity and such a deity can understand them. A nexus of empathy radiates support, comfort, and understanding in a two-way flow.

This concept of the Mother first attracted me as a young woman who was rebelling against the notion of being born in the need of redemption for the actions of others. I still remember the thrill of excitement at my discovery of a Goddess who did not punish the created for what went wrong in her creation, who took the heat for evil and death and yet was untouched by both.

Empathy for a deity who exists alone and copes alone grows stronger as more and more young

people have been raised by single parents, and more are coping with the difficulties of being a single parent. The Devi of *the Devi Mahatmyam* could aid did act as a warrior queen even though she was *the* monotheistic deity, Its hymns are part of an exciting story in which the Goddess is approached by gods who are being harassed by bandits and neighbors, and she agrees to help them fight off their enemies. No question of damnation and eternal punishement here but of will against will, skill against skill, with the Devi, as one who plays chess with herself, taking all the parts.

An American brought up in the climate of Victorian notions of maternal behavior asked a contemporary devotee of the Devi how he could be drawn to such a fierce deity and was told, "Ah, but you need a strong mother who will go to battle for you when you are in trouble." Single parents who find themselves battling for survival in their work worlds, battling traffic to get home at the end of the day, battling to feed their kids and educate their kids and keep their house reasonably sane resonate to the concept that one can be both and at the same time nourisher and warrior.

The *Mahatmyanm* (sometimes called the *Chandi*), first recorded in writing around 600 A.D, is by no means the oldest of hymns. But the concept of the Great Goddess is ancient indeed.

The *Devi* of the *Devi Mahatmyam* came to us in Sanskrit that was written by Aryan peoples, who worshipped masculine deities. Mystics report that they have glimpsed behind the veil of their deities human forms and personalities, a formless impersonal Godhead. This godhead was called Brahman, Satchitananda, (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss). Some followers of the Devi have encountered behind the Mother's form and personality, a formless, impersonal godhead they named Shakti.

Descriptions of Shakti and Brahman are exactly the same – except in one particular Brahman is eternal and unchanging while Shakti is eternal and always changing. The two are actually are one, Ramakrishna said, "like fire and its power to burn". According to East Indian cosmology Shakti's creative force spews out and develops this universe, which after an "age" draws back into itself to rest in the blissful, unchanging being of Brahman, only to spew out again through Shakti's restless power. This model is now so different from the theoretical model, proposed by some contemporary physicists, which depicts the universe exploding from a tiny and incomprehensibly dense core of existence, which will once again explode and expand.

And come to that, descriptions of Shakti/Brahman are uncannily similar to contemporary physicists' descriptions of the force field which creates and comprises all existence.

Source : " Living Wisdom Vedanta in the West"
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Symbol of an awakened civilisation

by Ram Madhav
February 10, 2003
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The real India is waking up to a new, historical reality. This awakening is a result of the unfolding of a mighty creative genius of millions of unknown Indians whose names are not known and whose lives are nothing special to remember otherwise. It is they who can metaphorically be descried as the 'Real Bharat.' They are charting a new course for the future of our country. The historic Ram Janambhoomi movement is but a symbol of that new awakening -- a symbol that reminds the world that India, at last, is becoming alive to its history.

It is not just a movement for a temple. It manifests the innate yearning of a people for self-respect and honour, an urge to unshackle themselves from the humiliations history heaped on it. It happens to every country; in fact it has happened several times in the history of several countries.

'As I have been speaking, some vivid visual memories have been flashing up in the mind's eye. One of these is the picture of the principal square in the Polish city of Warsaw sometime in the late nineteen twenties. In the course of the first Russian occupation of Warsaw (1914-1915) the Russians had built an Eastern Orthodox Christian cathedral on this central spot in the city that had been the capital of the once independent Roman Catholic Christian country Poland. The Russians had done this to give the Poles a continuous ocular demonstration that the Russians were their masters. After re-establishment of Poland's independence in 1918, the Poles pulled this cathedral down. The demolition had been completed just before the date of my visit. I do not greatly blame the Polish government for having pulled down that Russian church. The purpose for which the Russians had built it had been not religious but political, and the purpose had also been intentionally offensive,' says universally acclaimed historian Sir Arnold Toynbee.

In Turkey, they turned the Church of Santa Sophia into a mosque. In Nicosia churches were converted into mosques. The Spaniards spent many centuries re-conquering their land from Muslim invaders.

About India this was what Toynbee had to say: 'Aurangzeb's purpose in building those three mosques (Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura) was the same intentionally offensive political purpose that moved the Russians to build their Orthodox cathedral in the city centre at Warsaw. Those mosques were intended to signify that an Islamic government was reigning supreme, even over Hinduism's holiest of holy places. I must say that Aurangzeb had a veritable genius for picking out provocative sites. Aurangzeb and Philip II of Spain are a pair. They are incarnations of the gloomily fanatical vein in the Christian-Muslim-Jewish family of religions. Aurangzeb -- poor wretched misguided bad man -- spent a lifetime of hard labour in raising massive monuments to his own discredit. Perhaps the Poles were really kinder in destroying the Russians' self-discrediting monument in Warsaw than you have been in sparing Aurangzeb's mosques.' (*One World and India* (1960, pp 59-60).

Medieval Indian history is replete with instances of wanton aggression on its holy places by Muslim hordes. Innumerable instances of defaced Hindu idols and destroyed Hindu/Jain/Buddhist holy places stare at us everywhere. These destructions were not done just for the sake of fun as some eminent

Indian (read Marxist) historians would want us to believe. These were deliberate acts of religious vandalism perpetrated by intolerant Islamic invaders.

However, one would be grossly and sadly mistaken if he confuses the present day awakening in the form of the Ram Janambhoomi movement to an effort to 'avenge the historic wrongs.' Many so-called liberal (euphemism for Marxist) intellectuals spread this canard either deliberately (most probable) or at times out of ignorance (rare).

The movement for the Ram Janambhoomi is basically a movement for the self-assertion of a civilisation. It is a wounded civilisation trying to re-invent its roots. It has to be understood properly, instead of dismissed with contempt. That is what Sir Vidia Naipaul also says: 'If people just acknowledged history, certain deep emotions of shame and defeat would not be driven underground and would not find this rather nasty and violent expression. As people become more secure in India, as a middle and lower middle class begins to grow, they will feel this emotion more and more. And it is in these people that deep things are stirred by what was, clearly, a very bad defeat. The guides who take people around the temples of Belur and Halebid are talking about this all the time. I do not think they were talking about it like that when I was there last, which is about 20 something years ago. So new people come up and they begin to look at their world and from being great acceptors, they have become questioners. And I think we should simply try to understand this passion. It is not an ignoble passion at all. It is men trying to understand themselves. Do not dismiss them. Treat them seriously.' ('The truth governs writing,' an interview by Sadanand Menon, *The Hindu,* July 5, 1998)

The movement has reached a historic stage after the demolition of the non-mosque in 1992. It was a non-mosque because it was never used by Muslims after 1934. It was never registered as a waqf property by any of the Sunni or Shia boards anywhere in UP or the country. There was no Muttawalli/Imam attached to it. In effect, it ceased to be a mosque at least since 1934. And what is more, it was – and still is – a functioning temple at least since 1949.

Hence, what was destroyed in a very unfortunate incident on December 6, 1992 was a non-mosque and a functioning temple only. The destruction was a result of the pent up frustration caused by the inordinate delays and insensitive approach of a section of leaders.

The dispute reached the Supreme Court in 1993 when the government of the day referred to it the core question of whether a Hindu temple existed at the disputed site before the construction of the mosque or not. Declining to answer the core question, the five-member Supreme Court bench in its judgment in October 1994 said keeping aside the disputed land of 2.77 acres on which the make-shift Ram temple stands today, the remaining land of about 67 acres may be returned to its owners if the government thinks such a step would not hamper the legal proceedings on the disputed site.

It is pertinent to note here that there is no dispute about the ownership of this land or its title in any court anywhere. This undisputed land was acquired by the Union government in 1993 along with the disputed land. There was a move by the central government in 2002 to hand over this undisputed land to its original owners including the Ram Janambhoomi Nyas. The Nyas on its part was willing to give an undertaking to the effect that it would provide a corridor to the disputed site as access in case the judgment on that site went the other way. However, a public interest litigation was filed by a Muslim individual acting upon which a three-member Supreme Court bench asked the Government of India to maintain the status *quo* on the 67 acres.

All that the leaders of the movement are asking at this point in time is that their part of the undisputed site be returned to them. It does in no way affect the judicial proceedings on the disputed site. The Government of India has moved an application in the Supreme Court seeking vacation of the status *quo* order so that it can implement the 1994 judgment.

While the facts of the matter clearly indicate the demand of the leaders of the movement is fully legal and constitutional, -- at no point in time are they demanding that the disputed site be handed over to them -- a campaign of calumny full of falsehood and insinuation has been unleashed by a section of intellectuals.

It is a tragedy that these intellectuals fail to understand the movement in its entirety. This is what Sir Vidia had to say about them: 'Indian intellectuals, who want to be secure in their liberal beliefs, may not understand what is going on, especially if these intellectuals happen to be in the United States. But every other Indian knows precisely what is happening: deep down he knows that a larger response is emerging even if at times this response appears in his eyes to be threatening.'

And this is the advice he has for those intellectuals: 'It is not enough to abuse them or to use that fashionable word from Europe: fascism. There is a big, historical development going on in India. Wise men should understand it and ensure that it does not remain in the hands of fanatics. Rather they should use it for the intellectual transformation of India.' ('An area of awakening,' interview by Dileep Padgaonkar, *The Times of India,* July 18, 1993)

So much transformation has taken place in the intellectual world after 1993 that a large section of our intelligentsia understands and appreciates the significance of this movement today.

Let me end by quoting Dr Rajendra Prasad during the renovation of the historic Somnath temple in 1950 which was vandalised by a 11th century Muslim invader, Mohammad Ghazni.

'By rising from its ashes again, this temple of Somnath will proclaim to the world that no man and no power in the world can destroy that for which people have boundless faith and love in their hearts... Today, our attempt is not to rectify history. Our only aim is to proclaim anew our attachment to the faith, convictions and to the values on which our religion has rested since immemorial ages.'

Just replace Somnath with Ayodhya.

Ram Madhav is joint spokesman for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

India is deeply steeped in spiritual values

Samata & the Eternal Nature of Reality

By PURUSHOTTAM MAHAJAN

http://www.timesofindia.com/today/26edit5.htm

India is deeply steeped in spiritual values. Each historical period has its own needs, and these needs demand a contextual revelation of the world that would fulfil the need of the age. The words and teachings of sages in different periods can be experienced as the disclosure of the world in which they lived. Whatever they said, wrote or spoke was redemptory. In each period of history, a sage or saint comes with a mission and the mission discloses the salvific revelation of the world in terms of the convergence of being, samata. It is a state of being where you and I, this and that, remain not. It is a state of absolute knowledge. Being is not only seen or known but experienced in its totality and unity. The diversity which we see and experience in terms of discrete entities has to be viewed against the total background of reality, *Brahman*. In so far as we see reality in terms of discrete entities, we remain deprived of the knowledge of Brahman. But once there is convergence of this and that, you and I, the knowledge of being comes to be. The mission of sages was to point out the way that would lead to the point of convergence whereby the knowledge of being, by overcoming the phenomenal distinctions, could be gained and life's goal achieved.

Redemptory paths advocated by spiritual souls like Vashisht, Kapil, Kanad and Patanjali in ancient times and that of saints like Kabir, Nanak and Meera during medieval times were pointers to developing the aptitude for looking within. In our own times, we had amidst us Ramana Maharishi and Gurudev Mangatramji. Gurudev Mangatramji (1903-54) exhorted us to become wide-awake to understand the true path of dharma and peace. The five cardinal principles laid down by him which can help us to achieve self-realisation are: Simplicity -- innocent and un-self conscious, Service -- of all creatures, Truthfulness, Right assemblies -- association with the seers of sameness and Meditation on the name. Adherence to these principles leads us to redemption. Mangatramji taught nothing that he did not practise to perfection. Revelatory verses welled up from within the depth of his *samadhi* and spilled over for hours on end, where differences and dualities drop, a state where finites melt into infinities, where being thunders into its ultimate -- beyond space, beyond time.

By understanding the transcendent state of emergence and submergence, of expansion and withdrawal, of unity and diversity, human limitations can be overcome. Situated in the transcendent state of absolute gnosis, Mangatramji expressed esoteric wisdom in terms of which freedom from human limitation is experienced at the deepest level of being. He lived on a bowl of tea a day, and did not drink more than 10 draughts of water in his entire life time. He hardly slept for a continuous 25 years. His nights and days were spent in solitary places where silence reigned

supreme. He loved those who came in contact with him. His heart spoke without the use of words, and when he did speak, his words had such depth and grandeur that they brimmed with poetic beauty.

The teachings of Gurudev Mangatramji are the quintessence of *samata* or sameness. The meaning of the word *samata*, according to him, is to remain same in each and every condition. That is, to remain same to all opposites. He did not enunciate a new school of thought, nor did he propound any kind of sectarian religious doctrine; rather he reaffirmed, through his own spiritual enlightenment or intuition, the ancient spiritual truth: that reality or truth suffers not from the fissures of division or difference: it is one. Being one, reality is characterised by evenness, and the relative polarity or duality, at the transcendent level recedes into oblivion. As there is inherent unity and evenness in reality, so it has been referred to as *Brahman* or absolute.

Reality is spoken of as Brahman (absolute) because ``It is eternal and beginningless. Although immanent in everything, yet it is aloof and is affected by nothing. Being absolute, it transcends time, as it remains the same through three periods of time -- past, present and future. They come to know the sameness of reality who recollect and meditate the unnameable name of the transcendent one, God. They alone feel the presence of the Lord, both within and without, who rest in the presence of the ultimate" says Mangatramji.

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Body, Mind, Spirit: Strike A Balance

ASHUTOSH JI MAHARAJ

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?art_id=21288193

Ancient Indian sages have said that human beings are composed of both matter and spirit. Our physical body, mind and intellect are the matter components while our soul is the spirit — the real Self — that radiates and drives the matter components.

We have been blessed with the capacity to discriminate. We are equipped to take decisions using our intellect and by applying acquired wisdom. We have vast potential, but because of our ignorance of Self, these potentials remain largely untapped. That is why all wise men have exhorted us to try and attain Supreme Knowledge of the Self.

Today, we strive for perfection in every field. With the evolution of mind and intellect, worldly knowledge has become easily accessible. So, we have achieved a certain measure of excellence in the physical sciences. We have created for ourselves many facilities that make life more comfortable.

Our scriptures proclaim that the true nature of human beings is absolute tranquillity and peace. But today, we find that with so many worldly possessions at their command, our lives have become far more stressful and unhappy than ever before. We have become totally materialistic and self- centred.

No one has time for either themselves or their families. The so-called industrial and scientific advancements have failed to bring human beings closer to one another.

Many of us have become IT-savvy. But how many of us smile? In fact, we are increasingly isolating ourselves, creating a vacuum around us. In mindless pursuit of worldly possessions, negative emotions like greed, jealousy and hatred have overpowered our minds, creating tensions.

In order to combat stress and tension, we tend to over- indulge ourselves. Some try to find solace in substance abuse. One reason for this could be: Scientific advancement has not travelled beyond the physical level. We have achieved excellence in the physical sciences, but at the spiritual level, we lag far behind.

Physical experiences that are bereft of spirituality fail to connect with our true Self. The stress starts from within; the solution also lies within. The physical body functions with the hidden Spirit, which is the real Self. So it is important for us to gain knowledge of the Self.

Once we are able to do this, with the help of a guru, our hidden inherent potentials come to the

fore.

The seed of the large Banyan tree is tiny, like a mustard seed. It is so small that it can be blown away by a gentle breeze. The seed is however unaware of its hidden inherited potential. But when it is sown, it submits itself to growth — with the right inputs of water, air and sunlight, it grows to become a great big Banyan tree. But even the Banyan tree has limits to its growth.

Jiva or soul is a fragmented part of God or the Supreme Soul; it is, therefore, infinite. When we submit ourselves to the guidance of a spiritual master, we have an opportunity to gain knowledge of Self through which we can fully realise our hidden potential.

Great men are not those who do big things, but those who do small things with perfection, and the perfection comes from within.

Brahma gyan or realisation of truth alone will bring about a reformation, helping to establish lasting peace. Our sages proclaimed that the whole world is a family and they wished everyone well. Let's take the cue.

Let us attempt to know more about our inner Self, by striving for excellence not just in the field of physical sciences, but also in the field of spirituality.

(*As told to* ***K N Sawhney***)

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Divine Import of Krishna Leela

SHRI ASHUTOSH JI MAHARAJ
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/xml/uncomp/articleshow?msid=137938

It was the darkest hour of the era. The brutalities perpetrated by despot king Kansa had become unbearable. In such a period of crisis, during the Dwapar Yuga, the Divine Power descended on earth in human form as Krishna. He is Raagi as well as Vairaagi; Nar and Narayan; Chakradhar and Murlidhar — all blending into one incarnation, Krishna.

Even the pranks and adventure Balakrishna and his friends engaged in had subtle transcendental messages. Stealing butter from homes, Krishna as makhanchor points out the dualistic nature of the world. This world is an amalgamation of the essential (butter) and the non- essential (butter-milk). By relishing butter Krishna inspires us to abstract the Supreme Essence, mayapati, and enjoy pure bliss.

Likewise, the sport of trampling over the poisonous hoods of the serpent Kalia is also quite figurative. A similar kind of venomous snake is hissing within us. It is our conceited mind. The mind, through its attachment to sensuous desires, incessantly poisons the inner-self. Krishna's feat on the banks of the Yamuna symbolises the initiation of Brahma-Jnana within us. Experiencing the Divine through this knowledge will help us overcome vice. Such a pure heart then proves out to be a perfect platform for Krishna's dance of victory.

Krishna Leela is both divine and transcendental. But many fail to understand the real import of the Lord's leela. This failure, in turn, gives rise to innumerable doubts and even lead to vehement protests objecting to Krishna's leelas — like the rasleela between Krishna and the gopis. Krishna then was hardly 7-8 years old and the gopikas were much older.

Moreover, rasleela was in reality bhavleela, completely devoid of corporeal sensations. It was the celestial, atmic form of a gopi that used to participate in ras. Far above the carnal plane, it was a divine communion between souls (gopis) and the Supreme Soul (Krishna). Krishna Leela is Eko Aham Bahusyama, One manifested as Many.

Critics also condemn Krishna's role in the battle of Kurukshetra. They argue that Krishna with his divine powers could have prevented the war from taking place. Moreover, they point out, Krishna adopted unrighteous means to slay many great warriors of the Kauravas. But the Mahabharata war cannot be analysed like this in isolation — one has to take note of the larger picture. When a limb gets infected and is beyond repair, and there is danger of the patient losing his life because of this, the surgeon has no other option left to save his life than to amputate the infected limb.

Similarly, the Kauravas posed a real threat to society. They, in fact, had turned murderous — they did not hesitate to set aflame the Lakshagriha where the Pandavas were staying; they aided and abetted the disrobing of Draupadi; they rejected all peace-proposals by Krishna and were reluctant to offer even five villages to resolve the dispute. They preferred to go to battle.

To infer and gain know-ledge from the divine actions of incarnations, we need divine vision. This is what Krishna revealed to a confounded Arjuna: "What thou hast to see, this thy human eye cannot grasp; but there is a divine eye and that I now give to thee. Behold Me in my Divine Yoga." On attaining the divine

eye, Arjuna could see the cosmic form of Krishna. Then only, He could know the divine nature of Krishna and His leelas.

Janmashtami merely celebrates the spirit of Krishna, and reiterates the need to cultivate Krishna consciousness and to make efforts to realise Krishna in His elemental form through Brahma-Jnana.

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The Right Word
By Uday Mahurkar
http://www.india-today.com/itoday/19991206/offtrack.html

A scholar aims to bring the language of gods closer to humanity.

If Fulaji Turi, A 16-year-old Dalit student from north Gujarat, should meet Bijay Karan, a Kayastha from Shivala near Varanasi, it would be a meeting of minds, so to say. "Namaskaram, kim samacharam (Hello, what's the news)?" they would probably greet each other. And then, like old friends, the Dalit and the non-Brahmin would probably launch into a delighted prattle in a language that was once the pride of the priestly classes.

After centuries, Sanskrit is witnessing a slow and steady revival, specially in Gujarat. The man responsible for this is Chamu Krishna Shastry, 42, a Kannadiga Sanskrit scholar who lives for the day when Sanskrit becomes India's link language.

With a proselytiser's zeal, Shastry argues: "Hebrew was a dead language till 1880 but today it is the official language of Israel. If the Jews could revive Hebrew why can't we resuscitate Sanskrit?" Then the clinching contention: "Popularising Sanskrit is far easier. It is the mother of all Indian languages and up to 60 per cent of the words in the other languages come from Sanskrit." Shastry, organising secretary of Sanskrit Bharati, a voluntary body committed to the cause of Sanskrit, has evolved a simple method that in 14 years since 1985 has enabled nearly 29 lakh people to learn the language, one lakh of whom have decided to use Sanskrit at home in true Vedic style.

The "Ten-day Sanskrit Speaking Course", which Shastry has been implementing through a network of 130 full-time workers and 3,000 Sanskrit Bharati volunteers, has a conversation-based syllabus. Learning Sanskrit can be a forbidding exercise because of its elaborate grammar. To make it easier for the students Shastry's method is to skip grammar and teach Sanskrit as it is spoken. The students thus do not have to wrestle with the nuances of an arcane syntactics. It's then easier to master the language, so much so that even semi-literate people can opt for the course. It also helps that the course is for free.

The Sanskrit of 20th century is, unlike that of yore, more egalitarian. "Our accent is on removing the impression that Sanskrit is the language of the vidhwans (intellectuals)," says Shastry. Traditionalists would be horrified to hear Satish Gajjar, 26, a mere carpenter from Surendranagar district of Gujarat, hold forth in the language. Loosening the tongue also loosens heartstrings.On the last day of a Sanskrit Bharati class recently, an old Dalit participant was in tears; he said he could not believe that a day had come when the untouchables would be speaking in the language

of the gods.

One would think that Shastry, being a Brahmin, was well-versed in the language. But there was no Sanskrit spoken in his family. It was in jail that he found his metier as a language reviver. As a teenaged Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh worker Shastry was imprisoned during the Emergency. Alone in his cell, he took to reading biographies. In the writings of Veer Savarkar and Swami Vivekananda he learnt how Sanskrit could unlock scientific, mathematical and medical knowledge buried in ancient Sanskrit texts. He attended the Tirupati Sanskrit Pathshala, after which he plunged into his chosen mission, one of his main goals being to take Sanskrit to the non-Brahmin class, particularly the downtrodden classes. And his logic is impeccable. "Sanskrit is the best tool to remove the five types of social differences," he explains, "linguistic, class, caste, sect and the north vs south division."

His mission can prove crucial. Three crore Sanskrit manuscripts on important subjects are lying unread in musty archives all over the country. Happily, Shastry has begun to inspire people to learn the language. Like Jahanviben Shukla, a schoolteacher in Deesa town, who learnt to speak Sanskrit six years ago. Today, not only has she made Sanskrit the mode of communication in her four-member family, she has also ensured that many of the 400-odd students in her school speak the language without faltering.

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Holocaust of human heritage
Taliban worst culprit in history

Inder Malhotra

http://www.tribuneindia.com/20010308/edit.htm#4

No words can be strong enough to condemn what the unspeakable the Taliban regime of Afghanistan has done, not in a fit of blind rage but as an act of cold-blooded zealotry that Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee has rightly described as “barbaric”. Not since the Nazis has anything so vile and horrific as the destruction of the unique and priceless fifth-century giant Buddhas of Bamiyan been heard of. This savagery is comparable not to the orgy of book burning by Hitler and his henchmen but, in terms of culture and human heritage, to their holocaust of six million Jews.

Sadly, the foul deed has already been done. The incomparable works of art, sculpture and architecture that were the proud pre-Islamic heritage of not just Afghanistan but entire humanity now lie shattered to smithereens. Further attempts by sections of the international community, including UNESCO, rather belated in the first place, are now pointless. Prince Sadruddin Agha Khan, in a letter to The International Herald Tribune, had aptly compared the destroyed heritage to the “Pharaonic monuments of Egypt, the Babylonian treasures of Iraq, the pre-Islamic masterpieces of Persepolis in Iran”, the Greco-Roman temples and so on. To point out all this to the medieval and mad mullahs operating from Kandahar and Kabul, however, was like the proverbial playing of the been (a musical instrument) to a buffalo.

Does this mean that the world can only wring its hands and do nothing further about the monstrosity at Bamiyan? Not at all. The international community must unite to pillory Afghanistan’s barbaric rulers at every step and in every manner. They may control most of the Afghan territory. But only three countries — Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE — recognise the Taliban regime. The UN, UNESCO, other international bodies and the numerous countries that have spoken out agony against the outrage must see to it that the Taliban regime does not get international recognition at all. This is the minimum price the vandals must be made to pay for their villainy. The UN sanctions against it must be enforced rigorously and indeed intensified.

The suggestion for a complete de-recognition of the Taliban has come significantly from Mr Dimitri Loundras, the Greek Ambassador to Pakistan who also heads a UN committee to deal with the Taliban on the archaeological issues. Other Pakistan-based Ambassadors had joined him and UNESCO’s special envoy as well as a representative of the UN Secretary-General, in frantic but fruitless last minute attempts to reason with the Taliban. It is gratifying that a number of Muslim countries have condemned the Taliban. They have also joined a host of Muslim intellectuals across the world, including a large number from this country, in declaring the demolition of the Bamiyan Buddhas as “un-Islamic”.

The rage and the sorrow of the Buddhist countries such as Thailand, Japan, South Korea and Mongolia are limitless. The Dalai Lama also has given voice to deep anguish. The Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan has cried out against "betrayal". These countries ought to be active at the UN even more than India that is, of course, the birthplace of the Buddha. **As Jawaharlal Nehru once said, Buddhism might have taken root in other countries but "India has always lived under the Buddha's umbrella".**

Some have already started arguing that, however, deplorable the action of the Taliban, such vandalism, based on religion or ideology, has been a part of life almost throughout history. They can cite any number of instances beginning from the destruction by the all-conquering Romans of the Second Temple of the Jews in Jerusalem in 70 AD when they crushed a Jewish revolt in their empire. The argument is specious and must be rejected. What happened in medieval times cannot justify its repetition in the present age that is supposed to be enlightened. In any case, in medieval Spain when zealots tried to demolish the magnificent mosque at Cordoba and replace it by a cathedral, King Charles V had intervened to halt the havoc. "What you are building here", he had told the hotheads, "can be found anywhere. But what you have destroyed exists nowhere". Has there been a single such voice of sanity in Afghanistan, a land benighted by the Taliban?

The Taliban's own excuse for their monstrous act has shifted from time to time. At one stage someone had claimed on its behalf that it was pulverising its own heritage in retaliation for the demolition of Babri Masjid in India. The alternative claim to be articulated next was that the Taliban had been driven to act desperately, if also foolishly, by its isolation and even more by the sanctions imposed by the UN at a time when arms were allegedly flowing in to their rivals, the Northern Alliance. The gullible might have swallowed this — as quite a few in this country indeed did — but then the Taliban itself decided to cut out the cackle. It proclaimed from the housetops that the only reason for its despicable decision was that the statues in human form, whether actually worshipped or not, were "un-Islamic".

This has raised other pertinent questions. Muslims have ruled Afghanistan for at least a thousand years before Mullah Mohammed Omar and his wild followers seized power in the nineties. All of them had respected the Bamiyan Buddhas as their heritage. As someone has pointed out, with an appropriate touch of irony, Mahmud of Ghazni was among such rulers. **He did march to Somnath to break the idols there and on the way.** But he left Bamiyan strictly alone.

In the understable angry discussion on the Bamiyan Buddhas a critical point has been generally ignored. What are the Taliban, if not a creation of Pakistan? Pakistan's support to it is vital for its continued hold on power. Full allowance should surely be made of the fact that proteges sometimes do defy their mentors. It must also be recognised that Pakistan did join other countries in urging restraint on the Taliban. But regrettably its intervention was too late and too feeble. It was rather pathetic to watch Mr Shamshad Ahmed, Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN and a former Foreign Secretary, on the CNN fumbling for words and finally coming up with "ill-considered" as the description of the horrendous act in which the Taliban regime was already engaged when he spoke.

The real worry in Pakistan, and among its well-wishers, should be what might happen next. Pakistan may have created the Taliban, nurtured them in its madrassas and sustained them in power with the constant supply of warplanes, tanks and other sophisticated weapons. But now the

roles are getting reversed, ideologically at least. In the words of many Pakistanis themselves, their country is getting "Talibanised". Mr Sadruddin Agha Khan, in the letter quoted above, has asked: "How would Pakistan react if some cleric ordered the destruction of all the Indus Valley Gandhara Buddhas?"

His question is not rhetorical but very pertinent. The sway of the Taliban-like insanity in Pakistan is a regrettable fact of life. Neither the military regime presided over by General Musharraf nor those sections of Pakistani society who are dismayed by the rising tide of fundamentalism seem able to resist. This, especially in the light of what is going on in Kashmir after the third extension of the unilateral ceasefire, must be a source of major concern.

No less dismaying is the role of some sections of the Indian media that have been virtually condoning, if not applauding, the Taliban's barbarity at Bamiyan. Their argument is convoluted to the point of being perverse. Because there are in India elements like the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, they argue, the world has to live with the Taliban. The destruction of the matchless Buddhas, in their view, is justified because of the earlier demolition of the Babri Masjid. Mullah Omar and Acharya Giriraj Kishore are supposed to be the two sides of the same coin.

The destruction of the Babri Masjid was an egregious and unpardonable outrage. It is a matter of shame for this country that it has not yet punished its perpetrators. Instead, the government of the day is trying to fudge the case against some of the alleged culprits who occupy positions of power in the present set-up. But how does this justify the Taliban's savagery? Doubtless, the VHP's threat to avenge the blasting of the Bamiyan Buddhas by some similar idiocy at Ajmer or elsewhere has to be resisted by the Indian State firmly. **But the curious mindset being displayed by the Taliban's Indian apologists can in no way be defended by equating one evil with another. To do so is a perversion, not promotion, of liberal values.**

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Defenceless Buddhas

If the two Bamiyan Buddha statues have a voice, they will simply utter the unutterable: we have seen it all and suffered it all. But being the statues of the Buddha, they will simply and painfully smile and tell the Taliban destroyers, "Sons, you do not know what you are doing."

The last person to vandalise was Genghis Khan who cut off the legs in 1221. He also killed all residents of the town on the Silk Route as a punishment for living with two majestic Buddhas. It was the restoration work by Afghan and Indian experts that attracted new migrants and hotels to cater to tourists. In due course, the very tall statues – one 150 feet tall and the other 30 feet shorter – became world famous, being declared a heritage of the entire humanity.

Dedicated sculptors, mostly from India, created the icons out of a rock. In other words, the Buddhas were not built but carved out of a hillside very much like the Elephanta Caves and Ajanta. Again, in other words, there was just a hilltop to begin with and after the chistle and hammer work there stood two stunning figures spreading benediction. Of course the creators used a finely ground paste of limestone to produce the effect of folded robes and the contemplative expression. At one time there were also much gold plating and jewels, now sadly missing.

There are some priceless Buddha statues in the Kabul museum. This is after all the theft and pilferage by successive invaders. The first one was by an Iraqi General, Yakub ibn Layeth who took away many Buddhist treasures from the rockcuts of Bamiyan (some scholars spell it without the “y”). Chinese traveller Hsuen Tsang has said that Bamiyan was a very important Buddhist centre and housed many monks. They all lived in the caves cut out of the rocks. There need not be any greater evidence of Indian influence than this.

One last word. Temple architecture is normally style-bound. Like the tall spires of churches, domes and minarets of mosques. But in India it is bewilderingly different, The tall spires of the Bodh Gaya temple is different from the gopurams of the south. Humpi is a marvellous blending of the northern and southern architecture. The marble Jain temples of Rajasthan and Gujarat are a breed apart as are the temples in Khajuraho and Konarak. Then there are the exquisite designs of small temples in Himachal Pradesh and the grand and richly endowed gurdwaras in Punjab. No doubt, India’s most attractive exportable product in ancient times was religion and temple architecture and it did well.

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Did Jesus live in India?

By Iqbal Malhotra
The Indian Express

The New Testament of the Bible is completely silent on where Jesus spent 18 years of his life between the ages of 12 and 30. There is also a question mark on whether Jesus died on the cross or whether he survived the crucifixion and escaped from Jerusalem with the help of friends, to finally settle in India as an itinerant
preacher.

Both history and the Gospels are silent about the life of Jesus before his 30th year when he was baptised by John. A German theologian, Holger Kersten, has published a book called Jesus Lived in India, which contains seminal evidence on the fact that Jesus spent the 18 lost years of his life in India imbibing yoga, Vedic traditions and Buddhism. Thereafter, he returned to Jerusalem and after the crucifixion escaped back to India via Damascus and Persia.

Jesus is believed to have been buried in Srinagar, Kashmir. His graves are intact and points east-west in
the Jewish tradition rather than north-south in the Islamic tradition.

Kersten has provided a wealth of theological, archaeological and historical evidence in defence of his
hypothesis. According to Kersten, the Tibetans believe that Jesus was the 21st incarnation of Padmasambhava, the Buddha; the latter himself being the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. He develops an argument that the three wise men, or the Magi, were really Tibetan monks hunting for the
reincarnated Buddha.

If Kersten's evidence is to be tested, it will shake the foundations of contemporary Christianity as it will set
aside Jesus's sacrifice on the cross to wash the sins of mankind and therefore initiate a process of introspection to assess whether Christianity is indeed based on the teachings of Jesus Christ or whether it is based on the interpretation of the teachings of Jesus Christ by Paul. Paul taught that the whole function of Jesus centres on his sacrificial death, that through the shedding of his blood he absolved the faithful of their sins and released them from chaos and the domination of Satan. According to Paul, a person may be saved merely by the single act of baptism, becoming a child of God and a completely new being. Most Christians are of the opinion that the greatness, the uniqueness of Christianity, stands and falls with this teaching. Yet it may prove to be a fiction far

removed from the ideas of Jesus.

Not even a hint of this so-called Christian doctrine of salvation is to be found in the Sermon on the Mount --the quintessence of Jesus's message -- or in the Lord's Prayer, or in Christ's traditional parables.

Kersten first turns to Russian journalist Nicolai Notovitch who visited Ladakh in the 1880s and wrote a
book called òf40óThe Unknown Life of Jesus Christ. Notovitch discovered the existence of certain ancient
scriptures in the monastery of Hemis in Ladakh about the mysterious prophet Issa, whose life appeared to be similar to the stories of Jesus the Nazarene. According to these scriptures, at the age of 14, Issa, who was born in Israel, came to Sindh in India and from there he travelled through the Punjab to Jagannath Puri, where he learnt the Vedas for six years. Later he travelled via Nepal to Ladakh, where he studied Buddhist scriptures.

Then there is the Natha Namavali, an old Hindu Sutra of the mystical order of the Nath Yogis, which tells of the great Saint Isha Nath, who is said to have come to India at the age of 14. After he returned to his home country and started to spread his teachings there, he fell victim to a conspiracy and was crucified. By means of the yogic powers he had attained in India he was able to survive execution, and finally -- with the help of the supernatural powers of his teacher Chetan Nath, a Nath Guru -- he came once more to India, where he is said to have founded an ashram in the Himalayan foothills.

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Shiv Sharan:Not Your Typical French Hindu

By Rakesh Mathur, London

http://www.hinduism-today.com/1995/10/#gen42

"I spent more than twenty years in India in the traditional Hindu world," wrote Shiv Sharan--known in Europe as Alain Daniélou of Paris, France--in Shiva and Dionysus. "I was as far removed from the modern world as though I had been miraculously transported back to the Egypt of the Pharaohs." "On returning to Europe," Sharan went on with characteristic bluntness, "I was amazed at the childishness of theological concepts, and of the barrenness of what ness of what is called religion. I found a rudderless humanity, clutching the dying tree of Christianity, without even understanding why it was dying." He was an author, artist, musician and philosopher and perhaps the first European to boldly proclaim his Hinduness. This son of French aristocracy turned Benaras pundit had a wide effect upon Europe's understanding of Hinduism, though upon his passing in 1994, at the age of 87, only a few circles of scholars and musicians really appreciated the extent of his influence.

In 1987 famed sitarist Ravi Shankar, whom Sharan introduced to Europe in 1958, wrote of him, "Having covered the entire length and breadth of our great heritage during his long span, so deep were his feelings for the Motherland that he embraced Hinduism and took the name of 'Shiv Sharan.' Thus began the incessant flow of his glorious writings on Indian culture especially covering music, philosophy and religion. To this day his continuous contribution to the promotion of India's cultural heritage abroad through his works has no parallel in modern history. His unflinching devotion to our culture and, above all, love for Mother India, defy all expression."

Daniélou's Italian Sanctuary

At the request of Hinduism Today, I visited his simple villa home, the "Solstice of Labyrinth," 30 km away from Rome, set among the vineyards of the village of Zagarolo. This ancient pre-Roman Etruscan settlement is one of those places where the spirit breathes and peace prevails. Here Sharan spent his latter years with Jacques Cloarec, his assistant and disciple. He wrote incessantly on Hinduism. His presence can be felt all the time in the Solstice of Labyrinth. Cloarec makes sure that all visitors to this villa continue the dialogue, which Sharan poignantly started decades ago on the subjects of Indian music, Hinduism and especially Saivism.

Sharan, though he left India in the early sixties never to return, remained a Hindu throughout his life. He wrote in The Way to the Labyrinth, "I have never gone back to India. I know that the world I lived in will always exist but has simply retreated into its shell, waiting for the storms of the modern age to clear away. In order to find it again, I should have to go through the new Europeanized India that is so alien to me. It would take me a long while to readjust to its customs

and rites, to that way of life, eating, and dressing, without which there is no possible access to the traditional world. There would be nothing new for me to find, nothing I did not already know in the former existence I was granted by the Gods in that kingdom beyond time and space--the wondrous and eternal land of India."

Together Jacques Cloarec and I spend several evenings discussing Sharan's life and work. He was born as Alain Daniélou, Jacques related, in Paris on October 4th, 1907. His mother, an ardent Catholic, founded a religious order, as well as the famous "Sainte Marie" teaching establishments. His father was a Breton politician. Sharan spent most of his childhood in the country, with tutors, a library and a piano. Later he studied painting, singing and classical dancing. A great sportsman, Daniélou was a canoeing champion and an expert driver of racing cars.

"He was quite an agitator," Jacques confided. "He refused all limitations on his personal liberties and on his thought. He was very much anti-establishment--most of the time--although he came forth out of very conservative elements. He broke away from his family at a very tender age and became quite a wild person in the artistic milieu. Then he discovered India by chance one day as he was traveling to Afghanistan, and that is when his life changed totally."

With the Sadhus of Benaras

In 1932, together with the Swiss photographer, Raymond Burnier, this adventurous youth departed for the East, finally arriving in India in 1935. Initially he was associated with Rabindranath Tagore, as director of the school of music at Tagore's Shantiniketan academy.

Sharan could never cope with the Anglicized Indians who were ruling the country on Western concepts. He intensely disliked Gandhi and, to some extent, Tagore. "I soon discovered," he wrote, "that I had nothing to learn from English-speaking Indians--not even from such well-known philosophers as Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan, Aurobindo or Bhagwan Das."

His aversion for the India tailored out of English cloth fortuitously propelled Sharan into the depths of Hindu thought. He and Burnier moved to Benaras. There Sharan found a traditional world of writers, scholars, brahmins and monks who were completely indifferent to modern trends of thought. They preserved the traditional ideas, sciences, rites and philosophic systems of ancient India. He realized that these two worlds had practically no contact. They spoke different languages.

Under the guidance of Shivendra Nath Basu, Sharan studied classical Indian music and became an accomplished vina player. He became fluent in both written and spoken Hindi. A famous sannyasi of Benaras, Swami Karpatri, guided his study of Sanskrit and philosophy, and his association with sadhus and gurus.

Initiation into Hinduism

It was Karpatri who initiated Daniélou into Saivite Hinduism, and gave him the name of Siva Sharan ("protected by Siva"). Burnier was also initiated. Both lived as Hindus, including daily baths in the Ganges, a strict vegetarian diet and other observances, many of which Sharan continued the rest of his life.

In his 30 years with Daniélou, Cloarec never heard him speak of this initiation, nor for that matter,

of any other kinds of mystical inner experiences. "He was extremely discrete," he told me, "He would never speak about himself. He did say that just after his initiation he felt things had changed and he was now completely included in the Hindu world. He did puja nearly every day, but refused to allow anyone to watch."

The tradition Sharan adopted was that of the Saiva Agamas. This was really a crucial event, for nearly all modern exponents of Hinduism to the West belonged to the Smarta Sampradaya [tradition] of Adi Sankara. There are numerous differences between the philosophy of the ancient Agamas--which are the primary source and authority for Hindu ritual, yoga and temple construction--and the largely philosophic system propounded by Sankara in the 7th century ce.

As one example, the Agamic tradition does not regard the physical and spiritual worlds as mere maya or illusion, but rather considers them sacred creation, the visible form of the Supreme God. Hindu temple worship based upon this belief is a most important manifestation of the Agamic tradition. Smartas consider temple worship a lesser form of spiritual practice. The brilliance and uniqueness of Sharan's books, such as the encyclopedic Hindu Polytheism, was in his knowledgeable articulation of the Agamic mysticism which embraces the vast majority of Hindus.

In 1949, Sharan was appointed professor at the Hindu University of Benaras and director of the College of Indian Music. He corresponded with René Guénon about the philosophic and religious approaches of Saivite Hinduism. Greatly interested in the symbolism of Hindu architecture and sculpture, of which he made a thorough study, he made long trips together with Burnier to Khajuraho, Bhuvaneshvar and Konarak, as well as to many lesser-known sites in Central India and Rajputana.

In 1954, he left Benaras to take up the post of director of the Adyar Library of Sanskrit manuscripts and editions at Madras. In 1956, he was made a member of the Institut Française d'Indologie at Pondicherry, and subsequently of the Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient.

Impact of India's Independence

Sharan always believed that the foreign occupations of India, first by the Muslims then by the British--created deep rifts in Indian society. Those who were forced to collaborate with the invaders, learn their language and attend their schools and universities still believed themselves to be Hindus, but in fact, had only very vague notions of Indian science, philosophy and cosmology.

Most of the Indians running the administration of India during these occupations, Sharan believed, had to accept so many infractions to the rules of their society, so many moral and dietary compromises and absorb so many points of view foreign to their hybrid culture that they completely cut themselves off from any real knowledge of their traditions.

Sharan found that all the Hindus who ever occupied official functions and university and administrative posts were English-speaking and British educated, not only under British rule, but in the Indian administrative services that followed after Independence. "Men like Nehru and Tagore knew nothing about Hindu culture except through British authors," he observed. "Tagore was very much opposed to the rigors of the traditional society."

A close friend of the Nehru family, and in particular of Mrs. Pandit, Nehru's sister, his sympathies lay with the Independence Movement. But after the independence of India when the new

government attacked orthodoxy, it was suggested that his role would be more useful in the West in presenting the true face of Hinduism.

On Mission to Europe

"Sharan began to appear in Europe again from time to time after World War II," relates Cloarec, "and was somewhat of an eccentric because he had kept the kondu [hair tuft] of a good orthodox Hindu, which made of him a 'hippie' before the fact. But this eccentric person affirmed in a superb manner his knowledge of India from 1960 onward through his great work, Hindu Polytheism, which was printed by the prestigious Bollingen Series of Princeton University Press."

Once in Europe, he wrote prolifically. Among his most popular books were Hindu Polytheism; Virtue, Success, Pleasure and Liberation, The Four Aims of Life; The Ragas of Northern Indian Music; Music and the Power of Sound, plus books on sculpture, architecture, tales, history and yoga. He completed the first full translation of the Kama Sutra just before his death.

His double culture, which was by no means artificial, gave Sharan an outsider's vision of the Western world. In two of his works, Shiva and Dionysus and While the Gods Play--Saiva Oracles and Predictions on the Cycle of History and the Destiny of Mankind, he deals with the problems of a Western culture gone astray, having lost its own traditions and taken man away from nature and the divine. He demonstrates that the rites and beliefs of the ancient Western world before the onslaught of Christianity are very close to Saivism and clearly explains it with the aid of the texts and rites that have been preserved in India.

"My translation work and my attempt to elucidate Hindu conceptions presented many difficulties," Sharan once acknowledged, "because no words in any Western language can express the very subtle notions of Hindu metaphysics or cosmology. I had to express one way of thinking through the bric-a-brac of the vocabulary of another. Everything had to be rethought, no word could ever be translated directly by another."

Sharan's books have been published in twelve countries, in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese and more.

Promotion of the World's Music

For many in Europe, however, Sharan is best known for his promotion of the classical music of India and other countries. In 1958 he was the first to produce an anthology of Indian music, which included the Dagar brothers, Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan and Pattamal, among others. He arranged, against all advice, an international tour for the Dagar brothers in the concert halls of Europe where heretofore only European classical music was played. Similarly he advocated "equal status" for the classical traditions of all cultures. Famed violinist Yehudi Menuhin said in 1981, "It was Daniélou who, more than anyone else, thanks to his gifts of enthusiasm, ardor and communication skills, has furnished many elements of mutual comprehension which brought us closer to one another. The fact that music is today recognized as an essential value of all cultures and a universal discipline is to a large degree thanks to Daniélou." Mrs. Gobeil, director of Arts and Cultural Life at UNESCO, observes, "Daniélou was conscious of the value of traditional cultures 50 years before we were."

In 1963 he created the International Institute for Comparative Music Studies in Berlin and Venice

with the help of the Ford Foundation of America. By organizing concerts for the great musicians of Asia and the publication of recorded collections of traditional music under the aegis of UNESCO, he played an important part in the rediscovery of Asian art and music in the West. Because of his efforts, Indian music's influence can be seen on various established Western artists such as Xenakis, Nadia Boulanger and his friend, Maurice Béjart.

Sharan received numerous awards during his lifetime. President Charles de Gaulle presented him with the Légion d'Honneur, the highest award in France. In 1981, he received the UNESCO/CIM prize for music, and in 1987 the City of Paris honored his 80th birthday.

Shiv Sharan died January 27th, 1994. In accordance with his wish, he was cremated at Lausanne, Switzerland, without rites or ceremony.

Sharan's books, published under the name Alain Daniélou, are available in English translation from Inner Traditions, 1 Park Street, Rochester, Vermont, 05767, USA. Jacques Cloarec may be contacted at Via Colle Labirinto, 36, 00039, Zagarolo (Rome), Italy.

Sidebar: Shiv Sharan on Hinduism

From Hindu Polytheism (1964):

The word "Hindu," used for convenience, can be misleading, for it may convey the idea that Hinduism belongs to a country, to a particular human group, to a particular time. Hinduism, according to Hindu tradition and belief, is the remnant of a universal store of knowledge which, at one time, was accessible to the whole of mankind. It claims to represent the sum of all that has come to be known to man through his own effort or through revelation from the earliest age of his existence. The development of the mutually exclusive creeds which now claim membership of the greater number of human beings seems to be, in the Hindu view, a comparatively recent phenomenon, which appeared only during the Kali Yuga. Whatever value we attribute to more recent religions, we should not attempt to equate Hinduism with them. Hinduism cannot be opposed to any creed, to any prophet, to any incarnation, to any way of realization, since one of its fundamental principles is to acknowledge them all and many more to come.

The Western approach to Hinduism tends to present us with a clear picture of original systems which become confused and mixed in the mass of Hindu thought, while the Hindu approach wants us to see a coherent, all-inclusive, ever-evolving knowledge with its roots in ancient systems which tried to express, more or less successfully, the complex structure of the cosmos, a structure which came to be better and better analyzed in the elaborate mythology of the later ages.

From Shiva and Dionysus (1979):

Life is one. There is no boundary between the vegetable, animal and human worlds. They are interdependent, and their common survival depends on respect of their harmony, whereby none assumes the role of predator, or the right to alter the balance of nature. The Gods and subtle energies are present everywhere in the world and within ourselves. A return to Saivite wisdom would appear to be the only way to ensure a respite to a human race which is running towards destruction at an ever-increasing pace.

Sidebar: Some Personal Reminiscences

By Jacques Cloarec

"When I met Sharan in 1962, he had definitely left India and looked totally European, dressed Western-style and smoked abundantly. There was nothing to make him stand out particularly. Yet, I noticed very quickly that there was a certain bearing in him, a certain inner process going on, a certain way of thinking, that was totally different from those you would find in Europe. He had kept his Indian habits, that is to say ways of doing things, and especially a way of reflecting--the constant questioning of all established concepts. He had a sense of values of good and evil that made him different from anyone else around him.

"Even though he was director of a famous music institute, and making a good salary, he lived simply at that time in a small room. He refused even to give his laundry out to be done, and I found him washing it personally. He cared little about money, but his needs were always amply met, first through the support of Raymond Burnier, then from his well-paying job as director of the music institute. Only in the last few years has any substantial income come from his book royalties.

"A few years later, in the 1960s, he got in the habit of wearing a rudraksha mala, a very Saivite thing, and what surprised everyone most was a little golden Linga that he would wear in a very obvious way over his Scottish neckties.

"He had adopted Indian thinking in a very deep way and without any reservations. He felt that its philosophy and religion had no rival anywhere in the world as to its profundity and its logic. He regarded all other systems as completely wrong.

"Sharan was a secretive person, humble, transparent. For years and years that I lived with him, I never saw him reading or writing Hindi or Sanskrit. So I had some doubts whether he could read them at all. Then when he decided to do the Kama Sutra, he couldn't find any pundits who could help him do that, because the language was so tough. So he really surprised everyone when he started to translate it all on his own. And he worked extremely hard for four years to do a very difficult translation from the very archaic Sanskrit of Vatsyayana. The second commentary in Hindi was a little easier for him. After he completed Kama Sutra, at 85, he began translating the Artha Shastra which he would never be able to finish."

Jacques Cloarec was Sharan's personal assistant for 30 years.

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Epic soul-searching

Personality: From young professional to mature priest-author, that's the story of Krishna Dharma

By Mark McClelland

http://www.the-week.com/99oct03/life2.htm

At 25, Kenneth Anderson had acquired the trappings of success: an officer's job in the merchant navy, a girlfriend and a lifestyle that included drinking binges, smoking and the occasional drugs.

But this Ôdream life' was filled with emptiness until Anderson came across the Bhagavad Gita and discovered Hinduism. Now, 20 years later, his transformation from Kenneth Anderson to Krishna Dharma, a Hindu priest, is probably complete: He has authored an English version of the Mahabharata that runs to 1,000 pages.

Krishna Dharma (above left) hopes that his 1,000-page Mahabharata will become the definitive English version of the epic**.**

Dharma, who is the president of a temple which he founded in Manchester in 1986, says that reading the Gita was the greatest thing that happened to him.
"After reading it I suddenly gave up everything I had and went to live in a temple," said Dharma, whose wife of 15 years, Chintamani, also converted to Hinduism after meeting him. "In the temple, I rose at 4 a.m. every day and meditated. Discovering the spiritual side of things improved my life immeasurably. If I hadn't taken to this I might have gone crazy or killed myself."

Dharma, who has three children aged 11, eight and four, had stopped practising Christianity before he discovered Hinduism. After he started believing in Hinduism, he returned to Christianity seeking the answers he had been looking for. All he found was disillusionment. "Christian scriptures have a lot to offer," he said. "But the church has diluted the message, twisted it and misinterpreted it. Not only did I not get anything out of going to church, I actually became an atheist."

Dharma believes that the teachings of Christ and Krishna are not very different from each other and that Hinduism is more about spiritually-centred simple living and high thinking. The dialogue going on between religions and the willingness of people to explore other faiths was one of the factors in his deciding to write the Mahabharata in a simple form. "The Mahabharata is such a wonderful book and I wanted to share it with others," says Dharma. "The spirit of the epic is so different from today's harsh age of science and technology and materialism.

Dharma hopes that his book will become the definitive English version of the epic. "What is available in English is not so easy to read. The language is stilted, written by people for whom English is a second language. In the digressions, one easily lost the thread of the story," says Dharma, who hopes that his book, which contains many coloured and sketched pictures, will be of interest also to readers of fantasy fiction such as Lord Of The Rings.

Dharma has plans for a 300-page abridged version of the book. "A lot of people will balk at reading a 1,000 page book. It's not something you can carry with you to read on the train on the way to work. But, a lot of people may read the smaller version."

While Dharma has laid himself open to criticism of misinterpretation, he has not heard dissenting voices so far. "Everything I have heard has been positive," he says.

The positive feedback began with his American publishers who contacted him when he was looking for an agent. "They offered an attractive proposition, saying they would get behind it and they have," says Dharma. "They're pushing it well out there and the reviews I've had in the States have been excellent."

Although it took Dharma two years to write the book, which is priced Rs. 900 in India and available from Torchlight Publishing, New Delhi, he says that was only a small part of the process. "You need to read the verses a lot to get a good grasp of them and I read them over a number of years. There was a lot of cross referencing and I had to be definite about what I was looking for."

After a lifetime of searching, Dharma has found exactly what he was looking for in the Mahabharata.

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES - Tribal Tribulations
My personal encounter with the impact of Christian conversion on Meghalaya
By Dr. Mihir Meghani, Michigan

I first met the Khasi people of Meghalaya in 1995. A delegation of 30 were touring the state of Maharashtra as part of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's project, Bharat Mera Ghar ("India is My Home"). Previously my concept of India's Northeastern States--Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Nagaland,Manipur, Mizoram and Arunachal--was that everyone had converted to Christianity and wanted to separate from Bharat. Now I was delighted to meet this delegation of Khasi Hindus who were patriotic to India and proud of their heritage. I resolved to go to this state when the opportunity arose.

By good fortune, the following year was my last in medical school and the curriculum allowed time for experience outside the US. I arranged a position at a clinic with Dr. R. S. Thangkhiew, a Khasi Hindu physician in Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya. As a medical student, I expected to learn a lot about infectious diseases and the consequences of poverty and lack of basic resources on health. I saw those problems, and to some extent could alleviate them through my work as a physician.

As a concerned Hindu, I wanted to experience this state of Bharat that so few people get to experience, learn about the unique culture of the people there and see first hand what Christian missionaries were doing. I was truly shocked by the rampant discrimination that Christians meted out to non-Christians (mostly Hindus, including Khasis, Sikhs, Assamese and Bengalis). Christian denominations control almost 100 percent of the state's educational and health care institutions and resources. Most of them give discounts to those people who identify themselves with the particular Christian sect that runs that institution. Additionally, in many hospitals if an individual cannot pay his bill at the end of his stay, the hospital will offer to waive the full amount if he converts to Christianity. Most top government jobs are given to Christians, and there are barely any non-Christian members in the state legislature.

Aprial Mon Thangkhiew, a resident of Shillong, explained how this all happened. "Missionaries got converts because of education," she told me."Converts got admission to colleges and hostels outside the Northeast while non-Christians did not. Poor Khasis couldn't afford to go outside. Only Christians got scholarships. My cousin was a Presidency College Gold Medalist, but he didn't get a scholarship, because he was not a Christian. Conversion was the price for higher education. People converted because of educational and economic reasons initially. So, the poor, bright people converted, and then the other poor followed. If these preferences were not offered, people would not have converted."

Thangkhiew went on, "The Christians and British tried to teach us to hate our culture--song, dance, religion, everything. If we sang a Khasi song, they would laugh at us. They called us devil worshipers. They preached in our schools and brainwashed Khasis. The converted Khasis were just like them. They laughed at us when we went to our dances. I went to the Presbyterian school. I had many good friends. However, after some of them were converted to Christianity, they told me, 'We'll go to heaven and you'll go to hell.' They didn't realize that they were dishonoring their ancestors. The British policy of sending missionaries didn't do anything for us except weaken our culture. They converted all the Syiems [local rulers] except the Syiem of Nongkrum. Then other people converted."

The 50 percent of Khasis who did not convert are one of the few communities of the Northeast that still maintains their ancient traditions. They believe in one universal God, U Blei, who is the creator of everything. They do not have a written text or scripture, and the heritage verbally passes from generation to generation. The basic principle of Khasi religion is similar to the eternal principles of other tribal faiths. It is to earn righteousness in the world. The basic precept is that to know God, one must first know, love and respect fellow human beings. Prayer, song and dance are important aspects of the culture. Throughout the year, there are community dances where villagers get together. In March and April is the most important, the Shad Suk Mynsiem, (shad means dance, suk means happiness or tranquility and mynsiem means soul or heart), a dance of joy, merriment, gratitude and thanksgiving. Khasis follow a matrilineal system. The wife keeps her mother's last name, children keep the mother's last name and the youngest daughter inherits the family property.

Attempts during British times to resist the Christianization of the people generally failed. Jrin Mon Thangkhiew recalls, "My grandfather, Babu Jeebon Roy, wanted to start a school to promote the Khasi culture and religion and strengthen ties with the rest of India. He approached the British Government in 1875 and was told to get permission from the Welsh Calvinist Mission, which had been entrusted the task of propagating education. The missionaries replied, 'We have only come to educate your people to the extent that they can read the Bible. Anyway, your people do not have enough brains for higher studies.' " Nevertheless, in 1876, the Shillong High School opened with Roy's own money. But the Christian missionaries could not tolerate it because they realized it was a threat to their control of education, a main tool for proselytization. The government was forced to give control of the school to the Presbyterian missionaries, and subsequently, education about Khasi heritage was eliminated. Christianity became the sole religion taught, and the medium of instruction was changed from Bengali to English.

I was shocked to discover that the latest method for gaining converts was simple fear. Missionaries were telling the people that the apocalypse--a time predicted in the Christian Bible when the world is destroyed and only righteous Christians are saved--will occur in the year 2000. I was asked time and again by frightened local people if it was true. "Of course not," I told them, "hardly any Christians in the world believe such a prediction."
It is a version of the old "best bet" conversion argument used for centuries in the West. Dr. Sam Pamei, a Christian from Nagaland who lives in Shillong, gave me the Meghalaya version: "If I have a choice to be a Christian and face no bad outcome from the perspective of my indigenous religion, or to follow my indigenous religion and face eternal damnation if Christianity is the true

way, then the safe bet is to be come a Christian." According to Sunil Deodhar, the missionaries are resorting to such extreme measures because, "Due to the work of Seng Khasi, Sein Raj and RSS, they are gaining fewer new converts and are actually losing many old converts back to the indigenous fold. This threat of eternal damnation is their last-ditch attempt to win converts."

Many organizations have been dealing with these challenges. Since 1899, Seng Khasi has been working to maintain the indigenous Khasi culture and religion and defend it against attacks from Christian missionaries. Seng Khasi and its sister group, Sein Raj, organize Khasi religious and cultural programs, hold regular prayers and meetings and publish material to educate people about the Khasi heritage. The Ramakrishna Mission has been active for decades. More recently, the RSS, Seva Bharati and Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram have assisted Seng Khasi and Sein Raj with their programs and set up many schools, student and youth hostels and medical clinics. However, all these groups encounter constant opposition from Christians.

When I left Meghalaya in 1996, I felt among Khasis a growing sense of pride in their religion, culture and heritage. Two hundred years ago Hindus may have been at a technological, economic and political disadvantage. But today Hindus have all the resources they need to support our fellow brothers and sisters. If the Northeast goes, then many other tribal communities are susceptible to severing ties with the age-old Hindu society. Today, as tribal communities are strengthening their identities, there is a need to reaffirm to them that they are an integral part of Hindu society and that Hindu society will neither take them away from their traditional beliefs and culture, nor swallow them. Each time a Hindu community converts, their unique contribution to the religious and cultural melting pot is lost and Hinduism becomes less diverse.

source: **Hinduism Today**
http://www.hinduismtoday.kauai.hi.us/ashram/htoday.html

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Our past, our future: Time for action in Elephanta
By Sumita Mehta

Grabbing headlines in Mumbai last week was Intach's benefit event for the Elephanta Caves. Though heritage wasn't the abiding concern of the 300 guests, they did leave with a very different view.

The reason was the heritage experience. Awesome sculptures, vocalist Shubha Mudgal and danseuse Alarmel Valli's moving performances against the backdrop of the lit caves, and the small site museum combined exquisitely to reiterate the relevance of the past.
Elephanta, the world only island's caves, dates back to the 6th century and boasts of some of the country's most magnificent rock-cut sculptures. Says art historian Promod Chandra, "It's perhaps the most significant early Hindu monument in India." Approximately 20 lakh people visit annually.

UNESCO declared the caves a World Heritage Site in 1987, but one adventurous lot even happily perched itself on top of the magnificent three-faced Shiva statue, the Trimurti – and plastic packets were strewn all over. Something, indeed, had to be done in a hurry.

In order to bring Elephanta into greater focus, Intach, the Archaeological Survey and UNESCO have held seminars, prepared plans and organised workshops. All agencies involved with Elephanta's development, such as the departments of culture, environment, tourism, water, etc, as well as ASI and local bodies have worked towards creating a plan to preserve the area and evolve community development initiatives.

The ASI custodian's cottage was restored to house the site museum, showcasing the development of rock-cut sculptures in Mumbai and Maharashtra, the 16 World Heritage Sites in India, the stupa and other Buddhist monuments in Elephanta.

Some of the money collected from the art auction and ticket sales at last week's event will be used to redesign the pathway and ensure that the stalls present a simple, clean, coordinated impact.

But a lot remains to be done. The mangroves on the island's shores are severely affected by pollution from the Mumbai harbour. One mangrove species has already been lost and there is urgent need to rehabilitate the rest.

Elephanta is constantly threatened by the rapid industrial development in its vicinity. A toxic chemical storage terminal has been planned just 400 m away. Bilge from oil

tankers, waste from ship-breaking activities and plastic that is dumped in the sea seriously threatens the marine and bird life of the area. Another threat is the proposed move to put one leg of the eight-lane Sewri-Nhava Sheva highway link on Elephanta. Intach has asked experts to assess the impact of such development.

The place will survive only if the community benefits. Intach is working with Project.

Mainstream, an NGO, to provide loans and business opportunities to the unemployed youth. It plans to involve another NGO to create income-generating avenues for women. When all this comes to fruition, then the validity of last week's theme - Time Past, Time Future - will be proved.

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Poison of western economic thought

M.S.N. Menon

http://www.tribuneindia.com/2002/20020322/edit.htm#5

They gave bangles for African slaves, opium for the silver of China and beads for the gold of the Incas and Mayas of South America. **Exploitation — it was natural to the ways of the whiteman. It has not changed to this day.**

Live and let live — this was not what inspired their economic doctrines. **Instead, they talked of "competition". In practice, they used gun powder.** They have been a Cain to the Abels of the world.

Remember, the greatest sport of the Romans was to let the lions tear up human beings: To let gladiators gore each other!

Am I provoked? Indeed, I am, for the whiteman continues to "exploit" the world. He is the cause of much suffering. **And, worse, he sells to the poor of the world what is banned in his own native land and treats Asia and Africa as dumping ground for dangerous toxins.**

Surely, behind these activities is not a civilised mind. It reflects the barbarous past of Europe. The mind is deadened by rapacious greed.

That others too have to make a living — this has never been the concern of white men. Thus, the Manchester textile factory owners saw nothing wrong in destroying the livelihood of millions of Indian handloom workers in order to promote the livelihood of the white workers of Manchester! Of course, profit was the first priority.

Am I taking up the past to denigrate the people of the West of today? Certainly not. One can ignore the black deeds of the past, although that is no easy task. How can the Africans forget the slave trade and the Red Indians the genocide against their race? And these by those who professed Christianity! But one cannot tolerate the continuing criminal activities of the West in our times.

That tobacco is a health hazard was known a century ago. But the Western manufacturers persisted in foisting it on the world. Profit was all. Today they target the young (and women too) of Asia and Africa as tobacco consumption is fast declining in the West. That tobacco causes cancer, that millions go through agony — these are of no concern to them. There is no easy way to block them for they are powerful people.

Liquor has been a killer of a different kind. It causes alcoholism. Over the years, its consumption has gone up by leaps. With a decline in consumption in the West, makers of Scotch whisky are desperately trying to dump the surplus in Asia and Africa, particularly in India, with its copious

market and high purchasing power.

Globalisation has brought McDonald's and its French fries to every corner of the world. We are now told that it has been selling beef-flavoured French fries! How could it have done such a monstrous thing? Insatiable greed — that is the only answer.

And imagine this: a medical device which can see the inside of the lung was found to be causing infection of the lung! Although it is banned in the USA, the company continues to sell it in India.

All these have become possible because the peoples of Asia and Africa have for long been subjected to a feeling of inferiority — of self-hate. And admiration for everything western. Which is why America gives so much importance to the export of its way of life to the developing world. This was the unfinished business of colonialism. It has already prepared the peoples of Asia and Africa for an apotheosis of the market culture.

Of course, Indians are a party to these criminal activities. Thus, highly toxic lead wastes, which can cause blood and neurological disorders, imported from the West are sold in India for re-use in car batteries. At one time there were 250 plants in Delhi alone to re-cycle lead wastes! As India has no regulatory system, these activities have continued and multiplied. Which explains how a US firm planned to dump 20 tonnes of dangerous mercury in India. It was turned back when Indian NGOs got wind of it.

Today, indigent nations accept nuclear wastes for burial against payment. In fact, a new pattern has emerged: a hazardous industry is either transferred to the Third World or its wastes are sold to Third World peoples for reprocessing or disposal. Sometimes free incinerators are provided to burn the wastes, thus polluting the environment.

Can the non-white people object to these things? They cannot, for the whiteman can drag them to the WTO court in the name of "free trade".

Reap where you have not sown. The whiteman is a master of this art. He has done little for the development of the world. In fact, he was opposed to the industrialisation of the developing world. India got much of the help from the socialist countries, above all from Russia. And yet the West wants larger and larger share of the Indian market, as if by right!

It is time to ask: is this the way man should organise his economic life on which his life depends? Does this add to his happiness? Or is the entire system causing a great deal of avoidable sorrow? The answer should be obvious.

In spite of all these, how is it that we are too eager to open up our markets? This is because our business community's concerned with only one thing: its profit. The care of the country is secondary. Only when its own interests are threatened does it make nationalistic noises. And our rulers (whatever their hue) they have shown least interest in changing the ways of the world.

Today the USA champions human rights. It is legitimate to ask: is there a right against economic murder? Have we a right against those who poison our food and environment? It is time to raise these questions.

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articles on hinduism

Return of the Aryans

By: Bhagwan S.Gidwani

Publisher: Penguin Books India; Pages:994; ISBN 0-14-024053 –5

(Reviewed by: Prof. Jagjit Mirchand)

Introduction

Several eminent personalities including Swami Vivekanand, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and Shri Aurobindo firmly believed that Aryans were homegrown, born and brought up in India. Many chose to dismiss those views simply as irrational, inspirational or ultra-nationalistic. Yet, the archeological finds being uncovered presently, year after year, supported by continuing historical & scholarly research seem to prove that Swami Vivekanand, Rabindranath Tagore and Shri Aurobindo, and many learned personalities were correct to raise pointed questions against the Aryan Invasion Theory.

The British, in presenting the Aryan Invasion Theory offered no proof. They did not need to. Hundreds of Indian historians rushed forward to earn their doctorates, promotions, patronage and government-aided jobs and positions for supporting the British theory of Aryan Invasion of India. Their Proof? Largely quoting those very hundreds of articles and books –and asking - how could so many learned books and serious articles by countless British and Indian historians be wrong!

Some did murmur that the British-created Myth was aimed at proving to the Indians that they have always been ruled by foreigners, being incapable of ruling themselves and that it was always the foreign invader, like the Aryans (and in later times, other foreigners and finally, the British), who brought progress and enlightenment – and therefore never must Indians aspire for self-rule unless the intention is to bring back darkness, decadence and ruin on themselves.

'**RETURN OF THE ARYANS'** presented in novel form, provides a fascinating story and updates much of the research from scholarly and historical sources, archeological records, oral traditions and memory songs to present facts and evidence to show the Aryan Invasion Theory is flawed. Moreover, it presents the drama of the birth and beginning of Hinduism with elegance and beauty.

MAIN THEMES IN THE BOOK:

Bhagwan S. Gidwani's best-seller, "Return of the Aryans" presents drama of birth and beginnings of the roots of Hinduism (Sanatana-Dharma) prior to 8,000 BCE. The book's other main themes are:

1. Aryans originated from India. They were born, grew up, and died as citizens of Bharat-Varsha, anchored in timeless foundation of Sanatana-Dharma.

2. Theory of Aryan invasion of India from West is false.

3. Equally false is theory of North-South Divide. Ganga, Madhya, Sindhu and Dravidian regions were equal partners of Bharat-Varsha (India).

4. A generation that remains unaware of its roots and heritage is truly orphaned.

TERRITORY OF BHARAT VARSHA IN 5,000 BCE:

'Return of the Aryans' explains that Bharat-Varsha territory in 5,000 BCE was greater than combined territory of India, Pakistan & Bangladesh, as additionally, it included Avagana (Afghanistan), parts of Iran upto Lake-Namaskar; Tibet; Brahma-Lands (Burma); Sadhu-Newar-Lands (Nepal); Bhoota (Bhutan); and Vraon-Land (Sri Lanka). These lands joined Bharat-Varsha not by conquest but by free consent.

Yet wars came and Bharat-Varsha people proved themselves great & gallant warriors. To conquered peoples, they extended rights and freedoms of Sanatana-Dharma. Theirs was firm belief in humane ideals of Sanatana-Dharma and concept of human rights.

ANCIENT IDEALS OF SANATANA DHARMA:

Gidwani approaches Hinduism with deeply-felt respect. He writes about ideals that took shape in those early times, to become foundation of Sanatana-Dharma - and among those ideals were: recognition of spiritual nature of man wherever he is from; acceptance of every culture as expression of eternal values; and man's obligation to protect environment, and all creatures, tame and wild.

Thus the book speaks of beauty and universality of Hinduism; its respect for all faiths to assert "Whatever god you choose, He is that God, and Dharma (Righteousness) is His Will"

STORY OF ARYANS – Their origin and travel to far-distant Lands:

The book presents a fascinating story of the birth & beginning of the roots of Hinduism from 8,000 BCE. Equally dramatic is its account of Aryans originating in India, their exploits and adventures in distant lands, including Iran, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Turkey, Russian-lands, Finland, Italy, Greece, Norway, Sweden, Lithuania, Baltic-States and Germany; and finally their triumphal return to home-town and heritage of India.

ORIGIN OF OM, VEDAS, SWASTIKA, SOMA WINE, CIVILIZATION:

The work covers dramatic stories behind origins of Om, Tat Tvam Asi (That-Art- Thou) Namaste, Gayatri-Mantra, Swastika and Soma Wines . It tells how Sanskrit and Tamil developed - how they influenced world-languages; it has tales of battles and blood-shed, rise of Benaras, Hardwar and many cities; discovery and disappearance of Saraswati River and founding of Ganga, Dravidian, Sindhu civilizations; Besides, Gidwani sheds light on pre-history Hindu Parliament; development of ships & harbors; gold-mining; chariots; Yoga; mathematics; astronomy; medicine; surgery; music, dance, architecture; and material advancement of ancient India.

The book explains how Vedas were composed in 4000 BCE by poets of Bharat-Varsha, along India's rivers.

'Return of the Aryans' is certainly a great book, powerfully presented, with deep insights into pre-ancient history. The story, though in novel-form, is not mere fiction. It is based on enormous research and carries stamp of scholarship and plausibility.

It should make excellent TV Serial, based as it is on theme of national integration, national self-respect and national identity, . Certainly, the book fulfills long-felt need to keep alive awareness of foundation and eternal values of India's culture. Also it presents art, yoga, abstract thought, philosophical and spiritual leanings of pre-history India. Besides, it has suspense and drama, moving at red-hot speed, with thrilling tales of Aryan adventures, courage, rashness, heroic thrusts and triumphs, in various far-away countries of Asia & Europe. TV Serial therefore will have world-wide appeal.

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articles on hinduism

History overtaken by politics

By Bulbul Roy Mishra

http://www.indianexpress.com/full_story.php?content_id=21173

The Hindus do not pay much attention to the historical order of things,'' wrote Al beruni in 1030 A.D. ''They are very careless in relating the chronological succession of things.'' The millennium-old censure of the Hindu's lack of historic sense by a medieval historian appears to still apply, particularly to Indian historians of the present day.

It is bizarre that the eminent historians like Irfan Habib, Suraj Bhan and K.M. Shrimali have opposed the excavation of the Ayodhya site on rather flimsy grounds.

An interview with Professor Irfan Habib, the former chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research, was published in The Indian Express on March 12, with the headline ''Digging won't resolve Ayodhya dispute''. A historian of the repute of Irfan Habib would be expected to talk about possible historic finds on excavation of the site rather than resolution of Ayodhya dispute.

His apprehension is that ''such a post facto rationalisation of what was done on December 6, 1992, would place in jeopardy the fate of numerous historical monuments all over the country.'' Such apprehension is rather unfounded for two reasons.

First, it is nobody's case that all existing historic monuments should be demolished in order to carry out excavations. The demolition of Babri mosque has been condemned by one and all, including top BJP leaders. The question of excavation of the site has become relevant only because there is no structure at present on the disputed site.

Secondly, excavation is pertinent in the context of the observation by leaders like Syed Shahabuddin that if it was proved that the Babri masjid had been built after demolishing the Ramjanmabhoomi mandir, then a mosque on such usurped land deserved to be destroyed in conformity with the tenets of the Shariat.

Professor Habib has also remarked that the archaeological finds are subject to many interpretations. But given the core issue to find a permanent solution to the age-old dispute, archaeologists will have to only find whether or not a temple pre-existed the mosque. The dating of any such a temple structure can be scientifically attempted by the carbon 14 method. Whether such a temple was a Ram temple or Shiva temple or for that matter a temple for worship of any other deity is irrelevant. In any case, the disputed site has been known for a very long time as Ramjanmabhoomi where Ram has been worshipped in the mosque even during the heyday of the Mughal empire, down to the present day.

The temple, if any, can therefore, be logically taken as Ram temple. Thus it is difficult to understand why Professor Habib was apprehensive that the archaeological finds at the site would be subject to many interpretations. According to Professor Habib, there is no acceptable proof that the Babri masjid had been built at the site of a Hindu temple. This being the case, there is all the more reason for him to seek archaeological evidence.

The shortsightedness of historians like Professor Irfan Habib is patently evident from the fact that they have totally ignored the revelation from the radar survey to Tojo Vikas International, suggesting the

existence of ancient structures at a layer that may be of two to three millennium B.C. These findings of course are not conclusive, but are sufficient to inspire a historian to demand excavation of the site.

If one considers the fact that not a single ancient structure of the early Vedic period has so far been unearthed to establish the antiquity of the much vaunted Vedic civilisation, one will understand the immense importance of the excavation of the Ayodhya site.

According to western scholars, the period of early Vedic civilisation commenced from 1500 B.C. Assuming that an ancient temple structure of 2000 B.C. depicting well-known Vedic deities on its pillars, is unearthed at the disputed site, such a find will at once demolish the existing theories of Aryan invasion around 1500 B.C. and warrant a reconstruction of ancient Indian history. Thus, in view of the radar survey, all historians including the eminent ones like Professor Habib should have welcome the excavation. If the excavation leads to any such find, it will far outweigh in importance the issue on hand, viz. whether or not a temple existed at the mosque site.

The writer is a freelance journalist

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The Buddha will forgive. Should we?

Chandan Mitra

http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon2.asp?cat=BKBONE1&d=SUNDAYPIONEER/BACKBONE

The desecration and destruction of the magnificent Buddha statues in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, by Taliban marauders is especially painful and humiliating for Indians. For the rest of the world, they are only heritage sites, but for us they are symbols and surviving artifacts of our own history, culture and civilisation. It is futile to condemn the Taliban for this act: You cannot expect savages to be graced with table manners. And the Taliban have repeatedly and proudly proclaimed their savagery. They have dragged a former President of their own country out of the sanctified premises of the UN mission and hung him by the neck in a public square. They have stoned women to death for allegedly indulging in adultery, besides banishing them from schools and hospitals. They have shot people in cold blood for not sporting a beard. They jubilantly collaborated with the hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane in December 1999, helping them force a humiliating deal out of our Government from Kandahar under the benign gaze of the local commander.

The infuriating part of all this is that the world is so helpless in such situations. Just two decades ago, it was similarly helpless in the face of the murderous Pol Pot regime in Cambodia that went about massacring a few million people for the sheer joy of killing. Of course, the world was equally silent when Stalin and Mao Zedong liquidated "class enemies" by the million in their respective countries, but that was before the age of information dawned upon us. As far as the Taliban are concerned, their barbarism is worse for it is proclaimed with robust audacity. This time too, there was no hide-and-seek about their iconoclasm. They elevated statue-breaking to state policy and justified it on the specious ground of religion. Their arguments are so pathetic that even their sponsor state, Pakistan, has been compelled to plead with them, at least for the record, to desist from such savagery.

Now that the bloodthirsty Taliban have terrorised the local population into cowering submission, they need to find occupation for their unemployed soldiers. Also, the regime must be worried that their tanks and rocket-launchers, bought with money from the narcotics trade, could be rusting. So, what could be better than sending their rag-tag army and artillery for some target practice to the Bamiyan hills? The new recruits to the Taliban ranks will presumably be given less arduous responsibilities like smashing statues inside the Kabul Museum, another heritage site, with pick-axes and shovels. The UN and international heritage organisations shall salve their consciences by issuing condemnations and/or appeals. The US, which sallied into Afghanistan with Cruise missiles to destroy the ever-elusive Osama bin Laden, can be trusted to maintain deafening silence on this issue. Washington's machismo has recently been expended on some hapless Air Traffic Controllers in Iraq!

Not that we can do very much about it, but the Taliban's insane effrontery provides us occasion to introspect and perhaps resuscitate our shrinking concern for India's civilisational heritage. **Once upon a time, Kandahar marked the western frontier of Indian empires. Ruled by local Shaivite kings, much of Afghanistan was in the ambit of the Indo-Gangetic culture. Gandhari, wife of Dhritara-shtra, belonged to Kandahar, underlying the close ethno-cultural links between that region and today's Hindi heartland. The Shaivite kingdoms of Kandahar were eventually replaced by Buddhist monarchies during the centuries when Gautama Buddha's intellectual rebellion against the heavy-handed Brahminical Hindu order won him adherents throughout our vast land. Similarly to the East, Indian culture flourished, reaching islands as far as Borneo and Bali. Some of it survives even today, evident from the quaint proto-Sanskritic names that still prevail in Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia and Indonesia. Borneo's capital, Bandar Seri Begawan is a colloquialisation of Sri Bhagwan, Bali's headquarters, Jeyapora, is nothing but Jaipur, localised, just as Aranya Prathet in Thailand is simply the jungle province or Aranya Pradesh. Fortunately, much of the structure of the gigantic temple city of Angkor Vat has survived the ravages of the Khmer Rouge, while Borobudur in Java still shines in resplendent glory.**

I am yet to see an Indian documentary on these subjects though. However, the BBC commissioned a masterly serial on Angkor Vat some years ago, detailing the efforts being made now, in association with the Archeological Survey of India, to restore the damaged temple complex at Angkor in Cambodia. **I suppose any effort to educate today's generations of India's cultural heritage, that too outside India's current borders, will invite charges of saffronisation by our learned historians.** Only a few months ago, they kicked up a huge row over the grant of some money for a project to investigate the course of the "mythical" Saraswati. I am amused by their eloquent silence in the aftermath of the Gujarat quake, for satellite pictures have revealed subterranean water channels, leading to speculation that the mighty Saraswati might indeed still be flowing into the Arabian Sea, away from our gaze.

By the time this appears in print, the barbarian rulers of Afghanistan would undoubtedly have succeeded in their mediaeval mission. Having triumphed at home, they might even try their hand at exporting iconoclasm to neighbouring countries. Unfortunately, there are half-witted people across the globe that might well fall prey to the Taliban's grotesque logic. Of course, they need to be asked if the temple of Abu Simbel at Aswan with its gigantic statues, relocated at vast expense when the dam was built there in the 1950s, also constitutes an affront to religious sensibilities. But who's going the engage the Taliban in dialogue? They neither hear nor speak any language apart from that of the gun.

There are times when the world needs to intervene with physical force to stop such inhuman atrocities, whether perpetrated on icons or people. The Taliban represent a far bigger threat to civilisation than Radovan Karadic did in Bosnia. Their passion for destruction does not stop at human lives. The more we acquiesce in their barbarism through our silence, the more they get emboldened. The liberation of Afghanistan from the stranglehold of these diabolical peddlers of death and drugs has to be placed on the international agenda. Some tentative steps were initiated last year jointly by the US, Russia and India in that direction. That needs to be substantially upgraded and a concrete action plan drawn up. The region controlled by the Taliban is too strategic

to be left to them or the Dr Frankensteins in Islamabad. The Taliban must be eliminated today to secure humanity's tomorrow.

(*Buddha is a Hindu god. He is the ninth avatar of Vishnu. Celebrated poets and devotees such as Jayadev of Gitagovinda fame (12th C) sang about this in his composition "Dasavataram.")

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Why Hindus Worship The Shiv Ling

By Kartik Mohan

http://www.swordoftruth.com/swordoftruth/articles/readersvoice/readersvoice1.html

A guy named Philip asked me on this forum to explain why it is that Hindus worship the Shiv Ling. I am very glad that he did , not only because it gives me an opportunity to explain, but to expose the truth of what so called "Christian ethics" are all about. Christianity, after all, is hardly a religion - it has always been exactly what it started out as, a political agenda in spiritual guise. Its ends are the imperialistic subjugation of non-Christians, and to achieve them it has relied consistently on the propogation of lies and the falsification of history- not to mention the manipulation of our very notions of what is right and wrong. Unfortunately, Christianity is so widely followed in the world today that these manipulations have even permeated the ethics of non-Christians. Brother Hindus, we had better beware of this, because in surrendering to it we are undermining the worldwide spiritual legacy of an ancient civilised era of which we are the last surviving inheritors.

First, to answer the question. Philip asks, why is it that we worship the Shiv Ling- isn't it Shiva's penis? My reply to that is yes, and that is exactly the reason. The Shiv Ling, depicted in consummate union with the Yoni (vulva) of Shakti, is representative of the most wonderful and miraculous feature of life itself. What distinguishes life from non-life, after all? Above all else, the ability to reproduce its own kind. If we are to revere the concept that life itself is sacred- which even the Christians claim to believe- why is the most characteristic feature of life, the act of progenition, any less sacred? It is not only sex we are talking about here. It is the consummation of the vast and different energies of the male and female universal prerogative, of which the Shiv Ling in union is a symbol- celebrating the fact that humankind has two sexes, each with its unique attributes and qualities, and when they come together, they produce a synergy, they create MORE life, they become more than the sum of their individual parts. Many ancient civilisations recognized the wonder of this concept- including the Chinese, who represent it somewhat more abstractly in the symbol of Yin and Yang. It is a tribute to these ancient and wise people that they were able to perceive true miracles, true wonderment, in the very features of life which surround us in our everyday existence. They did not need to have some man walk upon water to see a miracle, nor see crippled people cured instantaneously- or, worse yet, read about it in some book and call their blind adherence to such beliefs "faith".

Now. My friend Philip was actually horrified, appalled, revolted by the very idea that we heathens could worship something such as a penis. The REALLY interesting question is, WHY?

Have you ever really thought about the assumptions that cause us to think of sex as something "unclean"? Have you ever wondered why a joke about sex, in the English language, is referred to

as a "dirty" joke? Why is a picture of the human body in its natural state thought of as a "dirty" picture? Why do thousands of teenagers, non Christian and Christian alike, go through entirely unnecessary agonies of guilt , bound by the belief that masturbation is a sin? Why does such painful ignorance manifest itself generation after generation, all over the world? The answer is, because we have been conditioned to think of it that way- and here is the pervasiveness of manipulative Christian "ethics" I talked about earlier. When Christians start schools, it is not because they want to teach us, it is because they want to teach us their lies. And the lie that sex is evil, sex is unclean, sex is inherently in and of itself immoral - the lie that is brainwashed into us in spite of our knowing better since childhood- is perhaps Christianity's oldest lie of all. And like all of its lies, it was meant, at the time of its invention, to serve a political agenda in a spiritual guise.

The Bible never says, in so many words, that sex is a sin. In Genesis, though, it contends that Adam and Eve were cast out from the Garden of Eden for committing between them the "Original Sin"- and then shortly thereafter they had a son. Later, in the New Testament, it is one of the cardinal principles of Christianity that "Virgin Mary" was more virtuous than any other human being, because she was "without sin"- i.e., she was allegedly still a "virgin" when she gave birth to the alleged "Jesus". Add to this the superstition that the entire Christian world associates with sex, the way in which Puritanism reviles sex, the sheer guilt that Christianity associates with anything viscerally pleasurable (because "Jesus died on the cross for their sins")- and the conclusion is obvious. The Bible may not ever have spelled out that sex is a sin, but most of the Christian world, including my dear Philip, are hidebound to view it that way. So that today, life is sacred but the creation of life is a sin. A thirteen year old girl who becomes pregnant because she is too young to know any better, is reviled by Christians as having committed the Original Sin. Yet, if she has an abortion rather than bring a child she cannot care for into the world, they will revile her doubly as a murderer. This is the hypocrisy of which Christianity consists to its very core. And it all exists for a reason, as I shall proceed to explain.

More than 4000 years ago, civilised human beings all over the world were essentially polytheistic, essentially tolerant people. The centre of their godhood, though, their primary deity, in almost all cases was not male. She was the Mother Goddess, in one or another of her manifestations. She was the Bounteous Earth, the giver of fertility and nurturance and sustenance to all her children without asking anything in return, the source of all life when it is created and the receiver of all things back into her womb when they die. She was an extremely natural deity to worship- when people had no hangups about procreation being part of the wonder of life. She had female attributes, the wife, the mother, the giver of unconditional love, the bearer of and caretaker of children. Her fertility was what allowed the circle of life to go on, and it was only natural that humans all around the world worship this. And they did.

We in India knew the Mother Goddess - there are representations of her dating back to the Indus Valley Civilisation. Hindus know her as Shakti, and in her manifestations as Durga / Kali / Parvati. In the civilisation of Persia, they knew her as Ishtar. In Babylonia and Egypt, as Astarte. In ancient Greece, as Hecate or Demeter. In Rome, as Vesta. Even in the New World, despite no evidence of any contact between Eurasian and American civilisations of that era- there are temples and representations of a Mother Goddess- it is obvious there would be, because she is the natural object for humanity to worship.

Not, however, for a tribe of desert barbarians 4000 years ago called the Israelites. They had a different kind of god altogether. A Male God, with a Capital G. They called him Yahweh, and he is the direct antecedent of the " Lord Our God " of the Christians, and of Allah of the Muslims. He was not about fertility and caring at all. He was a wrathful, vengeful, jealous , angry god, full of violent hatred and intolerance. He spoke out of a "burning bush" and instructed Moses , saying " I Am That I Am "- if this is unbelievable to you, don't read the Bible, watch The Ten Commandments by Cecil B DeMille, it really is more entertaining. He told Moses, among other things, that his followers must not worship False Gods, that HE was the One True God, and then asked Moses to go with his staff and smite another people who believed in false gods, the Egyptians, with the full force of His power. And there began the first of the imperialism that Christianity embodies today. A belief, stronger than any other, that the nonbeliever is a lesser human being than a Christian, because he is going to hell, and if he cannot be "saved" by being converted to Christianity, he should be killed before he spreads his views any further. A political agenda truly unprecedented. Go forth and multiply, and kill whatever stands in your way, because I Am That I Am and I am on Your Side.

The Jews never went about converting people with the rabid fervour of Christians, but they had a political agenda, certainly. To that end, it was necessary to revile and discredit other peoples, the neighbouring civilisations of Egypt and Babylon , and part of this was achieved by discrediting their principal deity- who was, of course, the Mother Goddess. How was this achieved? Through effecting a remarkable paradigm shift. If men, physically stronger, could be made to despise and subjugate women rather than treat them as equals- that would put an end to the worship of any Goddess . If fertility, and procreation itself, could be defamed as not miraculous but sinful things- though this went against all the natural instincts human beings had followed so far- if people could be made to feel unclean for worshipping these things, they would reject the Mother Goddess, because she stood for fertility and the miracle of life. Hence, sex is the Original Sin. Hence, the human body in its natural state is dirty. Hence, Philip is horrified when we worship the act of procreation.

How was this paradigm shift effected? Very slowly, but with the bitter doggedness of true fanatics. It began with the murder of Queen Jezebel as described in the Old Testament. It began with the razing of the Temple to Astarte in Jerusalem , and the building of a Temple to Yahweh by King David in its place. It carried on for thousands of years, hand in glove with more overt political actions, such as the conversion of Roman Emperor Constantine I to Christianity in AD ca. 300. It was at this time that what we know as the Bible today, was compiled and written- with a very hardcore political agenda already in place laying its foundations. The fall of Rome followed, and was followed by the Dark Ages, which were followed by the Crusades, which were followed by Colonialism and the Inquisition. The faith that had sprung from the Israelites spread like a metastizing cancer over the face of the earth. And it holds most of the earth in its poisonous grasp today. And still, the denigration of women in society that took hold as a result of this agenda continues. Till early this century, Christian countries did not give women the right to vote. Even now, in Islamic countries- where a monotheistic , intolerant God descended from Yahweh holds sway in his most perverse caricature- well, we know how they treat their women.

Brothers, we all knew the Mother Goddess once. We Hindus still know her as Shakti today. We are the only ones who are so lucky as to have survived. Persia, Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Rome, the Americas- all fell to the brutal viciousness of the Christian onslaught...and later, parts of Asia

to the Islamic onslaught. They were tolerant, civilised people, just as we are today. That was why they could be wiped out and replaced by Christians. But we have survived. We are heirs to the true legacy of humanism, and we must never forget this. We must recognize the lies of the Christians for what they are, we must recognize their activities of conversion for the imperialist evil they represent, and we must fight these things with all our efforts to the bitter end. One day, Christianity's mighty edifice will fall under the weight of its own contradictions . Till then, we must bear the torch of the legacy of pagan humanism that will ultimately prevail.

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articles on hinduism

Aum Silence - The ancient silence of Om

By David Gordon

http://www.spiritsound.com/aum.html

Seeking the unstruck sound

Ancient teachings and modern science agree: you, I, all living things, all things in existence are made up at their most essential level of vibrating, pulsing energy.



For millennia, mystics have recounted their experience of this energy, which is said to manifest in our hearing awareness as a humming vibration around and within everything else. In the Sanskrit tradition, this sound is called *"Anahata Nada,"* the *"Unstruck Sound."* Literally, this means *"the sound that is not made by two things striking together."* The point of this particular distinction is that all ordinary audible sounds are made by at least two elements: bow and string; drum and stick; two vocal cords; two lips against the mouthpiece of the trumpet; the double reed of the oboe; waves against the shore; wind against the leaves. All sounds within our range of hearing are created by things visible or invisible, striking each other or vibrating together, creating pulsing waves of air molecules which our ears and brain interpret as *sound*.

So, sound that is *not* made of two things striking together is the sound of primal energy, the sound of the universe itself. Joseph Campbell likens this unstruck vibration to the humming of an electrical transformer, or the (to our ears) unheard hummings of atoms and molecules. And the ancients say that the audible sound which most resembles this unstruck sound is the syllable *OM*. Tradition has it that this ancient mantra is composed of four elements: the first three are vocal sounds: *A*, *U*, and *M*. The fourth sound, unheard, is the *silence* which begins and ends the audible sound, the silence which surrounds it. There are several traditional and allegorical interpretations of this ancient sound.

The ancient tradition of AUM

The loveliest explanation of OM is found within the ancient Vedic and Sanskrit traditions. We can read about AUM in the marvelous *Manduka Upanishad*, which explains the four elements of AUM as an allegory of the four planes of consciousness.

"A" *(pronounced "AH" as in "father")* resonates in the center of the mouth. It represents normal waking consciousness, in which subject and object exist as separate entities. This is the level of

mechanics, science, logical reason, the lower three chakras. Matter exists on a gross level, is stable and slow to change.



Then the sound "U" *(pronounced as in "who")* transfers the sense of vibration to the back of the mouth, and shifts the allegory to the level of dream consciousness. Here, object and subject become intertwined in awareness. Both are contained within us. Matter becomes subtle, more fluid, rapidly changing. This is the realm of dreams, divinities, imagination, the inner world.

"M" is the third element, humming with lips gently closed. This sound resonates forward in the mouth and buzzes throughout the head. (Try it.) This sound represents the realm of deep, dreamless sleep. There is neither observing subject nor observed object. All are one, and nothing. Only pure consciousness exists, unseen, pristine, latent, covered with darkness. This is the cosmic night, the interval between cycles of creation, the womb of the divine Mother.

The Yoga of AUM



It might be said that the ultimate aim of Yoga is to enter this third dreamless realm while awake. Yoga means "yoke" or "join." Through yoga we "join" our waking consciousness to its "source" in the world of pure, qualitiless unconsciousness. Which brings us to the fourth sound of AUM, the primal "unstruck" sound within the silence at the end of the sacred syllable. In fact, the word "silence" itself can be understood only in reference to "sound." We hear this silence best when listening to sound, any sound at all, without interpreting or judging the sound. Listening fully, openly, without preconceptions or expectations. The sound of music, the sound of the city, the sound of the wind in the forest. All can give us the opportunity to follow the path of sound into the awareness of the *sound behind the sound*.

When one really "listens" to this silent sound, this unstruck vibration, one comes inevitably to stillness, to pure and open existence. The poet Gerhart Hauptmann says the aim of all poetry is *"to let the Word be heard resounding behind words."* The sound behind the sound. And, in making the sound of AUM, we hear this unstruck sound most clearly in the instant when the last humming vibrations of the "M" fade away. At that moment, that instant separating audible sound and silence, the veil is thinnest, and our listening awareness is most expansive. At that moment of silence, to use William Blake's words, the "doors of perception" are cleansed, and *"everything would appear to man as it is, infinite."*

Another way to make the AUM sound

One of my favorite exercises with the sacred AUM sound involves a more modern interpretation of its elements. In short: "A" is the sound of infinite expanding energy in the universe, the energy of unity consciousness and Divine Love; "U" is the sound of that very energy manifesting and materializing in our waking reality; with the sound of "M" we absorb and integrate that energy into our own being. In the silence after the sound we give thanks and allow the process to resonate within us.

Try this: stand comfortably, feet shoulder width apart, hands and arms hanging easily at your sides. Prepare to make the "AUM" sound, all three vowels in one seamless breath. Inhale gently,

easily, expanding into your belly as you breathe. Open your mouth fully as you inhale, as if to "inhale" the "A" sound itself, creating the intention of the sound before the sound actually begins. Then, as you begin to make the "A" sound, raise your arms out to the side, as if opening to embrace all the universe. Than as your voice transitions seamlessly to the "U" sound, extend your arms to the front, as if to hold something precious and powerful in your hands. You might wish to visualize some shape, round and energetic, manifesting between the palms of your hands. Then, gliding from "U" to the "M" sound, bring your hands, and whatever they may contain, to your heart center. Finally, in the echo of the silence, bring your palms to your chest, pressing them lovingly to your heart. Breathe gently. Repeat this exercise several times. It is remarkably centering and relaxing.

Find your own way

The most important aspect of this second form of AUM is the combination of *sound and movement.* It really doesn't matter what "images" you create in your mind as you do this exercise, or what specific significance you choose to attribute to each of the individual vowel sounds. The mere fact that you are intoning this ancient sound, and combining it with gentle intuitive movements of the upper body, will have a naturally gentle and balancing effect on your body, mind, emotions, and spirit.

In that state, we can best hear the the *Anahata Nada*, the unstruck sound behind the sound, the very Sound of the Self.

Omkar Prayers
Omkaram bindu samyuktham
Nityam dhyanathi Yoginah
Kamadam mokshadam chaiva, Omkaraya namo namah

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Hindu Contributions to the New Age Movement

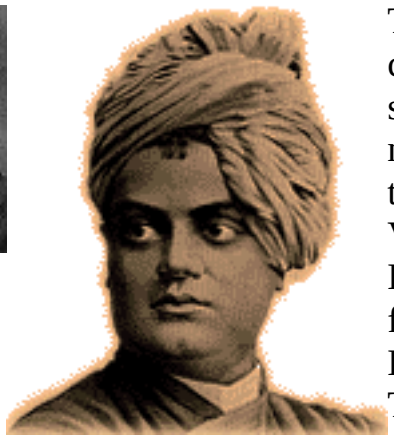
By Frank Morales

http://www.hinduweb.org/home/dharma_and_philosophy/dharma/main.htm

As a phenomena which has gained notable attention in the last two decades or so, the New Age movement has been of special interest to those who specialize in the study of religion. The history and origin of this essentially American movement is an especially interesting one. While several historical trends have contributed to the development of this world view, the main impetus for the New Age movement - both since the 1960's, and including its pre-Sixties antecedents - has been the periodic influx of Hindu spiritual and philosophical ideas.

The modern New Age movement had its origins in the explosive interest in achieving maximal human potential and personal spiritual development witnessed in 1960's America. Today, included among many of the more famous New Age leaders are Deepak Chopra, Bernie Seagal and Marianne Williamson. As a social phenomena, this spiritual movement seeks both personal and planetary transformation. The former, most New Age theoreticians would say, leading necessarily to the latter. While this movement has gained great notoriety in recent years, however, the core basis of its ideas are nothing new. Many scholars have, in fact, described New Age ideas as a revival of esoteric and mystical religion traditions rooted in humanity's ancient past. Indeed, the greatest single contributor of philosophical concepts to the American New Age movement has been something neither new nor American, i.e., the ancient religious tradition of Hinduism.





This fact is evident both historically and in more contemporary observations. Historically, there were several 19th Century antecedents of the New Age movement. These include a) the Theosophical Society, b) the New Thought Movement, and c) the arrival of Swami Vivekananda in America. The Theosophical Society of H.P. Blavatsky derived much of its philosophical outlook from the religions of Asia, specifically Hinduism and Buddhism. The source of divine knowledge for Theosophists were the mysterious and elusive "Mahatmas" who supposedly lived in the Himalayas. The New Thought movement - which inspired such 19th century Christian movements as Christian Science and Unity - was also very receptive to religious currents emanating from Eastern sources. The New Thought movement, in turn, owed much of its theology to the ideas of the New England Transcendentalists, such as Thoreau and Emerson, who where greatly influenced by the

Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. About the Bhagavad Gita's influence in his life, Thoreau has written, "In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonal philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita, in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial". Finally, the famous 1893 arrival of Swami Vivekananda, and the subsequent growth of his Vedanta Society in America, helped communicate Hindu religious thought to an eager American audience in a more explicit form.

Building upon these 19th Century foundations, the New Age movement began its modern development in the 1960's. Though other trends certainly contributed significantly to this development, including transpersonal psychology and occultism, it was the new influx of Hindu spiritual traditions which was most responsible for the movement's subsequent development and outlook. Due to changes in the immigration laws in 1965, Asian spiritual teachers (gurus) found entering the U.S. less of a challenge. During this time, many esteemed Hindu gurus began traveling about America on lecture tours, including Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Bhaktivedanta Swami, Swami Rama and Swami Satchidananda. Consequently, many Hindu religious traditions began to find new and eager adherents in America. Some of these traditions included Yoga, Vedanta, Tantra, Vaishnavism and various Advaitic Hindu teachings. The contributions of these different Hindu schools of thought to New Age thinking was immense.

These include both philosophical and practical contributions. While New Agers currently believe in such concepts as: the interdependence of all life, non-violence, concern for the Earth's environment, and tolerance for diverse viewpoints, it was the ancient Hindu philosophical heritage which first helped formulate these concepts coherently in the mind's of many nascent New Agers. Other New Age ideas which received strong philosophical support from India's religions include the belief in reincarnation and karma, the efficacy of ritual, and the need for compassion towards animals. Indeed, the latter trend within the New Age movement is quite in keeping with the vegetarian and non-violent ethic taught by most Asian spiritual traditions (specifically Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism).



Possibly the most important component which the New Age movement owes to Hindu spirituality, however, is the practice of meditation. Every tradition of Indian religion teaches one form of meditation or another. Perhaps the most important proponent of meditation in the U.S. has been the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the founder of the Transcendental Meditation movement. Other forms of meditation introduced from India include mantra-meditation, visualization and karma yoga. As a result of this influx of Hindu meditational techniques, the practice of meditation has become an integral part of the New Age landscape.

While it is true that many of the beliefs and practices of the New Age movement can also be traced to other sources (for example, Platonic and Hermetic philosophy, as well as Native American beliefs), it is apparent that the movement owes a great deal of its ideas to the much older spiritual traditions of India. From the practical considerations of vegetarianism and meditation, to gaining a more philosophical justification for its belief structure, the New Age movement finds its greatest source of inspiration and ideas from the great religious tradition of Hinduism.

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The Post Secular Age
By Frank Morales

The last two centuries have been a conspicuously unique era in the history of the human race. For, unlike any other epoch in our history, the last 200 years have witnessed the systematic and seemingly unstoppable deconstruction of religion as an important element of Western society. So successful has the exorcism of religion from public life been, that many twentieth Century American scholars went so far as to pronounce the imminent death of religion in our age.

As is becoming increasingly apparent, however, religion's obituary may have been written somewhat prematurely. The latter part of the twentieth century is witnessing one of the greatest world wide religious resurgences ever recorded in the annals of human history. And America has not been immune to this trend. Rather than ushering in a new secular age, an age free of the influence of religion, spirituality and contemplation, the evidence seems to indicate that we are actually entering a Post Secular Age: an age wherein religion will necessarily fill up the vacuum created by the failure of twentieth-century secularism.

The idea that religion would meet its eventual demise (and, according to some, should meet its demise) had been espoused by a large number of Western intellectuals in the last two centuries. Perhaps the most famous of these individuals were, what Christian theologian Martin Marty termed, "The Bearded God-Killers" (National Public Radio, 1996). These primarily nineteenth century figures included: Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud. Equating all human religious expression with an enslaving opiate designed to keep the proletariat in psychic chains, Karl Marx predicted both the inevitable death of religion and the subsequent emergence of a new atheistic world order. Similarly, Freud saw in religion the greatest threat to humanity's social and psychic development. Indeed, to Freud religion and philosophy represented no more than a "...black tide of mud...," designed solely to keep humanity enslaved in the chains of superstition (Ernest Becker, Denial of Death, p. 94). Overt atheists were not the only individuals to pronounce the imminent end of religion.

Quite a few Judeo-Christian theologians also felt that secularism would ultimately triumph over the human religious impulse. Among these religious leaders were several who felt that the inevitable secularization of the world merely represented a coming of age for homo religiosus (religious man). Included among these were Harvey Cox (author of "The Secular City") and Bishop John Robinson (who wrote "Honest to God"). Succumbing wholesale to the seemingly unstoppable secular tide seen in twentieth century history, some Christian theologians went so far as to declare the death of God in the early 1960's. If God is indeed dead, however, such ongoing phenomena as the belief in the importance of the spiritual dimension of human life and the search

for God seem to be very far from it.

As we approach the beginning of the 21st Century, it appears that religion has made a powerful comeback onto the world stage. Throughout the Third-World, nation upon nation is rejecting the current Western materialistic paradigm. Nations that were traditionally Hindu, Islamic, Buddhist and Jewish are rediscovering their ancient religious heritage and turning to these time-tested spiritual world-views for answers to today's many social, political, economic and ethical dilemmas - dilemmas, many of which were created directly as a result of the failures of secular materialism. Indigenous peoples - peoples ranging from the aborigines of Australia to the many hundreds of Native American tribes in North and South America - are reconnecting with their own, long oppressed, spiritually-based cultures: cultures which have proven themselves to be gentler, saner, and more Earth-centered spiritual outlooks than anything secular materialism had to offer. Moreover, with the failure and consequent collapse of Marxist regimes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the people of this region of the world have expressed an unprecedented resurgence of interest in more religious ways of life. Indeed, in today's Russia, two of the fastest growing philosophies of life are Hinduism and Buddhism.

This world-wide rediscovery of the importance of religion has also had a dramatic impact on the American scene. There are several recent trends in American culture which readily reveal this fact. One of these trends has been the explosive popularity of the New Age movement in recent years. As a movement deeply grounded in the belief that personal spiritual development is essential to social and political change, New Age thought has had a deeply penetrating influence on the American public. The rebirth of interest in religion is seen on the popular stage by the amazing number of books with spiritual themes that have become run-away best sellers. These include the works of Deepak Chopra, Bernie Siegal, Thomas Moore and Marianne Williamson.

Coupled with the success of New Age spirituality has been the growing popularity of Asian religions in America. Over the past several decades hundreds of thousands of Americans have joined various Asian religious traditions. Famous actors like Richard Gere and musical performers like Madonna and Sting, among many others, now consider themselves to be practicing Hindus, Buddhists or Taoists. To legions of college students and youth across America, nothing is considered cooler than studying and practicing Hindu and Buddhist philosophy and spirituality. Every major American city has at least several dozen Hindu temples and Buddhist meditation centers. Yoga, Tai Chi and meditation are spiritual techniques which are now practiced by millions of average, middle class Americans.

The recent religious resurgence in America is effecting society not only on a more popular level, but within the realm of academia as well . The latter phenomenon is evidenced by the recent successes of overtly religious scholars in philosophy departments across the land. Such philosophers of religion as Alvin Plantinga and Keith Yandell have begun to make tremendous inroads into an area which, until recently, was almost the exclusive domain of Human skeptics.

On a more ominous note, the new religious resurgence in America has also included a rise in Evangelical Fundamentalism. This new evangelical revival has taken on increasingly political tones in recent years. Beginning with such individuals as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell in the late 1970's, conservative Christian activists began to take their theological opinions into the

partisan political realm. Through supporting politicians and ballot initiatives viewed as being pro-family values, Evangelicals have made their views forcefully known and implemented throughout the nation. The success and acceptability of Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition in the Republican Party reveals to us that this is a movement that is immensely powerful and that is here to stay.

That religion, both in America and throughout the world, is becoming an increasingly important factor is well established knowledge. Let us now explore some of the possible reasons for this fact. One reason is certainly the dramatic failure of the most powerful anti-religious ideology in human history: Marxism. First presented as a rational, scientific and humanistic alternative to religion, the fall of Communism in Europe in 1989 revealed Marxism to be a more repressive, inhumane and destructive system than any religion had ever been. As only one of many examples of the failure of Marxism we have the example of Cambodia. A peaceful and beautiful Buddhist nation previous to the Marxist Khmer Rouge shooting their way to power in 1975, Marxist rule led to the genocide of at least 1.5 million of Cambodia's inhabitants - over an eighth of the population - over a three year period. Interestingly, Marxists and secularists throughout our century had repeatedly accused religion of being responsible for all of humanity's many historic sufferings and injustices. As we now know, however, more human beings have been persecuted, murdered, tortured and dehumanized by Marxism in our century alone than have been harmed by all of the world's many religions combined since the beginnings of human history.

Indeed, it could be argued that the failure of secularism, as a whole, is responsible for the new religious renaissance now being experienced globally. The omnipresent human need for meaning simply could not be adequately addressed by the cold, impersonal institutions and ideologies of secularism. Consequently, we are now witnessing an increasing worldwide reaction against all forms of Western materialism - both Marxist and capitalist. America, as we have seen, has been far from immune from this rather dramatic global shift.
Some might argue that it is still somewhat premature to proclaim the advent of a new religious era for humanity. However, the data reveals that there is definitely a current global shift away from institutions and philosophies which have urged the abandonment of the human spirit. Additionally, the currently ongoing rediscovery of humankind's many diverse spiritual traditions reveal to all impartial observers that we are at present experiencing nothing less than the beginning of a Post Secular Age. It is quite apparent that those scholars who earlier this century had predicted - and in some cases, even looked forward to - the death of religion were exceedingly mistaken. Rather than being on the verge of extinction, as we approach the second Millennium, the natural phenomenon of human religious expression seems to have been born anew.

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http://www.sit.wisc.edu/~fmorale1/main.htm

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articles on hinduism

Democracy in Ancient India

by Steve Muhlberger, Associate Professor of History, Nipissing University.
http://www.unipissing.ca/department/history/histdem/indiadem.htm

Returning to it now, in 1998, I find I still believe in my interpretation of the ancient evidence for Indian democracy, and in its relevance to how we understand the world history of democracy. Rather than let it languish further, I am releasing it electronically, for both general and specialist readers. I will be glad to hear your comments. For the reader who wants to look into the question independently, I have posted a bibliography, and of course there are always the footnotes. I should make clear that though this article bears my name alone, I was pointed in the right direction by an unpublished essay on democracy by Phil Paine. I also wish to note that I was aided in my research by the collection of Asian literature at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario. My philosopher-colleague at Nipissing University, Dr. Wayne Borody, made some suggestions, but neither he nor anyone else is responsibile for any errors or misinterpretations.

Historians who are interested in democracy often insist it must be understood in context of a unique western tradition of political development beginning with the Greeks. The spread of democratic ideals and practice to other cultures, or their failure to spread, have many times been explained on the assumption that democracy or personal liberty are ideals foreign to the non-Western world -- an assumption at least as old as Herodotus.1 But events since the late 1980s have shown that people both in "Western" and "non-Western" countries have a lively interest in democracy as something relevant to their own situation. The old assumption deserves to be re-examined.

In fact, the supposed differences between "Western" and "non-Western" cultures are in this case, as in so many others, more a matter of ideological faith than of cool, impartial judgment. If we are talking about the history of humanity as a whole, democracy is equally new or equally old everywhere. Fair and effective elections, under adult suffrage and in conditions that allow the free discussion of ideas, are a phenomenon of this century. The history of democracy, properly so called, is just beginning.

The "prehistory" of democracy, however, is scarcely restricted to Europe and Europeanized America and Australasia. A search of world history finds much worth studying. There are no perfect democracies waiting to be discovered, but there is something else: a long history of "government by discussion," in which groups of people having common interests make decisions that affect their lives through debate, consultation, and voting. The vast majority of such groups, it may be objected, are more properly called oligarchies than democracies. But every democracy has

been created by widening what was originally a very narrow franchise. The history of government by discussion, which may be called republicanism for brevity's sake, has a claim to the interest of anyone who takes democracy seriously.2

This article will examine one important case of government by discussion -- the republics of Ancient India. Although they are familiar to Indologists, these republics are hardly known to other historians. They deserve, however, a substantial place in world historiography. The experience of Ancient India with republicanism, if better known, would by itself make democracy seem less of a freakish development, and help dispel the common idea that the very concept of democracy is specifically "Western."

The present article has two goals. First, it will summarize the history of the ancient Indian republics as it is currently known. This survey is restricted to North India and the period before about 400 A.D., when sovereign republics seem to have become extinct.

Second, the article will examine the historiographical evaluations of the Indian republican experience, and suggest that most of them have placed it in too narrow a context. Ancient Indian democratic experiments, it will be argued, are more important than they are usually granted to be. It is well known that the sources of ancient Indian history present considerable difficulties. All the indigenous ancient literature from the subcontinent has been preserved as part of a religious tradition, Brahmanical, Buddhist or Jaina. When the subject is political theory and its implementation, the preselected nature of sources is a distinct handicap to the researcher. The largest and most influential Indian literary tradition, the Brahmanical, is distinctly hostile to anything resembling democracy.

Brahmanical literature gives kingship a central place in political life, and seldom hints that anything else is possible. For moral philosophers and legislators such as Manu (reputed author of the Manu-Smrti between 200 B.C.-A.D. 200), the king was a key figure in a social order based on caste (varna). Caste divided society into functional classes: the Brahmans had magical powers and priestly duties, the ksatriyas were the rulers and warriors, the vaisyas cultivators, and the sudras the lowest part of society, subservient to the other three. Moral law or dharma depended on the observance of these divisions, and the king was the guarantor of dharma , and in particular the privileges of the Brahmans. 3 Another tradition is best exemplified by the Arthasastra of Kautilya (c. 300 B.C.), which alloted the king a more independent role but likewise emphasized his responsibility for peace, justice and stability.4

Both Kautilya's work and the Manu-Smrti are considered classic expressions of ancient Indian political and social theory. A reader of these or other Brahmanical treatises finds it very easy to visualize ancient Indian society as one where "monarchy was the normal form of the state." 5

Until the end of the last century, the only indication that this might not always have been the case came from Greek and Roman accounts of India, mostly histories of India during and just after Alexander the Great's invasion of India in 327-324 B.C. These works spoke of numerous cities and even larger areas being governed as oligarchies and democracies, but they were not always believed by scholars.6 Yet research into the Buddhist Pali Canon during the nineteenth century confirmed this picture of widespread republicanism. The Pali Canon is the earliest version of the Buddhist scriptures, and reached its final form between 400-300 B.C.7 It contains the story of

Buddha's life and teaching and his rules for monastic communities. The rules and teachings are presented in the form of anecdotes, explaining the circumstances that called forth the Buddha's authoritative pronouncement. Thus the Pali Canon provides us with many details of life in ancient India, and specifically of the sixth century (the Buddha's lifetime) in the northeast. In 1903, T.W. Rhys Davids, the leading Pali scholar, pointed out in his book Buddhist India 8 that the Canon (and the Jatakas, a series of Buddhist legends set in the same period but composed much later) depicted a country in which there were many clans, dominating extensive and populous territories, who made their public decisions in assemblies, moots, or parliaments.

Rhys Davids' observation was not made in a vacuum. Throughout the nineteenth century, students of local government in India (many of them British bureaucrats) had been fascinated by popular elements in village life.9 The analysis of village government was part of a continuous debate on the goals and methods of imperial policy, and the future of India as a self-governing country. Rhys-Davids' book made the ancient institutions of India relevant to this debate. His reconstruction of a republican past for India was taken up by nationalistic Indian scholars of the 1910s.10 Later generations of Indian scholars have been somewhat embarrassed by the enthusiasm of their elders for early republics and have sought to treat the republics in a more balanced and dispassionate manner.11 Nevertheless, their work, like that of the pioneering nationalists, has been extremely productive. Not only the classical sources and the Pali Canon, but also Buddhist works in Sanskrit, Panini's Sanskrit grammar (the Astadhyayi), the Mahabharata, the Jaina Canon, and even Kautilya's Arthasastra have been combed for evidence and insights. Coins and inscriptions have documented the existence of republics and the workings of popular assemblies.

The work of twentieth century scholars has made possible a much different view of ancient political life in India. It has shown us a landscape with kings a-plenty, a culture where the terminology of rule is in the majority of sources relentlessly monarchical, but where, at the same time, the realities of politics are so complex that simply to call them "monarchical" is a grave distortion. Indeed, in ancient India, monarchical thinking was constantly battling with another vision, of self-rule by members of a guild, a village, or an extended kin-group, in other words, any group of equals with a common set of interests. This vision of cooperative self-government often produced republicanism and even democracy comparable to classical Greek democracy.

Though evidence for non-monarchical government goes back to the Vedas, 12 republican polities were most common and vigorous in the Buddhist period, 600 B.C.-A.D. 200. At this time, India was in the throes of urbanization. The Pali Canon gives a picturesque description of the city of Vesali in the fifth century B.C. as possessing 7707 storied buildings, 7707 pinnacled buildings, 7707 parks and lotus ponds, and a multitude of people, including the famous courtesan Ambapali, whose beauty and artistic achievements contributed mightily to the city's prosperity and reputation. The cities of Kapilavatthu and Kusavati were likewise full of traffic and noise.13 Moving between these cities were great trading caravans of 500 or 1000 carts -- figures that convey no precise measurement, but give a true feeling of scale: caravans that stopped for more than four months in a single place, as they often did because of the rainy season, were described as villages.14 Religion, too, was taking to the road. The hereditary Brahman who was also a householder, as in later Vedic tradition, saw his teachings, authority and perquisites threatened by wandering holy men and self-appointed teachers.15

There were warlord-kings who sought to control this fluid society, some with a measure of success. But the literature, Pali and Sanskrit, Buddhist and Brahmanical, shows that non-monarchical forms of government were omnipresent. There was a complex vocabulary to describe the different types of groups that ran their own affairs.16 Some of these were obviously warrior bands; 17 others more peaceful groups with economic goals; some religious brotherhoods. Such an organization, of whatever type, could be designated, almost indifferently, as a gana or a sangha; and similar though less important bodies were labeled with the terms sreni, puga, or vrata. Gana and sangha, the most important of these terms, originally meant "multitude." By the sixth century B.C., these words meant both a self-governing multitude, in which decisions were made by the members working in common, and the style of government characteristic of such groups. In the case of the strongest of such groups, which acted as sovereign governments, the words are best translated as "republic."

That there were many sovereign republics in India is easily demonstrated from a number of sources. Perhaps it is best to begin with the Greek evidence, even though it is not the earliest, simply because the Greek writers spoke in a political language that is familiar.

Perhaps the most useful Greek account of India is Arrian's Anabasis of Alexander , which describes the Macedonian conqueror's campaigns in great detail. The Anabasis, which is derived from the eyewitness accounts of Alexander's companions, 18 portrays him as meeting "free and independent" Indian communities at every turn. What "free and independent" meant is illustrated from the case of Nysa, a city on the border of modern Afghanistan and Pakistan that was ruled by a president named Aculphis and a council of 300. After surrendering to Alexander, Aculphis used the city's supposed connection with the god Dionysus to seek lenient terms from the king:

"The Nysaeans beseech thee, O king out of respect for Dionysus, to allow them to remain free and independent; for when Dionysus had subjugated the nation of the Indians...he founded this city from the soldiers who had become unfit for military service ...From that time we inhabit Nysa, a free city, and we ourselves are independent, conducting our government with constitutional order." 19

Nysa was in Greek terms an oligarchy, as further discussion between Alexander and Aculphis reveals, and a single-city state. There were other Indian states that were both larger in area and wider in franchise. It is clear from Arrian that the Mallian republic consisted of a number of cities.20 Q. Curtius Rufus and Diodorus Siculus in their histories of Alexander mention a people called the Sabarcae or Sambastai among whom "the form of government was democratic and not regal." 21 The Sabarcae/Sambastai, like the Mallians, had a large state. Their army consisted of 60,000 foot, 6000 cavalry, and 500 chariots.22 Thus Indian republics of the late fourth century could be much larger than the contemporaneous Greek polis . And it seems that in the northwestern part of India, republicanism was the norm. Alexander's historians mention a large number of republics, some named, some not, but only a handful of kings.23 The prevalence of republicanism and its democratic form is explicitly stated by Diodorus Siculus. After describing the mythical monarchs who succeeded the god Dionysus as rulers of India, he says:

At last, however, after many years had gone, most of the cities adopted the democratic form of government, though some retained the kingly until the invasion of the country by Alexander.24

What makes this statement particularly interesting is that it seems to derive from a first-hand description of India by a Greek traveler named Megasthenes. Around 300 B.C., about two decades after Alexander's invasion, Megasthenes served as ambassador of the Greek king Seleucus Nicator to the Indian emperor Chandragupta Maurya, and in the course of his duties crossed northern India to the eastern city of Patna, where he lived for a while.25 If this statement is drawn from Megasthenes, then the picture of a northwestern India dominated by republics must be extended to the entire northern half of the subcontinent.26

If we turn to the Indian sources, we find that there is nothing far-fetched about this idea. The most useful sources for mapping north India are three: The Pali Canon, which shows us northeastern India between the Himalayas and the Ganges in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.; the grammar of Panini, which discusses all of North India, with a focus on the northwest, during the fifth century; and Kautilya's Arthasastra, which is a product of the fourth century, roughly contemporaneous with Megasthenes. All three sources enable us to identify numerous sanghas and ganas, some very minor, others large and powerful.27

What were these republican polities like? According to Panini, all the states and regions (janapadas) of northern India during his time were based on the settlement or conquest of a given area by an identifiable warrior people who still dominated the political life of that area. Some of these peoples (in Panini's terms janapadins) were subject to a king, who was at least in theory of their own blood and was perhaps dependent on their special support.28 Elsewhere, the janapadins ran their affairs in a republican manner. Thus in both kinds of state, the government was dominated by people classified as ksatriyas, or, as later ages would put it, members of the warrior caste.

But in many states, perhaps most, political participation was restricted to a subset of all the ksatriyas . One needed to be not just a warrior, but a member of a specific royal clan, the rajanya.29 Evidence from a number of sources shows that the enfranchised members of many republics, including the Buddha's own Sakyas and the Licchavis with whom he was very familiar, considered themselves to be of royal descent, even brother-kings. The term raja, which in a monarchy certainly meant king, in a state with gana or sangha constitution could designate someone who held a share in sovereignty. In such places, it seems likely that political power was restricted to the heads of a restricted number of "royal families" (rajakulas) among the ruling clans. The heads of these families were consecrated as kings, and thereafter took part in deliberations of state.

Our Indian republics are beginning to sound extremely undemocratic by our modern standards, with real power concentrated in the hands of a few patriarchs representing the leading lineages of one privileged section of the warrior caste. A reader who has formed this impression is not entirely mistaken. No doubt the rulers of most republics thought of their gana as a closed club -- as did the citizens of Athens, who also defined themselves as a hereditarily privileged group. But, as in ancient Athens, there are other factors which modify the picture, and make it an interesting one for students of democracy.

First, the closed nature of the ruling class is easy to exaggerate. Republics where only descendants of certain families held power were common; but there was another type in which power was shared by all ksatriya families.31 This may not sound like much of a difference, since the

restriction to the warrior caste seems to remain. But this is an anachronistic view of the social conditions of the time. The varnas of pre-Christian-era India were not the castes of later periods, with their prohibitions on intermarriage and commensality with other groups.32 Rather, they were the constructs of theorists, much like the division of three orders (priests, warriors and workers) beloved by European writers of the Early Middle Ages.33 Such a classification was useful for debating purposes, but was not a fact of daily existence. Those republics that threw open the political process to all ksatriyas were not extending the franchise from one clearly defined group to another, albeit a larger one, but to all those who could claim, and justify the claim, to be capable of ruling and fighting.

Other evidence suggests that in some states the enfranchised group was even wider. Such a development is hinted at in Kautilya: according to him, there were two kinds of janapadas, ayudhiya-praya, those made up mostly of soldiers, and sreni-praya , those comprising guilds of craftsmen, traders, and agriculturalists.34 The first were political entities where military tradition alone defined those worthy of power, while the second would seem to be communities where wealth derived from peaceful economic activity gave some access to the political process. This interpretation is supported by the fact that sreni or guilds based on an economic interest were often both part of the armed force of a state and recognized as having jurisdiction over their own members.35 In the Indian republics, as in the Greek poleis or the European cities of the High Middle Ages, economic expansion enabled new groups to take up arms and eventually demand a share in sovereignty36 If it was not granted, one could always form one's own mini-state. Panini's picture of stable, long-established janapadas is certainly the illusion of a systematizing grammarian. As Panini's most thorough modern student has put it, there was "a craze for constituting new republics" which "had reached its climax in the Vahika country and north-west India where clans constituting of as many as one hundred families only organized themselves as Ganas."37 Furthermore, power in some republics was vested in a large number of individuals. In a well-known Jataka tale we are told that in the Licchavi capital of Vesali, there were 7707 kings (rajas), 7707 viceroys, 7707 generals, and 7707 treasurers.38 These figures, since they come from about half a millenium after the period they describe, have little evidentiary value, despite the ingenious efforts of scholars to find a core of hard fact. The tale does not give us the number of Licchavi ruling families (rajakulas), the size of the Licchavi assembly, or any real clues as to the population of Vesali.39 Yet the Jataka does retain the memory of an undisputed feature of Indian republicanism: the rulers were many.40 The same memory can be found in other sources, especially in those critical of republicanism. The Lalitavistara, in an obvious satirical jab, depicts Vesali as being full of Licchavi rajans , each one thinking, "I am king, I am king," and thus a place where piety, age and rank were ignored.41 The Santi Parva section of the Mahabharata shows the participation of too many people in the affairs of state as being a great flaw in the republican polity:

The gana leaders should be respected as the worldly affairs (of the ganas) depend to a great extent upon them...the spy (department) and the secrecy of counsel (should be left) to the chiefs, for it is not fit that the entire body of the gana should hear those secret matters. The chiefs of gana should carry out together, in secret, works leading to the prosperity of the gana , otherwise the wealth of the gana decays and it meets with danger.42

A Jaina work again criticizes ganas for being disorderly: the monks and nuns who frequent them will find themselves bullied, beaten, robbed, or accused of being spies.43

The numerous members of a sovereign gana or sangha interacted with each other as members of an assembly. Details of the working of such assemblies can be found both in Brahmanical and Buddhist literature. By the time of Panini (fifth century B.C.), there was a terminology for the process of corporate decision-making. Panini gives us the terms for vote, decisions reached by voting, and the completion of a quorum. Another cluster of words indicates that the division of assemblies into political parties was well known. Further, Panini and his commentators show that sometimes a smaller select group within a sangha had special functions -- acting as an executive, or perhaps as a committees for defined purposes.44

The Pali Canon gives a much fuller, if somewhat indirect, depiction of democratic institutions in India, confirming and extending the picture found in Panini. This is found in three of the earliest and most revered parts of the canon, the Maha-parinibbana-suttanta, the Mahavagga, and the Kullavagga.45 These works, taken together, preserve the Buddha's instructions for the proper running of the Buddhist monastic brotherhood -- the sangha -- after his death. They are the best source for voting procedures in a corporate body in the earliest part of the Buddhist period. They also give some insight into the development of democratic ideology.

The rules for conducting the Buddhist sangha were, according to the first chapter of the Maha-parinibbana-suttanta, based in principle on those commonly found in political sanghas or ganas. In the case of the Buddhist sangha, the key organizational virtue was the full participation of all the monks in the ritual and disciplinary acts of their group. To assure that this would be remembered, detailed rules concerning the voting in monastic assemblies, their membership, and their quorums, were set down in the Mahavagga and the Kullavagga .

Business could only be transacted legitimately in a full assembly, by a vote of all the members. If, for example, a candidate wanted the upasampada ordination, the question (ñatti) was put to the sangha by a learned and competent member, and the other members asked three times to indicate dissent. If there was none, the sangha was taken to be in agreement with the ñatti. The decision was finalized by the proclamation of the decision of the sangha.46

In many cases, as in the granting of upasampada ordination, unanimity of a full assembly was required.47 Of course, unanimity was not always possible. The Kullavagga provides other techniques that were used in disputes especially dangerous to the unity of the sangha, those which concerned interpretation of the monastic rule itself. If such a dispute had degenerated into bitter and confused debate, it could be decided by majority vote, or referred to a jury or committee specially elected by the sangha to treat the matter at hand.48

It is here that we see a curious combination of well-developed democratic procedure and fear of democracy. The rules for taking votes sanctioned the disallowance by the vote-taker of results that threatened the essential law of the sangha or its unity.49 Yet, if the voting procedure is less than free, the idea that only a free vote could decide contentious issues is strongly present. No decision could be made until some semblance of agreement had been reached.50 Such manipulations of voting were introduced because Buddhist elders were very concerned about the survival of the religious enterprise: disunity of the membership was the great fear of all Indian republics and

corporations.51 Yet the idea of a free vote could not be repudiated. The Kullavagga illustrates a conflict within the Buddhist sangha during its earliest centuries between democratic principles and a philosophy that was willing in the name of unity to sacrifice them.

Since the rules of the Buddhist sangha are by far the best known from the period we have been discussing, it is tempting to identify them with the rules of political ganas, particularly those of the Licchavis (or Vajjians), since the Buddha made a clear connection between the principles applicable to the Licchavi polity and those of his sangha.52 But from early on, scholars have recognized that the Buddhist constitution was not an exact imitation of any other: for instance, sovereign republics had a small, elected executive committee to manage the affairs of the gana when the whole membership of the gana was unable to be assembled.53 But neither did the Buddha or his earliest followers invent their complex and carefully formulated parliamentary procedures out of whole cloth. R.C. Majumdar's conclusion, first formulated in 1918, still seems valid: the techniques seen in the Buddhist sangha reflect a sophisticated and widespread political culture based on the popular assembly.54

Similarly, the value placed on full participation of members in the affairs of their sangha must reflect the ideology of those who believed in the sangha-gana form of government in the political sphere. The Buddha's commitment to republicanism (or at least the ideal republican virtues) was a strong one, if we are to believe the Maha-parinibbana-suttanta, among the oldest of Buddhist texts.55 As is common in the Buddhist scriptures, a precept is illustrated by a story. Here Ajatasastru, the King of Maghada, wishes to destroy the Vajjian confederacy (here = the Licchavis) 56 and sends a minister, Vassakara the Brahman, to the Buddha to ask his advice. Will his attack be a success? Rather than answer directly, the Buddha speaks to Ananda, his closest disciples:

"Have you heard, Ananda, that the Vajjians hold full and frequent public assemblies?"

"Lord, so I have heard," replied he.

"So long, Ananda," rejoined the Blessed One, "as the Vajjians hold these full and frequent public assemblies; so long may they be expected not to decline, but to prosper...

In a series of rhetorical questions to Ananda, the Buddha outlines other requirements for Vajjian prosperity:

"So long, Ananda, as the Vajjians meet together in concord, and rise in concord, and carry out their undertakings in concord...so long as they enact nothing not already established, abrogate nothing that has been already enacted, and act in accordance with the ancient institutions of the Vajjians as established in former days...so long as they honor and esteem and revere and support the Vajjian elders, and hold it a point of duty to hearken to their words...so long as no women or girls belonging to their clans are detained among them by force or abduction...so long as they honor and esteem and revere and support the Vajjian shrines in town or country, and allow not the proper offerings and rites, as formerly given and performed, to fall into desuetude...so long as the rightful protection, defense, and support shall be fully provided for the Arahats among them, so that Arahats from a distance may enter the realm, and the Arahats therein may live at ease -- so long may the Vajjians be expected not to decline, but to prosper."

Then the Blessed One addressed Vassakara the Brahman, and said, "When I was once staying, O Brahman, at Vesali at the Sarandada Temple, I taught the Vajjians these conditions of welfare; and so long as those conditions shall continue to exist among the Vajjians, so long as the Vajjians shall be well instructed in those conditions, so long may we expect them not to decline, but to prosper."

The comment of the king's ambassador underlines the point of this advice: "So, Gotama, the Vajjians cannot be overcome by the king of Magadha; that is, not in battle, without diplomacy or breaking up their alliance."

The same story tells us that once the king's envoy had departed, the Buddha and Ananda went to meet the assembly of monks. Buddha told the monks that they too must observe seven conditions if they were to prosper: Full and frequent assemblies, concord, preserving and not abrogating established institutions, honoring elders, falling "not under the influence of that craving which, springing up within them, would give rise to renewed existence," delighting in a life of solitude, and training "their minds that good and holy men shall come to them, and those who have come shall dwell at ease." 57 These precepts, and others that follow in sets of seven, were the main point for the monks who have transmitted the Maha-parinibbana-suttanta to us. We, however, may wish to emphasize another point: the Buddha saw the virtues necessary for a righteous and prosperous community, whether secular or monastic, as being much the same. Foremost among those virtues was the holding of "full and frequent assemblies." In this, the Buddha spoke not only for himself, and not only out of his personal view of justice and virtue. He based himself on what may be called the democratic tradition in ancient Indian politics -- democratic in that it argued for a wide rather than narrow distribution of political rights, and government by discussion rather than by command and submission.58

The Pali Canon gives us our earliest, and perhaps our best, detailed look at Indian republicanism, its workings, and its political philosophy. About no other republics do we know as much as we do about the Buddhist sangha and the Licchavis in the time of Buddha -- even though we do know that republics survived and were a significant factor until perhaps the fourth century A.D., a period of over 800 years. Scattered inscriptions, a great number of coins, and the occasional notice in Greek sources, the Jatakas or other Indian literature give us a few facts. But any history of Indian republicanism is necessarily a rather schematic one.

The theme that has most attracted the attention of scholars is the constant danger to republicanism, and its ultimate failure. Much of what we know about the sovereign ganas of India derives from stories of attacks upon them by various conquerors. Yet it is remarkable that for several centuries, the conspicuous successes of monarchs, even the greatest, had only a temporary effect on the sovereign republics and very little effect indeed on the corporate organization of guilds, religious bodies, and villages. The reason is, of course, that Indian kings have seldom been as mighty as they wished to be, or wished to be presented. Conquerors were not in a position to restructure society, to create states as we visualize them today. Rather they were usually content to gain the submission of their neighbors, whether they were other kings or republics.59 These defeated rivals were often left in control of their own affairs, merely required to pay tribute and provide troops for the conquerors next war. The great emperors of ancient India, including Chandragupta Maurya and Asoka, ran rather precarious realms. Once the center weakened, these unraveled very quickly, and society returned to its preceding complexity. Rival dynasties revived, as did defeated

republics.60

As Altekar recognized, the mere existence of warlords was not fatal to the republican tradition of politics. Far more important was the slow abandonment of republican ideals by republicans themselves. We have seen that many republics were content even in the earliest days with a very exclusive definition of the political community. In some, ideas of wider participation gained currency and even implementation. But the contrary movement is easier to document. By the third and fourth centuries A.D., states known to be republics in earlier times were subject to hereditary executives. Eventually such republics became monarchies.61

An evolution away from republicanism is clearly seen in the literature of politics and religion. If we grant that the society depicted by the Pali Canon is the beginning of a new era, one with an economy and culture quite distinct from the Vedic period, it immediately becomes obvious that the most democratic ideals are the earliest. The Pali Canon, and to some extent the Jaina Canon, show us energetic movements that rejected the hierarchialism and caste ideology seen in the Vedas and Brahmanas in favor of more egalitarian values. Buddhism and Jainism were scarcely exceptional: they are merely the most successful of many contemporary religious movements, and left us records. It is clear from Panini that egalitarianism was an important element in the fifth century B.C.: he preserves a special term for the gana where "there was no distinction between high and low." 62

Such Brahmanical classics as the Mahabharata, the writings of Kautilya and the Manu-Smrti, works that promoted hierarchy, are manifestations of a later movement (300 B.C.-200 A.D.) away from the degree of egalitarianism that had been achieved. Kautilya, who is traditionally identified with the chief minister of the Mauryan conqueror Chandragupta Maurya (fl. after 300 B.C.), is famous for his advice to monarchs on the best way to tame or destroy ganas through subterfuge; perhaps a more important part of his achievement was to formulate a political science in which royalty was normal, even though his own text shows that ganas were very important factors in the politics of his time.63 Similarly, the accomplishment of the Manu-Smrti was to formulate a view of society where human equality was non-existent and unthinkable.

Members of ganas were encouraged to fit themselves into a hierarchical, monarchical framework by a number of factors. Kings were not the only enemies of the ganas . The relationships between competing ganas must have been a constant political problem. Ganas that claimed sovereignty over certain territory were always faced by the competing claims of other corporate groups.64 How were these claims to be sorted out, other than by force? The king had an answer to this question: if he were acknowledged as "the only monarch [i.e. raja, chief executive] of all the corporations," 65 he would commit himself to preserving the legitimate privileges of each of them, and even protect the lesser members of each gana from abuse of power by their leaders. It was a tempting offer, and since the alternative was constant battle, it was slowly accepted, sometimes freely, sometimes under compulsion. The end result was the acceptance of a social order in which many ganas and sanghas existed, but none were sovereign and none were committed to any general egalitarian view of society. They were committed instead to a hierarchy in which they were promised a secure place.66 Such a notional hierarchy seems to have been constructed in North India by the fifth century A.D. Even the Buddhist sangha accommodated itself to it -- which led eventually to the complete victory of the rival Brahmans.

This was not quite the end of republicanism, because "government by discussion" continued within many ganas and sanghas ; but the idea of hierarchy and inequality, of caste, was increasingly dominant. The degree of corporate autonomy in later Indian society, which is considerable and in itself a very important fact, is in this sense a different topic that the one we have been following. A corporation that accepts itself as a subcaste in a great divine hierarchy is different from the more pugnacious ganas and sanghas of the Pali Canon, Kautilya or even the Jataka stories.

What have modern historians made of what we might call the golden age of Indian republicanism? We have already distinguished above between two eras of scholarship on the topic. In the first, patriotic enthusiasm and the simple thrill of discovery of unsuspected material characterized scholars' reactions. The former attitude was especially seen in K.P. Jayaswal's Hindu Polity . Published first in article form in 1911-1913, then as a book in 1924, Jayaswal's work was avowedly aimed to show that his countrymen were worthy of independence from Britain. The history of "Hindu" institutions demonstrated an ancient talent for politics:

The test of a polity is its capacity to live and develop, and its contribution to the culture and happiness of humanity. Hindu polity judged by this test will come out very successfully...The Golden Age of [the Hindu's] polity lies not in the Past but in the Future... Constitutional or social advancement is not a monopoly of any particular race.67

In Jayaswal's book scholarship was sometimes subordinated to his argument. In his discussion of ancient republics (which was not his only subject), the evidence was pushed at least as far as it would go to portray the republics as inspiring examples of early democracy.68 A similar, though quieter satisfaction can be seen in the contemporary discussions of R.C. Majumdar and D.R. Bhandarkar.69

In the second period of scholarship, in the years since independence, a more restrained attitude has been adopted by younger scholars who feel they have nothing to prove. Among these scholars the general tendency has been to emphasize that the republics were not real republics, in the modern usage that implies a universal adult suffrage. The clan-basis and the exclusiveness of the ruling class are much discussed. Sometimes writers have bent over backwards to divorce the Indian republican experience from the history of democracy: 70 thus A.K. Majumdar's judgement that because in a gana-rajya "all inhabitants other than the members of the raja-kulas [had] no rights [and] were treated as inferior citizens," people were actually better off in the monarchies, where "if not the general mass, at least the intellectuals and the commercial community enjoyed freedom in a monarchy, which seems to have been lacking in a gana-rajya." 71 The contrast drawn here is not backed up by any real argument, and makes one wonder about the how the author defines "freedom."

The reaction has perhaps gone too far.72 One feels that modern scholars have still not come to grips with the existence of widespread republicanism in a region so long thought to be the home par excellence of "Oriental Despotism." 73 Republicanism now has a place in every worthwhile book about ancient India, but it tends to be brushed aside so that one can get back to the main story, which is the development of the surviving Hindu tradition.74 Historians, in India as elsewhere, seem to feel that anything which could be so thoroughly forgotten must have had

grievous flaws to begin with.75 Most historians still cannot discuss these republics without qualifying using the qualifiers "tribal" or "clan."76 Long ago Jayaswal rightly protested against the use of these terms: "The evidence does not warrant our calling [republics] 'clans.' Indian republics of the seventh [sic] and sixth centuries B.C...had long passed the tribal stage of society. They were states, Ganas and Samghas, though many of them likely had a national or tribal basis, as every state, ancient or modern, must necessarily have." 77 He was equally correct when he pointed out that "Every state in ancient Rome and Greece was 'tribal' in the last analysis, but no constitutional historian would think of calling the republics of Rome and Greece mere tribal organizations." 78

Yet the phrases "clan-" and "tribal-republic" are still routinely used today in the Indian context, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they are being used perjoratively. In both common and scholarly usage, to label a people's institutions or culture as tribal is to dismiss them from serious consideration. "Tribespeople" are historical dead-ends, and their suppression or absorption by more advanced cultures (usually those ruled by centralizing governments) is taken for granted.79 The terminology of even Indian historians demonstrates the survival of an ancient but inappropriate prejudice in the general evaluation of Indian republicanism.

Once that prejudice is overcome, Indian republicanism gains a strong claim on the attention of historians, especially those with an interest in comparative or world history.

It is especially remarkable that, during the near-millenium between 500 B.C. and 400 A.D., we find republics almost anywhere in India that our sources allow us to examine society in any detail. Unless those sources, not least our Greek sources, are extremely deceptive, the republics of India were very likely more extensive and populous than the poleis of the Greeks.80 One cannot help wondering how in many other parts of Eurasia republican and democratic states may have co-existed with the royal dynasties that are a staple of both ancient and modern chronology and conceptualization. This may well be an unanswerable question, but so far no one has even tried to investigate it. If an investigation is made, we may discover things that are as surprising to us as the republics of India originally were.

The existence of Indian republicanism is a discovery of the twentieth century. The implications of this phenomenon have yet to be fully digested, because historians of the past century have been inordinately in love with the virtues of centralized authority and government by experts, and adhered to an evolutionary historicism that has little good to say about either direct or representative democracy. Perhaps the love affair is fading. If so, historians will find, in the Indian past as elsewhere, plenty of raw material for a new history of the development of human government.

Notes for "Democracy in Ancient India"

In referring to classical sources, I have usually not given full citations to the editions, on the assumption that specialists will know how to find them, but that general readers will be more interested in the translations.

Also, references to Indian primary materials will be made to English translations (where

available). Nearly all the secondary literature on the topic is in English.

1. See for example Herodotus, The Histories 7. 135, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 485: the famous reply of the Spartan emissaries to the Persian general Hydarnes. Back to text.

2. For more on this, see Steven Muhlberger and Phil Paine, "Democracy's Place in World History," Journal of World History 4 (1993): 23-45 and the World History of Democracy site, especially Chapter Two -- Democracy at the Basic Level: Government by consent in small communities. Back to text.

3. A.S. Altekar, State and Government in Ancient India, 3rd edn. rev. and enlarged (Delhi, 1958; first ed. 1949), p. 1; the Manu-Smrti translated by G. Bühler as The Laws of Manu, vol. 25 of Sacred Books of the East, hereafter SBE] ed. F. Max Müller (Oxford, 1886). Back to text.

4. Kautilya's Arthasastra, trans. by R. Shamasastry, 4th ed. (Mysore, 1951; first ed. 1915). Back to text.

5. Altekar, State and Government in Ancient India, p. 1 (hereafter State and Government); but see the same work, p. 109, where the statement is qualified as a prelude to discussing republics. Back to text.

6. Altekar, State and Government, pp. 110-111; K.P. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times, 2nd. and enl. ed. (Bangalore, 1943), p. 58. Back to text.

7. An introduction to the Pali Canon may be found in R.C. Majumdar, The History and Culture of the Indian People, vol. 2, The Age of Imperial Unity, (Bombay, 1951), pp. 396-411. Back to text.

8. (London, 1903). Back to text.

9. See, for instance, Sir Henry Sumner Maine, Village Communities in the East and West (1889; reprint edn. New York, 1974). Back to text.

10. K.P. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times 2nd and enl. edn. (Bangalore, 1943), published first in article form in 1911-13; D.R. Bhandarkar, Lectures on the Ancient History of India on the Period form 650 to 325 B.C., The Carmichael Lectures, 1918 (Calcutta, 1919); R.C. Majumdar. Corporate Life in Ancient India, (orig. written in 1918; cited here from the 3rd ed., Calcutta, 1969, as Corporate Life). Back to text.

11. E.g. Altekar (n. 6); J.P. Sharma, Republics in Ancient India, c. 1500 B.C.-500 B.C. (Leiden, 1968) [hereafter Republics]; U.N. Ghoshal, A History of Indian Public Life, vol. 2, The Pre-Maurya and Maurya Period (Oxford, 1966). For the embarrassment, see Sharma, Republics, pp. 2-3. Back to text.

12. Sharma, Republics, pp. 15-62, 237. Back to text.

13. Narendra Wagle, Society at the Time of the Buddha (Bombay: 1966), pp. 27-28. Back to text.

14. Wagle, Society at the Time of the Buddha, pp. 147-148. Back to text.

15. Sukumar Dutt, Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India (London, 1957), pp. 35-44. Back to text.

16. V.S. Agrawala, India as Known to Panini: A study of the cultural material in the Ashatadhyayi, 2nd edn. rev. and enl. (Varanasi, 1963), pp. 426-444 [hereafter, Panini]; Sharma, Republics, pp. 8-14. A.K. Majumdar, Concise History of Ancient History, vol. 2: Political Theory, Administration, and Economic Life (New Delhi, 1980), p. 131 [hereafter, Concise History]. Back to text.

17. It is often assumed in the literature that mercenary bands or wild tribes must be clearly distinguished from true political communities. A reading of Xenophon's Anabasis (trans. by W.H.D. Rouse as The March Up Country (New York and East Lansing, 1959)) would give food for thought about this distinction. The army Xenophon was part of and led for a time is perhaps the best documented example of the day-to-day political life of a Greek community that we have. Back to text.

18. See "Arrianus, Flavius" Oxford Classical Dictionary, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1970), pp. 122-123. Back to text.

19.. Arrian 5.1-2; all translations from the Greek sources are taken from R.C. Majumdar's compilation, The Classical Accounts of India (Calcutta, 1960) [hereafter Classical Accounts] -- in this case, p. 20. However, those who don't have access to that handy work can find these authors, whose books are all well-known classical works, in standard editions and translations. Back to text.

20. Arrian, 5.22, 5.25-6.14, Classical Accounts, pp. 47, 64-75. Back to text.

21. Q. Curtius Rufus, History of Alexander the Great 9.8, Classical Accounts, p. 151; Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica 17.104, Classical Accounts, p. 180. Back to text.

22. Ibid. Back to text.

23. Altekar, State and Government, p. 111. Back to text.

24. Diodorus Siculus 2.39, Classical Accounts, p. 236; cf. Arrian's Indika 9, Classical Accounts, p. 223, which seems to derive from the same source, i.e. Megasthenes, for whom see below. Back to text.

25. Otto Stein, "Megasthenes (2)," Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft, ed. A. von Pauly, G. Wissowa, et. al. (Stuttgart, 1893-) vol. 15, pt. 1, col. 232-3. Back to text.

26. R.C. Majumdar, Classical Accounts, Appendix I, pp. 461-473, throws doubt on the authority of this whole section of Diodorus (2.35-42, called "the Epitome of Megasthenes,"), but classicists do not share his doubts, though they grant that the original material may have been handled roughly by later epitomizers. See Otto Stein, "Megasthenes (2)," col. 255; Barbara C.J. Timmer, Megasthenes en de Indische Maatschaapij (Amsterdam, 1930); Diodorus of Sicily, trans. by C.H. Oldfather Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1935), vol. 2, p. vii. Back to text.

27. Kautilya, 11.1; Agrawala, Panini, pp. 445-457; see the short history of known republics in Altekar, State and Government pp. 118-123. See Joseph E. Schwartzenberg, ed., A Historical Atlas of South Asia (Chicago and London, 1978), p. 16 (Plate III.B.2). Back to text.

28. Agrawala, Panini, pp. 426-428; Benoychandra Sen, Studies in the Buddhist Jatakas: Tradition and Polity (Calcutta, 1974), pp. 157-159. Back to text.

29. Agrawala, Panini, pp. 430-432. Back to text.

30. Altekar, State and Government, p. 135; Sharma, Republics, pp. 12-13, 99-108, 112, 175-176. Back to text.

31. Altekar, State and Government, p. 114. Back to text.

32. Wagle, Society at the Time of the Buddha, pp. 132-33, 156-158. Back to text.

33. Georges Duby, The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined, tr. Victor Goldhammer (Chicago, 1980); Jacques Le Goff, "Labor, Techniques and Craftsmen in the Value Systems of the Early Middle Ages (Fifth to Tenth Centuries)," in Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages, tr. Victor Goldhammer (Chicago, 1980), pp. 71-86. Back to text.

34. Agrawala, Panini, pp. 436-439. Contra, Ghoshal, A History of Indian Public Life, ii, p. 195, n. 5, who rejects Agrawala's interpretation of the evidence in Panini and Kautilya, and insists on a strict (but anachronistic) division between political, military, and social and economic groups. A fair reading of Kautilya shows that "corporations" of whatever sort could be important political and military factors, whether they were sovereign or not, and whether they "lived by the name of raja" (Kautilya, 11.1, tr. Shamasastry, p. 407) or not. Back to text.

35. See esp. R.C. Majumdar, Corporate Life, pp. 18-29, 60-63; Charles Drekmeier, Kingship and Community in Early India (Stanford, 1962), pp. 275-277. Back to text.

36. W.G. Forrest, The Emergence of Greek Democracy, 800-400 B.C. (New York, 1966), esp. pp. 67-97; J.K. Hyde, Society and Politics in Medieval Italy: The Evolution of the Civil Life, 1000-1350, esp. 48-60, 104-118; John Hine Mundy, Liberty and Political Power in Toulouse 1050-1230 (New York, 1954). Back to text.

37. Agrawala, Panini, p. 432. Again cf. Italy at the beginning of the High Middle Ages, Hyde, Society and Politics in Medieval Italy, pp. 56-57. Back to text.

38. Jataka 149, trans. in The Jataka, or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births, ed. E.B. Cowell, tr. by Various Hands, 6 vols. (1895; reprint, London, 1957), 1: 316. Jataka 301 (Cowell trans., 3: 1) also mentions 7707 kings, "all of them given to argument and disputation." Back to text.

39. Every scholar to approach this material has wrestled with this number, none more diligently than Sharma, Republics, pp. 99-104. It is hard to take any of them very seriously once one has examined Jataka 149 itself. Here, as in many other places, 7077 is used as a large, ideal number. Back to text.

40. Similarly suggestive numbers can be found in Jataka 465 (Cowell trans., 4: 94) where 500 Licchavi kings (not necessarily the entire body of kings) are mentioned; in the Mahavastu, which refers to "twice 84,000 Licchavi rajas residing within the city of Vesali," (Sharma, Republics, p. 99; the Mahavastu is yet untranslated into a European language) and Jataka 547 (Cowell trans., 6: 266), which mentions 60,000 ksatriyas in the Ceta state, all of whom were styled rajano (Agrawala, Panini, p. 432). Back to text.

41. Agrawala, Panini, p. 430; Sharma, Republics, p. 101; A.K. Majumdar, Concise History, 2: 140. No translation of the Lalitavistara into a European language was available to me. Back to text.

42. Mahabharata 12.107, trans. by R.C. Majumdar, Corporate Life, 251. Back to text.

43. A.K. Majumdar, Concise History, 2: 140, referring to Acharangasutra II.3.1.10. The SBE translation of the Acharangasutra (vol. 22 (1884), tr. Hermann Jacobi) of this passage entirely conceals the meaning of gana. This is typical of older translations, and some not so old (e.g. the Roy trans. of the Mahabharata, Santi Parva (Calcutta, 1962), c. 107, where Roy insists that gana here must be understood as denoting an aristocracy of wealth and blood). Back to text.

44. Agrawala, Panini, pp. 433-435. Back to text.

45. The Maha-parinibbana-suttanta: Buddhist Suttas vol. 1, tr. T.W. Rhys Davids, SBE 11 (1881): 1-136. Mahavagga, Kullavagga, and Pattimokkha: Vinaya Texts, tr. T.W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg, SBE vol. 13, 17, 20 (1881, 1882, 1885). Back to text.

46. Mahavagga 1.28, SBE 13: 169-170. Back to text.

47. Note complex rules, e.g. Mahavagga 9.4.7-8, SBE 17: 217-272, establishing who has the right to vote (i.e., in such cases, to object). Back to text.

48. Kullavagga 4.9-14, SBE 20: 24-65. Back to text.

49. Kullavagga 4.10.1, SBE 20: 20-26, where it is stated that taking of votes is invalid "when the taker of votes [an elected official] knows that those whose opinions are not in accordance with the

law will be in the majority," or "when he is in doubt whether the voting will result in a schism in the Samgha," or "when they do not vote in accordance with the view that they really hold." Kullavagga 4.14.26, SBE 20: 56-57 shows how the vote-taker was permitted to prevent the will of the majority from being enacted even in a secret vote, by throwing out the results if the winners' opinion went against the law -- or his interpretation of it. Back to text.

50. See Kullavagga 4.14.25-26, SBE 20: 54-57, where the emphasis is on reconciling monks to a decision which they were opposed to. Voting is one method of doing so; manipulation of votes preserves the religious law without splitting the sangha. Back to text.

51. It is commonly accepted by scholars that the regulations we have been discussing are, in the form we have them, the product of a long evolution, though all of them are attributed to the Buddha. See Rhys Davids' and Oldenberg's introduction to the Vinaya Texts, SBE 13: ix-xxxvii, and notes throughout. For the concern with disunity, see the extract from the Maha-parinibbana-suttanta (i.1) below; the Mahabharata, Santi Parva 107, and Kautilya, 11.1 (which despite their monarchist purpose, contain passages of republican thought -- see below, n. 71); Altekar, State and Government, pp. 129-130; A.K. Majumdar, Concise History, 2: 140. Back to text.

52. Maha-parinibbana-suttanta 1.1, SBE 9: 6-7; see below. Back to text.

53. Altekar, pp. 126-127, 132-134; Sharma, Republics, pp. 12, 110-111. Back to text.

54. Corporate Life, pp. 233-234; A.K. Majumdar, Concise History, 2: 137. Back to text.

55. The Maha-parinibbana-suttanta is the story of the "great decease of the Buddha" and as such includes both colorful anecdotes and important last-minute instructions to his followers. Back to text.

56. The Pali Canon uses both the term Vajji (Vriji in Sanskrit) and Licchavi to designate a republican polity based at Vesali. Scholars believe that the Licchavi were the people who lived at Vesali, while Vajji was the name of a confederation that they headed. For a detailed discussion, see Sharma, Republics, pp. 81-84, 93-97. Back to text.

57. Maha-parinibbana-suttanta 1.1, SBE 11: 6-7. Back to text.

58. In this sense R.C. Majumdar was right in calling the Buddha "an apostle of democracy;" Corporate Life, p. 219. Contra, Drekmeier, Kingship and Community in Early India, p. 113. Back to text.

59. Sen, Studies in the Buddhist Jatakas, pp. 60-64. Compare Burton Stein, Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India (Delhi, 1980) for a similar evaluation of South Indian monarchy in a later period. Back to text.

60. Altekar, State and Government, p. 136. Back to text.

61. Altekar, State and Government, pp. 137-138; A.K. Majumdar, Concise History, 2: 144. Back to text.

62. Agrawala, Panini, p. 428. What may be the clearest statement of egalitarian political ideology only comes to us through many intermediaries, as a tantalizing passage in Diodorus Siculus (2.39; Classical Accounts, p. 236) which seems to derive from Megasthenes: "Of several remarkable customs existing among the Indians, there is one prescribed by their [sc. Indian] ancient philosophers which one may regard as truly admirable: for the law ordains that no one among them shall, under any circumstances, be a slave, but that, enjoying freedom, they shall respect the principle of equality in all persons: for those, they thought, who have learned neither to domineer over nor to cringe to others will attain the life best adapted for all vicissitudes of lot: since it is silly to make laws on the basis of equality of all persons and yet to establish inequalities in social intercourse." Megasthenes (who was a contemporary of Kautilya) is often criticized for the good reason that slavery and other forms of inequality did indeed exist among the Indians. But perhaps he correctly presented the views of "their ancient philosophers." Back to text.

63. Kautilya, 11.1, Shamasastry tr. p. 410. The Mahabharata, Santi Parva, a royalist treatise on morality and politics, likewise mentions ganas (in c. 107; cf. c. 81) only to show how a raja who is not yet a true monarch in his state can implement his will -- and as we have seen, eliminating popular participation in government is an essential part of this. It is interesting to note that there are in both works passages that urge the raja to cooperate with the gana and, like the Maha-parinibbana-suttanta, emphasize the dangers to a gana of disunity. R.C. Majumdar (in Ancient India, 7th ed. (Delhi, 1974), p. 159) regarded Mahabharata, Santi Parva 107 as a piece of republican political science reworked for monarchist purposes. Back to text.

64. Altekar, State and Government, p. 124, draws attention to the existence of republican-style local government within the greater republic. Cf. the Italian situation described by Hyde, Society and Politics in Medieval Italy, p. 104: "Government under medieval conditions was always a precarious matter...the Italian cities faced special problems of their own, derived from the fact that the commune was originally no more than one kind of societas in a society that abounded in societates, so that it was an uphill task to assert any special claim to the loyalty and obedience of the citizens." Back to text.

65. Kautilya, 11.1, Shamasastry trans., p. 410. Back to text.

66. See R.C. Majumdar, Corporate Life, pp. 42-59 for the attitude of later Dharmasastra writers to the place of semi-autonomous corporations and kindreds in the monarchical polity of the fifth century A.D. and later. Back to text.

67. Pp. 366-367. Back to text.

68. N.B. the introduction: "To the memory of the Republican Vrishnis, Kathas, Vaisalas, and Sakyas who announced philosophies of freedom from devas, death, cruelty and caste." Back to text.

69. See above, n. 10. Back to text.

70. See esp. Ghoshal's treatment, A History of Indian Public Life, ii, pp. 185-197, which goes almost as far in one direction as Jayaswal went in the other. Cf. Drekmeier, Kingship and Community in Early India, p. 279; A.K. Majumdar, Concise History, ii, pp. 139-144; Burton

Stein, "Politics, Peasants and the Deconstruction of Feudalism in Medieval India," Journal of Peasant Studies, xii, no. 2-3 (1985), p. 62 (discussing South India at a later period). Back to text.

71. A.K. Majumdar, Concise History, 2: 143. Back to text.

72. A similar tendency in recent decades to dismiss democratic elements in classical Athens and republican Rome is now being challenged: e.g. Ellen Meiksins Wood, Peasant-Citizens and Slave: The Foundation of Athenian Democracy, corrected paperback edn. (London, 1989) and much more cautiously by John North, "Politics and Aristocracy in the Roman Republic," Classical Philology, 85 (1990): 277-287 and reply to W.V. Harris's criticisms, pp. 297-298; John North, "Democratic Politics in Republican Rome," Past and Present 126 (1990): 3-21. Back to text.

73. Romila Thapar, A History of India, vol. 1 (Harmondsworth, 1966), p. 19; Bhandarkar, Lectures on the Ancient History of India, p. ix (written in 1918): "We have been so much accustomed to read and hear of Monarchy in India being always and invariably unfettered and despotic that the above conclusion [that republics were important in ancient India] is apt to appear incredible to many as it no doubt was to me for a long time." Back to text.

74. A.L. Basham, The Wonder That was India (London, 1954), pp. 96-98. Back to text.

75. In European history, the Anglo-Saxons have often been treated as a failed culture, and the Visigothic kingdom of Spain is seldom approached in any other way. See the opening remarks of Roger Collins, The Arab Conquest of Spain, 710-789 (Oxford, 1989). Back to text.

76. Thapar is one of the few to avoid this usage. Back to text.

77. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity, p. 46. Back to text.

78. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity, p. 116. Back to text.

79. For a general discussion of the concept of "tribalism," see Eric R. Wolf, Europe and the People Without History (Berkeley, 1982). Back to text.

80. Agrawala, Panini, pp. 479-493. Back to text.

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articles on hinduism

Beware of the academic fascists

By Saradindu Mukherjee

http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/230102/detpla01.asp

In a genuine academic debate over selection of facts and their interpretation, people should be graceful enough to accept their folly, if and when it is exposed. As Union HRD Minister Murli Manohar Joshi correctly put it (HT December 2): “Who says they are respectable?

They have received government support for 25 years.

There is a large section of people who say they are distorting history — there was a conspiracy to keep out anyone who did not have a Leftist view. I say India is a huge country and these are not the only people. This is academic fascism.”

It must be noted that the ‘academic fascists’ are an ideological front for pan-Islamic fundamentalists, and in this lofty mission they have the support of the Nehruvians.

Hence, they have to flaunt their **anti-Hindu** credentials and that explains their desperate attempt to repeatedly rub the Hindu psyche by referring to their alleged fondness for beef in the nebulous past, or rationalise every indignity suffered by the Hindus. To some extent, it was perhaps the by-product of **a ‘wounded civilisation’** and the resultant slavish mentality but mainly it was nurtured to provide the essential mindset for a political ambience and voting behaviour under the Nehruvian set-up. The Japanese call it the kokutai — the fundamental character of the State.

The post-Independence polity was sought to be nurtured on such a self-defeating mindset to kill the very soul of India. No wonder the ‘academic fascists’ are consistent in their revolutionary role as the foot soldiers of the Islamic ummah.

Hence the centrality of beef in their discourse. Even if we accept that beef was indeed on the menu, what is the big idea talking about it so vociferously aeons after it became a taboo. Besides being insensitive and gross, it has the ulterior motive of encouraging those insisting on cow slaughter.

Look at its political dividend for some. As against this grossness, they take extra care to keep quiet on the seminal concepts of kafir, jehad and ghanimah. While spread of Islam is superlatively described, there is not a word on how it expanded — its ideology and mechanism, not a word on the devastation and degradation of the polytheists and the pagans. Some of these historians are now claiming that they believed in giving ‘different theories’: but why not give at least the basic facts if not different theories about the other credal beliefs? It is this selectivity which exposes them as propagandists.

I have no hesitation in saying that India's hesitant approach to counter Islamic terrorism and grasp the significance of jehad even after being one of its longest suffering victims emanates from this terrorised and confused mindset. If the purpose of studying history is to understand the past, so that it helps us to grasp our present better and also be our guide to act appropriately in future, then history has to be objective. Why then blow up the irrelevant part of proto-history and smother other relevant facts? Is this history?

Leave aside this 'scientific' and 'rational' methodology, no historian can claim that their written words alone constitute the ultimate historical wisdom, and especially if they happen to be public sector historians. As Fernand Braudel says: "History is always being begun anew; it is always working itself out, striving to surpass itself. Its fate is shared by all the social sciences. So, I do not believe that the history books I am writing will be valid for decades to come. No book is ever written once and for all, and we all know it." This is what a historian of Braudel's stature (about whom it is said that he could have been the first recipient of the Nobel prize if there was one for historical studies) thinks of his own work.

As for modern Indian history, one of the textbooks proclaim that "the Mughal empire still commanded respect in the country". In saying that, they certainly ignore the agonies of the kafirs who saw their world crashing before themselves. It fails to record as to how and why the Marathas, Jats, Sikhs and others rose in revolt.

As for the British rule, they are rightly credited with giving us the concept of "rule of law" and "equality before law" while not disclosing the provisions of the Cornwallis Code which stopped the amputation of limbs and provided for the testimony of non-Muslims against Muslims in criminal cases previously prohibited in Muslim law. It goes on to say that, "Previously the judicial system had paid heed to caste distinctions and had differentiated between the so-called high-born and low-born. For the same crime, lighter punishment was awarded to a Brahmin than to a non-Brahmin."

There are serious omissions too. Warren Hastings is mentioned without his most important gift to Indians — the Asiatic Society, Raja Rammohan Roy's Gift to Monotheists has been wrongly dated to 1809 (actually 1804-5). While its 'weighty' arguments against the polytheists and views favouring the worship of a single god are admired, its critique of prophethood — central to monotheistic creed as well as his views on Muslim rule in India are suppressed.

The Hindu-Muslim communal differences are solely ascribed to the "perfidious Albion", while the role of the Wahabists and Faraizis is completely ignored. It is like ignoring the role of Al-Qaeda, Jaish-e-Mohammed etc. while studying Islamic terrorism in our own times. The exclusivist and intolerant elements inherent in Islam are smothered and the "racial arrogance" of the British is highlighted.

A student of Indian nationalism is never told about the stirring message of **Vande Mataram** while Iqbal gets considerable coverage.

Extra-territorial loyalty and obscurantism inherent in the Khilafat and fanaticism of the Moplahs are hidden. Similarly suppressed is the role of the communist party in supporting the Partition and opposing the Quit India Movement. Thus, students are never told about all those forces which are bent on destroying India.

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Life after Death

By Deepaknar Mukhopadhyay

Belief in reincarnation is as old as the hills.

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Followers of almost all ancient religions all over the world strongly believed that people returned to life after death and among them were the Hindus, Buddhists, Druids, Gauls, Greeks, many Jewish groups and even the early Christians. Reincarnation became a taboo for the Christians only after the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 ad. Since then, the Church has developed a strong anti-reincarnation stand.

Among the early believers, the most vocal supporter was the Greek philosopher Plato. He had specially referred to the experience of a Greek warrior, Er the Pamphylian, who was fatally injured in a battle but came back to life before cremation. According to him, each soul was given a choice to select the form and type of life for the next birth and nobody was responsible for the choice. After the selection, the souls had to drink water from a river flowing through the Plains of Forgetfulness, so that they could forget everything pertaining to their past lives. Then like shooting stars they came down to start their new lives.

There seems to be a fundamental difference between the Platonian and the Hindu-Buddhist concept. While Plato stresses on free choice, the Indian school insists that rebirth is decided strictly according to the Karma. The Orientals also believe that a man does not necessarily be reborn as a human being he can be an animal, even a plant. Manu-Samhita says the killer of a Brahmin will be reborn an ass, a drunkard a bird that lives on dung, while other sinners will become hyenas, rodents and other abominable creatures. The Westerners, however, believe that once a human always a human. Out of the two, the Karma theory definitely sounds more logical, for if there is a choice, everybody will opt for becoming Dhirubhai Ambani, Sachin Tendulkar or Hema Malini; nobody would like to become a destitute, an orphan or a cripple. The choice factor might be there, but it cannot overrule the Karmic parameter of individual.

Again, the Karma of the individual is instrumental for deciding how long his soul will remain in the outer world. In some cases, it returns quite fast, in others it has to wait for even centuries. There are certain souls who do not have to return at all, but they come back on their own to help other people. The Buddhists call them Bodhisatvas. Tibetans believe that the Bodhisatva called Abalokiteswara is the Dalai Lama. Only such advanced souls can remember their previous lives.

However, people who believe in the free option theory got some encouragement from the unusual research done by a psychiatrist Dr Helen Wambach. In the mid-70s, she hypnotised 750 people all

over the American continent, and commanded them to go back to their status before they were born and also to relive their birth experiences. During this hypnotic state, she asked them some questions, like: Did you choose to be born?; Did anyone help in your choice?; If yes, who?; Why did you choose the 20th century to be born?; Did you choose your sex?; Did you know your parents-to-be?; If so, what was the relationship?; Were you aware of other people whom you should know during your lifetime?

Dr Wambach left a five second gap between each question. After the last question, she brought them back to waking reality, with a command to remember all the answers, and hand them over paper and pencil to write down whatever answers had flashed through their subconscious. Let us pick up one answer at random: `Yes, I chose to be born. Someone did help me choose and it seemed to be some voice that I trusted greatly. It was kind, helpful and wise... I choose this period to be born because it is a great period of change where people need stability within themselves. I am supposed to help them somehow. I did choose to become a male because it is good for my work and I enjoy that sex-role. My mother was my wife in a past life, my father was my son. I got some faint flashes of mates and lovers, but nothing clear.

In the final analysis, 81% of Dr Wambach s subjects state that they have chosen to be born while the remaining 19% feel they either resisted it or they were not consulted. As one of them put it, `it was like a tour planned by a travel agent and one had to accept it. In most cases, a group of counsellors advised the spirits about their next birth. They were either friends and relatives from previous births or even total strangers somebody remembered an old man with a long beard who acted like a big boss. The counsellors adopted different tactics with different individuals; one spirit, not too keen to be reborn was shown his mother-to-be down below, and he liked the woman so much that he immediately agreed to be her son. It is interesting that very few of the subjects 0.1% to be precise ever felt the presence of God or any other religious figure in this process.

A fascinating aspect of the research is the study of human relationship that emerges through various births. Eighty-seven per cent of the subjects admit that their parents, friends or lovers were known to them in their previous births. The relationships are so varied that it is not possible to draw any general inference. One subject even says he wanted to be the son of his jailer of previous birth, who used to whip him everyday. Like love, hatred is also a strong bond.

Although Dr Wambach's work is impressive, we cannot reject outright the Karma theory. She does not reveal anything about her subjects their background, education, or lifestyle. Most are volunteers who heard about her `hypnotic workshop' and wanted to join it. From their datasheets, it is clear that they are well-educated people with a healthy interest in paranormal matters. It is possible that most of them were aware of the Western theory of self option in rebirth and that might have influenced their subconscious. Dr Wambach herself admitted that some of them might have been influenced by Dr Raymond Moody s international bestseller Life after life as some of their pre-birth experiences are surprisingly similar to some post-death syndromes recorded by Dr Moody. It is interesting that Dr Wambach s book, published just two years after Dr Moody s work, is titled Life before life.

I think, the most significant point about Dr Wambach s work is that in the last quarter of the 20th century, a practising psychiatrist of the western hemisphere has accepted reincarnation as a basis

for scientific research. Caught in the crossfire of religious disapproval and scientific disbelief, reincarnation was slowly relegated to mythology. Only during the 60s, there was a serious attempt to dust away the cobwebs gathered around it. Credit must go to Dr lan Stevenson for his pathbreaking work, Twenty cases suggestive of reincarnation. (1966). Please note the shadow of doubt in the title itself, but even today, the book remains a classic. Dr Hemendra Banerjee s work on parapsychology got him international recognition.

Both Stevenson and Banerjee put painstaking research behind each case and turned up with cast-iron evidence. A textbook example is the Swarnalata episode. (A detailed account of the case was recently published in The Pioneer.) An almost identical instance was provided by a Delhi girl Shanti, who declared in her childhood that she happened to be the wife of Kedarnath Pandey of Mathura. She was so assertive that her people took her to Mathura, where she not only correctly identified her erstwhile relatives but even dug out a tin box where she used to keep her savings. Till some years ago, Shanti Devi was teaching in a school in East Delhi, but I have somehow lost track of her. Another illustration from their India file is a slightly eerie story of a boy, Jasbir Singh. The boy died of smallpox at the age of three, but unexpectedly came back to life just before the cremation. After some time, the family noticed some personality changes in that little boy. One day, he announced that he was a Brahmin from a nearby village and would, therefore, not touch the food cooked by his family as they were from a lower caste! He was taken to that village and was soon identified as Shobha Ram, a man who died of smallpox at the same time with Jasbir, although Jasbir vehemently alleged that he was poisoned. But it was obvious that the boy knew all about Shobha Ram and his family. It seems to be a borderline case between possession and reincarnation.

No discussion on reincarnation is complete without mentioning Tibet, because there the concept of rebirth is accepted as a biological truth like life and death. Every major Lama or abbot will leave clear-cut instructions before death to his disciples about where to find his reincarnation (Tulku in Tibetan) after he passes away. The process of locating the Tulku is an extremely interesting one, which has been described by Anagarika Govinda, a German scholar who had spent many years in Tibet and became a Lama. He was a direct disciple of Tome Geshe Rimpoche, an illustrious Lama who was fourth in the hierarchy after the Dalai Lama. After he passed away in 1936, the search for the Tulku started. The Great Oracle of Nachung was consulted and it came out with the description of the town where he was reborn. This was followed by details of the house where he was living, the child s age and even the age of his parents.

After going through all details, the disciples concluded the place to be Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim. So, a delegation of monks landed there and soon they came across the house as described by the Oracle. The house belonged to Enche Kazi, a respected Sikkimese nobleman; he had a four-year-old son. The moment the monks entered the garden even before they had knocked the door the boy went to his father and told him that his people had come to take him back to his monastery! The monks then entered and subjected him to a familiarity test: they displayed a whole range of religious items like bells and rosaries and the boy without any error picked up only those items belonging to and actually used by Lama Rimpoche. After this demonstration, the heart-broken father the moter had died at childbirth had to allow his young son to go with the Lamas. As soon as they entered the monastery, Lama Rimpoche s pet dog came running and

greeted him with great happiness.

One might even ask Govinda, a blue-blooded rational German, what made him believe in reincarnation. His answer is simple: For myself, rebirth is neither a theory nor a belief, but an experience. What is this experience?

Long before he developed his Tibetan connection, Govinda, in his twenties, was living in the Island of Capri. One day, some of his friends invited him to attend a seance. Out of idle curiosity, Govinda asked about his past life, the spirit came out with a Latin name. Nobody had heard this name before. Only Govinda vaguely knew that it was the pen name of a German writer who died some years ago. He had come across the name in a bibliography.

After a few days, Govinda showed a short story which he had written some years ago to a friend who was well-versed in German literature. After reading it, the friend was very surprised and he asked Govinda if he had read the works of the German writer who used a Latin pseudonym he found many similarities.

Govinda was taken aback. He got hold of the works of the German author and found that his short story was virtually a part of an unfinished novel of that author, the novel that he could not complete because of his death. Some of the passages were identical and Govinda felt that not only the language, but his emotions, his innermost feelings were reflected in the writings of the other man. Later, Govinda found out that both of them were inmates in the same sanatorium and somebody even told him that they looked alike!

A secondary evidence of reincarnation is the example of child prodigies. We sometimes come across incidents of children achieving something unbelievable the legendary exploits of Mozart for example, or that of Jean Cardiac who knew six languages before the age of six. There is on record a famous case of a child who spoke only a few hours after his birth, knew the Bible by the age of two, mastered history, Latin and French by three, and correctly predicted his own death at four! No amount of human excellence can explain these events. It seems these children brought with them all their knowledge and expertise of previous existence.

The detractors of reincarnation theory often point out that most of rebirth cases are recorded in India and Tibet where people believe in the concept; fewer cases are reported from the land of unbelievers. This does not seem to be true after the publication of Dr Wambach experiments; we can round off this article with the personal experiences of another psychiatrist from the other side of the Atlantic.

Dr Arthur Guirdham is a well-known British specialist on psychiatry with many years of practice. For some inexplicable reason, he always felt attracted to an obsolete 13th century religious sect called the Cathars. The Cathars refused to accept Christianity and were massacred by the Church near Toulouse in France. The doctor had strong feelings of deja vu whenever he visited that area. (The feeling of deja vu, of being somewhere for the second time when actually it is the first visit, is often found to be a secondary evidence of reincarnation). He also had a recurring nightmare; he was lying on the ground while a tall man was approaching him menacingly. He could not explain this nightmare by any means. In 1962, a woman patient came to him and he was amazed to find

that she was also having an identical nightmare. After she disclosed it, the nightmares stopped. During the therapy, the lady confessed that she had been seeing the doctor in her dreams since the 1940s. Her dreams are invariably centered around her life in the 13th century when she, a young peasant girl, met a young Cathar priest Koger De Grissoles, and they fell in love. They lived together happily but not forever; the persecution started, they were arrested, the priest died in prison and the girl was burnt alive. She claimed Dr Guirdham was Roger.

This seems to be a Hindi movie in the Madhumati-Milan-Mehbooba gharana lovers who met tragic end return after 700 years as doctor and patient! But there is a minor problem. In her dreams, which she saw in the 40s, she saw in great details the background and lifestyle of the Cathars in the 13th century. Those details were documentarily proved only in the late 60s. And the lady was neither a historian nor a sociologist. So it is not easy to dismiss the story outright.

But this was not the end of Dr Guirdham s Cathars connections. Even before this incident, he had a woman patient who came because she could not understand why two strange words, the words with which she had nothing to do, with, were continuously repeated in her head `Albigensian' and `Raymonds'. Dr Guirdham was again puzzled because Albigenses; was another name of the Cathars and Raymonds was the Count of Toulouse who ordered the massacre of the sect. The same patient also saw nightmares of being burnt alive and being hit on the back by a torch in fact, she had a birthmark on her back which had a burnt look. In this way, Guirdham went on meeting more people who were somehow related to the Cathars. This led him to his theory that a group of people who were Cathars in the 13th century were born together in various places during the last two thousand years.

Dr Guirdham s books were published around 1970 and as expected got much flak and derisive laughter, but it may not sound so strange now.

There is only a basic difference between 1970 and 1979, the year of publication of Dr Wambach s book, as I have already pointed out: Dr Guirdham had to retire from practice and give up consultancy work before writing his books, because he knew his professional reputation would be damaged beyond repair, while Dr Wambach could still practice and reveal her studies.

Nothing could possibly illustrate better the gradual, though grudging, acceptance of the basic tenets of reincarnation.

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The Ugly H Word

Pritish Nandy

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President George W Bush, in his inaugural address, made so many references to God, the Bible and Christianity that even the American media sat up and noticed it. No, no one was in the least embarrassed by it. But they noticed it and some of them pointed it out, quite approvingly. For in American politics such references to religion are not seen as anything wrong. A President who flaunts his faith is no zealot; nor is he a Christian fundamentalist. He is a good, decent, God-fearing man.

Bush is not the first American President to be so openly Christian. Many before him have also rooted for a good, strong Christian image. No one doubted their motives. No one disparaged them for doing so. Even when it won them votes, no one accused them of religious bigotry or political opportunism.

Compare this to India. Think of what Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee goes through every time he mentions the dreaded H word. While many are ready to applaud him when he talks about fresh peace initiatives in Kashmir or making friends with Pakistan, the moment he says anything about being Hindu or defends the cause of Hindutva, he is promptly accused of revealing his true colours as a khaki knicker*wallah*. The very mention of his religious antecedents, however gently, raises the hackles of the Opposition and the media. Forget President Bush; if Vajpayee were to just talk about what being a Hindu means to him, he would be flagellated as a bigot who has emerged from the closet.

So strong is the pressure built up by the secular lobby in India that even leaders like Vajpayee, known for their open-mindedness in matters of religion, are now increasingly embarrassed to acknowledge their Hindu roots. It is as if being Hindu is politically incorrect, something to be ashamed of. The moral of the story is: If you must wear khaki knickers, wear them under your white *dhoti* so that no one can out you as a bigot, a traditionalist, or simply as an old fashioned prig. Secularism today is synonymous with modernity. It is synonymous with human rights. With the spirit of liberalisation, the scientific temper, with globalisation as we aspire to it.

Can you imagine Vajpayee in one of his speeches referring to Ram as the guiding spirit of our nationhood? Can you see him repeatedly quoting from the Bhagvad Gita or the Upanishads to underscore a political point? He would be torn apart. Even *Vande Mataram* is labelled as a Hindu anthem today, not the national anthem. The national anthem is *Jana Gana Mana* which is ostensibly secular. No speech by a prime minister refers to anything Hindu without promptly

balancing it with a cross reference to Islam or Christianity or Sikhism. We are always anxious to show the world how secular we are. If in the process we are regressing from our own faith, so be it.

When President Bush refers to God or Jesus Christ or the Bible, it does not make him a bigot or a fundamentalist. So why should we blame Vajpayee when he sees the Ram Mandir as the collective dream of this nation? His secular credentials are well known. His abiding faith in the peace process has been repeatedly demonstrated and, even though he has been let down again and again by Pakistan, he has refused to give up hope in the possibility of achieving peace in Kashmir. All this, against the wishes of some of his own supporters in the NDA. Yet he has been brave enough to stick his neck out and root for peace. He knows that radical Islam is a dangerous and destabilising force all over the world but he never refers to it. Instead, he has chosen to deliberately secularise our semantics by referring to it as cross-border terrorism even though the whole world knows where this cross-border terrorism comes from, who funds it, and why.

My question is: **Why must we deny Prime Minister Vajpayee his right to be a Hindu?** Bush does not become a fundamentalist when he refers to Christianity or the Bible. No one argues that he is anti-Muslim or anti-secular simply because he flaunts his own faith in public. By the same argument, when Vajpayee speaks of Hindutva or the Ram temple, why should we brand him as a fundamentalist? He remains what he always was: a Hindu at heart, a secular leader in office. In fact, as we all know, the only way to be truly secular is to be (first) a good Hindu or a good Christian or a good Muslim. Unless you respect your own faith you are unlikely to respect the faith of others.

The media and the Opposition are repeatedly arguing that Vajpayee is double-faced. That he hunts with the hounds and runs with the hares. On one hand he is the gentle and liberal face of the BJP. On the other, he keeps using the Hindu card to further his own political ends. That he is actually a wolf in sheep's clothing. A Hindu bigot wearing the mask of secularism to sneakily woo the minority vote.

This is a foolish argument. The prime minister has no reason to be bashful of the H word. **It is possible to be a Hindu without compromising one's secular credentials.** Like Gandhi. He was a good Hindu and a great secular leader too. There was no conflict of interest. In fact, it is just the opposite. Those who speak so passionately about secularism are the ones who barter it away so easily. In their pursuit of easy political goals. Without realising the simple fact that hypocrisy is no substitute for political conviction.

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articles on hinduism

A drain inspector's report
By Pritish Nandy
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There was a time when everyone frowned on India. Including us.

Everything was wrong with India. We hated her rags and yet, at the same time, we resented the rich and went out of our way to harass those who created wealth. With unreasonable and punishing taxes. With regulations that crushed all initiative and enterprise.

We complained about the roads, the phones, the buses, the trains, the hospitals, the distribution of food grains. Yet we insisted that all these should remain firmly in the hands of the State. A lazy, corrupt, bestial State, as we described it. Yet we allowed it to control everything and become more and more arrogant, more and more corrupt, more and more wicked.

We were bitter about how government servants, from the lowliest peon to the all powerful prime minister, were busy stashing away personal wealth and ignoring the problems of the common citizen. We complained about their callousness, their highhandedness, the sheer brutality with which they treated us ordinary people. At the same time, we wanted our children to grow up and join government service. Even though we were so critical of the government, we applauded when the State hijacked more and more powers, more and more authority in the name of socialism and a welfare society. Of course, the only welfare this society was interested in was the welfare of its corrupt babus and criminal netas.

There was simply no doubt that India was sick, very sick. Yet we were busy hanging up portraits of politicians on our walls and telling our children how wonderful they were, how they had fought for freedom and self reliance, how they were busy building the temples of modern India. And what were these temples of modern India? Big, ugly, polluting factories that churned out rotten, substandard products and employed thousands of untrained people who emerged as vote banks for those who provided them jobs. Jobs which they did badly even as they kept upping their demands, rendering most of the factories sick and inefficient.

There was all round anger and resentment. All round mediocrity. All round disappointment with the way we were going. Those who lived here hated India. Those who came to visit India hated her even more. She was a nation on the skid.

The nineties began to change all that. Economic bankruptcy was no longer seen as fashionable. Liberalisation, slow as it was, slowly began to change our attitude towards the creation of wealth. And even though Narasimha Rao himself got trapped in the vortex of his own corruption and

bribery we were lucky that subsequent governments persisted with the reforms he initiated. Sometimes fast, sometimes slow. But the reforms continued, largely because weak, waffling governments at the Centre made it impossible to roll them back.

India was lucky.

She was even luckier when Atal Bihari Vajpayee came to power and, instead of succumbing to the internal pressures groups within the BJP who were (once again) talking about swadeshi and self reliance, euphemisms for going back to the licence raj where everybody in government could make a fast buck, he pushed ahead with reforms and in fact accelerated the pace of change. Dismantling more and more state controls in the process and returning freedom, as it were, to the people of India.

In retrospect, it is difficult to say which were the worst years of slavery and colonization for India. Three hundred years of Muslim rule or two hundred years of British imperialism? Or, sadly, the 45 years of the Nehru-Gandhi dynastic rule when we lived with the pretence that we were free. Dressed in elaborate chains, we spoke of socialism and non-alignment with the ardor of slaves who were taught that freedom was a dangerous idea that only helped the rich and the powerful.

Thank God, that is all over now. Whatever may be the failures of the Vajpayee era, it will be remembered as that period when India started dismantling a corrupt and lazy empire of crime masquerading as a benevolent, welfare State and returned freedom to her people. It was the time when enormous wealth was created, when taxes were paid because they were reasonable, when people realized that profit was not such a dirty word after all. When excellence entered our lexicon.

It was the time when India began to realize her full potential. When she figured out that she was not a Third World nation, as the Nehrus and Gandhis had preached, equating us with Yugoslavia and Egypt. We realized that we had the talent, the wealth, the ability to be a first world nation if we wanted to and the fact that millions of Indians were still defecating on railway tracks or living below the poverty line was not exactly inimical to change or success.

That is why you see less Indians complaining today. You see them going out and doing things and doing them so well that the whole world has woken up to our talent. Leading international corporates, global banks are now headed by Indian professionals. The sexiest start-ups in Silicon Valley are spearheaded by Indians. Some of them first generation literate. Some of the richest men in the world are, in fact, Indians today. Measured dollar for dollar, wealth for wealth.

The fact that *apna* Azim Premji who lives in Bangalore is richer than the Queen of England or Gururaj Deshpande (having created a new start-up, barely a year old) has acquired wealth faster than the Sultan of Brunei in the past year are indications that Indians are a lot smarter, a lot more hard working and a damned sight more ingenious than most. Give us one more generation of free Indians and you will see how the pattern of wealth changes globally.

What is doubly satisfying is the fact that most Indians who have succeeded overseas are ready to share their ideas, their wealth with people back home. In other words, the Great Indian Diaspora is growing. Give us five more years and you will find an amazing change in our equation with the rest of the world.

Five years ago when I persuaded Captain Krishnan Nair of The Leela to set up India's first cybercafe little did we realize how quickly and fundamentally dot com would change India. The critics carped and said it would take us a century to catch up with the internet population in the US. Today Indians use e-mail more than any other community in the world. There are more Indians working for the knowledge economy than any other people. Soon all businesses requiring talent, skill, ingenuity, technology, service will not be able to do without us. We can leave making steel and cement to the rest of the world.

All this has happened because we chose freedom and democracy as the key metaphors of change. Unlike our neighbours. This is what set us apart. We did not chase short cuts. We stuck to democracy and the rule of law. Yes, we faltered. We faltered many times. We made many mistakes. We allowed, at times, fundamentalist ideas to flourish side by side with liberal convictions. We banned Rushdie when he hurt Muslim sentiments. We rapped Husain on the knuckles when he painted Saraswati naked.

But whatever our failures may be, we allowed a thousand flowers to bloom, a hundred schools of thought to contend. This is what has now paid off. We are today right in the midst of a flourishing new era, an era of far greater self confidence than we have ever had. That is possibly why we get so worked up with Deepa Mehta. We have nothing against her films but we are sick and tired of a mindset that sees only squalor and disease, pain and failure in modern India and wants to export this image to the rest of the world.

No, George Lucas, this is no lone individual's battle against an insensate, unreasonable, fascist State. It is, in fact, exactly the opposite. It is an attempt to commercially exploit a false, misleading image of India to win encomiums in the West. A West that loves to see us as we once were. A nation of losers.

We are no longer losers. We are no longer a sick nation, teetering on the edge of bankruptcy and shackling its people to a cantankerous, obsolete socialist ideology. We are a free nation today, trying to redesign our future and our lives. There is still much to be done, of course. I am sure there are many lonely wives finding solace in each other's arms. I am sure there are many poor widows in Varanasi whoring for a livelihood. There is no shame in admitting that.

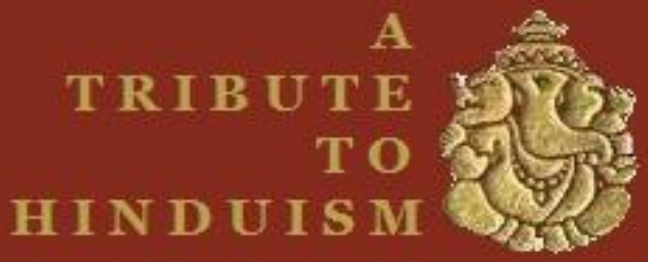
But surely there is much more to India today than its failures, its aberrations and that is why there are many people like me who are neither bigots nor religious fanatics nor supporters of the VHP who feel that Deepa Mehta must stop selling such sick, prejudiced pornography to the world, as Katherine Mayo once did, to make India wince in public.

The idea is not to curb Mehta's free spirit as a creative artist. She is most welcome to peddle her brand of pornography wherever she wants. She is welcome to see India through the eyes of a drain inspector. But, then, she must also be ready for the backlash of public opinion. In a democratic society you have to live with that. You can mock such opinion as traditional, unduly conservative. But it reflects in its own way, as it ought to, what people feel about their country, their society, their religion, their values.

It is fashionable for the creative elite to treat such opinion with contempt. But then they must be also ready to face the consequences. We are poor. Many among us are uneducated. Some of us may even be lesbians and whores. But we still love India and will not allow it to be denigrated by

someone out to make a quick buck.

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articles on hinduism

Why is being a good Hindu politically incorrect in secular India?
By Pritish Nandy
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Last week I wrote about the inaugural address by the new American President George W Bush and how he referred in it, again and again, to God, the Bible and Christian values.

He sounded almost like a scripture teacher in one of our convent schools. The American media noticed it, even commented upon it. But no one ever suggested that he sounded like a fundamentalist. A good Christian, perhaps. But a fundamentalist, heavens no!

Now imagine if someone like Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee were to talk so much about Ram or Hindutva in his inaugural address, or flaunt his Hindu education and background the way Bush flaunted his Christian upbringing, can you think of the outrage it would have provoked?

Everyone, including our media, would have flayed him for stoking the fires of Hindu fundamentalism. As it is, the world press keeps referring to the BJP-led NDA as spearheading Hindu fundamentalism.

In other words, being a good Christian is politically correct in free America but being a good Hindu is politically incorrect in secular India. Why? Why is the American President not slandered as a bigot when he speaks about God, the Bible and Christian values while the Indian prime minister is called a Hindu zealot when he refers to Ram or Hindutva?

After all, what are we looking for in our leaders? Denial of religion? Atheism? Is atheism synonymous with secularism? Or is secularism the ability to pursue your own faith with conviction and respect the right of others to do the same?

We are back to semantics here and this is the real difference between secularism as propagated by Mahatma Gandhi and secularism as it has been practised by his political heirs led by Jawaharlal Nehru.

Gandhi saw it as the co-existence of all religions and urged everyone to follow his own faith with even greater conviction while Nehru, a self-professed agnostic, saw it as the gradual erosion of the role of religion in a modern society.

So, while Gandhi pleaded for more faith, better understanding and a bigger role for religion in creating a truly secular state, Nehru idolised the blossoming of the scientific temper, which he believed would eventually diminish if not entirely wipe out the role of religion in our political culture. It achieved precisely the opposite.

But, before that, let me return for a moment to President Bush. On Thursday, I sat with heads of state and leaders from different parts of the world, as well as many of America's most influential senators and Congressmen, listening to the new President explain his vision for a new America at the 49th National Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC. It was an amazing experience, made doubly impressive by his touching faith in the power of religion to resolve social and political conflict.

Bush was not in the least embarrassed by his faith. In fact, he saw it as his strength. He saw it as the strength of his nation. So he dropped all pretences, all hypocrisy and spoke out openly for what he thought was the solution to most of America's problems, as well as the world's. Faith. Religious faith. In

his case, Christianity. But, for others, whatever their faith is.

His argument was exactly what I wrote: It is not religion that exacerbates conflict; it is the absence of religion. When we stop being good Hindus or good Muslims or good Christians, that is when we pick up weapons against each other to fight wars in the name of religion.

All conflict is actually secular. People may raise the banner of faith but they are actually covering up the real reasons for the conflict which are sometimes political and, more often, plain criminal.

The conference was a unique experience and what impressed me most was political America's fierce commitment to its faith. Of course Christianity was there, centrestage. But it was there as a symbol of America's faith in all religions and their right to coexist.

There was Benazir Bhutto arguing for her right to dissent. There was Roshanara Ershad, young son in tow, demanding that her imprisoned husband be given a free and fair trial. There were many heads of state. The president of Congo sitting right next to the president of Rwanda. The president of Macedonia next to me.

On the other side were the prime ministers of the Slovak Republic, Albania and Greenland. On the next table, the presidents of Croatia and Serbia and the governor of the Cayman Islands. My friend, the home minister of the Tibetan government in exile, and his wife, the Dalai Lama's sister were on the adjoining table. It was a *sangam* of all faiths. Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Buddhists. They were all there, praying for a better, stronger, more compassionate world.

As Benazir pointed out, there are nations in South Asia where politicians are either in power or in prison. As Roshanara Ershad lamented, it is a short distance from being a president's wife to being a luckless refugee. Luckily we, in India, have a strong judiciary that refuses to yield ground to over-ambitious political leaders. We have a democracy that is stubborn, brave, uncompromising.

Maybe it is time to reject cant and hypocrisy, shed this sham of political correctness. Let us, as a nation, admit to ourselves that there is absolutely nothing to be ashamed of when we speak of our religion, our faith.

A good Hindu is no less than a good Christian or a good Muslim and it is time we acknowledged this simple, inescapable fact in a nation that has been the crucible of faith for centuries.

In this acknowledgement lies our future. As Hindus, as Indians. As a nation on the move.

There is, there can be nothing endearing about faithlessness.

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articles on hinduism

An Uncultured Media
Author: Editorial column
Publication: The Navhind Times, Panaji Goa
Dated: February 2, 2001
http://www.hvk.org/

The Controversy over the media coverage of the Maha Kumbh mela continues. The conflict is between two streams of thought, one saying the media should be prohibited from covering scenes of mass bathing at the sangam, the other saying the media has the right to cover them, like it has the right to cover other events. It is not easy to decide which stream is wholly correct. Nevertheless, there cannot be two opinions that the media, especially the television, is guilty of commercialising the event. A section of the print media has joined those in the television in portraying the mela as an exotic event. At the apparent level, the media presented to the world as though it was covering the world's greatest Hindu congregation, but in reality, as their selective reportage and photography showed, they were out to portray the mela as a gathering of mad, eccentric, superstitiously blind villagers and sadhus.

Some of the foreign television channels ran programmes on the mela which had a rich content of seemingly lunatic and incredulous activities and apparels (or none of them) of Indians who came there. The game was to appeal to the subconscious of the European mind which has the image of Indians being an uncivilised and unelightened race, not all of whom the poor Britishers could manage to civilise. That was to improve the viewership (the ratings, on which advertising comes) in a competitive market. The more uncivilised, primitive, lunatic and naked the Indians looked in 21st century the more Europeans were bound to watch the show.

The Indian media was by and large discreet, responsible and respectful. A section of it, both on television as well as in print, however followed the foreign media in order to improve their ratings and readership. This section of media is not known to be very exploratory and outgoing, but in the Maha Kumbh mela case, all bounds were broken in terms of resources and time and space. In the name of special coverage they carried reports and photographs which others avoided. Their unethical content was marked not only by a voyeuristic obsession but also by an unwarranted slant towards the hype and celebrities. One section of the media gave too much spate to the proposed visits of some of the Hollywood stars, as if their coming was more important than the coming of millions of devout Hindu pilgrims.

On the correction side, there is a protest lodged by an official of the Uttar Pradesh government against a British television channel for distorted portrayal of the Maha Kumbh mela. The question is: will it deter this channel or other foreign channels from giving a distorted coverage to the Maha Kumbh mela or such events in India in the future? The answer is a plain no. What

about those sections of the Indian television and print media which also indulged in similar distortions in the name of the freedom of the individual and the freedom of the press? The media coverage of the mela this time was the most commercialised and distorted ever. With the lessons learnt this time, the authorities must place restrictions on the coverage of the mela and such religious events. Under our constitutional safeguards against misuse of the freedom of expression reasonable restrictions can be placed on the media.

The government should also call a meeting of its representatives with those of the television and print media, both domestic and foreign, in order to work out an ethical code for the coverage of religious events like the Maha Kumbh mela. The media must realize that the Maha Kumb Mela is an event of great religious importance to the Hindus. Any religious event demands purity of soul, non-attachment to feelings of desire, lust and greed and dedication to faith. The pilgrim who come to the Maha Kumbh mela from all parts oft the country, both sadhus and commoners, come for a holy bath overpowered by these emotions. It is only appropriate that the media men who come to communicate to the rest of the world what is happening at the Kumbh fully respect the sentiments of the devout pilgrims. To portray pilgrims in snatches of reportage or photography that capture only the weird and the unbelievable is snobbish, uncultured and unacceptable.

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Dutch Bhagvad Gita a sellout

By Ranvir Nayar in Paris

http://rediff.com/us/2001/sep/01gita.htm

The Bhagvad Gita, the treatise that encompasses the essential philosophy of Hinduism, has now reached out to the Dutch-speaking people of the Netherlands and Belgium.

Dutch scholars Gerda Staes and Winand Callewaert have translated the holy book into Modern Dutch, or Flemish as the language is called in Belgium.

Their work was released at a function in the Indian embassy in Belgium where nearly 40 Belgian academicians and leading personalities of Brussels were in attendance.

In the first edition, 2,500 copies of the book -- which runs into 158 pages and is priced at 17.20 euros ($15) -- have been printed.

The publisher, Davidsfonds/Leuven, says going by the fantastic response that the book has evoked in the Belgian and Dutch media and among readers, a second edition may soon follow.

Davidsfonds/Leuven has been in the publishing business for 125 years and focuses largely on cultural and scientific works. It is one of the most important publishing companies in the Flanders region of Belgium.

Translator Staes lived in India and Thailand for 14 years and learned Sanskrit -- the language of ancient Indian texts -- at various institutions in the two countries. She even worked for five months at Bombay University, where she organised a seminar on Sanskrit in May this year.

Callewaert, a professor at the Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium, earned his bachelor's degree in Hindi, Sanskrit and history from Ranchi University (Jharkhand) in 1968. He also studied at the Sanskrit University in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, and Pune University in Maharashtra. He holds the chair of Sanskrit and Hinduism at the Catholic University.

Callewaert, who has visited India at least 50 times, has already published 32 books in Hindi, English and Dutch. He was among those Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee honoured during the Sixth World Hindi Conference held in London in September 1999.

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articles on hinduism

Paris bids Ganesh a warm adieu

Ranvir Nayar in Paris
http://www.rediff.com/us/2001/sep/03fra.htm

Thousands of Parisians, among them a Russian Orthodox Church priest, helped pull a chariot of Lord Ganesh through the streets as the festival dedicated to the elephant-headed Hindu god ended in the French capital on Sunday.

People dressed in their best thronged the decorated streets of Paris as loudspeakers blared hymns at the end of Ganesh Chaturthi.

The festival had been going on in the city for the past ten days. Sunday marked the final day, with an idol of Ganesh being taken out in a chariot procession through the main streets.

A priest of the Russian Orthodox Church and several French converts to Hinduism joined the procession. The chariot was preceded by two water trucks, which washed the path before the idol.

Thousands of devotees offered prayers to the god. At the end of the procession, however, the idol was not immersed in a river, as is the custom in India.

The procession began at 11am from Mannika temple. Idols of Ganesh were installed in a five-metre-tall chariot pulled by scores of devotees. Groups of followers danced around it, singing devotional songs.

This year saw a significant increase in the participation of the local population in what is now by far the largest Hindu festival celebrated in France.

Over 10,000 devotees, largely Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils as well as Hindus from other parts of India, Madagascar, Mauritius and some French colonies celebrate the festival.

Organisers attributed the larger French turnout to the wide publicity the festival gets in the local press. This time too the French press was present in significant numbers.

After covering a route of 7km in about four hours, the procession returned with much gaiety to the temple where several thousand coconuts were offered to the god before his idol was returned to the temple.

During the procession, *luddoos* [an Indian sweet] along with holy offerings and milk were distributed to the devotees, most of whom then turned to neighbouring La Chappelle area that has the largest concentration of Indian and Sri Lankan shops and restaurants.

The procession is a boon for shopkeepers in the area, especially restaurateurs. "We get over a

week's business on just one day," said a restaurateur whose 15-table restaurant was packed since morning.

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Scientist looks for Jesus' body in Kashmir

http://news.sify.com/cgi-bin/sifynews/news/content/news_fullstory.jsp?article_oid=11142220&page_no=1

An American researcher who believes she has found the final resting place of Jesus Christ is campaigning to exhume a body at a Muslim shrine in Kashmir for scientific tests.

Suzanne Marie Olsson, a New York-based researcher is currently in Srinagar, studying the Muslim shrine of Rozabal.

While Muslims say Rozabal houses the tomb of Yuza Asaf, a Muslim saint, many researchers believe it contains the body of Jesus Christ.

To put an end to speculation Olsson has suggested exhuming the remains at Rozabal for DNA testing and carbon dating.

"This will trace him (the saint) to his origin ... and resolve the raging controversy over the identity of the place forever," she told the Sunday edition of Kashmir's leading daily, the Greater Kashmir.

Olsson has already dug up a shrine at the Murree hill station in Pakistan under the supervision of archaeologists Ahmad Hassan Dani and Saida Rahman.

Muree is believed to be the resting place of Jesus' mother, Mary (Marium). "The exhumed remains have been sent for the DNA testing and the report is awaited," she told the newspaper.

"Now Rozabal holds the key. If the remains there are sent for testing and then tallied with the results of the Murree project, it will either establish the link between the two shrines as being of similar origin and thus authenticate the Marium-Jesus theory or prove it wrong for good."

However, her project has run into trouble with the managers of the Rozabal shrine, who are strongly opposed to its "desecration".

"We will never allow it," said Mohammed Amin, one of the managers. But Olsson, stressing the "purely scientific nature of her work" and her identity as a "seeker of truth", is pleading to be allowed to "verify the origin and identity of the saint" to put to rest wild speculation.

She has even written to Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah for help. Olsson also believes Moses is buried in Bandipore in north Kashmir, the Islamic prophet Haroun at Harwan, on the outskirts of Srinagar, and Solomon at Takht-i-Suliaman in Srinagar.

"You have more Christian holy sites than even Egypt or Israel," she said in her appeal to the chief minister.

Olsson says she wants to unravel the truth about the shrines so that Kashmir, ravaged by a decade-long insurgency that has claimed 35,000 lives, can become a pilgrimage centre for Christians and Muslims.

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articles on hinduism

Foreign Correspondents Coverage of India

http://www.newsindia-times.com/usnews09.htm

When reviewing coverage of India, in the mainstream press, Francois Gautier, a South Asia correspondent for Le Figaro (a leading French publication) identified three types of articles:

"Foreign journalists (and photographers) covering India are generally interested in three kinds of India:

a. The macabre and the negative: the widows of Benaras, the caste system as practised in Bihar, Mother Teresa's place for the dying, kidney traffic in Tamil Nadu, the slums of Calcutta, bride burning, etc. These subjects have their own elements of truth. There does exist in India terrible slums, unacceptable exploitation of caste, dying people left unattended, and bride burning. But by harping only on these topics, the foreign press always presents a very negative image of India.

b. The folklore and the superfluous: Maharajas, of whom westerners are avid, are totally irrelevant to modern India, the palaces of Rajasthan, cherished by such magazines as Vogue which regularly sends their photographers and lanky models, who have no idea of India festival: Pushkar, the camel fair, kumbh-melas, dance performances in Khajuraho... all these have their own beauties, but they represent only a small part of our great and vast country.

c.The politically correct: There must be at least 300 foreign correspondents posted in Delhi, which should vouch for a variety of opinions. But if you give them a subject to write about - any subject - say Ayodhya, the RSS, fanatic Hindus, secularism, or Sonia Gandhi, you will get 298 articles which will say more or less the same thing, even if it is with different styles, different illustrations and various degrees of professionalism.

"Our Goal"

Our goal will be to expose the "macabre and negative" the "folklore and superfluous" and the "politically correct". We will also praise excellence in reporting and efforts to cover Indian Americans in the United States.

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Invoking the Sun God

http://www.newstodaynet.com/pongal/pn1.htm

Thai Pongal, traditionally called Thamizhar Thirunal is basically worship of the Sun God which has spread to the length and breadth of the world, of course in different names.

Seers of Truth have composed many hymns worshipping Sun God as He is the source of sustenance for all living beings on earth and without the grace of Sun nothing can flourish and no one can imagine a life in the absence of Sun. And the human race which has been drawn its sustenance through the grace of Sun, naturally thanks Him for showering his mercy.

Adi Sankara categorised the worship of Gods and Goddesses into six major categories *Souram, Saktham, Saivam, Ganapathyam, Vaishnavam* and *Goumaram.*

Souram is the worship of Sun God. He is seen as the Light of Wisdom as well as source of livelihood for all creatures. That is why Tamils described Sun God as *kankanda deivam* (God who could be seen with one's naked eyes). Even now, one could see the elders in rural areas worship the Sun as their first duty.

Gayathri or *Sandya Vandanam* which has to be done thrice a day, is nothing but offering obeisance to Sun God. And on Pongal day, i.e., the first day of the month Thai, people offer Pongal to Lord Suryanarayanan (Sun God).

The worship of Sun God has been in the vogue in other parts of the world also from time immemorial.

In countries like Greece, England, Iran, Egypt, Afghanisthan, Japan, Burma, Cambodia, Java and Sumathra people worship the Sun God through various methods Worship of Sun God has an important place in the marriage rituals of Greeks and their mythological stories resemble that of the ones in the India. Like the Greeks, Mexicans also give at most importance to the Sun worship and Japanese kings take pride in calling themselves as the inheritors of *Surya Vamsam* (Sun Race). In Astrology, Sun God is connected with the health of the individual particularly for good vision, Hindus worship Him.

Another aspect of Sun God is courage. Sage Agasthya taught Lord Rama the *Aditya Hridayam*, the hymn to Lord Surya (Sun) when he felt fatigued during the battle with Ravana. And by reciting it thrice, Lord Rama rejuvenated himself and won the battle. In the Hindu system of worship, offering to the deities assumes an important place and it is called *naivedyam*. And the offering is nothing but thanking the Almighty, for providing the food for sustenance.

Sastras prescribe specific flowers and food items as offerings for each God and Goddesses. Among the offerings, 'pongal' is considered as sacred by one and all. Worshippers of Goddess Sakthi, Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu offer a varieties of cooked rice.

A Vedic prayer offered to Sun God goes ...

Asatho ma sat gamaya (Lead us from Falsehood to Truth)

Thamaso ma jyothir gamaya (Lead us from Darkness to Enlightenment)

Mruthyor ma amrutham gamaya (Lead us from Ephemerality to Eternity)

Let us all pray for a prosperous 2003 with a bumper harvest of crop.

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Archaeologist too believes Ram temple existed at Ayodhya

http://www.newstodaynet.com/07mar/ld1.htm

NT Bureau
Chennai, Mar 7:

The VHPs assertion through scientific data that a Ram temple existed at the disputed site in Aydodhya now has the backing of archaeologists who dug up the place in the 1980s.

According to an agency story, one of the architects who conducted extensive digging on a half-acre area barely a metre off the site has said the excavations will establish without doubt the existence of an ancient temple.

The observation of the archaeologist is significant as the Allahabad High Court has ordered excavations at the disputed site.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is already preparing its team to begin excavations within a week at the site to ascertain the antiquity of structures detected in radar tests in January.

But even before that archaeologists are saying that a temple existed there.

The structures we found dated back 3,000 years to 900 B.C., S.P. Gupta, who was among the dozen archaeologists who excavated the site from 1975 to 1980 has been quoted as saying by a news agency.

Gupta described pillars, floors, brick walls and even statuettes uncovered by his team. We covered them up with earth after our studies were complete, he has said.

If these findings were barely a metre away from the actual spot of dispute, then it is obvious that the temple would have covered the disputed site too.

Another expedition was conducted in 1992 just before the demolition of the Babri structure.

According to Gupta, 68 idols had been uncovered in that bout of digging and there were certain indications of a sprawling temple complex that existed before the Babri mosque.

The demolition put a lid on the controversial excavations, and the dispute shifted to the political arena until the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court Tuesday ordered the ASI to excavate the site and submit a report within a month.

Admitting that it would be one of their most sensitive assignments till date, ASI officials said their digging would take off where Delhi-based ground mapping company Tojo Vikas International left off.

An official of the company said their ground penetrating radar technique to map underground utilities had definitely sensed remains of a structure underneath.

Canadian expert Claude Robillard led the team that used radars to study the site. In this method,

an antenna transmits electro-magnetic waves, which penetrate the layers of underground structures and are deflected.

The time taken by the waves to travel can tell the size and shape of structures without any actual digging involved.

The ASI commissioned the radar studies, conducted at the site excluding the spot where Hindus worship the idol of infant Ram, at the instance of the Allahabad High Court.

According to Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leaders such as Ashok Singhal, the very finding of a structure indicates that the Babri mosque was built on the ruins of an ancient temple.

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The spread of the Hindu mosaic

By Vivekanand Ojha

http://www.dailypioneer.com/oped/OPD2.HTM

In the wake of the controversy regarding conversions by Christian missionaries in the country, it has been suggested by a few commentators in the media that the Dalits and tribals are not Hindus.

This assertion, however, is not only erroneous but also presumes a narrow and medieval Brahmin-centric definition of Hinduism. Besides, it appears to be an attempt to twist the ongoing debate on conversions.

To begin with, the word Hindu was not coined by Hindus themselves but was given by the people living on the eastern side of the river Indus. By this definition alone, all Dalits and tribals who have been living here since the beginning of civilisation come within the ambit of Hinduism. This apart, unlike the followers of monotheistic religions like Islam, Christianity or Buddhism, Hindus, as one entity, never followed the teachings of any one prophet or a single book. So it is difficult to have a precise, all-inclusive and concise definition of Hinduism. Though the Vedic society can be considered to be the origin of Hinduism, Vedic culture was composite in nature, based as it was on the collective wisdom of sages down the ages, rather than on the teachings of a single prophet or seer.

Hinduism allows considerable intellectual freedom to its adherents, giving it a certain dynamism. Over the ages, saints and holy men have interpreted the religious texts differently, resulting in many overlapping sects, numerous deities and countless festivals within Hinduism. So, just because the tribal culture and their methods of worship are different from the Brahminical concept, it cannot be concluded that tribals are not Hindus. In fact, tribals also follow a wide spectrum of beliefs and customs, each one of which differs markedly from one tribe to another.

Worship of more than one deity is one of the main characteristics of the Hindu religion; one that distinguishes it from other religions. Hinduism professes that God, essentially One, can be worshiped in any form as desired by the individual. In fact, this freedom is at the root of the composite nature of Hinduism as they worship many deities.

Moreover, Hinduism believes in the concept of noble soul or devta. This means that any individual, through his karma, can be regarded as a noble soul, worthy of worship by a group of his followers. That is why Hindu scriptures claim that there is not one but 84 lakh devtas. This has further resulted in the concept of kuldevatas where every clan has its own deity. This is a kind of ancestor worship. A more direct form of ancestor-worship is the pinda-daan performed by Hindus during a particular period.

Nature-worship is also a unique feature of Hinduism. From the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, mountains, rivers, seas to even rain, every element of nature is worshiped by Hindus. Even different species of flora and fauna find a place of reverence. Similarly idol-worship is another practice followed only by Hindus.

Thus all these features of Hinduism, namely worship of multiple deities, idol worship, ancestor worship and nature worship are found to varying degrees among all the tribal groups in the country. **Moreover, many of the tribal s seemingly eccentric practices are rooted in the great epics of the Ramayana**

and Mahabharata. This establishes beyond doubt that tribals are essentially Hindus.

Further, it has to be noted that Hinduism is the only religion which does not impose any uniform way of worship on its adherents, so those within the Hindu fold can follow their indigenous culture. But once tribals convert to, say, Christianity, they have to give up their original practices and ways of worship in favour of those
followed by Christians. This leads to a marked changed in their way of life, resulting in confrontation between neo-converts and tribals.

The case of Dalits is no different either. They are even more closely related to mainstream Hinduism than are tribals. Although the Dalits were for centuries placed outside the varna-system, and subjected to various discriminations like being denied entry to temples, the fact that they tried to enter temples proves that they considered themselves as Hindus. Of course, there were numerous instances of mass conversions to Buddhism but that was mostly as a protest against the Brahminical stranglehold over Hinduism. Today this stranglehold is no longer what it was and most religious and social institutions are open to all, including the Dalits. Incidentally, the Dalits celebrate almost all Hindu religious festivals.

It would also be incorrect to say that the Dalits and tribals find no mention in the Hindu tradition. In Ramayana, during Rama s foray into the forest, his interaction with various tribes is described in detail. In Mahabharata, **Bhima, the second of the Pandavas, married a tribal woman, Hidimba, and their child grew up to be a great warrior.** Even in some modern traditional festivals, the Dalits find a place. For example, in the Chhath puja, which is the most important festival of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh, it is considered necessary to buy a bamboo-stick bowl (in which offerings are made to the Sun) from the lowest of the outcastes , the Doms, who are engaged in the profession of cremating bodies.

It is true that the Dalits and tribals have been discriminated against in the past. However, thanks to the efforts of numerous religious and social reformers, the situation has changed and, notwithstanding the motivated campaign to prove otherwise, the Dalits and tribals are very much a part of the composite Hindu culture as opposed to the Brahmin-centric Hinduism propagated by Brahmins during the medieval period.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Nalanda: Testimony to Greatness

By Manish Pant

Source: Indian Airlines - Swagat Magazine



(The red brick ruins of Nalanda seem to echo the footsteps, voices and stories of those who thronged the portals of this once renowned seat of learning. And even 800 hundred years later Nalanda has the power to overwhelm the visitor……)

Students came to Nalanda from all parts of the country, from distant China and South East Asia. But only a few could manage to get in as candidates had to clear a rigorous oral entrance test as the university's gate. The competition must have been intense!

But how did the rise of Nalanda come about? The answer to this question is closely related to the birth and spread of Buddhism and Jainism.

Much before Buddha, the university at Taxila – now in Pakistan – had contributed to learning in a significant way. Still, the hub of all educational activity was the *gurukul* or teacher's home. With the establishment of Buddhist and Jain monasteries a change crept in. The monastery took over from the gurukul. And some like Nalanda developed into prestigious institutions of learning in the medieval period.

Nalanda is located not too far to the northeast of Gaya – the place where Siddharth became the Buddha (the Enlightened One). Buddha is believed to have visited Nalanda on many occasions during his lifetime. The place assumed significance as his first disciple, Sariputra, was born and died here. The famous Mauryan Emperor, Ashoka, later erected a stupa to honour Sariputra's memory. Ashoka also became a patron of the monastery. Nalanda was also visited by Vardhamana Mahavira, the founder of Jainism. So for the followers of both Buddha and Mahavira, Nalanda took on a special importance.

Nalanda, however, flourished into a varsity in 5 AD- the time Kumargupta of the north Indian Gupta dynasty. Nalanda was then meant primarily for the study of Mahayana Buddhist doctrines. With the beginning of the Christian era the orthodox as well as the followers of new ideas among Buddha's followers had parted company. The former were known as the followers of Hinayana or

the Lesser Vehicle and latter of Mahayana or the Greater Vehicle. Mahayana incorporated many ideas current at the time thereby making itself more approachable and popular among a large number of people in the country.

But the Hinayana, and Brahmanical doctrines from Hinduism were taught here too. The syllabus covered mainly philosophy, logic, grammar, medicine and the science of arts and crafts.

Donations poured in from abroad: Balputra of Shrivijaya- modern day Sumatra, Indonesia- funded the construction of a monastery. The monastery was meant for students coming from Shrivijaya. The Pala King Dharmapala (c.a. 770-810) gifted this monastery with five villages towards its upkeep. During the seven centuries of its existence Nalanda came under various dynasties. But the prevailing political climate did not diminish its growth or importance.

The education at Nalanda was free. The iniversity depended on the largesse of its patrons. A school of art was opened in Kumargupta's time. Harshavardhana, the King of Kanauj, is said to have gifted it with a 26 metre high statue of Buddha. Gradually Nalanda acquired, in donations, control over many villages. Revenue obtained from these was utilised in meeting maintenance expenses.

Much of what is known today about Nalanda has come to us through the records kept by one of its well-known products- Hieun Tsang. This Chinese traveller, a comtemporary of Harshavardhana, has described Nalanda in detail in *Si-Yu-Ki* or The Record of the Western Kingdom i.e. India. He puts the student strength in Nalanda at 10,000 trained by a 2,000 strong faculty.



Students were admitted into the university for a period of 10 years. But those who wished to be ordained had to remain for a longer period. The teachers were highly regarded for their learning. Sometimes, their expert opinion was sought in the raging debates of the times. Lively discussions led to active participation from the students. The winner of a debate was honoured by being taken around the campus on an elephant. Many well-known names were on the university's rolls. The logician, Dinnaga and the Brahmin scholar Dharma-pala taught there. Hieun Tsang, an alumini, also served it as Vice Principal. And the 8th century figure Padmasambhava, who converted Tibet to Buddhism, was associated with it. Today, a memorial hall commemorates Hieun Tsang's stay.

The excavated remains of the university campus are spread over 14 hectares bringing to light some temples and monasteries. It was from a raised platform in a monastery that a teacher addressed his students. A pathway running from north to south, separates temples from monasteries. It is claimed that each monastery was four-storey high housing a dozen rooms in each storey.

All the rooms were well-ventilated. Then there was the huge library. Called Dharmaganj, meaning

the Abode of Dharma, the library is thought to have been large enough to be sub-divided into three main sections.

But the most striking landmark in the campus is the Great Stupa which was originally built on an elevated base with small stupas at the four corners. It was successively enlarged, especially during the Gupta and Pala times as is evident from the steps leading to what remains of the pinnacle. Today, in its dilapidated condition it more or less resembles a pyramid.

For almost seven centuries, Nalanda kept the beacon of scholarship burning bright. Then in 1197 AD a mercenary Mudhammed-Bin Bhakhtiyar Khiliji attacked the university. The damage done by man was complemented by nature and soon the place was forgotten and buried beneath foliage and traveller's records. It was only in the initial decades of this century that the first systematic efforts were finally made to bring Nalanda's past to light.



Today, as a result of the excavations a little more is known about the place. In 1951 an international centre for Buddhist studies, Nav Nalanda Mahavihara, was set up near the archaeological site. The center has many rare Buddhist manuscripts in its collection.

Just across the road from the entrance to the university is the museum. A number of objects from different periods of Nalanda's history are on show here.

And so Nalanda lives on – testimony in stone to what once was the greatest seat of learning in this part of the world.

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Ayurveda is now the mantra in America too

by Sutirtho Patranobis

http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/181_166763,000600010001.htm

Guess what the Americans are turning to lately after eating all that junk food? Isabgol. A survey funded by the Commerce Ministry and conducted by the Health Ministry has found that Ayurvedic drugs are becoming popular in the United States with more Americans trying to "return to nature".

"Though the market for Ayurvedic drugs in the US is not very big, four to five formulations have already gained acceptance there. Isabgol is very popular. The acceptability for such drugs is growing as well," says Joint Secretary, Indian Systems of Medicine, Union Health Ministry, L. Prasad.

In fact, a delegation of 15 US scientists is likely to fly down in April to interact with Ayurveda experts here. "We are in touch with the National Centre for Complementary and Alternative Systems of Medicine of the US. The scientists are expected in the second week of April," Prasad adds.

The survey, in which the Ayurvedic Drug Manufacturing Association (ADMA) taking part, was commissioned last year and the report was submitted recently. ORG-Marg was hired to distribute questionnaires to doctors and health officials all over the US and collect the data. The thick report at the end of it came at a cost of around Rs 25 lakh.

The report also threw up the problems that plague the fledgling industry. Says ADMA's Dr Narendra Bhatt: "Lack of awareness about is the main problem. Also the formulation of the drugs needs to be done."

Ravi Prasad of an Ayurvedic drug manufacturing company adds the herbs need to identified and analysed and series of tests need to be conducted before being released into a new market. "The US health authorities insist on trials and toxicity studies followed by clinical trials. The drugs would also have to be standardised according to laid down rules," he adds.

That could pose a problem, according to the experts, as there are 4,000 Ayurvedic formulations, combining different herbs, written down in 54 ancient books.

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articles on hinduism

Saraswati Vandana

http://www.pragna.org/Debsaras.html

Saraswati Vandana is a beautiful poem to art, culture and spirituality. It is a praise of learning not the promotion of any church or prophet. "Saraswati Vandana is unsecular," said the Marxists. That is why pure secularists even scorn the idea of lighting lamps at functions - because it is a Hindu symbol. But in the US, the Government declares a whole year as 'Bible Year' - that does not make the Government unsecular. But here a mere suggestion - which would never become a decision unless all the great men, and the greatest woman from Italy agree today - that Upanishads and Vedas should be taught in schools 'is regarded as communal and imposing the 'Hindu Agenda'.

Ronald Reagan was not charged with imposing the Christian Agenda when he declared 1983 as the 'Year of the Bible' in the US.

When he moved the resolution for the declaration, Reagan said: "Now, therefore, I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, in recognition of the contribution and influence of the Bible on our Republic and our people, do hereby proclaim 1983 the 'Year of the Bible' in the USA. I encourage all citizens in his or her own way to re-examine and rediscover its priceless and timeless message." His appeal was to all citizens - not just to Christians.

The "secularists" have convinced the minorities that secularism means rejecting everything that has a Hindu origin. None of these great men, not to mention the great woman from Italy who pontificates on secularism to India, even know what role the Vedas, Upanishads and the Gita have played in our national regeneration. And in raising a mighty national awakening that transformed into the movement for India's freedom. **Swami Vivekananda and Maharishi Aurobindo who built the intellectual foundation for the freedom movement were influenced by all that our secularists from India and Italy call unsecular - the Vedas, Upanishads and the Gita. Balgangadhar Tilak wrote the Gita Rahasya as the guide for his participation in the independence movement. Mahatma Gandhi said that but for reading the Gita he would have committed suicide. Whether it is Guru Tegh Bahadur or Guru Gobind Singh, who sacrificed everything, including their lives to protect the Vedas and the Cow, or a Ravidas or a Surdas, a Nandanar or Sri Narayana Guru, their inspiration came only from ancient Indian thought.**

In fact, Dr. Annie Besant and Sister Nivedita, with whom the lady from Italy is often compared by her admirers to indigenise her, upheld all that is Hindu in origin as the main

inspiration for them to serve India. Besant said: "Minus Hinduism, India is irrelevant."

There is in it no insistence on any one God, book or savior, salvation for the true believers and eternal damnation for those who think differently. The song projects lofty human ideals and nothing of religious sectarianism or exclusivism. But such a Saraswati must be suspect in modern India.

Among those who approved the singing of Vande Mataram at the Nagpur Congress was Mahatma Gandhi. Today those who claim to be the political heirs of Mahatma Gandhi are boycotting Saraswati Vandana.

The cry against Saraswati is being led by Sonia Gandhi, the last Gandhi one could say, an Italian Catholic who has received the Gandhian mantle by widowhood alone. Sonia should remember the example of Mahatma Gandhi who regularly conducted prayer meetings, praised the Bhagavad Gita and chanted the name of Rama. Though closely associated with the Catholic church, which by its own account is still the only true religion and has an agenda to convert Hindu India to Catholicism, she finds the more liberal expressions of Saraswati Vandana to be offensive.

The anti-Saraswati tirade is naturally promoted by the atheist and communist left, which still rules the state governments of Bengal and Kerala. India's communists, uniquely backward of all in the world, still honor Stalin and Mao, whose pictures adorn all their functions. They routinely preach against Hindu intolerance, oblivious to the fact that their standard bearers are among the most brutal tyrants of history responsible for the murder of tens of millions of people. Such politicians obviously don't have any respect for Dharma or for the Indic spiritual traditions. They are also against the Dalai Lama and the cause of Tibet and go out of their way not only to defend, but to praise the Chinese action in the region, in spite of its genocidal nature. Their hearts are not in India but in the Moscow and Bejing of previous decades! In fact Dharma is another term that is becoming an anathema in modern India.

The West meanwhile is looking to the Dharmic traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism to provide a spiritual alternative to modern materialist culture. If so-called Indian secularists have their way, those traditions would be no more and India great gift to the world would be eliminated. What they want is a new India without Saraswati or Dharma.

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Hindus are striving to mesh philosophy and reality

http://www.bergen.com/home/break420000210c.htm

Thursday, February 10, 2000

By OM PRAKASH and ATUL PRAKASH

Hinduism (Dharma) is a very broad and sublime religion, a way of life that sees the world as a single family.

Prayers to God have invocations for health, happiness, and peace on the earth. According to basic Hindu scriptures -- Vedas, Upanishads, Gita, and epics of the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranahs -- Dharma stands for righteousness and the practice of spiritual and moral values. God -- omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent -- is one, but people refer to him by different names.

Hinduism imparts social justice in many different ways. Its built-in form of social justice is the idea that the soul is eternal and indestructible, born again and again according to the sum total of past and present actions until one has communion with the Supreme. These actions do not include eating, sleeping, and procreating, but rather actions for others without expectation of reward. The reward is to be left to God.

The Vedas prescribe 16 sacraments to purify and mold the mind in righteousness throughout its cycle of earthly existence. These stages include marriage, which is to be undertaken only upon completion of education of both partners and in the presence of compatibility.

The bride has equal say in accepting or rejecting the match, and may choose her partner in a ceremony called *swayamvar* (self-choosing). The aim of the family is to be a stable and righteous unit of society.

The Vedas prescribe five great duties (*maha yajnas*) to sublimate self-interest to the interest of the society. *Yajna* means self-sacrifice. These noble obligations include *brahma yajna*,a discipline for personal development by acquiring knowledge, including daily reading of the scriptures; *deva yajna*, a symbolic sacrifice required of every head of household to remind the family that they have to share with each other and use wealth for the welfare of others; *pitri yajna*,a commitment to discharge one's responsibility to senior citizens; *athithi yagna*, an obligation toward the entire human race (*athithi* means an unannounced visitor), even at the price of one's own comfort and happiness; and *booth yajna*, a unique contribution of Hinduism to the world that advocates giving a portion of one's meal to an animal.

Hinduism also stands for social ethics and a dedication to society. The Vedic society is divided into four natural groups according to the service rendered by an individual.

Those who pursue the vocation of learning and propagate knowledge are called *Brahmins*. Warriors and those who govern the state are *Kshtriyas*. Traders, farmers, and professionals are *Vaishyas*. Those who serve the society with manual labor are *Shudras*. No vocation is considered high or low; all are deemed dignified and essential to society, working together for the common good.

These four classes form the backbone of the society. Rigveda and Atharveda detail the principles and methodology of governing this society in a way that helps promote righteousness, dispense justice, and establish peace within the state. The officers of the state, including the king, were required to have certain qualities and were chosen by the public. There was full freedom of speech, and any unjust, incompetent, corrupt, or tyrannical ruler could be removed.

Clearly, the Vedas and the other Hindu scriptures encourage equality, freedom of mind, expression, self-discipline, and righteous values for a just and equitable society to provide social justice. Unfortunately, external aggressions, internal strifes, and subjugations have resulted in some of the present-day ignorances, distortions, and aberrations.

Mahatma Gandhi is perhaps the greatest example of an individual's attempt to eradicate these aberrations. Though he is best known for his principles of truth and non-violence, his *ashrams* reflect a perfect example of social justice as defined by the Hindu philosophy.

These Ashrams were small-scale versions of classless community life without any discrimination. Gandhi inducted spirituality and spiritualism in all facets of his own life and the lives of people all over the world. He constantly strived to eradicate the sociocultural aberration of "untouchability," which is against the basic tenants of Hinduism. But socio-cultural aberrations do not by any means undermine the social justice emphasized by Hindu traditions.

***

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Foreigners hail Aryabhata as a genius

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

http://www.expressindia.com/ie/daily/19981017/29050084.html

MUMBAI, Oct 16: Two western researchers have hailed the fifth century Indian astronomer Aryabhata as a genius in his own right and paid tributes to his mathematical acumen.

James Jacobs Quirinus, an independent researcher in Athens, Greece and a Swedish scholar Bo Klintberg at the London School of Economics and Political Science, have communicated through the internet with the Thane-based Institute of Oriental Study regarding their studies on Aryabhata.

Quirinus, who has created his own Aryabhata web page, has noted that the ancient astronomer born at Kusumapura (now Patna) in Bihar was born in 476 AD and came out with his magnum opus *Aryabhatiya* in verse form around 499 summarizing his concept of astronomy, spherical trignometry, arithmetic, algebra and plane trignometry. ``However some of his formulas are correct, while others are not," Quirinus has noted.

Aryabhata is the first known astronomer to have initiated a continuous counting of solar days, designating each day with a number, theGreek researcher said adding ``his astronomic ratio, which is to the best of my knowledge the earliest recorded one, is so incredibly accurate that it surprises me that this fact has gone unnoticed to this date."

Citing a 1930 translation of *Aryabhatiya* by Sanskrit professor William Eugene Clark of the Harvard University, Quirinus mentions mind boggling calculations such as 1582 million rotations of the earth equalling 57.7 million lunar orbits.

Given January one, 2000 astronomic constants and present day formulas to temporally, adjust the constants, Quirinus has calculated that Aryabhata's ratio would have been exact in 1604 BC.

``The date AD 500 is the approximate epoch in which Aryabhata wrote and while the majority of the ratios presented by him are not equally precise, it is difficult to believe that the earth rotations to lunar orbits ratio, given such large numbers, could be so precise by coincidence," the Greek researcher said.

The concept of the `sine of an angle' appears for thefirst time in Aryabhata's work and he also compiled tables of half chords or sine tables, Quirinus said.

Aryabhata also wrote about axial rotation of the earth being the cause of the apparent motion of the heavens, earth as a sphere rotating on its axis and eclipses resulting from shadows of the moon and earth, the researcher said.

``Though Aryabhata was born in Bihar, he inspired mathematical and astronomical schools of Kerala with Sanskrit then a language medium unifying the country," observes Oriental Institute director Dr V V Bedekar.

``I am convinced that Indian scientists did a lot of important astronomical observations and calculations," avers Klintberg who is finishing his master's thesis on `Aryabhata's significant achievements'. He has authored an essay on Aryabhata for inclusion in his forthcoming `Annotated bibliography of Indian astronomy and mathematics.'

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INDIA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN CIVILIZATION
By P. Priyadarshi

The story of origin of knowledge in India and its dispersal to the west leading to development of modern western civilization.

Although Modern Civilization took its shape in the West, its roots are in India and to some extent in China. Modern Civilization is definitely not a product of Judo-Christian tradition but rather it is an anti-thesis of that tradition. In fact, modern philosophy and science are a delayed fruition of the tree that was ancient India. On the other hand, Semitic religions were quite fixed in their ideas about God, heaven and divine will and freethinking against these concepts was not possible. Science had a very poor chance to grow in those societies. India, China and Egypt were the most developed civilizations in second millennium BC. Ancient Greek civilization developed from sixth century BC and was brought to an end, first by Roman invasions and later by Christianity. Ancient Egypt was brought to an end initially by Christian efforts and later by Muslim conquest.

We will briefly review how knowledge grew and developed in the world.

1. Dark Ages in Europe

Up to the sixteenth century, Europe was in the Dark Age. Historians call this period as the Dark Age because there was no knowledge like mathematics, science, medicine etc. in Europe. Long back, there was a brief period of enlightenment in a limited part of Europe, i.e. Greece from sixth century BC for a few centuries by import of knowledge from India. This period is called the first awakening of Europe and the reappearance of knowledge in the 16th century is called the Renaissance (meaning rebirth or re-awakening). We will briefly review how science came to Greece from the East for the first time, then how it was destroyed and scholars killed by the Romans, and then by the Christians and finally Muslim invaders. We will also see how knowledge survived outside Europe during the Dark Ages and finally reached the West to propel Europe into a renaissance.

During the dark ages, people of Europe used the cumbersome Roman numerals, and even the so-called mathematicians would calculate sums by counting on the fingers! Decimals were not known and real calculation was not possible with that type of number system. Science was inevitably bound not to grow. Universities were basically centers of copying religious texts by hand in beautiful letters. Medicine meant blessings of priests. Value of hygiene was unknown and Europe was a permanent home of diseases.

Even calculation of calendar was difficult for them and dates were not able to cope with the sun. Religion was the real ruler. Verdict of the priests would be the final words in any matter. The man was surrounded by ghosts, witches and bad spirits. Churches were permanently busy finding out the witches and sorcerers and killing them: the only way known to them for helping the ailing humanity. National tragedies and epidemics were caused by the non-believer, who was a representative of the devil, and an enemy of the society. Prayer remained the only medicine in most of the hospitals. The priests were the doctors and nuns were the nurses, without any education and training in health and medicine (modern doctors derive their designation of 'doctor' from the priests, doctor being the highest degree of Christian theology). They would go to the beds everyday, in the hospitals, and pray for each of the admitted patients. Hosp itals were essentially an attachment to the churches. And in fact, during the

Dark Ages, it was the responsibility of the theologians to treat the patients. But it was not so, long long back, before the advent of Christianity, when the southeastern corner of Europe was vibrating with knowledge, when Greece was a centre of learning. Turkey was not inhabited by the Turks then and it was called Asia Minor. Its coastal parts were inhabited by the Greeks and the central parts were inhabited by various tribes of Indo-Iranian origin.

2. Indian influence on the West in the early BC period

India has been the birthplace of science over ages. Takshashila University (in Pakistan now) was a great centre of learning where students from Iran and further west came to study. In the first millennium BC, Iran was highly Indianized and could be considered an expansion of Indian culture and civilization. At the western fringe of it was Asia Minor, modern Turkey, which was a place of interaction between Greeks and Iranians. In the 6th century BC, Iran expanded its boarders to include Assyria, Babylon, whole of Asia Minor and major parts of Greece. Egypt also fell to Iran soon after. Thus while Iran was engaged in expansion at its western boarders, its eastern part was in peace, continuously receiving Indian knowledge and religion. Zoroaster, fifth century BC, lived in the eastern reaches of Persia, not far from India, and his belief to wage war on evil, and the idea of con stant struggle between good and bad, light and darkness, is believed by the scholars of history of theology, to be Indian (Upanishadic) in origin. Monotheism had reached a full development in the Upanishad literature much earlier in India, from which Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and also Akhenaton of Egypt (1350 BC) had borrowed it. Upanishadic knowledge did not stay long in Egypt and faded away soon after the death of its only patron Akhenatan. Mithraism was another branch of Vedic religion, which spread widely over Iran, Europe and Egypt. Mithra is a Vedic God (the Sun-God). Mithras celebrated the birthday of God (Sun) on the 25th December, which became adapted by the Christians as the date of birth of God (Jesus). These religions of Indian origin in Middle East, introduced the principle of righteousness and monotheism to Judaism and Christianity and thereby to Islam later. Hence ethical monotheism, the backbone of Judaism, Christianit y and Islam found its origin in Hinduism.

Apart from these, Indian wandering monks traveled the breadth and length of this whole area. From Western sources we know that in the third century BC, a big Indian community lived at Alexandria in Egypt with their Vedic sannyasins as well as Buddhist bhikshukas. Indian sea- traders also dominated the sea -trade up to the period of rise of Islam. It was under this background that the Indian religions, philosophies and science travelled to the West to enlighten it in the ancient times. Indians developed mathematical formulae called '*Sulvasutra'* in 1500 BC. Geometry developed because of its need in constructing specially designed Yajna Kundas, and also because accurate measurement of agricultural land was needed to fix the farm boundaries. Trigonometry was invented to study the locations and the movements of the stars, which was vital for navigation in sea, during sea trade. Hypothesis of atom was made in the field of physics, which we find mentioned in the Upanishad literature. Bacteria were conceived (which have been discussed in the Jain literature in detail) as early as the 6th century BC. Physicians and surgeons like Jivaka were experimenting even craniotomy (operation on the brain) in the 6th century BC.

Human psychology was studied in detail and considered an essential part of academic curriculum (q.v. 'Eastern Psychology' in 'The Theories of Personality' by Hall and Lindsey). There was an all round development in all spheres of learning.

3. Why Indian religions were pro-science - On the other hand, Jewish religion was based on the faith that only their God is real and all others false. Hence it was not only belief in one God but it was also a belief in correctness of only one religion. It was a belief in correctness of only one view of reality. Christians also adopted the same attitude and Islam also asserted the same. The words of the God as revealed to the Prophet are final and anything contradicting them is wrong and has to be destroyed. This gave the concept of heresy. Fighting the followers of other religions/nonbelievers (jihad/crusade) was considered the sacred duty of every truly religious person in these traditions.

4. Dawn of knowledge in the west with Pythagorus turning Hindu

History of knowledge in Europe starts with Pythagoras. Pythagoras, in the 6th century BC was the first

European (Greek) who brought Indian knowledge and mathematics to Greece in an organized way. He was the first European to convert completely to Hinduism also. Pythagoras was born around 560 BC; on Samos an island not far from the coast of the Asia Minor. His mother was probably a native of Samos but his father was probably a Phoenician. His life history was recorded from oral traditions a couple of centuries after his death, and even that information has survived only in fragments. (In fact, the Ancient Greek civilization was not really European. The first Greek city, Miletus was established around 1100 BC in Asia Minor. Samos, an island adjoining Asia Minor was inhabited in 1000 BC. From Milesia, Greeks spread to establish colonies round the Black Sea founding the cities of Sinope, Trapezus and Olbia etc. They also crossed the Aegean Sea to establish colonies in Macedonia and then south of that to the land what is called Greece today. Cyrenaica (Cyrene) and Carthage were other colonies of these people, which was at the coastal Libya in Africa. The famous Troy (of Helen fame) was in the Asia Minor. These colonies were not united into a nation state but were autonomous, and bound to the metropolis< metro, mother; polis, city; in Sanskrit matripuri>. Hence, Greek culture, far from being European, was act ually Asian.).

At that time, Greeks did not have mathematics or sciences. Education was limited to music and gymnastics. After studying the very best available in his country (music and gymnastics), Pythagoras set out for more. He went to Egypt, which had already received Indian Geometry through its contact with Indians as well as with Indo-Iranians and had at that time, scholars teaching geometry and a bit of astrology. During his stay in Egypt, Egypt was invaded by Iran and he was brought to Iran as a captive, where he stayed at Babylon and other cities. Babylon was no more a Semitic city by that time, and it had been thoroughly Indo-Iranized in language, religion and knowledge at least a century earlier, when the Medes and the Persians thoroughly overran the country of Babylon, and it was now a part of Persian Empire and culturally a part of Indo-Iran. It is probable that Pythagoras went to the Punjab and thence to the Himalayas a s well. It thoroughly changed his life style and thinking. He permanently rejected the long Greek robes, and adopted trousers, turning away from Ionian culture and identifying himself strongly with the East. Before Pythagoras, trousers were not known to Europe. Woolen trousers were worn by Indians living at high altitudes in the Himalayas, like people of Nepal, Laddakh, Tibet, and Kashmir etc. (The statue of Indian king Kanishka, found in Afghanistan, is wearing a long double-breasted coat and trousers). Variants of trousers like pajamas and shalwar were worn in the northern plains of Indo-Iran. The costume, which Pythagoras introduced into the Europe, was going to become the ethnic costume of the West!! (Wertheim, Pythagoras's Trousers)

Having lived twenty years in the east, he returned to Greece, and settled in Croton, a Greek-speaking town of South Italy. He formed an order of ascetics devoted to develop a sense of community with the help of religious injunctions and instructions. This was aimed to give the members a real insight into the concordant nature of universe. He preached that the world, like human society, was held together by the orderly arrangement of its parts, and it then became their clear duty to cultivate order in their own lives. It is the order in any system, which sustains it. He was describing the concept of *Dharma*, which means *the order, which sustains the system.* He was now acting as an ambassador of Hinduism to the West. Pythagoreans believed in transmigration of life through different life forms. His contemporary poet Xenophanes writes: Pythagoras was once passing by when a man was beating a dog .He took pity on the animal and said, Stop it; Indeed it is the soul of a friend of mine; I recognized it when I heard its voice. Pythagoras was even able to recall the details of his own previous incarnations. Pythagoras preached the essential unity and kinship of all forms of life, which is the fundamental principle of Hinduism (and also of other later Indian religions). He preached non-violence and banned killing and eating animals in his order of ascetics. He was a firm believer in Karmic law and preached immortality of existence. The human body is temporary; therefore one must purify the soul by abstaining from bodily pleasure. By these means soul would ultimately win release from the wheel of becoming and realize its true divine status. In other words, he was preaching karma, samsara and moksha. Pythagoreans believed that anyone who downgraded his life by immoral and impure acts would be born as animal in his next life. A particular type of sayings, he named akousmata (things heard) which were probably Greek translation of the shruti (Sanskrit, Things heard). In his brotherhood, members were of two kinds. Acousmatics would visit him and seek guidance on how to lead a simple, non-violent and virtuous way of life. Others called Mathematikoi lived inside the math (monastery, mutt) and studied the nature of reality more deeply. From mathematik is derived the word mathematics. Pythagoreans studied and

further developed the science of mathematics and philosophy, which was brought to them from Indo-Iran by their great Guru. The chain reaction started by Pythagoras resulted in a boom of scholarship in Greece and finally we find authorities like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc. The background provided by the Pythagoreans provided sound basis of logic to enable these thinkers to arrive at sound conclusions. During this whole period transfer of knowledge from India to Greece was never interrupted. This may be assumed from the fact that whatever theory was given in India e.g. atomic theory, theory of micro-organism, theory of non-dualism, Brahman, atman, the five elements (the Greeks accepted only four, and did not include space), it appears in Greek literature as well soon after. The three doshas of Indian medicine are present in exactly the same way. It was a good thing. A living and growing civilization is always ready to find out and assimilate whatever valuable it notices in other civilizations.

5. Alexandria university: a center for Indo-Greek learning - After Alexander established the Hellenistic Empire comprising Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor, Iran, Bactria and North -West India (including Punjab and modern Afghanistan), the transfer of learning from India to Greece was very much facilitated. Alexander himself got thoroughly Indo-Iranized. He started shaving beard (fashionable in the East, but considered uncivilized in the Greek world at that time), and started leading life like an Indian monarch. Alexander himself rounded up hundreds of Brahmin scholars and took them with him to increase the wealth of knowledge of his country. He also married several Indo-Iranian women. Tens of thousands of Greek soldiers married Indo-Iranian women and took them to Greece. Many of the children of such mothers would be speaking Sanskrit or Prakrit dialects and Indo-centric in attitude, further influencing flow of literature from India to Greece in successive generations. Trade routs and diplomatic channels were also established which would facilitate flow of knowledge from India to Greece.

The Greeks, who came to India, were highly impressed by the Takshashila University in Punjab. Probably being inspired by that, Ptolemy –the Greek Governor for Egypt, who later became independent ruler of Egypt-- also established a great university at Alexandria in Egypt. This was the first university ever built outside India. In Alexandria, scholars from Greece, Asia Minor (modern Turkey), Iran, India and Egypt would come to study and to teach. Being very near to the centre of Hellenistic world, Greek remained the main language of book writing at Alexandria. A large number of Indian texts were translated into Greek and kept in the library at Alexandria.

ALEXANDRIAN SCOLARS AND SCIENTISTS Some of the most famous scholars of the Alexandrian University are as follows:

Aristarchus of Samos (Asia Minor; 310-230 BC) : Archimedes and Plutarch quoted his book “On the size and distance of Sun and Moon”. The values he gave were inaccurate but he wrote that earth rotates at its axis and revolves round the sun.

Heracledes (390-310 BC), only his name is quoted by others, nothing more is known.

Euclid (? 325-265 BC): Nothing is known of Euclid’s life except that he taught at Alexandria and that he wrote the Elements.

Conon (280-220 BC): Born in Samos, contemporary of Archimedes, lived at Alexandria. Wrote De Astrologia.

Hipparchus (born in Nicacaea, Asia Minor; 190-120 BC): Wrote commentaries on Aratus and Exodus.

Claudius Ptolemy (not the Egyptian ruler called Ptolemy; born in Egypt; 85 AD-165AD). He compiled an encyclopedia of astronomy from available Indo-Greek literature and also discussed trigonometry in this book. This book was translated into Arabic in 827, and from Arabic into Latin in the later part of the 12th century. This book is called *Almagest*, and served the basic astronomical book for the Arabs and the Europeans till the 17th century. (The original title of the book is not known and *Almagest* is just a corrupted form of what could have been the title in Arabic, and that again in turn was a corrupted form of whatever was the original name in Sanskrit or Greek. Given the nature of the contents of the book, which was a monopoly of Indian astronomers, it could have well been a Sanskrit book originally, translated into Greek at Alexandria by Ptolemy. In that case the Sanskrit origina l title of the book might

have been ‘Mahishtha’ meaning ‘around the earth’, and by several changes it became Al magest, which has no meaning in Arabic language. Actually only one dot is needed in Arabic script to change ‘mahishtha’ into ‘magest’ because only one dot is needed to transform the letter ‘hey’ i.e. H into ‘jeem’ i.e. J.)

Diophantus (200-284 AD): Essentially nothing is known of his life. Called father of Algebra, wrote Arithmetica. (See Appendix)

Plotinus (born in Upper Egypt at Lycopolis; 204-270 AD): Received education at Alexandria University. When the Roman Emperor Gordian took a campaign against the Persians, Plotinus accompanied him in order to learn more of the Indo-Iranian cosmological knowledge (The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, www.britannica.com). Again indicating that India was far ahead of Alexandria in the third century AD. These scholars usually called Greek scholars should not be called so because of various reasons. They can at best be called Alexandrian scholars. Firstly Alexandria was in Egypt, and therefore calling them Greek and not Egyptian is not realistic and has a pro-Euro racial bias. Secondly, if we consider the place of birth of these people, most of them barring a few exceptions were born on Asian land like Samos, Nicacaea, or in Africa like Egypt and Libya. Thirdly, nothing is known about majority of the Alexandrian scholars except their names and their work. But even that has survived from Arabic sources and then translated into Latin and thence to English, French etc. In this process the names were changed from Arabic forms to a new Greek sounding form. In fact many of the Greek sounding names were inventions of the Latin translators of the Arabic texts. But actually, at the time of translation of the manuscripts into Ar abic from Sanskrit and Greek, Arabs also had manipulated with the names. Hence we cannot know what were the real names of many of these scholars like Euclid, Diophantus etc. The work of Euclid, Diophantus etc are more similar to Indian tradition of mathematical work. Given the absence of any good number system, non-Indians could not be expected to produce any mathematical work of any good value. Therefore it is more than likely that Euclid, Diophantus etc were Indian scholars working at Alexandria whose actual names were different in the same way as the real name of Sandrocottus was Chandragupta.

It was Thomas Heath (1861-1940), a great believer of White superiority and an Oxford mathematician, who worked on the Alexandrian scholars like Euclid etc. and finally labeled them all to be Greeks, even though nothing was known about the lives of most of these scholars. After him nobody examined this subject. Much of the manuscripts at Alexandria must have been translations of Indian works. We need to study any surviving Arabic scientific texts carefully with a view to deciphering correct possible Sanskrit names of the Indian-Alexandrian scholars, rather than accepting blindly what Latin translators have done with their limited knowledge of Sanskrit and their ethnocentric attitude. When Judaism and Christianity threatened the scientific community living at Alexandria, a fresh surge in Pythagoreanism was generated, which was called Neo-Pythagoreanism. Hypatia was one of the neo-Pythagoreans.

ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY AND THREATS TO ALEXANDRIA

Jesus Christ started his religion when Alexandria was blooming. Jesus was very much like an Indian ascetic. Like Hindu saints, he followed renunciation and practiced celibacy, and preached non-violence and love. It is claimed that he had been to India and had received spiritual training in Indian tradition. Whatever be the fact, we find that many of the preaching and parables of Jesus, Pythagoras and the Upanishads are common. When Christianity was taking shape, Hindus inhabited that part of the world as well. When they converted to Christianity, they introduced many things to this new religion e.g. folding hands in Indian style when praying to God; ringing typical Indian styled bells in the churches; introduction of a circular solar halo round the picture of Jesus, burning incense and lamps (or candles) in the church etc. Practice of celibacy, monastic life, renunciation of material life by the monks and asceticism ad opted by Christian saints were Hindu influences on Christianity, because they are not found in other Semitic religions. But the vast majority of people who initially accepted Christianity were Jews. Therefore, they brought in with them the Old Testament (the Jewish scripture) and most of the beliefs and practices of the Jews. Therefore, after the death of Jesus, Christians now believed, as the Jews did, that only theirs’ is the right religion and only theirs’ is the true God. Sorcery, miracle, witchcraft, mysticism, idol-worship, etc. are satanic acts and people accused to be involved in them would be killed. (Little remembering that the Jews had accused Jesus himself of being a sorcerer,

before killing him). Raising any doubt or suggesting modification in religion was termed heresy, punishable with death. Fighting the non-Christians to convert or eliminate them was considered religious duty. This new religion was very anti-science, because science did not support what this religion preached. It was no more pacifist or liberal than the Jews. It hated paganism. It hated heresy. This religion considered the Alexandrian scholarship to be pagan. The applic ation of logic and free discussion of theological questions was considered blasphemous. Man cannot investigate the divine acts, they held. Once Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century, the pagan monuments were destroyed and pagan worshippers killed and force-converted in wholesale numbers. Therefore destruction of this Indo-Greek university was the most sincere duty of the Christians of the period.

DESTRICTION OF GREECE AND DEMOLITION OF ALEXANDRIA BY ROMANS, CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

In the third and second centuries BC, Rome rose up as a big power. Having no respect for knowledge, they destroyed much of Greek civilization. They expanded their empire to include North Africa, Asia Minor and South Europe. Greek tradition of learning was disrupted in Europe, scholars killed, cities destroyed, although it continued in Alexandria in Egypt. A few Greek scholars escaped being killed in Europe as well, who continued their pursuit of knowledge although in a low profile up till the Byzantine period. It was Justinian, the Byzantine Emperor who in 529, closed the nine-hundred-year- old Academy of Plato in Athens and completely destroyed the last remains of Greek knowledge in Europe, claiming it was a hotbed of paganism and heresy and therefore it was against Christianity. The scholars were killed or converted into Christianity. Many of these Greek scholars, fearing for their lives and intellectual freedom, fle d to Persia, where they established a kind of Academy in exile.

In 48 BC, Julius Caesar set fire to ships in the harbor at Alexandria and according to Plutarch, burned 40,000 scrolls at Alexandria. Queen Zenobia of Palmyra captured Alexandria in 270 AD. Much of the city was destroyed during a counter attack by the Roman Emperor Aurelian.

In early fourth century Constantine who had already become Christian, acceded to Roman power. Christianity now became the state religion. Nonbelievers (non-Christians) were persecuted, burned and murdered by animated Christian mobs called zealots. Mathematicians, scientists and philosophers were particularly targeted. Europe was entering into an era called Dark Age with complete elimination of all the works of science, mathematics and philosophy. But University of Alexandria was still surviving in Egypt. In AD 389 Christian Emperor Theodosius ordered Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria to destroy all pagan monuments. Hindus were also called pagan by them. The Christian mobs burned the pagan scholars and the library. This rampage was most fierce in AD 391. Even after this, many scholars survived and continued their work.

BRUTAL MURDER OF A MATHEMATICAL GENIUS

One of the mathematicians who survived the holocaust and continued her work was **Hypatia**, a great scholar of mathematics, and one of the few female mathematicians in history. She was wise, learned, virtuous and beautiful. There was much mistrust among Christians, Jews and Pagans, but Hypatia taught everyone. She wrote commentaries on Euclid, Apollonius and on Arithmetica. She wrote books discussing new mathematical problems and solving old ones. She also wrote books on astronomy, compiled tables of positions of celestial bodies and designed several scientific instruments. It was a time of revival of Pythagoreanism, the Greek form of Hinduism, as a Hellenistic (Greek) alternative of the rising tide of Christianity.

In AD 412 Cyril, a fanatic Christian became the patriarch of Alexandria and began the campaign to rid the city of both Jews and the Pythagorean scholars. Hypatia was asked to accept Christianity several times. But she always refused. That commitment cost her life. “In AD 415, she was set upon a mob of Christian zealots, dragged from her carriage and beaten to death. In the account of a fifth century author: they stripped her stark naked: they raze the skin and rend the flesh of her body with sharp shells, until the death departed from her body: they quarter her body: they bring her quarters unto a place called Cinaron and burn them to ashes...” This is only one out of thousands of such atrocities,

which was going to finish scientific knowledge, as well Indian influence, from the West for a thousand years. (Pythagoras's Trousers)

Even after such attacks, Alexandrian school was surviving for further two hundred years.

CALIPH OMAR GIVES THE DEATH BLOW TO ALEXANDRIA

In AD 642 Caliph Omar overran Egypt. Victorious Caliph ordered, those books that were contrary to Koran should be destroyed and furthermore those books that confirmed the Koran were superfluous and they too must be destroyed. Manuscripts were used to stove the public baths. The University library was torched to ashes. The volume of manuscripts was so large that it kept on burning for six months. Needless to add that all the scholars were slaughtered except those who embraced Islam. All over Egypt and Libya, books were searched out and burned. As a result of this, the history and literature of Egypt was lost forever, only a fraction of it to be rediscovered later by the Europeans out of the Pyramids. Greek literature in Egypt was also lost and the same happened to Babylonian history.

Some of the Greek scholars of Alexandria, who embraced Islam and survived, were able to smuggle some of the manuscripts to their homes. Later they translated these into Arabic language. These translations included Greek medicine (now called Unani after Ionia, a Greek city), much of Greek philosophy e.g. Plato (Aflatoon), Aristotle (Arastu), Socrates (Sukrat) etc. It contained Alexandrian sciences as well as six of the original thirteen volumes of the mathematical text called Arithmetica, seven volumes of it being lost forever. The Arithmetica was translated many centuries later into Latin. (Arithmetica, Elements, Surya Siddhanta and the Indian books on algebra, trigonometry, and arithmetic contained the basic knowledge, which would later propel Europe into modern age.)

It is to be remembered here that all of Greek medicine, all of Greek books of philosophy and science were already burned to ashes in Greece and Europe by Christian zealots. End of knowledge in the West was complete now. When the falsehood fears that it is likely to be exposed, it attacks knowledge, because knowledge is the worst poison for ignorance.

6. Grwoth of Knowledge in India during this period - In India, scenario was different. Science, mathematics, logic, philosophy, art, everything was growing at an unlimited pace. In India, religion's central dogma was knowledge, and experience, experiment and reasoning were accepted as very important means of obtaining knowledge. Arguments were encouraged in religious matters and religious philosophy and metaphysics had to be based on scientific knowledge. This scientific bias of Hinduism had led to the growth of science earlier as well, from which Pythagoras and many other people of the West had been benefited over ages. Hence by the time of Caliph Omar, India was the only place in the world where knowledge was progressing unhindered. It is also worth mentioning that when Islam came to Iran, Zoroastrianism was followed only by a minority (15%) of the Iranian people. Others followed Buddhism, Shaivism, Mithraism, Judaism, Nestorian Christianity, and other religions.

Earth is round was never disputed in India. So much so that you will find Varahavatar lifting the rounded earth on His tusks in many sculpture. You will find a lion (Buddha) fighting with a dragon (ignorance), which is holding a round earth by its tail, in many northeastern Indian Buddhist icons. Every Hindu is aware of the metaphoric story of the demon king Hiranyaksha, who finding the earth as a round ball, seized it to play with it; then Lord Vishnu had to kill him to save the earth. The law of conservation of matter and energy and the law of cause and effect were the two fundamental laws of Hinduism. Anybody not accepting these two laws would be considered a nastic or non-believer. The agnostics and people who refuted the existence of God were considered equally respected as others. The religion or belief was a matter of personal choice and could not be enforced on to anybody by either the State or the family or th e society. Clergy and priests in Western sense did not exist. Priest would come to perform a rite only if an individual requested him. Needless to add that fatwa or religious decree kind of things were beyond imagination in India. There was no place for 'theocracy' in Hinduism. Religion and politics are two different things for the Hindus, and state was never under the control of the priests/clergy in the Hindu/Buddhist period. This institutional difference from the West made India a fertile ground for growth and development of knowledge of all shorts including even sex education (Kama sutra). It is not possible to discuss the achievements of Indian Scholars here. But I will briefly

discuss Aryabhata and name a few others.

ARYABHATA

Aryabhata occupies a central position in the evolution of knowledge. His works were translated into Arabic and then into Latin. These texts were taught in the European universities at the time of Keplar, Copernicus and Isaac Newton. Had it not been, these scientists would not have been able to discover what they did. The Latin version of Aryabhata's work was absolutely needed, which provided a knowledge base for arrival of modern concepts in science.

Most of Aryabhata's work is no more available. What we know about his work is from what has been quoted by later Indian and Arabic scholars.

In 'The Calendar' Duncan writes on Aryabhata, "In 476, far away in the time and place from Charlemagne's dark, imposing castle at Aachen, beyond the Eastern boarder of Frankland… a Hindu genius was born ... A blend of Ptolemy the astronomer, Pythagoras the mathematician and Bacon the rebel, Aryabhata was one of a remarkable group of Indian scholars, and a pivotal figure on one of the stranger journeys ever taken by an assemblage of ideas across time and geography. …..(the ideas) turn to the west, centuries later, landing the great centers of Islamic learning after the Arab conquest of Persia and India. The Arabs in turn carried the knowledge to portals in Spain, Syria and Sicily, where it made its way to Europe (pp150-1)…

…Aryabhata grew up during the final years of Gupta golden age, when India was a world centre of art, science, literature and architecture. Learning was considered a sacred duty, and educated Hindus were expected to know not only the basics of reading, writing and numbers but also to be adept at poetry, painting and music. This was the age of Kama Sutra, the text that treats love as a fine art… .. Excavations attest (presence of).. a large middle class, which enjoyed prosperity on a par with the golden age of Rome (pp 151-2)". Duncan further writes, Aryabhata thought of the heliocentric solar system a thousand years ahead of Copernicus (pp155).

Some of the interesting work of Aryabhata is worth notice here.

1) Value of pi: Aryabhata calculated its value to be 3.1416.

2) Length of Tropical Year: Aryabhata gave a value of 365.3586805 days.

3) Heliocentric solar system: Aryabhata said that earth is a sphere and it rotates on its axis causing day and night. He also suggested that earth revolves round the sun once in a year and it is the sun, which is at the centre of the khagola, not the earth.

4) Incredibly, he believed that the orbits of revolutions of moon and the planets are elliptical and not spherical or circular.

5) He gave the radii of planetary orbits as ratio of earth/sun orbit, which are quite correct.

6) Diameter of earth as 8316 miles (almost accurate to modern measurements).

7) Moon and the planets are not luminous and they shine by reflection of sunlight.

8) Lunar eclipse is caused by earth's shadow falling on the moon. Solar eclipse is caused by moon coming in between sun and the earth.

9) Table of sines: He listed the values of sines of angles up to 90 degrees at intervals of 3.75 degrees for a radius of 3438 measures. The value 3438 is one radian expressed in minutes!

10) He gave calculations of equations based on Fractions, Quadric Equations, Sums of Power Series, Imaginary Numbers (square root of –1), Concept of Version (1 - cos).

Equally notable were the achievements in medicine. Sushruta has described the procedure for many

surgical operations including prostate (trans-rectal route), cataract. Charaka, Dhanvantari and Jivaka were other famous physicians. Plastic surgery was invented and developed in India (ref. Noted in Sabiston's Text book of Surgery, under the History of transplant surgery). Madhavacharya, a 12th century physician, writes in his book 'Madhavanidanam', that vishama jvara (Typhoid fever) is caused by invisibly small organisms, which live in dirty water and infect the body when that water is drunk. It is impossible even to make a brief mention the works of these intellectual wizards and I leave it here.

The last in the glorious tradition of scholars was Bhaskaracharya, who invented the gravitational force also. David E. Duncan writes in his book The Calendar, "After Brahmagupta, India continued to produce noted mathematicians, including Bhaskara (1114--1185), considered by mathematicians to be the most brilliant in his field anywhere during the twelfth century." At this period North India fell to Muslim invaders and Mohammed Ghouri established the Delhi Sultanate. All the great Indian Universities viz. Taxilla, Nalanda, Odantapuri and Vikramashila were burnt down to ashes and all inmates killed by the invading commanders propelling India into darkness. Scholars were hunted down and Indian system of education was abolished being replaced by Islamic Muderssas. All education needs state funding. Once state came under Muslim Rule, all indigenous knowledge vanished except Sanskrit Grammar, a bit of mathematics, logic, medicine and philosophy, which were preserved by individual efforts of practitioners and scholars. To sustain their lives these people had to serve as priests or cooks in the households or face starvation. Hard pressed under excessive land revenue and communal taxes (like jezia, birth tax, cremation tax) common people did not have enough money to donate to maintain the lives of scholars. This led to further demoralization of the scholars. Once the light of knowledge was gone, ignorance and social evils embraced India from all sides. Even the books of History had been burnt down by the invaders and the India of 18th Century had no information about her pre-Muslim history.

But many of the books dealing with religion, philosophy and history had been taken away to Sri Lanka, Burma, Tibet and China before Islamic invasion. From these much of Indian History has been reconstructed by now. It is remarkable to note that soon after the Mughal Empire was gone from India in 1858, a great mathematician was born again (in 1887). David Duncan writes " In 1887 another mathematics genius was borne in India, Srinivasa Ramanujan, who tragically died at the age of 33." Ramanujan solved many disturbing mathematical problems although he never had any Western education.

7. Transfer of knowledge from India to Arabic language - Duncan writes in The Calendar "In **773,** some 250 years after Aryabhata's death, a delegation of diplomats from lower Indus River Valley arrived in the new Arab capital of Baghdad. Dressed in bright coloured silks, turbans and glittering gems, ... Arriving at last outside the gates of **al-Mansur'**s (the founder of the Abbasid dynasty) magnificent city.....

.....This particular delegation also brought with them an astronomer, **..Kanaka**. An expert on eclipse, he carried with him a small library of Indian astronomical texts to give to the Caliph, including the *Surya Siddhanta* and the works of **Brahmagupta** (containing material on **Aryabhata**). Nothing more is known about this Kanaka. An Arab historian named al-Qifti wrote the first known reference to him some five hundred years later. According to al-Qifti, the caliph was amazed by the knowledge in the Indian texts. He immediately ordered them to be translated into Arabic and their essence compiled into a textbook that became known as the *Great Sindhind* (*Sindhind* is the Arabic form of the Sanskrit word *Siddhanta*)."

Incidents like this were necessary "in order to bring the works of India into the sphere of the early Islamic scholars, whence they would travel to Christian Europe through Syria, Sicily and Arab controlled Spain. A version of the *Great Sindhind* would be translated into Latin in 1126. **This was one of the dozens of critical documents that would contribute to the knowledge base needed to propel Europe into the modern age"** Duncan adds. The pre-Islamic Iran had Zoroastrian, Mithraic, Shaivite and Buddhist followers. These religions can be called Hindu or Hindu-like and were not against investigation of truth. Iran also had the privilege of being just adjacent to India. Therefore the knowledge was quite developed in Iran at the time of Islamic invasion. When Iran fell to Islam, people accepted Islam but the undercurrent of Hinduism remained flowing here and there in the form of Sufism and Yoga-Mysticism. Early Sufis were quite vocal of their philosophy. They were persecuted and many killed

by the orthodox Muslims. Most famous of them was Mansur -bin-Hallaz who was killed because of his fancy for Upanishadic statement *'an- al- Haq'* (Aham Brahmasmi; I am the reality/God). Many of the later Sufis adopted all the external features of Islam, but maintained Hindu ideas and attitude of tolerance in philosophy and teachings.

The pre-Islamic Iran had a rich intellectual interaction with India, Greece and Alexandria. It had acted as a transmitter of Indian knowledge to Egypt for two millennia and to Greece for one millennium. When **Justinian** persecuted the **Nestorian** people, they had fled to Baghdad with sacs of Greek scientific texts in the sixth century AD. Nestorian (or Assyrian or Eastern) Christians were the people who believed that Jesus was human as well as divine. Nestorius was a Bishop at Byzantium, contemporary of Cyril whose fanaticism was responsible for killing of pagan scholars at Alexandria including Hypatia. Nestorius was declared a heretic by Cyril and others, because he pleaded that Mary was not a God-bearer, as Christ was born human but only later he attained divinity. Nestorius must have had some background of Indian philosophy, because he was born in Iran of Persia n parents. Nestorians founded the Eastern Church and considered Greek literature as important reservoir of knowledge. Much later after the death of Nestorius, the Nestorians faced a severe persecution and genocide at the hands of Justinian. After persecution, they fled away to Iran, (pre-Islamic) Arabia and south India. In this process they carried the Greek books with them. Indian Nestorians became re-affiliated to the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century.

Although majority of pre-Islamic literature had been destroyed in Iran by Muslim crusaders, some Pahlawi and Greek literature could survive and got translated into Arabic later. It was at the time of the third Caliph that the capital of Islamic Empire was shifted to the Iranian city of Baghdad (in modern Iraq). After the initial phase of victories and overrunning other nations, which lasted about a century after the death of the Prophet, the Caliphs from al-Mansur onwards started showing interest in science and philosophy. These people had come out of the deserts of Arabia where few were literate; they brought little material culture to the ancient civilizations now under their sway. The initial reaction of the Muslims overrunning these civilizations was that of hatred for the infidel, causing large-scale destruction of lives and knowledge wherever they went. But credit should be given to the early Abbasid Caliphs, who transformed his people into a knowledge-loving nation, although only for a few centuries.

The period of the reign of al-Mansur and his successors, Caliph **Haroun ar-Rashid** (786-809) and his son **al-Mamun** (809-833) was the time when Indian texts were brought to Baghdad in large scale and were translated into Arabic. They were studied along with the Arabic translation of the manuscripts of the Greek Alexandrines and Nestorians, which had escaped destruction, by the army of Caliph Omar as well as surviving bits of Iranian scholarship. Eventually they were synthesized into the forms, which would later reach Europe. Scholars, engineers, scientists and artists flocked to Baghdad and were honoured and well paid. Many came bearing manuscripts. This was a great era of translation. The project was made infinitely simpler when the first *paper factory* opened in Baghdad in 794, using a process the Arabs learned from a **Chinese prisoner** captured during the AD 712 conquest of **Samarkand**, in modern Uzbekistan. This art would be passed on to Europe centuries later in the 12th century (Duncan, The Calendar).

As the translations of Indian manuscripts began to stack up, al-Mamun ordered a museum and library complex to be built which was completed by 833 and became known as the **House of Wisdom** *(Bait al-hikma*). It was now only third in size in the world after the libraries of Taxila and Nalanda Universities. The Zero, decimal system, Indian numerals, astronomy, astrology, trigonometry, ayurveda, chemistry, everything even up to the Hindu dream-analysis, had now reached Baghdad, and the local Irani scholars were now in a position to formulate further theorems. Fascinated by Indian astronomy, Caliph al-Mamun ordered an observatory built in Baghdad in 829 and one soon after outside of Damascus. Another less well known fact is that almost all of the scholars known as Arabic to the posterity were actually Iranian or Iranianized Turks e.g. al-Khwarizmi, al-Biruni etc and some were Spanish but they wrote in Arabic, Arabic being the language of the Emperor. On the other hand not much intellectual activity was going on in Arabian Peninsula, which was still the centre of Islamic religious activities.

The Indian ideas reaching Baghdad sparked off an intellectual revolution. When the Baghdadis came to know from the translations of the works of **Aryabhata** that the *earth is a sphere of a diameter of 8316*

miles, rotating on its axis, many of them believed it and wanted to measure it themselves too. Similar inspirations led to development of experimentation in the Abbasid people and observatories etc were constructed in the Abbasid world as well.

The word for mathematics in Arabic is *'Hindi sat'* meaning the *'Indian Art'*. One of the greatest mathematicians in the Arabic empire was **al-Khwarizmi** (full name, Abu Jafar Mohammed ibn Musa al-Khwarismi, 780-850) who was summoned to Baghdad in 820 by al-Mamun and appointed the 'first astronomer' and later the head of library. He led three scientific missions to India to meet scholars and collect manuscripts. Based on them, he wrote a book 'Kitab al-jabr wa al-muqabalah' (Calculation by addition and subtraction, 'jabr' here is an Arabi-ised form of Apabhramsha Indian language word 'jor' meaning addition, and not the Arabic word meaning 'difficult'; algebra is a short Latinised form of the word). Later, its Latin translation became a standard textbook of mathematics in European universities. He wrote out the oldest surviving *ziz*--set of astronomical tables-- surviving from the Indian charts bro ught to Baghdad by Kanaka. This *ziz* later made the journey to Spanish Cordoba and onwards to the rest of Europe where a Latin translation made in 1126 became one of the most influential works on astronomy in medieval Europe. These are to count just a few of the books al-Khwarismi wrote on mathematics, the Indian art. In 825, al-Khwarizmi wrote on the concept of logarithm (this is a Latinised form of his name itself), zero and positional notation system after learning them from the Indian texts especially **Brahmagupta**, in his book **'Algoritmi de numero Indorum'** (this is the title of the Latin translation). This book (in its Arabic form, which unfortunately is not available any more) reached Spain (which was under Arab control at that time) where, in the 990's, **Gerbert of Aurillac** taught the Hindu numbers to his students, but it could not be very popular in Europe. In c.1100, an Englishman Robert **of Chester** visited Spain and translated al-Khwarizmi's little book into Latin in 1120. This and other translations of al-Khwarizmi, inspired writing of several Latin textbooks on the 'new arithmetic' including description of the decimal system and positional notation. Sti ll it took several more centuries before Europeans entirely abandoned Roman numerals despite their clumsiness and inferiority to Hindu numerals (Duncan, The Calendar).

Another standout at Baghdad was **al-Battani** (c. 850-929), known in Europe as **Albategneus** who studied Indian astronomy and expounded Indian trigonometric methods to show that the distance from the earth to the sun varies during the year (Ibid.). Half a century later another Iranized Turk (but known as Arab) astronomer, Abu ar-Rayhan Mohammed ibn Ahmed **al-Biruni** (call him al-Biruni; 973-1048) was born in central Asia. He extensively studied the Arabic translation of the Indian mathematics and astronomy and by the age of thirty, had written at least eight works. Most important of them was one in which he discussed arguments for and against the earth's rotating on its axis, taking up the debate of Aryabhata versus other Indian astronomers. He went to India with an invading Muslim army of Mehmood Ghaznawi. There he learned Sanskrit and studied every ancient text he could find. He compiled his findings into a book called Kitab-ul-Hind (Kitab fi tahqiq ma li 'l-Hind). This offers a remarkably candid and critical analysis of Hindu mathematics and siddhantas as well as philosophy and religion (Ibid.).

Al-Biruni wrote a note on Patanjali's Yoga sutra, Bhagavad-Gita and Sankhyakarika. But he also seems to be under fear of fanatics and always writes in reference to what Indians believed. Like, the Indians believe that the earth is five billion years old, which is wrong because the Islam says it was created only four thousand and five hundred years back. But overall, he greatly admires Hindu genius and metempsychosis. He discusses in detail the Hindu concept of cycle of evolution and dissolution and re-evolution of universe. He also describes the Hindu concept of geography. He mentions, the Hindus describe an island, which is diametrically opposite Rome on the globe. These ideas would be later translated into Latin from which people like Columbus would gain inspiration to try reach India by going westward and that would lead to the discovery of Americas.

8. Translation of Hindu literature in India - Before Taxila, Nalanda, Odantpuri, Vikramshila and other Indian universities were burned down and their inmates killed by the Muslim invaders, much of Indian science (especially mathematics, astrology, medicine and philosophy) had already reached Baghdad and been translated into Arabic.

The destruction of Indian literature was so extensive that no record of pre-Islamic history remained in India. In fact whatever systemic history of ancient India we know now was reconstructed by the Europeans with the help of the Indian historical books which survived mainly in Sri Lanka and to a lesser extent in China, Myanmar, Tibet etc. plus non-historical religious oriented Puranas, then archaeological remains and the Vedas; and most extensively by imagination. But still there were too many manuscripts scattered over the vast country, which escaped destruction. These related mainly to philosophy and religion. **Amir Khusraw** was impressed by the depth of learning among Indians and their ability to speak any language. He greatly admired the Brahmanas for their ability to teach all subjects, who had devised the numerical system, written Kalila wa Dimma on the art of government and invented chess. Although a Muslim chauvinist, he admitted that the Hindus believe in the unity and eternity of God. **Nakhshabi** translated two Sanskrit texts. Following his conquest of Nogarkot in 1362 **Firuz Shah Tughlaq** acquired 1300 books from Jwalamukhi temple. He commissioned Sanskrit scholars to translate some of them into Persian. On the basis of the translation of works on physics and astronomy, **'Izzu 'd-Din Khalid Khani** compiled the Dala 'il-Firuz Shahi. 'Abdu'l 'Aziz Shams Baha-i Nuri translated Brihatsamhita into Persian (it was earlier translated by al-Biruni into Arabic). **Sultan Zaynu'l-'Abidin** of Kashmir, **Sultan Sikandar Lodi** and several other Muslim rulers ordered the translation of various Sanskrit works into Persian with a view to enriching their language. **Akbar** established a translation bureau (the Maktab Khana) for translation of Sanskrit texts into Persian and Arabic. Yet more Sanskrit books were translated during **Jehangir's** period. **Dara Shukoh** translated Upanishads into Persian. Later **Anquetil Duperron** translated the Persian version into French and Latin. This Latin version influenced many intellectuals in Europe including German scholar **Schopenhauer** who found its study 'the solace to my life' and 'the solace to my death' (Rizwi, The Wonder that was India, vol 2; Basham, The Wonder that was India, vol 1)

Knowledge moves west

The Arabs ruled over a vast area from Indus to Spain in the eighth century when they started getting knowledge from India. As the Arabic schools were established all over the Abbasid empire to produce a regular supply of clergy and teachers, the Arabic version of Indian knowledge spread all over the empire. **Caliph Abd ar-Rahman III** (891--961), a patron of art and learning built a massive new library at **Cordoba** in Spain and filled it with a vast treasure trove of manuscripts brought from Baghdad. The library contained 400,000 volumes. By 976, Hindu numbers started appearing in modified form, which were going to be the forerunners of modern International form of Indian numerals (Duncan, The Calendar). &nbs p;

Some of the earliest translations of Arabic manuscripts into Latin were penned in northern Spain beginning in the mid-tenth century at the monastery of **Santa Maria de Ripoll**. In the tenth century, **Gerbert of Aurillac** (c. 946--1003) learned the Indian counting system from the Moors of Spain who in 999 became the **Pope Sylvester II**. In 990s he taught the Hindu numerals to his students and monks. H e trekked to northern Spain to carry home Latin translations of Arab treatise on abacus and astrolabe. He encouraged adoption of these systems especially by merchants. Needless to say that the new numbers were going to revolutionize accounting which was essential for leading Europe into a successful mercantile community (Ibid.)

Another was **Adelard of Bath**(c. 1075--1160). He journeyed by ship along the new eastern trade routes to the Crusader held coast of Syria, where he translated Euclid into Latin using Arabic translation of the original. Most prolific of all these early translators was the Italian Gerard of Cremona (c. 1114--1187). Fluent in Greek and Arabic, he was leading figure in the new **'College of Translators'** set up by Spanish archbishop Raymond after the capture of **Toledo** (and its library). He rendered into Latin the Arabic texts by Galen, Aristotle, Euclid, al-Khwarismi and Ptolemy, among many others. Some of the works of the ancient Greeks were translated back to Greek from Arabic at this time (Ibid.).

. We have already seen how al-Khwarismi's Algoritmi de numero Indorum was translated into Latin by an Englishman Robert of Chester living in Spain in 1120. The Indian astronomical works as translated by al-Khwarismi was translated into Latin in Cordoba in1126. This brought Indian numbers, arithmetic, algebra and Astronomy to the Latin world. This contained the works of **Aryabhata**. Aryabhata's work

contained enough mathematical knowledge that was needed for further work in physics. The work on astrology was the stuff which was needed for creating a base for more advanced calculations. This knowledge was now in the hands of Europeans who had been counting with their fingers till that time. This was going to provide the knowledge base required for further scientific discoveries to Kepler, Copernicus and Newton.

The translation of Hindu-Arabic literature continued till the end of sixteenth century. Apart from Spain, and Italy, other centres of translation were Syria, Damascus, Palermo and Sicily. The Arab emirs governing Sicily imported texts from Baghdad and had a rich library there. A Christian, **Roger Guiscard** (1031--1101), son of a baron of **Normandy**, conquered **Sicily** in 1072 when he renamed himself **Roger I, Count of Sicily**. His son Roger II ruled over Sicily and southern Italy. These two Rogers and their successor, **Frederick II** encouraged translation of Arabic texts. Frederick was elected the Holy Roman Emperor in 1220. He surrounded himself from philosophers and sages from Baghdad and Syria, dancing girls from India and Iran (Ibid.).

It may be added here that Hindu girls were forcefully taken away from their families by the Muslim rulers. They were trained into expert dancers for prostitution and luxury of the Muslim aristocracy in India and the surplus was sold to the sex-traders in the Middle East. These girls were again sold to the European customers. This brought to the Eastern Europe, Indian costumes and the classical dance dramas of Indian style. This in turn influenced the Western European dances. Such efforts introduced many Indian elements into the classical dances of the West.

Frederick founded the University of **Naples** in 1224 endowing it with a large collection of Arabic manuscripts. From Spain he brought a translator who created a Latin summary of Aristotle's biological and zoological works. The library was endowed with a large collection of Arabic manuscripts of ancient Greek and Indian scholars as well as commentaries of the Arab scholars on them. Copies of Latin translation were sent to universities in **Paris** and **Bologna**. . Frederick also led the Fifth Crusade to Palestine in 1228--1229, successfully and recaptured Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth. All these efforts brought to Europe the works of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and the Greek Medicine, which were earlier, destroyed from Europe by over zealous Christian zealots. It also brought to Europe the works of Indian genius in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, medicine, physics, chemistry, philosophy and music. Europeans learned the art of papermaking from the Arabs and printing press from the Chinese. In 1450s **Gutenberg** operated the first European printing press in Germany.

The Europeans were very slow to absorb this much of knowledge and new type of numbers. Much of the work in universities and monasteries was limited to copying the manuscripts or to translating them. They were not able to use decimals until a Dutch mathematician **Simon Stevin** (1548--1620) explained the system in a book called **La Thiende** (The Tenth). After him, **Magini** and **Christopher Clauvius** used them in their works. It was **Galileo** in the late sixteenth century who for the first time tried to understand what was containd in the Latin translation of the *Sindhind of Brahmagupta*. Once he understood the theory of rotation of earth he had to suffer the persecution of the Church. In 1621, **Bachet** published the Latin version of Arithmetica from Arabic (Ibid.). By this time, the era of Europe's Dark Age was over. Understanding of science led to removal of Church's domination in everyday life. People were now able to work further on the subjects of science beyond the works of the Hindus, which was presented, to them after being translated twice-- first in Arabic and then in Latin. The *decline of Christian faith* coupled with *rise of knowledge* ushered Europe into all round development and they came in a position to dominate the world. The power associated with knowledge converted the Europeans into Economic and Military powers. Now supremacy of knowledge is quite established all over the world, except in a few pockets of fundamentalist ideologies. But the contributions that India made to the growth and dissemination of knowledge over several thousands of years will remain the everlasting success of India.

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EPILOGUE

It was the story of knowledge. Now are the few appendices discussing isolated topics.

Appendix I - Influence on Western philosophy: The knowledge has survived in spite of all odds against it. Not only in Science, but also in the field of Modern *philosophy*, West has borrowed heavily from India. Europe got all of Indian logic and philosophy through the channel of the Arabs, and earlier through the *Neo-Plutonian* channel. Later when the British came to India they had first hand knowledge of Indian philosophy. **Goethe**, **Schopenhauer** and *most of the German philosophers* had studied Indian philosophy and most of them got influenced by it. They in turn influenced the other students of philosophy by their writings. "The monism of **Fichte** and **Hegel** might never have taken forms they did if it had not been for **Anquetil-Duperron'**s translation of the Upanishads and the works of pioneer Indologists. In English-sp eaking world the strongest Indian influence was felt in America where **Emerson**, **Thoreau** and other New England writers avidly studied much Indian religious literature in translation, and exerted immense influence on their contemporaries and successors, notably **Walt Whitman**" writes A. L. Basham. The list of authors who admitted Indian influence on them is very big and includes such authors as **Carlyle, Richard Jeffries, Edward Carpenter, Stephen Zwig, Romya Rolland, Jung,** etc. Indian influence is visible on all the major authors of **Existential** school as well as the **Humanistic** school of philosophers. The **New Age Dharma** is a new surge of Western interest in Indian way of life and thinking. At the moment the West is trying to understand the **yoga, meditation and transcendental states**. The concepts of kindness to the animals, animal rights, vegetarianism, universal brotherhood, tolerance for differing faiths, etc. are gradually becoming more and more popular. Paganism is another movement to understand reality in a post-modern context. The birth and death of star, the concept of life as a unity etc are recognized more and more by Western people. Indeed, Ancient Indian thoughts preserve enormous potentialities for the future of humanity.

Appendix II Decline of Knowledge in the Arab World

Baghdad was destroyed first by a civil war among the later Abbasids. Then in 1258 the invading Mongol army of Changhiz Khan destroyed it to the last brick. Although the Islamic Empire was reconstructed, the scientific temper of the Abbasids could never be restored to the Arabs. Later when Abdul Wahab started his movement, Muslims would look more and more into religious books rather than investigate the material world.

Appendix III

Why Indians did not pursue their quest of knowledge after 12th century?

India had a several thousand years old tradition of education, research and training. After Delhi fell to the Turko-Afghan rulers, the great Indian universities were demolished. Libraries were burnt down. The village schools spread all over the country got starved of funds. The Govt funds would now go to muderssas, which would teach Koran and Arabic and Persian languages. Even the Indian texts on science and philosophy were translated into Arabic and Persian and were made available to only the Arabic and Persian knowing people, the Muslims who attended the mudrssas. Persian was maintained as the medium of instruction till the British took over the governance of India, so that Hindus could not take benefit of education. A false allegation has been leveled against the Brahmanas that they were not imparting education to the masses. But the fact is that the Brahmanas themselves quickly got deprived of education and became ignorant within a few generation time after establishment of Turkish rule and muderssa system of education. Now Brahmana became a caste and lost the Varna character. Unless they were employed in any educational institution (i.e. muderssas in that period), how can we expect

them to teach the public? People were not ready to pay privately for learning Sanskrit, which would not get them any jobs in a Muslim establishment. As it became a non-sustainable vocation, teaching disappeared from the Hindu people. The few Brahmanas, who had knowledge, freely imparted it to whoever came, even to the Muslims. Al-Biruni and Amir Khusaraw etc were taught Sanskrit language and literature without any consideration of caste or religion by Brahmin scholars.

The Muslim rule converted Brahmanas into priest. This fact can be verified by carefully reading history. In pre-Muslim period we never find mention of a Brahmana who lived in a village doing puja-work (priest craft). They lived as scholars or teachers. They could attend a yajna done by a king as a respected guest. But such occasions were very infrequent. Abolition of education profession compelled the Brahmanas to adopt new professions. Some become village priests. Others became doctors (vaidya), astrologer, farmer or even cooks. But the majority of Brahmanas never adopted the degrading job of priests. Many Brahmanas who hated priest-craft became farmers like the Chitpawan, Anavil, Mohiyal, Nagar and Tyagi Brahmanas etc and survived on agriculture.

Appendix IV A note on Arithmetica:

Six volumes of Arithmetica that could survive were translated into Arabic. Many centuries later this Arabic text was translated into Latin. Nothing is known about its author except that he worked at Alexandria University and that the Latin version of his name is Diophantus. In Arabic it was something like Dwbnt. What was the actual name or country of birth of the author of Arithmetica, nobody knows. Arithmetica itself is a meaningless word in Latin or Greek languages. But in Sanskrit, Arthamitica is a meaningful word meaning calculation (miti) of money matters (artha). It can be inferred that the author of the Arithmetica was an Indian mathematician teaching at Alexandria and this book was a Greek version of a compilation of Indian mathematics .His name was probably something like Devabhuti. This raises a grave question. Almost all of Greek literature was lost. The overwhelming majority of the literature known today to be of Ancient Greece is actually translation from Arabic. In a large number of them, only information available about the author is his name. And these books describe the Indian philosophy in entirely unmodified form. Is it not possible that the Europeans who translated these Arabic texts did not discriminate between what had come into Arabic from India and what had come from Alexandria. Their motive was definitely mala fide is clear from many other facts. They very well knew by very name of the text itself (Algoritmi de numero Indorum) that the decimal system and the new numbers were Indian. But they kept it secret from the masses that started calling them Arabic numbers. It was only after ancient Indian stone inscriptions containing those numerals predating Islam were found, that the Europeans openly accepted the reality. Similarly, the Europeans including the Greek themselves are kept into darkness about the fact the Greek philosophy they are reading was actually translated from Arabic, the original having been lost centuries before. These attempts are done in a very organized way to keep up the morale of their masses but not to let the morale of anyone else go up. Duncan sites one example of mischief by the Euro-centric historians (The Calendar, pp166): “The Greeks of the classic age had no symbol for zero, because their numeral system did not require a zero place…Nevertheless, Euro-centric scholars long assumed that the symbol for zero was invented by the Greeks, with no proof at all, speculating that it came from the Greek letter omicron-O-the first letter in the word *ouden*, meaning ‘empty’. But this unwarranted belief that Indians could not have come up with such a basic concept has given way to recognition that ancient Greeks did not really use such a symbols for zero, and that Indian mathematicians seem independently to have invented the dot and then the round goose-egg symbol.”

Appendix V **Plotinus: A Greek Vedantin** Plotinus (born at Lycopolis, in Upper Egypt in 204 BC).

Plotinus studied the very best of philosophy available at the Alexandria University. He was not satisfied with that and even went to Iran with an Invading Army of the Roman Emperor Gordian. Finally he wrote his books on the subject of Atman and Brahman. His pupil Porphyry edited them in fifty-four treatises. After the destruction of Alexandria University, the books survived as Arabic translation and later translated into Latin by Marsilio Ficino in 1492. It was later translated into Greek by Basel in 1580.

Plotinus writes “Many are the ways by which to reach the goal of spiritual attainment: that love of Beauty which inebriates the poet; that devotion to the one and that cognitive ascent which represent the

aspiration of the philosopher; that love and those prayers by means of which spirits full of devotion and ardour, in all their moral purity, aspire to perfection. There are the Great main ways which lead to the peak, beyond the earthly, the actual and the particular, where we can raise ourselves up into the immediate presence of the infinite which bursts forth in all its radiance from the depths of the soul." (Quoted as the opening page in, Essence & Purpose of Yoga, by Raphael, Element Books Ltd, Dorset, UK, 1996)

This paragraph summarizes what we understand today by Advaita Vedanta. It is clear that Plotinus's understanding of Advaitic philosophy was more profound than that of Plato. He admits the insolubility of human reason of the basic metaphysical problem i.e. how becoming arose out of immutable being (Brahman) and plurality out of Unity. He also asserts that 'the highest principle has neither thought nor consciousness, so the *nous,* which is purely contemplative, has no reflective logical thought. This is the work of the world soul (Paramatma), which is the link between the intelligible and the phenomenal world. Matter is conceived by Plotinus not exactly as an emanation from the world-soul, but rather in the guise of a receptive or passive principle (Prakriti) in contrast to the formative or active (Prusha)."

Plotinus is considered founder of what is called Neo-Platonism. He even conceived of founding an ideal city to be named Plutonia, but it could not materialize. Later his work would be translated into Arabic after the fall of Alexandria. His works along with similar other philosophical works, after translation into Arabic, helped in the growth of Sufi mysticism, which was also inspired directly by Sanskrit texts from India. (www.britannica.com).

Appendix VI Plutarch on re-birth

In the Moralia, Plutarch, the famous Alexandrian scholar, expresses a belief in reincarnation. This indicates the influence of prevailing Hindu ideas on him. His letter of consolation to his wife, after the death of their two-year-old daughter, gives us a glimpse of his philosophy:

"The soul, being eternal, after death is like a caged bird that has been released. If it has been a long time in the body, and has become tame by many affairs and long habit, the soul will immediately take another body and once again become involved in the troubles of the world. The worst thing about old age is that the soul's memory of the other world grows dim, while at the same time its attachment to things of this world becomes so strong that the soul tends to retain the form that it had in the body. But that soul which remains only a short time within a body, until liberated by the higher powers, quickly recovers its fire and goes on to higher things." (www.britannica.com)

Appendix VII Indian Influences on Greece before Pythagoras

Cremation of the dead is one of the most characteristic features of Indian or Hindu civilization. Hindu (Sanatana), Buddhist, Jain and Sikhs cremate their dead. Passages from Homer indicate that Greeks also cremated their dead for some period before 6th century BC. Cremation is more advanced form of disposal of the dead; as the West is advancing, more and more people are now cremating their dead in the West. Therefore it is interesting to note that Greeks did adopt cremation even if for a short period. The following passage has been quoted from 'The Greek View of Life' by G. L. Dickinson; Methuen & Co., London, 18th Ed, 1938.

"Let us take another passage from Homer to illustrate the same point. It is a place where Achilles is endeavouring to light the funeral pyre of Patroclus, but because there is no wind the fire will not catch….'standing aside from the pyre he prayed to the two winds of North and West, and promised them fair offerings, and pouring large libations from a golden cup besought them to come, that the corpse might blaze up speedily in the fire, and the wood make haste to be enkindled.' …'So all night drave they the flame of the pyre together blowing shrill; and all night fleet Achilles, holding a two handled cup, drew wine (madhu) from a golden bowl, and poured it forth and drenched the earth, calling upon the spirit of hapless Patroclus.' …'But at the hour when the morning star goeth forth to herald light upon the earth, the star that saffron-mantled Dawn cometh after, and spreadeth over the sea salt, then

grew the burning faint and the flame died down.' (*Iliad, xxiii,* 193. Translated by Lang, Leaf and Myers.)"

Also interesting to note here is the mention of 'saffron' colour, which has a special importance in Indian culture and is symbolic of Indian culture whether (Hinduism, Buddhism or Sikhism). In fact saffron and red were considered the colour of spirituality in ancient Greek civilization as well (pp. 12, Dickinson, ibid.) The ritual of *pitri-tarpan* was prevalent in the Homeric Greece as well. " The family centered in the hearth, where the father, in his capacity of priest, offered sacrifice and prayer to the ancestors of the house," (p.11, Ibid.). It is a common practice that the head of the family is the *karta* (priest) of major yajnas and rituals along with his wife. The Brahmin who comes to help is actually not the real priest but he comes to help the house-holder in performance of the rites by narrating the steps, e.g. now do this, now do that etc. It is more than likely that the Christian tradition of calling the priest as father came from the Hindu tradition of the father of the family presiding at the religious rites. Hinduism was definitely the principal religion in Europe at the time when Christianity was absorbing the masses. Christian theology strongly asserts that the word father always means biological father and not the spi ritual guide. It is because of this reason that Jesus is considered the biological Son of God, as Jesus calls God his father. But in the case of priests this question of biological father-hood is not raised, and it is a contradiction in Christianity. In fact, Pope also literally means father (papa).

Hindu influences on Greek Gods - Greeks held the same view of nature as the earliest Vedic hymns do. "Every power of nature he presumes to be a spiritual being, impersonating the sky as Zeus, the earth as Demeter, the sea as Poseidon." See this description of Vedic Rudra in Odyssey (v, 282), " With that he gathered the clouds and troubled the waters of the deep, grasping his trident in his hands; and he roused all storms of all manners of winds." (Ibid, p.5).

The ancient Greeks called themselves the Hellenes. This could have been a modification of Sanskrit word 'hiranya' as we see that the Vedic people were highly influenced by the concept of Hiranya-garbha. Zeus was the sky-god (dyuh in Sanskrit). Athene was the goddess of war and wisdom, while by her table sat her favourite bird, an owl (The Story of Greece, by Mary Macgregor; Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, Edinburgh, 1960). It seems that the Greeks fused the Durga, Sarasvati and Lakshmi into one as Athena. Poseidon was the sea-god (Varuna in Vedic literature) who lived in a palace beneath the waves of the ocean. Pluto (? Sanskrit preta) was the guardian of Hades, the dark and gloomy kingdom of the dead, beneath the earth (Ibid. p.3). This Pluto could have been none other than the Yama of Vedic literature. Another Greek god Pan was a protector of animals and shepherds and was half man, half goat. Protector of folks means *Prajapati*, and we know from Indian mythology that Daksha was a Prajapati with half man, half goat features after he was punished by Shiva. The god Helios was Vedic Hari. And in the same way we find lots of similarities between Vedic religion and the religion of the Homeric Greeks.

Appendix VIII **Status of Sufism in contemporary Islam**

Sufism contains a lot of spiritual, occultist and cosmological beliefs and practices, which had over flown from India and survived in Egyptian (Alexandrian as well as others), Greek, Persian, Buddhist and Sanskrit (Indian) texts. Orthodox Muslims did not accept these ideas initially and in fact a large number of Sufis were killed for their faith. Most famous of all is Mansur bin Hallaz. He claimed 'an al Haq' (I am the Reality/God), and his claim cost his life. Mainstream contemporary Muslims do not accept Sufism as an Islamic thought and its interpretation of Koran is not considered acceptable by the orthodox Muslims.

Appendix IX A Note on Calendar:

Western scholars have a tendency to ascribe any discovery by the ancients to Greece, and if that is not possible then to ascribe it to Mesopotamia. In that attempt, Western historians have always said that Indians got their calendar from the Babylonians. Important to consider here is that 'A' can borrow something from 'B' only if 'B' had it. We will briefly review the calendars of various civilizations to refute

this false claim of the Western historians.

Points to note regarding Indian calendar: 1) Hindus runs two types of calendars simultaneously. The solar calendar is exactly of the same length as the modern International Calendar and the New Years day falls exactly on the 13th or 14th of April (Vaishakhi) depending on the leap year of the International era. Lunar calendar follows the lunar months, but after about two and a half years an extra month is inserted to restore the synchronicity of the lunar and solar calendars.

There is no drift of solar Vaishakha and lunar vaishakh, and vishakha nakshatra over a long period. 2) One can easily convert any Indian year into Georgian year, i.e. no drift between Georgian and Indian calendars occur over years, going back up to the 6th century BC. Hence the length of year is quite equal to the International year. It also proves that the same length of year was used even in the 6th century BC. Hence any Babylonian influence has got to have come before that. But before that period the Babylonians had a very primitive calendar, which was not accurate in length. We have accurate Indian chronologies only through the Sri Lankan sources, which have preserved Indian history only in reference to Buddha. Indian history in India was thoroughly destroyed by Turko-Afghan invaders. Hence we cannot know any accurate Indian chronology before the time of Buddha. 3) The Indian calendars are widely followed in the South-East Asia and must be quite old. One cannot claim that the SE Asia also had links with Greeks or Babylonians. 4) The claims that the Babylonians invented the modern calendar is false because the Babylonians could not have calculated the exact lengths of time in the absence of any efficient mathematics and number system. India had both and therefore, she is the most likely candidate to have accurately calculated the length of year. 5) We know from the inscriptions that the Pre-Iranian (pre-Medes) Babylonia, i.e. in the 7th century BC, had a very primitive calendar. Hence question of them having invented the modern calendar is imaginary and biased. Therefore, India could not have got it from them. 6) Mesha, vrisha, crocodile, scorpion etc fit well into Indian fauna and naming of zodiacal signs after them is more probably Indian than European. Indian solar calendar is based on the signs of zodiac. When sun enters any new sign of zodiac a new month starts. 7) The word Kalend or calendar itself is of Indian origin. Kala means time in Sanskrit and Tamil. Otherwise, calendar is meaningless etymologically in any European language. (Kala has no cognate word in any of the European languages and Western linguists consider it a Dravidian word.)

Babylonian Calendar Ancient Babylonians followed a lunar calendar of 354 days. Around 432 BC, after they were made a part of the Persian Empire, they developed a calendar, which involved 19 yearly cycles. First 7 years of 13 lunar months was followed by 12 years comprising 12 lunar months. This later became known as Metonic cycle after the Greek astronomer Meton (5th century BC), but had originated in China.

Sumerian Calendar In 21st century BC, Sumerians developed a calendar consisting of a year of 360 days, with 12 months of 30 days each. It drifted against solar cycle by more than 5 days every year.

Jewish Calendar The Jewish year is a lunar year of 354 days. An extra month is intercalated every three years, just before the month of Nisan. But the year still drifts and needs addition of an extra month every now and then by the Jewish elders. (Although this is what Duncan says about the Jewish calendar, I had a word about the Jewish calendar with a Rabbi at Luton, who informed me that the Jewish calendar follows a cycle of twelve years with 12 lunar months followed by seven years with 13 lunar months. It is possible that different Jewish communities may be following different systems.)

Chinese Calendar In c. 2357 BC Emperor Yao began a calendar which was essentially lunar but Seven months were added to the year every 19 years. With further experiments, it eventually became Metonic (vide supra).

Greek Calendar Greeks had a standard lunar calendar of 354 days. To it they added 90 days every eight years as haphazardly inserted months.

Roman Calendar The mythic Roman king Romulus founded the city of Rome and also began the Roman calendar in 753 BC—the first year of Roman calendar, called ab urbe condita (AUC). This year of 10 months totalled 304 days in a year. The names of the months were Martis, Aprilis, Maius, Junius

(these four months were after the names of gods), Quintilis (fifth), Sextilis (sixth), September (seventh), October (eighth), November (ninth), December (tenth). The days of the month were all named and not numbered. This cumbersome Roman system of naming the dates (e.g. 11 March as Five Ides) lasted in Europe till as late as seventeenth century.

King Numa in c. 700 BC added two more months, January and February (the eleventh and twelfth months), to this calendar making it a standard lunar year of 354 days. Then he added one more day to the last month to make the year of 355 days (as even numbers were considered ominous in Rome). But this year was running too fast against the solar cycle. Later they started adding one extra month every two years. This made the calendar too slow. Then the Romans adapted the Greek calendar, adding three extra months every eight years, which gave an average of 365-day year. When Julius Caesar concurred Egypt, he came to know the Egyptian calendar. He introduced this calendar of 365 days and six hours in his empire in 46 BC, although the names of the Roman months were kept intact.

The Ancient Egypt and development of Modern Calendar

In about 4000 BC Egyptians developed a calendar of 365 days. It was a calendar of 12 months of 30 days each and an additional 5 days at the end to commemorate the gods. (Maya of America also had a calendar of 18 months of 20 days, to which they added five days at the end). This year slowly drifted to complete a cycle over 1,460 years. The Egyptians knew that this year of 365 days was short by about one fourth of a day. But because of the resistance by the priests, no change was made. When Alexander concurred Egypt, the new rulers, the Ptolemies adopted the old Egyptian calendar, and did not impose the Greek calendar. In 238 BC, Ptolemy III, the king of Egypt, ordered for introduction of an extra day to be inserted every fourth year—the leap year.

When the Roman emperor returned to Rome after concurring Egypt, he decided to introduce the Egyptian calendar to Rome. Caesar called the best of mathematicians and philosophers, including the Alexandrian astronomer Sosigenes to discuss the calendric reforms. The vernal equinox and the winter solstice, the two most important pagan-Mithraic festivals should fall on the 25th March and 25th December respectively, as per tradition of that time. But they had drifted far away. (Probably these festivals were imported from Indo-Iran, where solstices and equinoxes had fixed dates in the year; and when these festivals came to Rome, in the absence of an accurate calendar, they drifted in the year. By the time of Julius Caesar, they had drifted by about 80 days, indicating that more than 320 years had passed since the festivals were borrowed into Europe.)

Julius Caesar decided to end the confusion. He added two extra intercalary months apart from the one regular intercalary month to the year 46 BC. That year ended up having 446 days and 15 months. This was officially called ‘the last year of confusion’, but public simply called it ’the year of confusion’. When he added two extra months to year 46 BC, Julius Caesar had to bring the beginning of year from March to January for 45 BC in order not to create havoc in the mercantile world and taxations. Thence, December became the twelfth month of the year instead of being the tenth month. Julius Caesar to make changes in the number of days. He organised the 12 months as alternating 31 and 30 days, with the exception of February, which had 29 days in a normal year and 30 days in a leap year. The senate changed the name of the month Quintalis to July in respect of Julius Caesar. After the death of Julius Caesar in 44 BC, people started making leap years in three years instead of four until 8 BC. It was the reign of Emperor Augustus that this fault was detected. He ordered for its correction. The senate changed the name the month Sextilis to August, to honour the emperor. But this month had only 30 days. It was considered disrespectful for the Emperor Augustus to have a month in his name with only 30 days. Therefore one day was snatched from February and added to the month of August. Now it resulted in July, August and September, three in a row having 31 days. Making September and November of 30 days and October and December of 31 days solved this problem.

When the Roman Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity, this pagan Julian calendar was imposed to Christianity. Earlier Christians followed various types of calendars, all lunar. When this Julian calendar was imposed on to them, they did not know the date of birth of Christ in this system. And the Christian mathematics was not developed enough to back calculate the corresponding date from the Jewish calendar. The most popular festival of the pagan Romans, the birthday of sun god, the 25th

December was accepted as the birthday of Christ by the Roman Emperor. Similarly Easter, the day of death of Jesus was decided to be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, completely ignoring the existing Judo-Christian tradition's dates of their lunar calendar. This calendar was still wrong by a few minutes every year. It was in the thirteenth century that Indian number system and mathematics reached Europe. Only then it was appreciated that the calendar had drifted by many days over a thousand years. Then the mathematicians and astronomers had to struggle to have calendar reformed. But the Christian orthodoxy considered all such attempts blasphemous. It was as late as 16th century that the Pope Gregory VIII became convinced about the flaws of the calendar and appointed calendar commission in 1581. On the basis of the recommendations, 10 days were lost forever. After the night of 4th October 1582 came the morning of15th October 1582. The February month of the century years e.g. 1700, 1800, etc were to have only 28 days and not 29 days. But years 1600, 2000, e tc, multiple of 400 will be leap years having a February of 29 days. Not every body accepted it immediately. Last to accept the loss of 10 days were Russians, who accepted it after communist revolution and the Chinese Christians, who accepted it in 1949. It is the biggest joke to say that the Indian luni-solar calendar is borrowed from the Babylonians who never had any scientific calendar. Equally laughable is the claim of the Western historians (including AL Basham) that the Indian solar calendar was imported into India during Gupta period from Western contact!! Which West? Which was in its darkest age and still confused about calendar and calculation of time? On the other hand the Indian festivals and months have not drifted against seasons at all over several millennia.

Appendix X Other Indian Contributions to the World We have discussed about mathematics including algebra, trigonometry, geometry, numerals etc. We have also discussed astronomy and cosmology. Linguistics and phonetics is another scientific Indian contribution to the West (The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language, David Crystal, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p 405) The studies in Samaveda prove that the seven notes of music is an Indian invention, which was not known to the West before Pythagoras.

We have also noted that trade in Hindu slave dancer girls contributed to development of western dances. A L Basham lists India's contribution to World: rice, cotton, sugar cane, many spices, domestic fowl (chicken), game of chess etc. "The heterodox Jewish sect of the Essence, which influenced early Christianity followed monastic practices similar to Buddhism. Parallels may be traced between passages in New Testament and the Pali (and Upanishad) literature. Similarities between the teachings of western philosophers and mystics from Pythagoras to Plotinus and those of Upanishad have been noticed…We can say that there was always some contact between the Hellenistic world and India, mediated first by the Achaemenid empire, then by the Seleucids and finally under the Romans, by the traders of the Indian Ocean. Christianity began to spread when this contact was the closest. We know that the Indian ascetics occasionally visited the West, and that there was a colony of Indian merchants at Alexandria." (The Wonder That was India, A L Basham, p 485-6)

It has been shown that much of Arabic and Persian fiction literature (like, Arabian Nights, Kissa Chahar Dervish, etc) are translations of Sanskrit and Pali story literature, e.g. Kathasaritsagar, Panchatantra and Hitopadesha etc. This literature was again translated from Arabic to Latin giving rise to Esop's fables etc. In this way Indian literature contributed to the growth of world's fiction literature.

Appendix XI A note on Theocracy (Theocracy has been the most successful enemy of freethinking. Freethinking is essential for exploring reality and thereby growth of knowledge. Hence theocracy usually is inimical to knowledge. It is therefore, appropriate to discuss a few words about theocracy here.) Theocratic state is a state, which is controlled by the priests and theologians. The Egyptian pharaohs were considered the 'god on earth'. The king was helped by a host of priests. Egyptian state was therefore theocratic theoretically, but still the king was more powerful than the priests and could take independent decisions and it was not a total theocracy. Pre-Christian Roman emperors held the title of head-priest (*pontifex maximus*) and performed religious functions as well. Priests had a good say in administrative matters. But the emperor could do many things independently and introduce new things, as Julius Caesar did. On analysis, this was also not a hundred percent theocracy. The Jewish holy-book Torah is translated into English as 'the Laws'. A priest, Rabbi, is an expert on the 'laws' and only he can decide the legal matters. The training in theology or priest-hood involves training in the holy law and

even when the Jews were not formed into a state, the verdict of Rabbi would be a binding to a Jew in most of the matters. This is an example of theocracy where priests administer Judiciary and law. When the Roman emperor adopted Christianity, a mixture of Jewish and earlier Roman system was introduced. The Pope was the emperor as well as the head-priest. But now, the Pope had to be trained in the theology and pass all the theological examination and cross the ladders of hierarchy of the Church before becoming the Pope. Law, justice, administration, taxation and education were all within absolute control of the Church. This system was a complete theocracy. It still exists in the Vatican.

Koran is the word of God and it deals with a lot of matters related to succession, law and criminal justice. The words of God cannot be changed. Therefore the Koranic laws are unchangeable. Hence an Islamic state requires scholars of Islam to administer justice. Wherever a confusion or controversy arises, a decree (fatwa) may be issued by the committee of the Ulema (scholars of Islam). In Islam, state and religion are inseparable. The state has got to be controlled by religion. Hinduism and Buddhism as religions do not control the state. Religion does not prescribe the punishments etc for crime. State and the religion are actually entirely independent. In fact, an organised Church with a hierarchical structure never existed among the Hindus. Priests are more like private practitioners who may be invited for performance of certain rituals by the client. The basic relation between a priest and a householder is that of a specialist or professional and a client. Hence the priest is not entitled to do anything more than what he has been asked to do. He will advise only on those matters for which an advice has been sought and he receives his fee. If the householder does not like his advice, he may consult another practitioner. In other instances, priests are employed in the temples to keep the deity clean and looked after. There is no way a priest can control the state. In this system th ere is no scope for growth of theocracy. This is one of the reasons for development of sciences in ancient India.

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The Legacy of Sanskrit

By Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

(source: Our Heritage. Orient Paperbacks 1973 pg 30-38)

संस्कृत A Recent survey of old archaeological relics in China and Central Asia has revealed that Sanskrit has been dominant in those regions for centuries. Some Sanskrit scriptures are reported to have been found on the great wall of China. Sanskrit texts are found also on the scrolls and scarves exchanged between the emperors of China and the dignitaries of other parts of Central Asia in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.



Some European and American Universities have chairs for Sanskrit studies. There is a growing interest in Indian thought in many parts of the world, in philosophy and religion; in psychology and psychoanalysis.

We have inherited a legacy, great and precious, but it is fatal to rest in the consciousness of having inherited something unique. The inheritance should be invested in new undertakings; we have to start new achievements. We must be ever engaged in the pursuit of truth. In the different spheres of the Sanskrit language, its literature, philosophy, religion, music, metaphysics, mathematics, astronomy, medicine and surgery, work is being done.

It cannot be said that the culture enshrined in the Sanskrit language is irrelevant to the modern conditions. The higher aspects of Vedic thought, and Buddha, Mahavira, and Ashoka also taught us to build a classless society where men and women, whatever be their status, are treated alike. The saints of different regions, Valluvar (Tamil), Vemana (Telugu), Basava (Kannada), Kabir-panthis, Sikhs, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Gandhi in recent times, take us back to the essential dignity of man emphasized in the *mahavakyas of the Vedas* and insist on social equality and respect for human dignity. An adaptive culture is incompatible with static social structures. We have suffered in the past by our adherence to outmoded forms and habits. Social changes are necessary if we are to build a unified and progressive India.

The problem facing the world today is that of the conflict or co-operation among the different cultures. We had had a long tradition of peaceful co-operation among the different cultures. From the beginning of our history new groups have become steadily Indianised, the Sakas, The Kusanas, and the Pallavas. The arts and the crafts they brought with them have been respectfully accepted. Varahamihira in his *Brhat-samhita* says, " The *yavanas* (Greek) are verily *mlecchas* but this science is well established among them. Therefore they too deserve our respect even as our own sages."

" *mleccha hi yavanas tesu samyak sastram idam sthitam rsivat tepi pujyah syuh kim punar daivavid dvijah"*

Of the five schools of astronomy, two are known as Romaka (after Rome) and Paulisa (after Paul of Alexandria, A.D. 378). **We had no sense of cultural isolationism or intellectual bigotry which disdains to accept knowledge from different regions of the world.**

On the account of these characteristics, even religion has been perpetually adapting itself to the new challenges. The Vedic *samhitas*, the ceremonialism of the *Brahmanas* and the idealism of the Upanishads could not become popular with the masses. Different tendencies developed. Systems of thought, called heterodox because they did not accept the authority of the Vedas, grew up, like Jainism and Buddhism. In the Upanishads we find traces of free thinking which appealed to the masses. The conservative tendencies grew up on the basis of Vedic *sutras* and *vedangas.* There were tendencies which tried to reconcile the anti-Vedism of the heterodox systems and the revivalism of the conservative schools. The people on general followed their tribal creed. Their gods and goddesses were different from those of the Vedic pantheon. These popular beliefs were encouraged by the followers of the Vedas. The Vrsnis, the Satvatas, the Abhiras and the Yadavas worshipped Krsna who was the temporal head and spiritual preceptor of these tribes. Sometimes a conflict between the Vedic and the non-Vedic prevailed. The struggle between Indra and Krsna is symbolic of it.

Krsna's teachings are epitomized in the *Bhagavadgita*. There is no stress on the phenomenality of the world or the identification of the individual soul with the Supreme. Bhakti to Krsna is insisted on. The *Gita* asks us to work for *lokasamgraha*, world solidarity or progress. An active way of life, karma-yoga adopts renunciation in action and not of action. The Gita religion is one in which all people could participate. Despite geographical, climatic, racial, religious, and linguistic diversities, **India possesses a fundamental cultural unity.**

We talk about modernity. The people are trying to get rid of many of our old standards and ask for modern interpretation. I am also a modernist, but I believe that modernism consists in preserving whatever is valuable in our ancient heritage and discarding whatever is not of value. There are so many things which have come down to us and which do not constitute the glory of our culture or our country. There are others which are vital factors and which sustain our country. **The noted French writer Andre Malraux, said, " The problem of this century is the religious problem and the discovery of Hindu thought will have a great deal to do with the solving of that particular problem."**

We think we are democratic but the basis of democracy is sanctity of the individual, the divine possibilities which he has. The four *mahavakyas*, or great sayings, of the four *Vedas* have been given by Sankaracharya to the four established Mutts at Dwaraka, Puri, Badrinath and Sringeri.

The basis of democracy has come down to us from over five thousand years. The *Vedas* may have been written in 5,000 B.C. but were composed earlier. Anyway, what is called the democratic trend need not be regarded as something which we had to acquire from Western nations. These trends have been there.

The *Mahabharata* tells us:

guhyam brahma tad idam vo bravimi
na manusat sresthataram hi kincit.

There is nothing higher than man in this world. God transcendent is beyond us. God immanent is in man. Every human being must be regarded as sustaining the possibility of rising to the divine state.

Buddhism has its origin in the Upanishads. Kumarilabhatta says: *vijnanavada nairatmavadanam api upanisad prabhavatvam.* Every vijnanavada originated from the Upanishad. It is one resevoir from which, in different directions, things flow, and we have to understand the basis of unity which prevails. It is this reconciliation of all faiths that challenges the modern world. These different faiths are not to be regarded as opposites or contradictories. They are distinct or complementaries. They will enrich the human heritage, if we are able to get them together.

What is secularism - mistakenly called secularism - is really respect for all faiths; it is not giving up of faiths. Everyone should respect whatever is held sacred by any other individual. It is essential that we should not lose our moorings; we should not be absorbed or fascinated by the new-fangled ideas. What is happening today is that even the students do not have a perception of the values of our country. If you get them back to these things and make them understand that the fundamentals of our religion are most scientific, most democratic, most harmonious and most significant, so far as the historic process is concerned, we will be doing a valuable service.

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Pan-Islam and Indian secularism

BY GNS Raghavan
August 25 2003

For a whole century now, since the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905 to create a new Muslim-majority province in the east, Indian Muslims have been favoured with special treatment. For the British rulers, this was dictated by the Imperial policy of divide and rule. In the case of Mahatma Gandhi who led the national movement for three decades, appeasement of Muslims flowed from his advocacy of unilateral, non-reciprocal love: He would time and again ask Hindus to stand before any Muslim assailants bare-chested and to "die without killing". For the Congress party after Partition and Independence, mollycoddling of Muslims and Christians has been part of electoral strategy to win bloc votes in a system which makes the candidate who wins the largest number of votes, even if much less than a majority, the sole representative of a constituency.

A two-nation theory was implicit in the separate electorates provided for Muslims in the Indian Councils Act of 1909. This theory, promoted by the British, ignored the fact that, as Gandhi was to point out later to Jinnah, the overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims (like Indian Christians) are descendants of Hindu converts. This fact is obscured by the unfortunate habit of Muslim parents giving their children outlandish names derived from Arabia, Turkey or other West Asian country. In contrast, many Christian families have not felt ashamed to bear Hindu names or to retain the surname of their converted forbears. Among notable examples are Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, a leader of the agitation against Curzon's partition of Bengal in 1905, who proudly described himself as a Hindu Catholic, and Joseph Cornelius Kumarappa of Tamil Nadu, a patriot who was an exponent of Mahatma Gandhi's pro-nature and pro-people economics.

Muslim separatism was unwittingly nurtured by Mahatma Gandhi when he extended support to the Khilafat movement though it was an expression of pan-Islam and a negation of nationalism. So keen was Gandhi on winning the goodwill of Muslim leaders that though he vigorously opposed boycott of British goods during his address to a Khilafat conference in Delhi on November 24, 1919, arguing that it was an expression of hatred, he reversed his attitude under Muslim insistence and made boycott part of his own eleven-point programme of non-cooperation.

When, after the failure of the Khilafat movement (the Turks themselves overthrew the Sultan and formed a republic), Muslims of Malabar known as Moplahs turned on their Hindu neighbours in an orgy of violence and forced conversions, **Annie Besant** commented: "We have been forced to see that the primary allegiance of Mussalmans is to Islamic countries, not to our motherland." **Gandhi, on the other hand, expressed regret that the Hindus of Malabar had failed to win the love of their Muslim neighbours.**

Both Nehru and Gandhi were irresolute in then-attitude to separate Muslim electorates. When the Lahore session of the Congress concluded on 1st January 1930, the time limit of one year set by the Congress for grant of Dominion status had expired. The all-party committee headed by Motilal Nehru had affirmed the

democratic principle of territorial constituencies, and envisaged Dominion status as the immediate goal rather than complete independence. Elated at the lapse of the report known after his father's name because he would not be content with Dominion status (which is what he eventually accepted in 1947), Nehru as Congress president consigned the principle of joint electorates to the waters of the Ravi.

By the time of Partition both Gandhi and Nehru had internalised the Two-Nation theory. This was strikingly demonstrated in relation to Jammu & Kashmir. Apparently finding it unnatural that a Muslim-majority State should accede to India, Nehru made his Government's acceptance of the Maharaja's accession provisional and conditional on ratification by a plebiscite to be conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. As for the Mahatma, he said at his prayer meeting on 25th December 1947: "The maharaja should clearly say that he is no longer the ruler: It is the Muslims of Kashmir who are the real rulers and they may do what they like."

The rest is recent history: Nehru, the founder of Indian secularism, confining the reform of family laws in the mid-1950s to Hindus, leaving Muslim polygamy and instant talaq untouched; his daughter Indira Gandhi - who got the 1950 Constitution amended retrospectively in 1976 to write secularism into its Preamble - drawing up a 15-point programme for religious minorities as if they need to be treated separately from other citizens; his grandson Rajiv Gandhi getting Parliament to nullify the Supreme Court's judgement in the Shah Bano case; and the last Congress Prime Minister, PV Narasimha Rao, conferring statutory status and the powers of a civil court on the Minorities Commission.

The BJP stands for equal rights to all citizens and appeasement of none. Yet such is the hegemony of Gandhi-Nehru minorityism on the Indian polity that the Vajpayee Cabinet decided on February 4, 2003, to continue the subsidy of Rs 12,000 on air travel to nearly 72,000 Haj pilgrims. Abolition of the patently non-secular Haj subsidy is not part of the minimum common programme of the NDA on which the BJP-led coalition rests. Clearly, the emergence of secularism in the true sense, which alone can promote the integration of Indian Muslims with their fellow citizens, must await better times.

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articles on hinduism

Vedacharya from the West

By Gaurav Raina

http://www.timesofindia.com/300300/30intw1.htm

David Frawley**, a grand-disciple of Ramana Maharishi, is widely acknowledged as a Vedacharya. Also known as Vamadeva Shastri, he was conferred the title of `Pandit' for his pioneering research work in Vedic studies, yoga, ayurveda and jyotish in his institute in New Mexico, USA. Author of several books on Hinduism, his writings seek to contrast the generally flippant and dry academic presentations of western Indologists. During a recent lecture-tour of India, David Frawley spoke to **Gaurav Raina:

What do you find unique about India and Hinduism?

India is a greatly favoured land in terms of cosmic beneficence according to the Vaastu aspect of its geographical location. The Himalayas, or Meru Parvat, oversee the whole of India in the likeness of the prime *sahasrara chakra* in the human body. The *tapas* of so many yogis and mystics and the timely appearance of *avataras* and saints over thousands of years have greatly accentuated this spiritual potency. The Hindu religion is like a gigantic banyan tree with its refreshing, ever ramifying growth, change and variegation, which is a contrast to Western religion as a monolithic pillar.

In the Indian ethos the pursuit of consciousness has traditionally been given priority over the need to understand the visible material world. There are various yogic systems for realising this higher consciousness. There is also evidence of a yogic methodology in India's every sphere of learned activity such as in music, dance, poetry, architecture, astronomy and medicine.

Hinduism comprises of a multiplicity of sects and philosophies. Do you think such diversity is a cause for confusion ?

The Indian tradition is pluralistic and has always offered freedom of worshipping the divine in the name and form of one's choice and according to one's individual *samskaras*. It is pluralistic both at the level of religious practices as well as philosophical teachings. For this reason we find more religions inside Hinduism than among all of the world's religions put together.

Pluralism means freedom. It means that we should accept religious differences as a fact of life, like other natural variations. We need freedom to arrive at the truth. The pursuit of *dharma*, the urge for self-realisation and desire for liberation are common to all paths. Rather than as a cause for confusion, I see Indian pluralism as constructively facilitating an individual's spiritual quest.

Can one be rational and scientific and yet be religious and spiritual?

Unlike in the West, Indian sages never perceived science and religion as incompatible. Religion was viewed mainly as a way of knowledge -- *vidya* or *veda*, as a way of seeing, a philosophy. Knowledge is of two types. *Apara vidya* or lower knowledge is necessary for our practical functioning in life and deals with the outer world of name, form and causation. The second, *para* or higher knowledge is concerned with consciousness and the Absolute Reality.

Indian sages regarded higher knowledge as more important, but did not regard lower or outer knowledge as wrong or disharmonious. The science versus religion dichotomy that became dominant in Europe in the nineteenth century, never really existed in classical India. The Indian model therefore seeks to resolve rather than perpetuate the Western conflict between an immoral science versus an irrational religion. Even the different systems of philosophy in India were more like scientific theories meant to be debated rationally or explored and experienced through meditation. Religion can thus be seen as a higher form of science. Anyone who systematically practices prescribed ritual methods, meditation procedures and mantras, can experience higher states of consciousness and thereby validate his or her religious belief.

Why are the ancient scriptures today seen by many as mythical and fantastic?

The Vedas are composed in an ancient language of mantra, myth and symbol and utilise a rich poetic and imagistic expression. The modern mind being conditioned by contemporary thought and language lacks the necessary empathy and insight into the ancient texts. What we tend to regard as mythological in the *puranas* and *itihasas* was never meant to portray the actual state of things in time and space. These texts include not just the visible world in their scope but also the invisible worlds belonging to subtle and astral dimensions of existence.

If there are some apparent chronological inaccuracies in the scriptures, it is because sacred history takes into account the relationship between the temporal and the eternal and is less concerned with the actual dates of various events. This is in sharp contrast to the linear view of time held by contemporary historians who are ignorant of the relationship of time with the eternal. We should not approach the scriptures from the primarily academic standpoint of a historian, archaeologist or linguist; we should exercise an intuitive and meditative insight.

You are a former Catholic. What is your view of the recent incidents of violence against the Indian Christian community?

I do not consider the missionary form of Christianity an enlightened religion. Conversion activity is an assault on intellectual freedom and destroys native cultures as we have seen in Asia, Africa and the Americas. It is more like a sales gimmick which targets the poor and uneducated. Then there is also the history of the missionaries having sub-served European colonisers by providing a justification for their brutalities. The Catholic Church chose to be silent on the excesses of the Nazis and its tacit understanding with Mussolini, and more recently with Chile's Pinochet, are no secret.

Violence against Christians has been exaggerated a great deal by the Western media. Such backlashes have occurred throughout history all over the world. Missionary zeal tends to offend the religious sensibilities of people by denouncing their native religions as false and pagan.

To what extent are India and Indian culture misrepresented in the Western media?

Firstly India is greatly under represented in the Western media. Whatever little news we have emphasises poverty, social problems, human rights abuses and alarmist reports of military and nuclear policies. The entertainment and advertising aspect of the media is on the other extreme and treats everything Indian as ``exotic and erotic''.

Indians have failed to learn the lessons of effective media articulation. Hindu organisations have been labelled fundamentalist and often end up with a far worse image than they deserve. The Indian government too has failed to promote Indian culture and to lobby its case with the Western governments. In fact India's gurus have done much a better job than its politicians and diplomats, in projecting the country's image abroad.

I am concerned at the absence of a dharmic intelligentsia in this country. It is imperative that Indians free themselves from colonial, Marxist and missionary distortions of their culture. They need to stop playing apologist for the genuine cultural and spiritual aspirations of their people. They should reverse their blind and obsequious adulation of the West. The great spiritual traditions of India will be lost if its intellectual kshatriyas fail to wake up to the call of the information war and lay siege to the false apostles of religious freedom.

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Krishna: Friend, Philosopher, Lover and Guide

By PARMARTHI RAINA

http://www.timesofindia.com/today/23edit5.htm

IN the month of *Magh* in August-September each year, *Janmashtami* is celebrated to mark the day Lord Krishna appeared on this earth at the end of *dvapara yuga* 5,000 years ago. To all Hindus, irrespective of their sectarian beliefs, Krishna is Almighty God, the supreme person. What sort of God is Krishna? What does He look like and what are His characteristics? How does He relate with us ordinary humans?

Does Krishna fit Michael Angelo's vision of God? Is He tall, strong and solemn, with long hair and a flowing beard, wearing an ankle length robe? Grand and awesome, one who invokes respect and terror; who is simultaneously compassionate and gracious, remote but attentive, benevolent yet impartial; kind but strict; for whom we should feel affection, gratitude as well as fear?

Krishna is the supreme personality of godhead, the absolute truth, the cause of all causes, the one without a second, the creator, maintainer and destroyer of all that be. Yet devotees see Him as the epitome of sweetness and love. They know Him as a beautiful and adorable infant crawling about in the nude; as a naughty child who breaks butter-pots and steals butter from the houses of the beloved inhabitants of Nandagaon; as a dutiful young boy who tends His father's cows; who plays practical jokes on the *gopis*, young women of Vrajadham, by hiding their clothes while they are bathing in the river; one who has amorous affairs with them as they willingly submit to His unsurpassable beauty and charm; and one who has 16,108 wives.

Krishna is known as the one who ever remains a young lad of sixteen even when over a hundred years old. As the one who enthrals the residents of Vrajmandala with captivating melodies from His flute. Who is addressed lovingly by the Vrajavasis by millions of intimate names like Gopala, Govinda, Nandalala, Yoshodha-nandan, Gopinath, Makhan-chor, Kanhiya, Madana-Mohana and so on. He is loved and adored as God, as master, as friend, as son and as lover.

The *Brahma Samhita* contains hymns sung by Lord Brahma in praise of Lord Krishna. Brahma describes Him thus: ``I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is adept at playing on His flute, who has blooming eyes like lotus petals, whose head is decked with a peacock's feather, whose beautiful body is tinged with the hue of blue clouds, and whose unique loveliness charms millions of cupids. Around His neck swings a garland of flowers graced with a moon-locket; jewelled ornaments adorn His two hands in which He hold His flute. He always revels in pastimes of love, and who eternally manifests Himself in the graceful three-way bending form of Shyamsundara".

Rishi Parasrama, a great Vedic authority, has defined *Bhagavan* as the one who possesses completely the six opulences -- power, wealth, knowledge, fame, beauty and renunciation. Among

ordinary persons it is, perhaps possible for a few to possess one, or at most two or three, of these opulences to a large extent, but no one can possesses all six of them. Krishna qualifies as God because He has all the six opulences in infinite measure.

By definition, God must be the most lovable, the most attractive and alluring of all persons; and His abode must be the most excellent and most desirable of all places; and we would not want anything but to be with Him in His kingdom. Liberated devotees of Sri Krishna have attained to just this state of *sat-cit-ananda* or existence-knowledge-bliss, in His abode Gokula Vrindavana in the spiritual world, and of them the *gopis* of Vrajamandal are eternally established in *madhurya-bhava*, the most intimate and ecstatic of the five main possible relationships with Him.

Krishna's activities are mysterious and unfathomable. he abets in the abduction of His own sister, Subhadra, by His friend and cousin, Arjuna, and encourages their elopement. In the Kurukshetra war He breaks His promise by taking up arms to save His devotee Arjuna and persuades Yudhistra to tell a lie for tactical gain. He uses deception to retrieve the five arrows meant for killing Arjuna and his four brothers given to Duryodhana by Bhisma, in order to save the lives of the Pandavas. He is paramour of the *gopis* of Vraja, many of whom, including Radharani, were married. Inexplicable behaviour for one who professes to be God.

Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita* that the one who knows His true nature is indeed very rare and even the *devas* or gods, fail to understand Him. But that rare devotee, ``Who knows the transcendental nature of my appearance and activities, does not, upon leaving the body, take birth again in this material world but attains My eternal abode".

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LOST TREASURES GONE TO 0

By Ambati M. Rao, Jayakrishna Ambati, Balamurali K. Ambati, Gomathi S. Rao
Rediff On The Net

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'In science, more than in any other human institution, it is necessary to search out the past in order to understand the present and to control the future.'
- J D Bernal, Science in History

As we hurtle into a new millennium, we would do well to reflect where all those 0s came from. The greatness that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome started their numeral systems at one. The Arabs brought the modern numerals, including zero, to Europe centuries ago. But while 1, 2, 3, are commonly and mistakenly referred to as the "Arabic" numerals, they actually originated in India, and are but one of many achievements that became treasures lost to the oblivion of history.

India is the epitome of diversity in all respects, geographically and culturally. From such diversity has bloomed the myriad blossoms of science and mathematics.
Indian science flowered long before the classical age of Europe and flourishes to this day.
India must be credited with the primacy of the invention of unaccountably finite principles and theorems that have been granted to later Arabs and Europeans. In celebrating India's contribution to learning we shall find a deep and long-nurtured reverent and respectful love of learning.

There is still much to be learned from ancient Indian science. The depths of the Vedas and other scriptures, as well as more "scholarly" extant work, offer much to the modern world of science. Indeed, we can all profit from an in-depth examination of ancient Indian science. Yet it is a sad testament to our community's inability to transmit our heritage to our youth that most of our youngsters don't know the difference between Brahmagupta and Brahmaputra.

This article focuses on some of the more important and relevant inventions and discoveries of ancient Indians and attempts to analyze the reasons why these scientists never received their due credit.

In the 16th century, there grew a tendency in Europe to trace scientific thought to the achievements of Mediterranean antiquity. This direct link between modern science and ancient Greece is increasingly perpetuated by a flourishing literature in the cause of a simplistic, but false, understanding of the history of science. Most Western historians preach the tale that a Greek miracle led to the dawn of science. The facts of older civilizations are cursorily covered and

mainly for the perverted purpose of showing why there was no real science before the Greeks.

Arnold Reymand echoed these sentiments well: "Compared to empirical and fragmentary knowledge which the peoples of the East had laboriously gathered together during long centuries, Greek science constitutes a veritable miracle."

However, historian Will Durant correctly observed: "Europe and America are the spoiled child and grandchild of Asia and have never quite realized the wealth of their pre-classical inheritance." Most Western study of ancient India has been a tunnel vision dominated by a prefabricated psychology. The parochial provincialism of mindless Eurocentrism has distorted the history of civilization as originating in Greece while summing up India's contribution in a line or two.

However, our own apathy in addition to Western neglect has led to the demise of ancient Indian science from the pages of history. The disguised racism of some historians notwithstanding, we must share the blame for this tragedy. It is imperative that we shed our ignorance and elucidate what for countless centuries has been buried in the recess of history.

India's most important contribution to science is nothing: the concept of nothing, or zero, is central to the understanding of all else. It is time that we raise out scientific heritage from what it is today: nothing.

No ancient civilization possessed more talent or accomplished more feats in mathematics than India. For instance, the most ingenious creation in all of mathematics, the decimal system, of which the famed mathematician LaPlace wrote: "It is India that gave us the ingenious method of expressing all numbers by 10 symbols, a profound and important idea which appears so simple to us now that we ignore its true merit. But its very simplicity, the great ease which it has lent to all computations, puts our arithmetic in the first rank of useful inventions; and we shall appreciate the grandeur of this achievement the more when we remember that it escaped the genius of Archimedes and Apollonius, two of the greatest men produced by antiquity."

These misnomered "Arabic" numerals appeared on the Rock Edicts of Ashoka (256 BC), a thousand years before they appeared in the Arabic literature. Even those few who know this fact know little more about the myriad contributions of Indian mathematics.

India's work in science is young as a secular pursuit but old as an auxiliary interest of her priests. Science started with the priests, originated in astronomy and mathematics governing religious festivals, and was preserved in the temples and transmitted through the generations.

Consider the most famous elementary theorem in mathematics: the so-called Pythagorean theorem, which states that the square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle equals the sum of the squares of the other two sides. The Sulvasutras (collection of rules concerning measurements) of Baudhayana (600 BC) describe this identity almost 200 years before Pythagoras: "The diagonal of an oblong produces by itself both the areas which the two sides of the oblong produce separately."

Aryabhata (476-520 AD), the father of Indian mathematics and astronomy, computed pi to

3.1416, a value not equaled in Europe until Purbach (1423-61). Pi is computed to 11 digits in the Karanapaddhati work (15th century) as 3.1415926535, a value not equaled in Europe until much later. More importantly, Indian mathematicians knew algebra at least as early as the 5th century AD Known as Bijaganitam, algebra (a corruption of the Arabic word Al-Jabr) was used extensively in astronomical calculations and referred to by Aryabhata in his treatise Aryabhattiya. This science was couriered to the West by the Arabs.

Trigonometry too was known to Indian mathematicians and astronomers before their European counterparts. It was used in India from the Gupta period (3rd century AD) onwards, and the Surya-Siddhanta (4th century AD) gives a table of sines.

Indian atomic theory greatly predates Democritus (430 BC). Kashyapa (aka Kanada), in his Vaisheshika Sutra, formulated an advanced theory of atomic structure in the 6th century BC. He also stated the principle of volume displacement long before Archimedes. Pakudha Kayayana (580 BC), a contemporary of Buddha, taught atomic theory by propounding the theory that undifferentiated potential matter (tanmatra) forms the universal energy of the cosmos by forming atoms.

Brahmagupta (598-660 AD) anticipated the gravitational theory: "Things fall to the ground not because of any inherent force within but because of the pull from the earth." A century before Brahmagupta, Varahamihira claimed that objects remain on the earth's surface due to an internal attractive force and that a similar force keeps celestial bodies in their positions. In fact, the ancient Sanskrit has a word for gravity --
Gurutvakarshan.

Aryabhata also proposed the heliocentric theory a millennium before Copernicus, who is generally credited with this revolutionary idea. In poetic form, Aryabhata stated that the earth's diurnal rotation on its axis produced the daily rising and setting of planets and stars. In fact, the Sandhya Vandanam (morning prayers to the sun), dating back to the Vedic age, contains numerous references to the sun as the center of the solar system.

Long before Columbus staked his claim that the world was round, Aryabhata recognized that the earth was spherical and Brahmagupta gave a figure of 36,000 km for the earth's circumference, not far from the actual value.

And a word about the game that is so popular among us Indians -- chess. It is so old that half the world claims it. Archaeologists generally believe it arose in India,where the oldest indisputable appearance in 750 AD. The word chaturanga became transformed into the Arabic shatranj and finally chess.

We hope the foregoing non-exhaustive recital will serve to kindle pride and interest in our collective heritage.
Trying to forge links with the past without teaching about our contributions is akin to planting cut flowers. Parents must pass on knowledge about our past to our youth, much like a relay race, lest our leaders of tomorrow grow bereft of vital knowledge and become rudderless in an information-driven world.

The Ambati family has conducted the Educational Excellence Program, for middle and high school students, for the last decade. These free classes are held every Saturday at the Swaminarayan Temple in Flushing, New York.

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A time to fast with faith

By P.V.L.N. RAO

http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/fr/stories/2003022801260600.htm

AMONG THE hallowed trinity of the Hindu pantheon, Lord Siva evokes equal devotion but more fear than Vishnu and Brahma. This is because, when provoked Siva opens his third eye (the Sun, the Moon and Agni are the three eyes) thereby causing widespread devastation. Hence the concern of the devotees to convert the God's fierce temperament into graceful benediction.

Mahasivaratri, which falls on Magha Krishna Chaturti (March 1, this year), is the grand night of Siva's marriage to Parvati. The festival is popular throughout India, especially among Saivites who celebrate it with faith and fervour. People fast the whole day and spend the night keeping awake (gambling which goes on in some places is a misconceived aberration) singing bhajans, playing drums and dancing, thus creating a holy ambience all around. Unmarried girls fast the whole day propitiating Lord Siva (Ardhanareeswarar) for granting them an ideal husband.

The number five has special significance for Lord Siva; while Panchakshari ("Om Namasivayah") is his core mantra, the five Siva lingams corresponding to Panchabhutas (five divine elements) are considered most sacred. They are Kanchi Ekambareswara temple Prithvi (Earth), Thiruvanaikoil (near Tiruchirapalli) — Apa (water), Thiruvannamalai (North Arcot District) — Tejas (Fire), Chidambaram (South Arcot), — Akas (Ether) and Kalahasti (Andhra Pradesh) — Vayu (Air). Siva is always worshipped with Panchamruta — a mix of milk, butter, curd, honey and sugar.

While the sitting and dancing Siva (Nataraja) is the deity in some places, worship of the Lingam is common throughout the country.

Kedarnath, Kasi Viswanath, Sri Saila Mallikarjuna, Draksharama Bhimeswara and Rameswaram are the most popular pilgrim centres.

For Chennai, the Kapaleeswarar temple is a landmark, while the ancient Dandiswarar (Velachery) and Marundiswarar (Tiruvanmiyur) temples also draw huge crowds, especially during Sivaratri.

A German scholar, Gustav Oppert argued that while Saligram represents the feminine aspect, the Sivalingam is symbiotic of masculine energy.

Swami Vivekananda rebutted this explanation and traced the reference to the Atharva Veda: "The worship of the Siva Lingam originated from the famous hymn in the "Atharva Veda Samhita", sung in praise of the Yupastambha, the sacrificial post which gave place in time to the Siva Lingam and was deified to the high Devahood of Sri Sankara".

This stambha represents the Vedic concept of the brightness of Siva's body, his matted hair and blue throat and His riding on the Nandi, the bull.

Along with celebrations, worship and fasting, is *bhang*, the favourite drink of Lord Siva, which is a `must' for many Saivites.

According to a legend, Lord Siva although married to Parvati, is an ascetic living in the forest. It is

interesting to know that at one time Kashmir Muslims took part in the Sivaratri celebrations of pandits.

The festival would begin three weeks in advance and culminate on Sivaratri day. Unfortunately, this major manifestation of communal harmony no more exists.

One can only hope for the revival of this healthy practice not only in Kashmir but throughout the country, highlighting that all festivals are meant to promote brotherhood and harmony and not hatred between religions.

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articles on hinduism

Toilet Seats Sport Hindu Gods

www.rediff.com

Sittin' Pretty, a Seattle-based manufacturer of designer toilet seats, may find itself in the hot seat with the Hindu community in the days ahead.



This morning, the American Hindu Anti-Defamation Coalition stumbled across the fledgling firm's Web site (sittinprettydesign.com) and, much to their chagrin, discovered their Sacred Seats product line.

The seats, which have bold images of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Kali emblazoned on the bottom of the lids, are available for $130 and come in three colors: bright red, royal blue, and black.

"All toilet seats are completely functional," the Web site explains. And "three coats of waterproof clear coat protect the art, as well as make the seats completely washable with a non-abrasive cleaner."

"They should stop doing this at once," Vijay Pallod, a spokesperson for the AHADC said angrily. "This is nonsense. It's absolutely the wrong place to put our gods."

Pallod also pointed out that the product line's exclusive focus on Hinduism is another cause for concern.

"They say the Sacred Seat collection, but when you look at the site only Hinduism is featured," he observed. "That doesn't make any sense to me. If you're going to call it that, why not pick up all the religions? So we don't know why they are doing it."

Repeated phone calls and e-mails to Sittin' Pretty by the AHADC and Rediff.com went unanswered today. But a Dun & Bradstreet business report revealed the company was founded in 1999 and employs two people. Lamar Van Dyke is listed as a partner and the company does not appear to have a distribution presence beyond its Web site.

Pallod said the AHADC will give Van Dyke time to reply to their first overtures. “The first thing we do is talk to the people politely and present our views,” he said. “Many of them stop right there. But if they don’t, we can involve lawyers and begin protests.”

The San Diego-based AHADC has already carried out several successful campaigns to end the insensitive use of Hindu deities in the United States. Most recently it convinced Fortune Dynamic, a California-based company, to stop importing shoes from Taiwan imprinted with images of Hindu gods and goddesses.

Responding to AHADC complaints, a topless dancing bar in Texas ended their use of Radha and Krishna iconography in their advertisements and stage shows this year.

And shlokas from the *Bhagavad Gita* were also clipped out of an orgy scene in the video and cable television version of Stanley Kubrick’s *Eyes Wide Shut* after AHADC protests.

“This has been happening for a long time, but we’re getting more assertive and proactive now,” Pallod said. “We have the tools and the conviction to talk to them and change their minds.”

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India to emerge as major regional power by 2015: Report

India will emerge as an unparalleled regional and economic power by the year 2015 and its growth along with China and Russia may form a "de facto geo-strategic alliance" to counterbalance US and western influence, a US National Intelligence Council projection for 2015 has said.

The size of India's population --1.2 billion by 2015 -- and its technologically driven economic growth virtually dictate that India will be a rising regional power, it said.

The report also points out that the international community will have to deal with the military, political and economic dimensions of the rise of China and India and the continued decline of Russia.

The future being contemplated by intelligence officials is part of a long-ranging forecasting endeavour compiled in the National Intelligence Council 2015 Project which seeks to come up with a range of scenarios the world could face then.
The council is made up of senior analysts who advise Director of Central Intelligence George J Tenet. The study was
undertaken in consultation with a wide range of think tanks and non-official experts.

Among developing countries, India will remain in the forefront in developing information technology, led by a growing class of high-tech workers and entrepreneurs, the report says.

"India's relatively strong educational system, democracy and English language skills position it well to take advantage of gains related to information technology," the projections reveal.

India, nevertheless, faces enormous challenges in spreading the benefits of growth to hundreds of millions of impoverished, often illiterate citizens, particularly in the northern states.

"India will strengthen its role as a regional power, but many uncertainties about the effects of global trends on its society cast doubts on how far India will go. India faces growing extremes between wealth and poverty, a mixed picture on natural resources, and problems with internal governance," it warned.

(source: **http://in.rediff.com/news/2003/dec/06ind.htm**

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articles on hinduism

India to be No 1 knowledge hub by 2025

India has the potential to become the number one knowledge producing centre in the world by 2025, going by the way that things are moving. It is a story of lilies in the pond, where intellectual capital keeps doubling," said R A Mashelkar, the director-general of Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

Delivering the 33rd ASCI (Administrative Staff College of India) Foundation Lecture in Hyderabad, he observed that the winds of technoglobalism (a strong interaction between the internationalisation of technology and the globalisation of the economy) were bringing about a silent revolution in India.

"India is on the march. Interesting transformation is taking place in the country. It is great time to be in India and interesting to see the changes that are unfolded here," he said, adding that the demographic shift in the western world meant that a country like India with relatively favourable demographic profile with a large portion of working and talented young people could become a global innovation hub."

"More than 100 companies around the world have set up their R&D centres in the country in the last five years and India offers real and unique opportunities for becoming a true global R&D platform," he said.

"For a dollar that is invested here you can go so many miles, where you can't go anywhere else in the world. It is going to be the land of opportunity. There is a world-class technical manpower. India's emergence as a global R&D hub has a social, economic, political and strategic significance," Mashelkar pointed out.

Analysing the possible impact of this on 'brain drain,' he said that a normal scientist would love to stay in India, provided he was given a challenging job here and all this would become possible as India became a great R&D hub, with the world's best companies doing their most challenging R&D in India.

"Another implication of this would be that there would be enhanced competition among institutions and firms to seek the best brains to work for them. This will automatically mean that the institutions will really have to create an intellectually stimulating, rewarding and hassle-free environment," Mashelkar analysed.

Mentioning the drugs and pharmaceuticals sector, in which India has the potential to become an R&D destination, the CSIR director-general said: "The increased emphasis on diseases for the poor coupled with the setting up of global health funds implies that there is a scope that India can

become a destination of the creations -- global knowledge for global good through global funding."

source: **http://in.rediff.com/money/2003/dec/06hub.htm**

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The Beauty of the Vedas

By Paul William Roberts - "Empire of the Soul: Some journeys in India." Pg 299 – 325
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1573226351/o/qid=947163138/sr=8-1/103-4559356-3757423

" In the beginning the Divine Will arose,
This was the first seed from the Creator's mind
Those who can see deeper by putting their mind and heart together as one
Found the underlying essence of all existence was deep
beyond all that exists,
Found the non-existent existing in the existent."

- RIG VEDA 10.129.4



The Vedas are the quintessence of classical Hindu philosophy. Thinking with your heart; loving with your mind. All yoga and meditation aim to attain this goal. Anything else is delusion, or worse. And when the heart sees, it sees the unknowable, nameless, formless, limitless, supreme God. He is called the nonexistent because he is eternal, beyond existence. God manifest is the fabric of creation itself. They are one.The heart that learns to think realizes this truth and merges into the eternal oneness. As William Blake put it, " If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear as it is, infinite."



This merging with the Eternal, this inner transformation, this direct experience of Truth – these are the goals of which the Vedic sages speak. They explain the nature of the universe, of life, while admitting that Creation itself is the one unknowable mystery. To the Vedic sages, creation indicated that point before which there was no Creator, the line between indefinable nothingness and something delineated by attributes and function, at least. Like the moment before the Big Bang Theory. These concepts preoccupy high wisdom, the Truth far removed from mere religion.

Recent research and scholarship make it increasingly possible to believe that the Vedic era was the lost civilization whose legacy the Egyptians and the Indians inherited. There must have been one. There are too

many similarities between hieroglyphic texts and Vedic ones, these in turn echoed in a somewhat diluted form and a confused fashion by the authors of Babylonian texts and the Old Testament.



In the **Hymn of Creation,** (Rig Veda 10.129.3)

In the beginning there was darkness,
Utter darkness, darkness upon darkness,
The world then was merely its primordial essence, its formless fabric.
Thus what would become this world was first wrapped within the
All pervading power of the Eternal One
Before whom our material world is but a trifle brought into existence
By the omnipotent force of His will alone.

Yet the Vedas go further, being philosophy, or really spiritual sciences, rather than myth.

Who truly knows, who can honestly say where.
This universe cam from
And where it will vanish to at the End?
Those godlike wise men who claim they know were born long
After the birth of Creation.
Who then could know where our universe really came from?
And whoever knows or does not know where Creation came from,
Only one gazing at its vastness from the very roof of the final

Heaven-

"Only such a one could possibly know,
But does even He know? "

The Bible begins with the Creation. Before the Creation, however, there was the Creator, but does even He know what was there before He existed ?Long before such philosophical questions occurred to other historical peoples, Vedism posited the existence of something more ultimate than the one God. Whatever must have created Him. ***That*** is presuming the absolute and basic reality. Or is it? Long before such philosophical questions occurred to other historical peoples, Vedism posited the existence of something more ultimate than the one God. Whatever must have created Him. ***That*** is presuming the absolute and basic reality. Or is it?

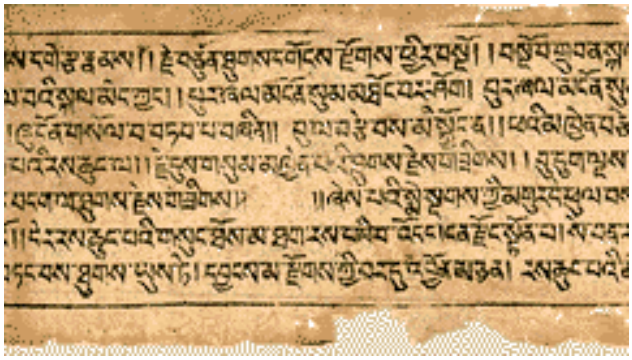
This is mysticism that is simultaneously metalogic and the kind of thing those bardic sages living some twenty-five thousand years ago thought about a great deal, according to Hindu tradition. The Vedas are the very first compositions mankind produced dating back at least twenty thousand years. Most orthodox historians and anthropologists strongly dispute such a view. They confuse writing with civilization and deny meaningful history to any people who did not leave a written record. A rich culture does not

necessarily depend on writing, as the Celtic civilization proves. **They are the most sophisticated, most profoundly beautiful, and most complete presentations of what Aldous Huxley termed the "perennial philosophy" that is at the core of all religions. In modern academia, of course, there is not supposed to be any "ancient wisdom".**

The Vedas go much further in outlining the nature of reality than any other religious texts still in use. Some Vedic hymns paint the exquisite glories of the natural world: the preternatural beauty of predawn light, its rosy fingers holding the iridescent steel-blue sky; some celebrate the welcome cool of evening the scented breeze of a calm and refreshing night, its basalt dome studded with shimmering pearls and diamonds.

Beauty permeates them, a reflection of Truth.

The Vedas hold within them enough information to rebuild human civilization from scratch, if necessary. I think someone did believe that might be necessary one day.



The Vedas still represent eternal truth in the purest form ever written. And they are what drew me to India in the first place, what kept me there, and what draws me back still. Technology has certainly evolved at a rapid pace in the last century, when man began to gauge the quality of a civilization according to its level of technological advancement. However, **Arnold Toynbee**, the greatest historian of his age, maintained that the test for a major civilization was its fostering of a major religion. The human race, in fact, reveals a marked deterioration in the quality of its advancement over the past five hundred years. It's made no progress. Yet progress has become a secular religion - even after Progress had advanced to the point of enabling mankind either to blast the planet into a radioactive wasteland or to poison it into uninhabitability. Better health care and global communications cannot be considered worth this kind of cost.

After Darwin, who was, to be fair, misunderstood, the concept undermined those sciences that developed around the same time as the theory of evolution - notably archaeology, evolution -as-progess became intrinsic to the very thinking process of Western man, conditioned into him from early childhood on.

Above all, the notion of advanced civilizations, of "ancient wisdom" existing long before written history even began, was complete heresy in the Church of Progress. The great cultures of Old Kingdom of Egypt and the Indus Valley were admired for the impressive remains they left, yet dismissed as ignorant and superstitious tyrannies dominated by megalomaniacal rulers obsessed with constructing monuments to their egos and subjugating the masses with mumbo jumbo. There is not a shred of evidence to support such a view, say, Old Kingdom Egypt.

The architectural achievements from such civilizations are feats of science and beauty that have never been equaled. Could evolution-as-progress be supported by a look at the Great Pyramid of Giza, the massive Temple of Amon at Karnac compared to ....what? The Empire State Building? Canary Wharf? The CNN Tower? Marshall McLuhan once wisely observed that you could determine a society's major concerns by observing for what purpose its largest building was constructed?

It is at this moment, according to their own internal evidence, that the first hymns of the Rig Veda were composed and passed to this new species, our distant ancestors. **The level of understanding, knowledge,**

and wisdom contained in the Vedic hymns does not just spring out of nowhere. Nor does the language containing these, mankind's loftiest thoughts. The great Rig Veda, in ten thousand verses, contains an astounding stock of some thirty-five thousand words, all of them imbued with great elasticity and enormous potentiality for the coming of new terms.

For the Vedic sages, the three great Realities were Creator, Creation and Language - all sacred, all interlinked.

It is said in Hindu scriptures that the gods themselves envy human birth, because only within time is there free will and movement. Eternity in the Vedas is utter stillness; it exists entirely outside time, conceived of as that point where the future meets the past. There is no stable principle of evil in Vedic philosophy. There is no infernal realm for sinners. Its nondualism is really beyond monotheism - which creates a fundamental duality of God and man. Evil is not envisaged as a quality opposed to good. It is the absence of good, just as darkness is the absence of light, not its opposite quality.

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Truth behind all ephemeral truths. The Creation leads us to the Creator, to the highest knowledge, which is integrated into one. Like the Creator, human beings create, but humankind's creations are separate from humans themselves. Thus Vedic God is an architect whose structures all exist ***within*** him. Nothing can exist outside the Supreme Reality, and it in turn is within all:

" It is always moving, yet it never moves.
It is infinitely far away, yet it is close,
It is within all of this creation,
And yet it is beyond everything."

- YAJUR VEDA 22.5

Vedic terminology for "creation" implies that it is the steady process transforming ***asat***, the unmanifest, into ***sat,*** the manifest. In this sense, the entire-space-and-time continuum, all the vastness and infinite variety of creation, exists within the existence of the Eternal One - as if it were a concept in his mind. God is also called ***hiranyagarbha,*** the "Womb of Light."

" The Womb of Light existed before there was any other thing. It gave birth to all. It is the sole ruler of all existence, maintaining and upholding everything between earth and heaven. To the Lord alone, and to no others, we should offer all our love and respect."

- RIG VEDA 10.121.2: ATHARVA VEDA 4.2.7

This Supreme Reality is not a mere abstract concept of philosophy, either. It is a reality of the Vedas, whose invocation and evocation are essential for the whole process of spiritual growth and the fulfillment of life. God is a dynamic reality that should concern an individual every moment of his life. we forget this, or ignore it, but many hymns remind us that God never neglects us.

" God is always near. He never leaves. But near as He always is, no one and no thing ever sees Him. Such is the great Art of the Lord - Poetry that is deathless, songs that will never seem old. "

- ATHARVA VEDA 10.8.32

Vedic Invocations, which are deemed animistic and crudely pagan by many scholars, merely invoke God through his attributes and functions. He is the Force behind all of nature's mighty forces, the Light behind the light; the Terror behind the terror; the Delight behind delights' the Ultimate Activity behind all activities. Similarly, God's various names in the Vedas are the one God viewed in terms of his attributes, functions, and nature. There is no real suggestion of anything besides the One.

The Yajur Veda (60.17) states that, removed from the context of its creation and its relationship as the ruler of souls, the Ultimate Reality would have only one name: Om which is written in Sanskrit and pronounced more like ***Aum*** and represents the utterly comprehensive syllable, embracing within it the scope of the complete phonetic alphabet containing the potential to create, sustain, and bring about dissolution.

Saint John's account of the Creation begins at an earlier moment than the Genesis account, and its similarity to Vedic writings is startling.

Comparison between a great deal of Jesus' actual teachings, as recorded in the Gospels, and Vedic spiritual science continues to fascinate scholars. Considering controversies caused by material in the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as other texts suppressed or even quite clearly falsified, it seems foolish to dismiss any speculations.

But Western scholars have tried to ridicule the Vedas.

To subjugate and destroy a culture, of course, which is a major facet of every imperial adventure, you have to regard it as worthless, savage, and primitive.

" He is without any form, yet dwells inside and outside all things
With form and shape,
Yet He is entirely free of error, faultless and pure.
He is far beyond anything a human body can comprehend.
And being the Divine Poet. He is inspiration itself. "

He maintains peace and harmony because He is both peace and harmony made manifest.

Yajur Veda 10.8

" He is present in all places and rules everywhere.
His power controls utterly all the three regions:
Earth, the Middle-Air, and the highest heavens.
One foot is rooted in things we understand:
But the other rests in a realm of deep, dark mystery,
A place far beyond the knowledge of mankind."

Artha Veda 7.26.4

" He is substance of every great eternal law,
And He can be perceived in the universal forces of life.
His presence is there in the vast seas,

Across the teeming earth,'
And in the soaring mountain peaks."

Rig Veda 4.40.5

Hardly polytheism. Long before the burgeoning Hindu pantheon; long before Siva, Vishnu, Rama, Ganesh, Parvati, Saraswati, Laxmi, and the 35,999,993 others, this is the God of the Vedas, and religion in its most pristine form.

Source : Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys in India. By Paul William Roberts Chapter 13. pg-299-323 ISBN 1-57322-635-1 Mr. Roberts graduated from and taught literature at Oxford University. He currently lives with his wife and children in Toronto, where he has been the recipient of numerous screenwriting, journalism, and other awards. His writing have appeared in Harper's Conde Nast Traveler, The Toronto Star.

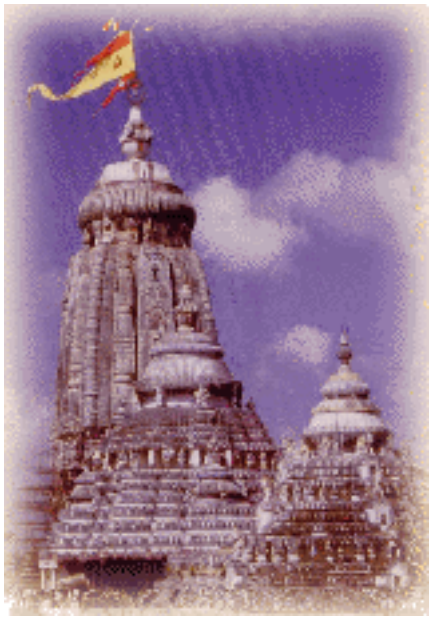
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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Touch of harmony
By Bruce C. Robertson
http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/1999/08/15/stories/1315079b.htm

It was a momentous event in Maryland when the Greater Baltimore Temple and Community Centre was formally inaugurated. This brings to reality an eight-year dream of the immigrant community there, says BRUCE C. ROBERTSON.



A MAJOR festival in the religious life of Baltimore, Maryland, took place last year. The Greater Baltimore Temple and Community Centre was formally inaugurated in a murti pranapratistha sthapana in which six deities were consecrated - Siva Lingam, Durgama, Ganesha, Saraswati, Nandi and Hanuman. In April this year more deities - Radha, Krishna, Rama, Sita, Lakshman and Balaji - were consecrated. In May, Svetambara and Digambara Jain munis performed pratistha ceremonies installing a murti Mahavira.

These uniquely momentous events bring to fruition an eight-year dream of an immigrant community in Baltimore to define itself by establishing a public place of worship and a cultural centre. Like so many others (African-American, Italian-American, German- American, Korean-American, Muslim, and Sikh, to name only a few), they have moulded this multi-culturally rich, economically vibrant, international, university town as house of worship and community centre - this is the American way.

Americans are a very religious people. We attend church, synagogue, mosque, mandir and gurudvara in record numbers. Conservative religious groups are growing the fastest, largely at the expense of the so-called "mainline" Christian denominations such as the Episcopal (Church of England), Presbyterian, Methodist, and Lutheran. Islam is one of the fastest growing religions.

Religion is "in" among university students. At the John Hopkins University, a group of American-born Indian-American Hindu students study the Bhagavad Gita together once a week. Muslim students read the Quran in a dormitory room. Bible-study and prayer groups meet regularly. The ecumenical chaplain's office is one of the busiest on campus. The other side is that religion in America is big business.

There are over a million Hindus in America, with seven Hindu temples in the Baltimore-Washington-northern Virginia area alone. The Greater Baltimore Temple and

Community Centre may be unique for its latitudinarianism. There is perhaps no Hindu temple in India like it.

A quick glance at the names on the temple committee suggests a profile of the temple congregation (this is the word we use here for religious aggregations) - Andhras, Bengalis, Delhiites, Gujaratis, Maharashtrians, Malayalis, Orians, Punjabis, Tamils, Saiva, Sakta, Vaishnava and Jain, including some of the mid- Atlantic region's most distinguished architects, physicians, lawyers, academics, engineers, managers, entrepreneurs, and private citizens.

Commanding (in symbol and in fact) the high ground overlooking the Finksburg Shopping Centre, the Greater Baltimore Centre is situated among working farms in some of Carroll County's most scenic countryside. This is the trend among many affluent religious communities located outside urban centres, attracted by relaxed zoning laws, favourable local tax and building codes, and low crime environments. In America, a shikhara (temple tower) is an eye-catching backdrop to a Roy Rogers and Pizza Hut.

Mistaken for a synagogue, even a Mexican restaurant, it is unmistakably a mandir blended into the very conservation, nominally Christian rural farming community. The 22,000 sq.ft. building is an eloquent statement of inventive Hindu architectural adaptability that the Vastu Sastra would surely sanction. Chitrachedu Naganna, Praful Vani, Nikhil Sheth, Jaya Bansal, Satyam Chary, Ashok and Jyoti Kumta, as well as other members of the temple committee, have repeatedly emphasised to me that this Hindu-Jain congregation is committed to reaching out to the surrounding non-Hindu community.

Again, like many religious community centres in America, the Greater Baltimore Centre performs a dual role of being a religious education-cultural and a community centre to local non- member organisations, typically groups like the Boys and Girls Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous, school tutoring, family support agencies, proliferating "Save the whale" or "the Chesapeake Bay" environmental and other special interest groups. The only rules are: no alcohol and no meat.



Uday Purushe, of Laurel Design Alliance architects, a graduate of the J.J. School of Art in Mumbai, who primarily designs retirement communities (some for the aging Indian-American community), described some of the difficulties in designing a Hindu temple in America. Aside from keeping within budget, building codes required separate security, electrical, heating and air conditioning systems for the community hall and the mandapa. Even then homas had to be performed outside the mandapa in five brick-lined homakundas under a specially erected shamiana so that the fire alarm would not go off.

The temple is in the Oriya style, modelled after the Lingaraj temple of Puri. The mandapa

occupies the east wing (in compliance with rubrics in the Matsya Purana, according to P. V. Kane's monumental History of Dharma Shastra), with the garbha griha (sanctum sanctorum) directly under the shikhara. The shikhara itself is high enough to be seen clearly from the highway about a half-mile away, though low by Indian standards. The vimana is also lower than in South Indian temples. Around two front sides of the complex there is a canopy. Windows appear to be dressed in the "Hindu-style" with rajagopuram-like stepped ledges atop columns. The masonry exterior is painted beige with salmon trim and accents.

Distinctly American touches include tinted, plate-glass windows along the front lobby area, a concession to both the vagaries of mid-Atlantic weather and local canons of ornamentation, a circular dirveway leading to the temple entrance, and a well- lighted parking lot, and all within pleasingly landscaped grounds. Purushe has also completed the design of a new Swaminarayan temple in New Jersey.

The three-day sthapana was presided over by six mahants and seemed to follow the general outline that Kane gives for the consecration of immovable (sthirarca) murtis.

The acharya of sthapaka, was Sri Thanga Bhattar, former chief priest of the Meenakshi temple in Madurai, who had come from Thailand where he had presided over another temple opening.

I attended the maha abhishekham on the last day with my oldest daughter and son, Aimee and Andrew. We arrived as a procession of devotees bearing kalashas on their heads was returning from the homa ceremony in the shamiana. It reminded us of the procession of palms last Palm Sunday, another cold and rainy day. In the mandapa, families, many with little children, were gathered, teenagers off by themselves, young women in colourful saris and salwar kameezes, and a few young men dressed, with begrudging congruity, in kurta, docksider slacks and chappals. Coloured pennants were strung connecting the garbha griha with the homa garh outside.

I was mesmerised by the chanting of slokas, the cadences, the retroflex nasalisations, the allitervative, liquid soft, sesquipedalian, civilised sounds, in much the same way I love plainsong in my own tradition, especially when it is a sonorous baritone voice, sound, sabda, the eternal word of advaita vedanta, recalled to mind the words of the Taittiriya Samhita "Vac, Speech, once upon a time escaped from the gods, and settled in the trees. Her voice still resounds in wooden instruments." I have a recording of Jesudass chanting selections from the Bhagavad Gita and Rig Veda. I heard a live recitation of the Quran recently and it was also moving.

The acharya chanted while the assisting pujaris bathed and dressed first the lingam then each of the other deities. Chanting, bells and incense, this was very "high church" as we would say. Sitting at the back I understood about as much of what was being said as I, a Protestant, did back in the pre-Vatican II days of the Catholic Latin mass. Yet, or perhaps because of this (as though sacred processes are profaned by our comprehension) a sense of the sacred, of the holy, was palpable as congregants watched and listened, a few whispering (japa) the chanted slokas. On a cold, damp winter day in central Maryland, U.S., a beautiful wooded hillside was transformed into a sacred grove, hallowed ground.

The singing of bhajans at the end brought me back to an awareness of a community at worship as individuals, then family groups joined in. Worship is contagious and we left reflecting upon the significance of the pageant.

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articles on hinduism

Stone writ could hold key to Ayodhya

12TH CENTURY INSCRIPTION HAS VERSES ON RAM AND REFERS TO 'UNIQUE TEMPLE'
AMBIKANAND SAHAY & VINAY PANDEY
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?art_id=919876434

NEW DELHI/PATNA: A 12th-century stone inscription recovered from the debris of the disputed structure at Ayodhya could hold the key to the resolution of the temple-mosque imbroglio.

Experts believe the 20-line inscription comprising 30 verses in Sanskrit said to have been embedded in the lower portion of a wall of the structure that was demolished on December 6, 1992 could provide conclusive proof of the existence of a Ram temple at the site in the 12th century and even earlier.

Although little has been heard of the inscription, believers in its "magical" power to resolve the dispute include hardcore Sangh Parivar elements as well as religious leaders among them Puri Shankaracharya Swami Swaroopanand Saraswati who have been working for a solution to the problem outside the VHP umbrella.

A leading proponent of the "inscription as key" theory has been Acharya Kishore Kunal, who took voluntary retirement from the IPS recently and is now vice-chancellor of the Kameshwar Singh Sanskrit University, Darbhanga. In his younger days as an IPS officer working in the Union home ministry, he acted as the Centre's negotiator for the Ayodhya dispute.

Acharya Kunal, who was behind the renovation of the Hanuman temple at Patna, has been arguing that the authenticity of the inscription could be verified by an independent organisation like UNESCO. Once that is done, he says, it would be easier to persuade the Muslim leaders for a solution.

According to an article published in the journal, Itihas Darpan, in 1996, the inscription is written in the Nagari script which was in vogue in the 12th century. The inscription (verse 5) pays obeisance to the "janmabhumi of that incarnation of Vishnu which possesses the highest and most desirable glory in this world and whose splendour was constantly enhanced by performing thousands of brave deeds". There could be little doubt about this incarnation being Ram.

The inscription (verse 21) refers to a temple of Vishnuhari built by King Nayachandra. It says that stone slabs, chiselled out of solid boulders brought from the mountain peaks, were arranged to form "a unique temple the like of which had not been constructed by any other previous king". It adds that the temple was crowned with a golden kalasa (copula) lending great beauty to it.

The inscription refers twice to the Gahadavala king, Govindachandra, who reigned in this part of the country from 1114 to 1154 AD. Nayachandra appears to have been a vassal of the Gahadavala king.

The 1.10m x 0.56m buff sandstone, found broken into two pieces from the debris of the demolished structure, was inspected by a team of experts from the Archaeological Survey of India in March 2000 under instructions from the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court. It has since been kept at the Ram Katha Kunj under the seal of the high court. Ram Katha Kunj, which was the office of the VHP in the Janmabhumi complex, prior to the demolition, is now part of the land acquired by the Central government on January 7, 1993.

(With inputs from V N Arora in Faizabad)

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Delhi's ancient iron pillar faces a modern predicament

Tara Shankar Sahay in New Delhi

http://www.rediff.com/news/1999/jul/26dilli.htm

White patches have begun appearing on the ancient iron pillar in New Delhi which for over 1,600 years has been regarded as a metallurgical wonder by defying rust and the vagaries of nature.

It stands proud and defiant, an exotic relic of an extravagant past. The iron pillar, located at the centre of the Quwwatul Mosque in the historic Mehrauli area, continues to confound tourists, puzzled at how such a piece of ancient craftsmanship has stayed rust-free. It is said to have been built during the golden Gupta dynasty. The pillar stands next to the world-famous Qutb Minar.

According to A K Khanna, assistant superintendent engineer of the Archeological Survey of India, leading metallurgists from all over the world have paid glowing tributes to the skills of the ancient Hindu craftsmen who had apparently mastered the science of metals.

Khanna revealed how, **baffled by the pillar's capacity to "stave of rust," noted British archeologist Sir Alexander Cunningham sent a sample from it for chemical analysis and it turned out that it was made of pure -- 99.9 per cent -- malleable iron. "But nobody, till today, has been able to establish how the science of metallurgy had reached such heights in the reign of King Chandra II Vikramaditya of the Gupta dynasty," he said.**

Historians also appear foxed about the specific date of the pillar's origin. An inscription on the pillar in the Pali script mentions it as Vishnudhwaj (symbol of the Hindu god Vishnu) on the top of the mound known as Vishnupad (Vishnu's feet).

British historian Vincent A Smith in 1897 studied this inscription but was amazed at another inscription lower down. While the inscription at the top of the pillar indicates it was King Chandra's monument of victory, another further down mentions King Anang Pal II of the Chauhan dynasty who ruled in northern India during the late eleventh century.

This has predictably led to some confusion. A lot of myths have also surrounded the pillar. Dr Munish Chandra, former additional director-general of ASI and noted scholar, has sought to sift legend from reality.

In the previous centuries many devout Hindus came to believe that the mighty Bheem (the mythological strongman of the Mahabharata) lifted the pillar with his right hand and impaled it in the ground. "This grew into a legend and the reverential Hindu masses readily lapped it up," Dr Chandra contended.

The pillar is a solid shaft of iron, 23 feet 8 inches in length. Its diameter varies from 12.5 inches at

the top to 16.4 inches on the ground. **Asked to elaborate on his research, Dr Chandra emphasised that the pillar was surrounded by an image of Lord Vishnu, which was probably removed by the Muslim invaders.** This explains why the Muslim rulers let it remain at the centre of the Quwwatul Mosque.

It was subsequently discovered that the pillar was not cast but painstakingly constructed by a welding process.

British historian Percival Spear, through his researches, was able to determine that there was a statue attached to the pillar but he failed to identify it.

Even after the passage of 15 centuries, the iron pillar remains as much an enigma as it was after King Chandra's reign. However, the widespread Hindu belief that it was impaled there by Bheem has resulted in a peculiar problem.

As each day hundreds of curious Indian tourists try to encircle the pillar with their hands (according to Hindu legend, to do so will bring good luck), white patches have begun appearing on the lower portion. An alarmed Khanna cautioned, "Man has destroyed many historical monuments. We must take care not to damage this iron pillar which is a universal crowd-puller."

One does not know whether Khanna's cry for preservation will go in vain or better sense will prevail. Be that as it may, King Chandra's pillar continues to be a source of edification and mystery: a true tribute to India's powerful heritage.

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Need for cultural pride - Revival

Rizwan Salim

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India's social problem--rampant corruption to exploding population--can disappear and the nation can become great almost overnight if most Indians, especially the people on top in every domain of activity, are made to undergo just one mental transformation: Acquiring intense cultural pride. Yes, vigorous cultural pride has the power to create great individuals and great nations. Intense and well-informed cultural pride can be a very strong force animating ancient historical civilisations such as India. A people, if intoxicated enough with arrogant pride in their history and culture, can go on to achieve greater glory. The Japanese and the Chinese, the French and the Germans possess a surfeit of cultural pride-and a sense of cultural superiority. Consider their achievements over the centuries and in recent decades.

Given the reality that Hindustan is the longest surviving ancient civilisation and Hindus have to their credit so many unccountable and such astonishing achievements of architecture and painting. music and dance, poetry and drama. epics and narratives, intellectual systems and philosophical doctrines, healing systems and mind-body disciplines, Hindus of every caste and class today should have possessed a well-informed and well-developed, intense and, fully conscious cultural pride. But one of the principal tragedies of contemporary India is that the majority of even the educated and otherwise affluent Hindus do not possess a deep and extensive knowledge of their culture-and do not give evidence of an intensely felt cultural pride.

From the earliest surviving Gupta period temples of the fifth century to the grand Moghul monuments and Rajput palaces, Hindustan has more than a thousand year old tradition of stunningly beautiful and awe-inspiring architecture. Yet so lacking in cultural pride have Indian architects been, that after 1950 they eagerly adopted the European Leftwing architects' Bauhaus style, the architecture of ugly concrete boxes. Now they slavishly follow the currently fashionable West "Post-Modern" style that developed out of the Bauhaus. There has been no authentic Indian architecture now, structures replicating shapes and forms, motifs and decorative elements of ancient Hindu temple and Moghul and Rajput palace art.

India's English as well as regional language novel writers who grew to literary maturity after 1950, had they absorbed the Hindustani cultural tradition in depth and were ambitious for their talent could have written authentic Indian novels that would have been ranked, in time, with the best and most enduring of the British and American, German and Russian fiction-so

overwhelmingly varied is India's human reality and so much potential has Indian life for engendering great novels.

Mentally crippled by their own feelings of cultural inferiority, India's novel writers (in English mainly but also in the regional languages) slavishly follow the Leftist-invented style of writing and themes of the contemporary Anglo-American fiction writing, the most degenerate school in the history of European letters. Western Leftists favour novels with amoral, inhuman and anti-heroic themes expressed in ungrammatical and fractured language. Beautiful prose is repugnant to ideological Leftists.

So complete is the alienation of India's English language fiction writers from their own culture, they seem incapable of creating emotionally satisfying and deeply pleasurable novels. **They write fiction to please influential Leftwing book critics in England and America, not those with good literary tastes at home and abroad. There is nothing genuinely Indian in so many of these "Made for Export" novels.**

Lacking profound cultural knowledge and intense cultural pride, India's intellectuals regard the fashionable ideas and ideologies *>from Europe and America as unquestionably superior to Bharat's* thousands of years old Hindu culture and wisdom. Following the West's dictates in domains ranging from polity to economics, jurisprudence to genetics policy, India's intellectuals do not bother to find out if there might not be ideas and insights in ancient Hindu philosophy, intellectual systems and texts better than the West's. Why must we always let some American or German
argue, for example, that the Mahabharata is as good a guide for a modem business manager and a politician as compared to an ancient
Hindu king? There is no authentic Indian response to the intellectual questions and moral dilemmas of the modem world. There is no genuinely Indian view of world events and trends today. India's politicians in power over the years evidently have never felt a surge of cultural pride to create university programmes and institutions where Bharat's culture, texts and tradition can be rigorously and exhaustively studied to the highest international academic standards. Hindustan does not have enough institutions for the scholarly study of Hindu culture. The
institutions that do exist are not of the first rank because they were never generously funded (by government or philanthropists)
to do excellent work. There are not very many scholars of high ability and international reputation in India today who illuminate Hindu culture and Hindus' past great accomplishments. It is an embarrassing truth that the best Indologists are found in the Netherlands and Sweden, Germany and France, Japan and Italy-not in Delhi and Ujjain, Varanasi and Puri, Madurai and Mysore.

India's big city universities do have resident scholars doing dedicated research in humanities. Instead of educating us - and the world-about the profundity and the originality of Hindu thought, and the imaginative power of Hindu arts, they prefer to research with great seriousness works of second rate intellectual system builders and third rate writers and poets of Europe and America.

An intense cultural pride follows from an intense cultural consciousness: A powerful attraction to one's own culture and cultural practices. An intense cultural consciousness is not evident in most

Indian men and women Performances of India's classical dances and drama, instrumental and

vocal music are not as widely held or well-attended as would have happened had a strong interest in the nation's refined culture of temples and royal courts existed among most Indians. Cultural pride also means guarding against any loss of the culture's vitality. A number of energetic and powerfully affecting village and tribal folk art forms, including festivals and rituals, customs and ceremonies, dances and drama, music, and songs, jatras and trance induction techniques are on the verge of extinction (or have vanished already) from all over the country. There is no extensive and focused national effort to prevent the disappearance of the very vital folk tradition of Hindustan.

Indian society very urgently needs a class of brilliant culture leaders: Men and women who possess a deep knowledge of Hindu culture and the subcontinent's history; who have insights into what is imaginative and profound, what is worth preserving in our culture. These self-chosen culture leaders should go around the country, giving lucid but forceful orations, educating the people about the great qualities of their culture and creating a robust cultural consciousness in the majority.

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U.S. Policy Should Acknowledge Hindu Nationalism

By Sarita Sarvate

Sarita Sarvate is a writer for India Currents and other publications, and a contributing editor to Pacific News Service, from which this piece originated.

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http://www.newsday.com/news/opinion/ny-vpsar062612927mar06.story?coll=ny%2Dviewpoints%2Dheadlines

LONG MARGINALIZED, Hindu nationalism is becoming mainstream in India.

The recent burning of an Indian train headed for Ayodhya, the birthplace of the Hindu god Ram, has once more flared Hindu sentiments in the subcontinent.

During a recent visit, I found liberals and intellectuals, jet-setters and slum dwellers, men and women, Brahmins and untouchables expressing this Hindu pride.

I think it is history's revenge for a land that was subjugated by foreigners for more than a thousand years.

It was Mahmud of Ghazni from Afghanistan who first came roaring through the Khyber Pass around 1000 A.D. to destroy the magnificent Hindu temple at Somnath. These early Muslim rulers of India were soon followed by other dynasties, all with connections to Afghanistan.

Because of its polytheistic, pacifist and non- proselytizing nature, Hinduism became vulnerable to the coming of Islam. Muslims ruled India until the 1600s, when the British took over.

Hindutva, or the Hindu fundamentalist movement, originally began in the back alleys of my hometown of Nagpur in 1925, in the wake of India's struggle for freedom from British rule. Through the recitation of stories of native heroes like Shivaji, who had successfully fought guerrilla warfare against the Mughal despot Aurangzeb, the movement strove to incite nationalistic pride in a people who had lost their identity.

The 1947 partition of the country at independence from Britain created deeper wounds in the Hindu psyche. Later, America's support for military dictatorships in Pakistan and the simultaneous marginalizing of India, the world's largest democracy, kept the Hindutva movement alive.

Now, the war on terrorism has opened these 1,000-year-old wounds once again. Indians, who were hoping for strong American rhetoric against Taliban-incited terrorism in Kashmir in the wake of Sept. 11, were sorely disappointed. Many Hindus today believe that U.S. concern for victims of terrorism is limited only to its citizens, and does not extend to innocent Indians.

Most Indians I spoke to clearly believe that Kashmir - a majority-Muslim region between India and Pakistan - belongs to India.

This nationalistic pride was revealed to me when a Bengali friend - who hails from a cosmopolitan and Westernized

family and whom I had always looked up to during my formative years for guidance on American literature, art, music and pop culture - told me about a recent pilgrimage she had undertaken to the holy city of Varanasi. As she was bathing in the waters of the Ganges, she said, what struck her was not the spectacle of hundreds of little Hindu temples dotting the river bank, but the shadow of the enormous mosque built by Aurangzeb still towering over the holy site.

In that instance, I realized that what Hindus need today from the international community is an acknowledgment of the legitimacy of Hindu nationalism in a historical context. Such understanding is essential for any agreement on Kashmir that will pass muster with Indians.

Indeed, more than 50 years after independence from Britain, many Indians invoke memories of past invasions so that future generations will not be too pacifistic.

"You can turn the other cheek for only so long," a female friend commented during my visit. "Sometimes you have to show the world that you are proud."

Educated women seem to be on the forefront of the Hindu nationalistic movement today. Many now join peasants in their annual trek to the Kumbh Mela and other spiritual gatherings.

Unless future American foreign policy takes Hindu nationalism into account, violence in the subcontinent may well escalate, and might lead to a military, even a nuclear, conflict.

Standing in the visa line at the Indian Consulate in San Francisco recently, I noticed the large picture of the Taj Mahal covering an entire wall. **"Isn't it ironic," I said to a friend, "that the one icon most people identify with India happens to be a Muslim tomb?"**

"I wish they would use a picture of the Minakshi Temple instead," she replied. The temple is Hindu.

And then we both fell silent, surprised by our own non-secular sentiments.

But such sentiments are not uncommon among Indian immigrants, many of whom believe that America needs to take a more favorable stance with regard to India, the world's largest democracy, vis-a-vis Pakistan, a military dictatorship harboring Taliban terrorists.

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WOMEN OF INDIA—ANCIENT AND MODERN

—By Hon. Sir C. V. Kumaraswami Sastri

http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/5185/2-2women.html

"There are," observes Fielding Hall in his beautiful book, "One Immortality," "three loves that make and keep the world—the love that binds man and woman into one flesh and soul—the love that draws families into nations—the love that holds the world to God. Each is justified in its own immortality. All our life that is worth living is the expression of one or more of these loves, all our religion is an attempt to explain them, all our hope is in their immortality." The force of these loves is dynamic both in the life of individuals and in the history of nations and their proper appreciation is essential before one can understand a people correctly. The position which women occupy and the part which they play in the East, have been engaging the attention of historians and statesmen. In spite of wars, conquests and revolutions, religious and social, the history of India presents a continuity which strikes the most superficial observer, but it is a great mistake to suppose that social and political life in India has not changed during the progress of centuries. There can be no world without tradition nor any life without movement and in India where the effort of sages, philosophers and poets has been to find a concrete and perfect embodiment of the ideal system of values, we find types of men and women representing changing ideals, from Gargi and Maitreyi, learned in religion and philosophy, to Seeta, Savitri, Damayanti, and Draupadi representing chastity, tactfulness, modesty, devotion, patience, self-abnegation and all those virtues so prized in India.

"Women in Ancient India" aims at presenting a picture of the social and religious life of women and the part they played in Ancient India during the Vedic and the Heroic periods, i.e., women referred to in the Vedas and the Puranas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The scope of the work is thus clearly set out in the preface:

"In discussing women under the different conditions of daughter, mother and widow we shall endeavor to trace the source of each type from the Vedic times and by following the successive development through the ages and commenting on the various episodes drawn from the hymns and poems. We shall avoid the dullness of merely studying the customs and laws taken by themselves. Her national character thus established, we shall further describe the part women was permitted to play in the legendary times which have come down to us, in the mysterious tales contained in the Puranas, in the heroic periods reflected in the Epics and in the Court of Malwa and it customs, revealed to us in drama and in story."

Position of Vedic Women

There can be little doubt that women occupied a high place in the social life of the Early Aryans.

The milder and more beneficent forces of nature were addressed as female deities and invoked with prayers. Loving care and protection were accorded to women both in her parent's and her husband's home. In the marriage Mantras the husband welcomes the wife with tender affection and hopes of a happy future for her and she is asked not to be the submissive slave of her whims but the mistress of the house, shedding joy and comfort all round.

" 'Come,' exclaims the husband, 'Oh deserved of the Gods, beautiful one, with the tender heart, with the charming look, good towards your husband, kind towards animals, destined to bring forth heroes. Let there be happiness in our home both for bipeds and quadrupeds. Oh Generous Indra, make her fortunate. May she have a beautiful family; May she give her husband ten children; May he himself be the eleventh. Reign with thy father-in-law, reign with thy mother-in-law; reign with the sisters of thy husband; reign with their brothers.' "

The value of women in relieving suffering is recognized in the Vedas. "A woman," says a hymn, "is more firm and better than a man who is godless and not charitable. She discerns the distressed, needy and the thirsty; and is godly herself "(Rig Veda, 5, 61, 67). The great law-giver Manu places women on a high pinnacle and describes them as "the ornaments and the light of the house, the very receptacles of grace and glory" and he summarizes the duties of married life by saying "Let mutual fidelity continue till death, this is the law of paramount importance as regards husband and wife."

Vedic Women Learned

The author is mistaken in thinking that "Manu did not recognize woman's right to lift up her soul to God, to strengthen herself by prayer for her duties, to purify herself by penance." The duty of obedience to her husband and to look upon him as almost divine in no way supports the view above quoted and both in the Vedic and Heroic periods we find women learned in the Shastras and seeking salvation by study and contemplation.

A great portion of the book is taken up with the women who figure in the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and though to those who have read the original Sanskrit the descriptions and remarks may appear not to do full justice to the beauties of the originals, the author has given us a very fair description they played. What a wealth of contrast is there between Seeta and Draupadi and how nobly have all the heroines referred to in the book acted in all situations, whether in prosperity or adversity, whether old or young.

The title of the concluding chapter of the book "Women in the court of Malwa" is rather misleading.

The heroines of Kalidasa are women of the heroic age and they can no more be said to be women of the Court of Malwa than Cleopatra can be said to be a woman of the Court of Elizabeth because Shakespeare wrote about her. The author, in ascribing the decadence of the high ideal as to women revealed in the primitive Sanskrit literature to Pantheism, the Krishna cult and the enervating influence of Islam, is theorizing on insufficient data and imperfect knowledge of the various currents of Indian religious thought. Pantheism can no more account for any decadence than monotheism.

The early Christian fathers held women in no high regard and Saint Augustine called them the "gateways to hell." Even so late as the sixteenth century John Knox, the celebrated reformer,

wrote: "To promote a woman to bear rule, superiority, dominion or empire above any realm, nation or city is repugnant to nature, contumely to God, a thing most contrarious to His revealed will and approved ordinance, and finally it is the subversion of good order of all equity and justice. ....Nature, I say, doth paint them forth to be weak, frail, impatient, feeble and foolish and experience hath declared them to be inconstant, variable, cruel and lacking in the spirit of counsel and regiment." Martin Luther advised persons to marry wives who would be good housewives and thought women "a frail vessel, the silliest of God's creatures." Yet these divines can in no sense be said to be pantheists or devotees of Krishna.

Pantheism had developed and taken deep root in Hindu religious thought long before the Mahabharata took the shape it now does, and yet women described in it occupied a high niche in the ideals as to women's status and function in the body social. In the Anusasana Parva it is said: "Respect, kind interest and everything agreeable should be given to the maiden whose hand is taken in marriage. * * * Women, Oh, King, should always be worshipped and treated with affection. There where women are treated with respect the very deities are said to be filled with joy. There where women are not worshipped all acts become fruitless. Women deserve to be honored. Do, ye men, show them honor. The righteousness of men depends on women."

The Ascetic Ideal

It is difficult to find any one cause for the changing values as to social relations between men and women which we find in every nation's history and if any dominant reason for any decadence were to afford a workable hypothesis, the ascetic ideal which gradually found a large place in Indian religious thought would afford a sufficient explanation. The early Aryan conquerors of the Vedic and Heroic periods had little cause for being pessimistic or to regard life as an evil. Their prayers were for more power and dominion, for strength, joy and happiness in the enjoyment of their conquered lands. The period of introspection came long afterwards and the uselessness of material endeavor when sorrow, suffering and sin found so large a place in man's life called for remedies. The chief remedy suggested by Buddhism and adopted by Hinduism on the Hindu revival after the decline of Buddhism was the attainment of bliss through cessation of attachment to material objects of joy—and as woman was, whether as wife, mother or daughter, the greatest obstacle to such detachment, she was gradually regarded as an enemy to emancipation and so to be avoided. This explanation accounts for the low place which women took both in the writings of the monotheistic Christian fathers and divines and the Pantheistic Hindu authors of the later Puranic period.

Bengalee Women

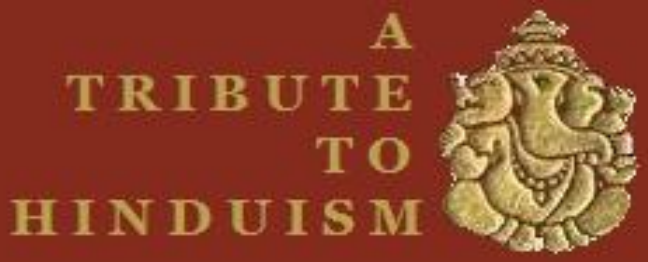
"Women of Bengal" is a study of the Hindu Pardanashins of Calcutta by Margaret M. Urqhart, who displays considerable knowledge of the inner life of Bengal Pardanashin ladies. It deals with the social and religious life of the women of Bengal and affords interesting reading. The Bengalees are a gifted and emotional race and as Western thought and culture gained root in Bengal earlier than in other parts of India and found a fruitful soil there, the Bengalee women are naturally more progressive than their sisters in other parts of India, and the study in contrast between the orthodox and the progressive types is much more interesting. Between the Pardanashin Gosha ladies bound down by tradition and mother-in-law rule and the "reformed" ladies emulating their Western sisters, the difference is wide and sometimes disconcerting. The

book reveals several beautiful aspects of Bengalee orthodox life and manners and one almost wishes that the change that is sure to sweep away the pieties and graces of the old order will be gradual and discriminating.

A study of the two books, while affording interesting reading and useful knowledge, is sure to give room for much anxious thought. Women in the social economy of the East by no means "Fades from the view a cipher of man's changeless sum of lust past present and to come" and the progress of India, social and political, must in a large measure depend on the direction which reforms take as regards the position of the sexes and the part woman plays in the social and domestic economy of the race. It is difficult to accept that the ancient ideals will remain unchanged by long and constant association with the modern progressive tendencies of the West, and the demand for independence and equality both social and political; and the only question is how the change is to be effected so as to retain all that is good in the past and avoid changes unsuited to the genius of the nation. A cynical friend of mine once remarked that if Seeta had been more "manly" and had stood out against the injustice and suffering undeservedly imposed on her, the lot of Indian women through the ages would have been better. Like all remarks of cynics there is no doubt a grain of truth in the remark, but who would wish Seeta, the concrete and perfect embodiment of all that is noble and true in Aryan womanhood, to be otherwise than she was. It is sad to think that in the conflict of the Eastern and Western ideals a great many of those mysteries and pieties of life which have been sanctioned by the reverence of ages will have to give place to the forces of noisy and aggressive ambitions. To such of those who clamor for immediate reversal of the ideals of the East, a study of these two books will supply much room for thought.

Let us hope that whatever changes may be in store for Indian women, they will be based on those ideals which have formed the glory and greatness of Indian women through countless generations.

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articles on hinduism

Politics of Conversion

By Shripaty Sastry

A RETROSPECT CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA BY
http://rbhatnagar.ececs.uc.edu:8080/~archives/hvk/books/Retrospect_of_Christianity/index.htm

Indeed in the whole of the Christian-Hindu strained relationship there has been no greater cause of friction than the Christian campaign of conversion.

When the one who is in an advantageous position seeks to force his conception of God and the Universe on the other who is in a vulnerable position, when the one strikes at that which is deepest and most precious in the heart of the others he invites resistance. The Christians of India are converts or descendents of converts whose conversion had been' secured during some period of history by force or fraud; conversion by persuasion is a rarity. Voluntary change of faith prompted by spiritual motives, nobody objects to. The Rev. Tilak, Pandita Ramabai are of such type. Change of faith did not diminish their love of India's cultural heritage. But how are whole villages converted en mass in no time? Are mass conversions prompted by any spiritual motive? Voluntary change of faith is preceded by great psychological revolution; nobody abandoned Hinduism that way.

Most of the converts have been victims of threats, allurements financial stringency, ignorance, deception and persecution. The less said the better about the role of the sword in securing recruits for the gospel. it is an ugly past. The Hindus who had gladly given asylum to the Jewish wanderers, the exiled Parsis and persecuted Christians found themselves victims of proselytisation by Christians.

For quite a long time there had been a continuous decline of Hindus in number; when under the British religion became the basis of representation, the missionary movement acquired momentum. Even a small increase in Christian population and a decrease among the Hindus would bring in its train a chain of troubles, political and social. What ails India's north-east is this factor. It is the political consequence of the supposed religious conversions.

There is something unhealthy in the whole missionary idea. To go to a people like the Hindus, a race of high culture and a long tradition with philosophical, ethical and religious systems ante-dating Christianity and to go avowedly to save its people from damnation is certainly something grotesque! Humanitarian and philanthrophic works are only excuses to enable themselves to go near their victims to tear out the ancient religion from the simple and trusting hearts.

Gandhiji wrote "Conversion now-a-days has become a matter of business, like any other. I remember having read a missionary report saying how much it cost per her head to convert and then presenting a budget for the next harvest".
He further maintained "If I had power and could legislate, I should certainly stop all proselytising. For Hindu households, the advent of a missionary has meant the disruption of the family, coming in the wake of change of dress, manners, language, food and drink". What Gandhiji wanted to stop, viz. Conversion has been held by the Christian missionary as his basic religious right. The best of them, Mother Teresa, justified it very recently in an interview by saying that, 'Conversion is a change of mind by love' Remove the tapestry of the language, it is aggression an the Hindu society. Therefore, a Hindu cannot condone conversion and he must not.

A large part of Asia has gone Islamic and another large chunk communist. Their doors are closed for Christian missionaries to storm in. So, India has emerged as a fertile grazing ground. Christianity is, now working overtime trying to convert our people, particularly the tribals. The rich white missionary agencies are making use of the country's poverty and social ills to further their ends. They offer temptations, a cardinal sin, in order to effect conversions The Baptist missionary in North-Eastern belt, for example, reward with cheap polyester trousers to those tribals who change their religion; with motor bicycles if they also help their brothers to be converted. In Madhya Pradesh as the Neogy Report showed, the missionaries give small loans of say five or ten dollars to the tribals on interest, loans which they know could not be easily paid back but the payment of which can be waived off if the debtors accepted Christianity.

On more sophisticated levels, they run schools arid dispensaries, asylums and orphanages and engage in so- called social work. Since the basic motive is proselytisation or creating congenial climate for poselytizers, these services are tainted and poisoned. Social work has now become big business. It is not disinterested philanthropy. To a superficial observer the Christianity centres appear not only quite harmless, but as the very embodiment of sympathy and love for humanity. Words like service, human salvation flow endlessly from their speeches. The ultimate objective is to
de-Hinduise. The people of our country, simple and innocent as they are, are taken in by all these things. The sweetest of tongues is accompanied by the sharpest of teeth. Is it not arrogance going in the garb of humility? It reminds me of the story of Pootana, an evil woman who made a show of motherly affection and wanted to breast- feed infant Krishna. But it was not milk but poison.

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Unity in Diversity
By Milind Sathye

Introduction

The very foundation of Hinduism is the principle of unity in diversity. This principle of unity in diversity binds India together, despite the fact that it's a huge country with a huge population and with diversity of physical features, races, languages and religions. The population of India comprises of six main ethnic groups namely, the Negrito, Proto-austroloids, Mongoloids, Mediterranean or Dravidian, Western brachycephals and the Nordic Aryans. India has as many as 1652 languages and dialects. The constitution recognises 15 major languages. The major religions of India are Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism. The Indian attitude towards all living things grows out of the Hindu view of the unity or oneness of all life. Majority of Indians are Hindus. Hinduism , the scholars say, is not a religion but a way of life. Hinduism respects the right of all living beings to live. This right is brought into practice through the principle of non-violence in thought and non-violence in action. Hinduism therefore shuns all kinds of aggression. Mahatma Gandhi, voted as the man of the century by USA Today, was a living example of this Hindu thought.

Unity and Diversity in The Hindu Thought

The Hindu view of oneness of all life flows from every Hindu Scripture. It must be clarified that Hinduism does not have a founder or a prophet and hence Hindu Scriptures are a collection of the wisdom of many great thinkers of the Indus valley, evolved over thousands of years. The important among these are:

· *The Vedas and the Upanishads:* The oldest of the Vedas, the Rig-Veda, begins with a prayer that let noble thoughts come to us from all sides. Upanishads which form part of the Vedas are the real foundations of Hinduism. Upanishads proclaim that the universal spirit resides in all being, whatever be their form *(Ishavasyam eedam sarvam)*. "The Ultimate Truth or Knowledge" means the realisation that these outer appearances or forms are deceptive and that in essence all living beings are one and interconnected with each other. Ignorance *(maya)* may prevent one from realising this fact. Schopenhauer, the 19th Century German philosopher, remarked 'In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishad…The study of Upanishad has been the solace of my life and it will be the solace of my death'.

· *The Ramayan and Mahabharat:* These two great epics of India also extol the virtues of universal brotherhood and compassion not only towards fellow human beings but towards all living beings. The *Mahabharata* contains *Bhagwad Gita* (the song celestial) which is the gospel of philosophic Hinduism. It is like a manual for human conduct to dispel *Maya* (ignorance) and realise the Ultimate Truth, which is the oneness of all Beings.

Unity and Diversity in the Hindu practice

The thoughts are brought in to practice by Hinduism in several ways. Notable among these are:

· *Not tolerance but fellowship:* As the great Hindu scholar Vivekanand said 'tolerance is blasphemy. It connotes superiority over the one who is tolerated'. Hinduism believes in fellowship, equality, togetherness or acceptance and not tolerance. Through out the ages, Hinduism has abjured exclusiveness and has assimilated the elements of several extraneous cultures.

· *I am OK, you are OK:* Instead of taking a judgemental attitude that says I am OK, you are not OK, Hinduism accepts and respects all religions. The temples constructed by the Ramakrishna Mission wherever in the world have symbols of all the religions of the world depicted on it signifying the respect of Hinduism for all religions.

· *Look not for differences look for similarities:* The Hindu view that there is a single life force that exhibits itself in many forms, insects, animals, trees, and humans (of all hues and colour) tells that the focus needs to be shifted from picking difference to identifying similarities. Those who have seen ABC's documentary on Zubin Mehta televised on Sunday 1st April 2001 would have heard him say that 'it is my Indian heritage that taught me how to co-exist and create a great symphony.'

· *Not 'divide and rule' but unite and progress:* The Hindu view is non-aggressive or non-threatening in all walks of life. Hence the people of Indus valley have never harboured territorial ambitions. The Hindu practice of 'yoga' is very popular in western countries. The word "yoga' literally means 'union' or 'togetherness'.

Conclusion

It can thus be seen that the people of Indus valley advocated inclusiveness and the oneness of all living beings many thousand years ago. Unity in diversity was operationlised by the Hindu's through advocating and practicing of non-violence.

In every Hindu home just before dinner the following Sanskrit prayer is said which sums up so beautifully the Hindu view towards all living beings.

Om Sahanvavatu, Sahanaubhunaktu, Sahaviryam Karvavahai
Tejasvinavadhitamastu Mavisdvishavahai.

(So let us think together, let us act together, let us be victorious together
For we all belong to that great light, where there is no place for hatred).

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(Presented at the Multicultural Queensland Conference, Toowoomba held in April 2001)

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Writing Indian History

By Dr. Gautam Sen

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The current dispute over Indian history and the behaviour of some of its protagonists is little short of hilarious. The sheer arrogance of the implied claim of India's Stalinist historians to some absolute moral and legal title over historical truth is hard to credit. The underlying contention that the raison d'être of historical writing has been accepted universally as the examination of **variegated class struggles** is breathtaking in its impudence, since nothing could be further from the truth.

As the writer V. S. Naipaul has pointed out, it constitutes an arbitrary espousal of some "higher truth" (i.e. the transcendent objective primacy of class struggles over all other forms of ascription) that is parochial, to say the least, if not downright perverse. The manner in which this claim is being put forward also borders on something akin to racist contempt for rival claims. The failure, in turn, of rival claimants, the alleged Hindu fascists, to argue an alternative view cogently does not make it false. Their gut feeling on some basic issues is in fact perfectly defensible, but their failure to argue coherently and scant regard for established scholarly conventions make them easy targets.

I have now thrice heard parroted virtually identical scripts by historians from Delhi University and JNU. The refrain is the incorrigible stupidity of the protagonists of Hindutva and the alleged universal abandonment of earlier historical canons by all right thinking, sane intellectuals. This supercession includes, among other things, the periodisation of Indian history as Hindu, Muslim and British. Obviously, any periodisation involves simplification because it is a form of shorthand that only captures broad contours, but that does not necessarily render it either untrue or useless. The likes of R.C. Majumdar and Jadunath Sarkar are loftily disparaged in scholarly work by innuendo and complacent resort to the latest in fashionable ontologies and methodologies. In public debate their names are dishonestly misused to dismiss a lesser breed of provincials daring to dabble in the antecedents of their forbears. This is evidently a forlorn endeavour for those who have apparently not mastered the Chicago style of footnoting, leave aside the profundities of critical theory and intricacies of deconstruction; deep thought, in other words.

Not wishing to spoil a good story the Stalinists are also apt to regale subliminally racist Western audiences. One leading Delhi historian hysterically denounced the present Prime Minister of India in a seminar at the London School of Economics as, I quote, “a closet fascist” and “Hindu fundamentalism” as anti-Semitic. The latter canard is repeated unfailingly, on the basis of evidence that is so scandalously thin that one wonders about their claims on other issues in which scholarly expertise is claimed. One might be forgiven a sneaking suspicion that the real alarm, underlying all of this hand wringing in the interests of truth and justice by these ethereal cosmopolitans, is the fear of an empowered Indian state resisting the prevailing international political and military order.

The Stalinist insistence that past invasions of India were inconsequential is novel in the extreme since such a belief about the meaning of military conquest is embraced by historians nowhere else. Yet this remarkable fantasy is now an axiom that has taken hold among a majority of American and British academic specialists working on India as well. They are also engaged in a chorus of denunciation of Hinduism and its political manifestations as a calamity only barely exceeded by Nazism. The Islamic conquest of India, by contrast, is regarded as no worse than a temporary cricket pitch invasion, followed by the resumption of normal play. The idea that military defeat and the loss of political power might be a legitimate source of grievance for the losing side is implicitly rationalised because the Hindu upper castes have no redeeming features to justify mourning their passing.

Even if one were to concede the falsity of the claim that iconoclasm by the invaders was rare and motivated primarily by material greed, as well as dismissing their own surviving accounts as unreliable, it is surely unreasonable to expect later generations to recall that past with enthusiasm. But the historians of class struggle and immemorial communal harmony require that the murder, mass slavery, looting and institutionalised rape of one’s ancestors by invaders be viewed with equanimity because, in their considered opinion and against all the available evidence, it, improbably, lacked religious sanction. This sheer perversity heaps additional insult upon injury by disgraceful efforts to prove that the victims of this historical experience were probably themselves the offspring of Aryan invaders at some point in the distant past, who presumably behaved no better. This is what India’s historians today require to be publicly funded and it is only the remoteness of ordinary citizens from this bizarre endeavour that prevents unsparing scrutiny being directed towards it.

How it was possible for greed to be a purely secular phenomenon when social life and political action were synonymous with religion in pre-modern societies, especially Islamic ones, is left to the imagination. Of course, it is much more plausible that looting, abduction, etc. were subjectively experienced as the discharge of religious duty, but this likelihood is ignored by illegitimate imputation of motivations and sentiment that are entirely modern. A passing knowledge of Islamic invasions elsewhere would dispel this unlikely invention with respect to India. Any subsequent sign of Islamic communalism, which, in fact, happens to be one of its essential and proud distinguishing features, is tidily explained, first, by British colonial chicanery and, then, the Hindu renaissance as well. One recent work damns all of the latter, from Ram

Mohun Roy, to the Tagores and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, as the ultimate cause of partition.

Already a further foretaste of this fifth column epistemology can be found in the failure to come to terms with more recent events, which cannot be quite so easily dismissed, because too many witnesses survive. The genocidal suppression of East Pakistan in 1971, specifically complemented by the massacre of Dacca's Hindu intellectuals on one fateful day, precisely because of their religious affiliation, followed by a considered policy of mass rape and murder on an unimaginable scale, is already being ignored but cannot be denied. The unspoken justification that this amnesia is needed in the interests of communal harmony must be sternly repudiated. No doubt, the erasure of Afghanistan's Buddhist heritage and the tragic destruction of the great Bamiyan statutes will, in time, also find "scientific" and historical rationalisation. However, it is doubtful if these politically inspired Stalinist "cosmopolitans", on the forefront of intellectual genocide against Hinduism, will dare to invent subterfuges to obscure the fate of the twin towers of New York. So much for the courage of their convictions!

(Dr. Gautam Sen, London School of Economics & Political Science,Member Indo-UK Roundtable.)

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articles on hinduism

Indian power and the threat to the world

By Gautam Sen

http://www.rediff.com/news/2000/sep/11pmus1.htm

If India's economy continues to grow at around seven per cent each year or ten per cent, which is feasible, it will prefigure an end to the dominance of world affairs that white Europeans have enjoyed since Christopher Columbus landed in America. Already, the achievement of sophisticated nuclear weapons capacity has seriously unsettled NATO, the international counterpart of the Ku Klux Klan, and the ultimate inciter of the on-going proxy war against India. If India were to become a country with a per capita income of $ 12,000, the new arithmetic diminishes the overall relative international primacy of the US and the NATO alliance.

Imagine an India with a per capita income of $ 12,000 and the effective capacity to increase its defense expenditure by a corresponding six-fold? At present, US global hegemony as well as the security enjoyed by its subservient European allies are underpinned by massive economic superiority over the rest of the world. This primacy was only reached in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The US subsequently unleashed a brilliant campaign to cause political and economic disarray within Russia by sustaining a corrupt, incompetent and drunken Boris Yeltsin in power and infiltrating so-called Western 'experts', actually employed by the CIA.

If a wealthier India achieves great power status, it is likely to set off a chain reaction and international political realignments that will end undisputed US world hegemony. Within Asia, Japan, which has been cowed and diffident since its surrender in 1945, will find India an irresistible prospect as an economic and political partner. The reason will be its traditional dream of leading an Asian bloc to counterbalance the West and the US.

India's massive purchasing power will enable Japan to diversify its economy away from its present vulnerability to constant Western blackmail over market access. An Indo-Japanese understanding will neutralize China's growing belligerence, not only *vis-à-vis* Japan, but also in relation to other Asian countries. At present, fearful of China's growing power and claims they, including Vietnam, uneasily welcome a US presence in the region. But the US has simply taken advantage of the situation and treated these countries as second class.

The glee of Wall Street during the recent Asian financial crisis and the attempt at the virtual theft of Asian assets (owing to artificially low prices after the exchange rate collapse) was a stark reminder of their role as cattle feed for international predators. Singapore, despite its huge successes, remains much less important than Belgium for reasons that are not difficult to guess.

The goal of the US is to retain its hegemonic global pre-eminence rather than merely protect its own security and ensure a tolerable level of influence by participating in an international balance

of power to deny any one country or bloc the ability to dictate. It only acquiesced in China's great power status because its additional weight was useful for curbing the much more threatening military might of the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

The US can afford to continue humouring China because although it is the only major country with an independent voice, it remains relatively weak in relation to the Western alliance. And its goals are likely to remain regional for the foreseeable future.

The US also believes that within the wider global arena, China will remain a supplicant because of the fear of a resurgent Russia and possibly, a revisionist Japan. However, both the US and China have cause to worry if India emerges as a major centre of power and influence simply because its size alone means that it will have large surplus resources to embark on a destabilising, independent path in world affairs.

The emergence of India as a new centre of power will inevitably cause huge uncertainty for the current pattern of alliances and international relationships, predicated on the existing distribution of political and military power. Such Indian aspirations were one of the reasons for the deep earlier US mistrust and dislike of both Nehru and Indira Gandhi, as available US public records confirm.

With the ascent of India, the global political and economic centre of gravity will shift from Europe to Asia. It may even undermine the Western alliance because some historical animosities persist among key European countries. The British and French, for example, were initially staunchly pro-Serb during Yugoslavia's disintegration ("He helped us a lot," said Serb leader and war criminal Radovan Karadic of then British prime minister John Major) unlike the Germans who fomented Croat and Slovene intransigence.

The earlier historical rivalry between Japan and Russia is unlikely to be an issue given the interposition of a powerful Chinese buffer between them and the truncation of Russia itself. Russia will eventually reassert its authority in Central Asia, which has been usurped by the US, and secure its western frontier against a revanchist Germany that has advanced further than Hitler did, under the cloak of NATO. Hitler had only reached the Curzon line before war broke out with the Soviet Union.

But both Russia and Japan will have to deal with US machinations that might range from economic blackmail to military encirclement. The US will enjoy *carte blanche* in Latin America alone because the deracinated, Mulatto local elites of Mexico (through NAFTA), Argentina (which abandoned its national currency in favour of the dollar) and Brazil (bought out by US investment) have already surrendered their economies to the US. India remains a weak country that needs to be deflected from the trajectory of economic growth and political prominence through subversion and direct assault.

The principal vehicle for causing an immediate and decisive setback to India would be a war on two fronts at a moment when Russia is too weak or distracted to respond. China has lately been examining various strategies for demolishing India's military assets in a limited war in the northeast. Recently, it deliberately precipitated floods and destroyed bridges in order to cut Arunachal Pradesh off from the rest of India. It has cultivated the Burmese military regime assiduously in recent years while India has allowed itself to be hypnotised by an egotistical and

ultra-Westernised dissident, instead of engaging in the ruthless calculation its dangerous vulnerability to Burma's geopolitical location demands.

China is also financing and arming dissidents everywhere in the region from Nagaland to Assam, as rebels surrendering to Indian security forces continue to reveal. It is China that has transferred nuclear weapons to Pakistan, with undoubted US government connivance, an inference Congressional investigations have made irresistible, in order to tie India down all along the border, stretching potentially from Gujarat to Ladakh.

India is being forced to only fight defensively against foreign incursion for fear of uncontrolled escalation when the situation it faces constitutes a textbook case for an offensive war for defensive purposes. Infiltration along such a long border by suicide squads will only end when its sponsors make a political decision to desist because they fear severe punishment elsewhere (example: the loss of Lahore).

Finally, India's relations with Nepal have taken a dramatic turn for the worse, partly because of a history of sheer Indian incompetence and stupidity over five decades, but also owing to the decisive intervention of China and the US in recent years. Nepali intransigence is now reinforced by Sino-US reassurances of support against India (including the establishment of a so-called UN peacekeeping academy in Kathmandu at US instigation). Nepal is awash with petrodollars as well and its politicians and bureaucrats, with few exceptions, are not known for refusing money.

India's unimaginative policy makers do not seem to understand that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are no more Pakistani than US cruise missiles on European soil are European. The strategic implication is that they will only be launched if China does not fear retaliation against its own cities, a potent threat that India has failed to insinuate. This is the same reason why Europeans were unconvinced that the US would risk American cities by launching its nuclear missiles in Europe against Soviet cities.

India's politicians (though not defence experts) will also have to come around to the realisation that they are far weaker in relation to the Sino-Pak axis than Pakistan is *vis-à-vis* them. It is India that stands isolated, not Pakistan, notwithstanding the determination of middle class Indians to believe otherwise because they cannot bear to believe their ardent attraction for the US and all its decadent sensuality cannot elicit some pity, if not reciprocity.

Purposive troops movements alone will suffice to tie down most of the Indian armed forces along the Sino-Indian border. In that event, India may have to use the threat of early nuclear escalation against China on the battlefield, exactly as Pakistan is doing despite the secure knowledge of Chinese assistance in the event of a serious encounter with India.

Kargil and the Kandahar hijack were merely US warnings to India to curtail its nuclear programme, no more. Ironically, the successes of the Indian armed forces at Kargil compelled US intervention to save Pakistan from complete rout, although the media, extraordinarily, portrays it as having been for India's benefit! However, the Indian nuclear programme may now be shelved (especially missile development) reverting to a *status quo ante* worse than the pre-Pokhran situation, which should please India's 'peaceniks' too.

Unfortunately, the scale of Sino-Pak and US infiltration in India is growing phenomenally. The US, which has obvious preferences of its own for electoral outcomes in India, has sponsored

detailed studies (overseen by the late Mancur Olson) of every Lok Sabha constituency to examine the changing alignment of forces since the retreat of the Congress. It has numerous assets in the Indian media and some bankrupt newspapers receive Gulf petrodollars through the intercession of the US.

Indian officials are aware of one national newspaper editor who has a relationship with British intelligence and have denied him a berth on the NSB. There is no Indian civil servant above the rank of deputy secretary who does not have a close relative working or studying in the US, creating points of contact and vulnerability to blandishments.

Keeping a fractious India constantly off balance and divided, though actual secession itself would be the real prize, is deceptively easy when caste, region and religion cleave its sense of national purpose and so many Indians are eager collaborators. It is highly probable that many of the bomb makers and subversives being discovered in various parts of India are controlled jointly by Pakistan and the US, which alone has extensive insider knowledge. It need have no other direct involvement beyond the provision of invaluable information to its friends in Islamabad.

The US has been the pioneer in using Islamic radicals (though not in Iran or with its proxies in the Lebanon and the Hamas) against secular, nationalist Arab regimes since the 1950s, as Said Aburish has shown. The US has sought to install and maintain harsh, unpopular monarchical Islamic regimes beholden to it, without so much as a squeak from liberal and feminist America, and nourished their absurd claim to Islamic rectitude when Arab rulers violate every major tenet of Islam. The Taliban Afghan enterprise began before the Soviet invasion and remains firmly tied to the US and the CIA.

The state department also brazenly manufactures stories of anti-US activities by Islamic radicals. These are designed to stop ordinary Muslims, who clearly take a less benign view of the US, from reflecting on the unusual coincidence between the insistence of the alleged defenders of the faith that their political and personal freedoms lack divine sanction with US interests and an enlightened oil policy. That some canny operatives like Osama Bin Laden actually end up becoming anti-American 'rogues' is not particularly surprising, since the scale of the undertaking is so large and complex.

Of course, they also have violent inclinations against conceited pagans deemed to oppress the *umma.* The idea that the US will repudiate its relationship with Islamic radicals and curb their activities to save India's bacon is unrealistic in the extreme, since so much is at stake and US Arab policy depends on the seamless international web of its radical Islamic assets (especially of Pakistani provenance).

India can never provide the invaluable services to the US that Pakistan's elites can, like for example, suppressing popular revolts in the Gulf or entry into Afghanistan and beyond. The relative importance of Indian economic ties for the US, compared to even Thailand, for example, is minuscule.

Pakistan's ruling order (essentially the landlords of the Punjab and the Sindh), in turn, needs the sub-continental imbroglio to resist the democratisation of Pakistani society that they have feared since the pre-independence Congress threatened to abolish the zamindari system, transforming previous landlord indifference towards partition in the Punjab to fervent support. They regard

even a proper census as a threat to stability. State department Islam cannot endure democracy, as the Jamaat's utter electoral failure in Pakistan itself resoundingly confirms and democracy in the Third World has always been the enemy of Western imperialism.

However, it may be anticipated that radical Central Asian Islamic regimes will also find friends in Washington should they seize power. The tragedy of most contemporary Islamic politics is that it is a product of the Cold War and the political economy of oil and originates in Washington, as many Muslim intellectuals themselves have insisted.

The final problem for India's great power pretensions is the slow pace of economic reform, which is an absolute prerequisite for attaining international stature, unmatched by a level of rhetoric that only the Indian polity seems able to generate. In every area, sectional interests and self-serving politicians are failing the Indian economy, its people and especially the poor who are mostly unemployed or underemployed as well as underpaid.

The public sector continues to bleed the rest of the economy, including agriculture (so much for concern about poverty) and supply-side bottlenecks are strangling areas that would otherwise grow rapidly. It is unbelievable that even today garments and knitwear are reserved for the small and medium sector, all of which will simply be blown away after 2005 when the WTO textile accord on free trade is implemented. Despite so much animated high level talk, the urgent problems of India's publicly owned airlines remain unresolved with all sorts of corrupt influences being peddled to ensure that high prices remain no matter who owns them!

Paradoxically, the CPI-M and the RSS have adopted a similar posture with regard to economic reform, defending organised workers who are a small and privileged minority and opposing international economic ties with an unreasoned obduracy that has no historical precedent. It is a source of grave concern that the best policy makers that India can muster, and they compare favourably with any in the world, remain apathetic when it comes to decisive action. But this is India and self-indulgent ideological peregrination a cover for business as usual.

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Media suffer from "dhimmi" disorder

By Shankar Sharan, New Delhi, India
http://www.indiacause.com/OL_101502.htm

A B Vajpayee, 14 Apr. 2002:

"It is indeed strange that I am praised as a secular leader when I condemn, as I recently did, intolerance and other negative features exhibited by certain self-styled champions of Hindutva, but criticised as a "communal leader" when I point out the negative aspects of militant Islam. Such double standards do no good to a healthy debate on what is true secularism and what is in the interest of our nation and the world"

The *Outlook* weekly put an online opinion poll asking: "What do you think should be done in the aftermath of Godhra and 'retaliatory killings' in Gujarat?" And gave the following six options: "(1) Narendra Modi and his minisiters should be removed, arrested and prosecuted along with the killers of Godhra. (2) VHP and Bajrang Dal leaders should be arrested and prosecuted for their role in Gujarat and Ayodhya. (3) BJP government at the centre should resign. (4.) All of the above -- 1, 2 & 3. (5) None of the above, they're not to blame for "Newton's third law applies and only so much can be done by the administration". (6) Do not know." The poll began on 5th March 2002, that is, within three days of the Godhra carnage the magazine was sure that the answer lies within these options.

And what ingenious options! In the garb of six there is but one choice. All the differently worded options just condemn Hindus and *Hindutvawadies*. Even the last one leaves no opportunity to say different – it says shut up, if you want to blame anyone else. Please think over this poll design. It is on the line of Stalinist Russia or Musharraf's Pakistan where electorates had only one candidate to 'choose'. The *Outlook* poll structure exposes the mindset of our mainstream especially English media.

This poll is also an example of *dhimmi* mentality (the Arabic word means 'the non-Muslims tolerated by Islam on conditions', one being that *dhimmis* are always required to show subservience and acknowledge the supremacy of Islam and the Muslims). The weekly comprises an overwhelming majority of the Hindus as staff. Yet it refuses any option to blame Muslims in a visibly communal conflict. Which is a manifestation of *dhimmi* state of mind. Explaining all its facets is a separate task. The interested should read a book entitled "Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide" written by Bat Ye'or, a British scholar. She has really opened a new field in sociology. *Dhimmi* mentality is a very significant concept. Meaning a voluntary acceptance of Islamic superiority by non-Muslims with a sense of dread from Islamic

vehemence. Acceptance by people who lived under Islamic rule for ages as inferior subjects. These subjects, the *dhimmis*, were allowed to live, but granted only a second grade existence. Now the subjects have so internalized this inferior mindset that even being free they continue to revere Islam at the cost of other faiths, traditions and egalitarian theories. This, in short, is *dhimmi* mentality. To understand it, however, one must have at least some gray cells left uncorrupted by the Marxist-secularist dogmas.

***Dhimmi* mentality in India is reflected everywhere in the society. Including the media. Kashmir is the hottest news spot in the country.** Yet it is difficult to find regular correspondents of the mainstream media. Usually the stringers do. What they report, whom they quote and which version they narrate are interesting to watch. They seldom report about local terrorist networks – though at times they *know* about it. Understandable. Who wants to become a Daniel Pearl? But Kashmir reporting is not an exception. Same dread is felt anywhere in the country when it comes to report affairs Muslim. It is NOT about respecting Muslim feelings. Though some scribes genuinely believe doing so by, say, being silent on *Satanic Verses*, *shariat* codes, the contents of Madarsa education etc. Yet respecting feelings is not the whole truth. Large section of the media keep mum because they know the reprisal would be violent. Each time a Muslim mob resort to violence upon newspaper offices, saying 'sorry' is the media custom. Just think – victims say sorry to the lawbreakers! In Bangalore, for instance, all leading English dailies in turn tendered apologies whenever something – anything: a headline, a cartoon or a report - angered certain Muslims. There is no case when a newspaper stood in the name of freedom of expression or constitutional rights. One rarely finds a harsh adjective used by scribes against Muslim offenders – from Kashmir to Mumbai to Hyderabad to Kolkata to Dubai.

Now, please contrast this timid attitude with the manner adopted in the abovementioned **Outlook** options. **What boldness when it comes to disparage Hindu leaders and masses! Here is the key to understand regular Hindu-bashing. Our media - columnists, anchors and reporters - feel free to call Hindus names. Hindutvawadies are repeatedly called fascists, killers, beasts, hate-mongers etc.** Everyday in some write up or analysis these adjectives can be found. Because, the dorks know too well what these 'fascists' really are. The 'Hindu fascists' are anything but dreadful. Hence no fear of violent reprisals while abusing Modis, Sudershans, Vajpayees, Advanis, Joshis, Togadias *et al*. **Why, even Hindu gods and goddesses can be abused freely! Our brave and beautiful - from media to academia – take all liberties when talking matters Hindu. They can openly defend insulting Hindu deities; liberally offer suggestions about making playgrounds or libraries on sites of Hindu faith.** Painting nude goddess Saraswati, Durga was stubbornly supported as an act of artistic expression by these brave and beautiful. Most recently a senior Hindi editor, Rajendra Yadav, called the deity Hanuman as 'the first terrorist'. By no stretch of courage he can call Prophet Muhammad so, who had wreaked havoc on so many cities to clear it from idols and idol-worshippers. Such feats are properly recorded history, and always highly praised in Islamic discourses. But no Yadav (or Jha, Pannikar, Thapar, Habib, Chandra, Sarkar, Roy *et al* , who are permanently *sahmat* with every kind of Hindu-abusing) would point to it in the manner he did to Hanuman. They are all reverence before an Islamic figure. THIS is *dhimmi* mentality. Islamic feelings, figures, arguments are superior; but those of Hindus inferior – so reckons a *dhimmi* by habit. This mindset is here for centuries now. And duly internalised by the terrorized Hindus. Rajendra Yadav is not an isolated case, he is just a good specimen of this attitude.

Another contrast is the attitude of the US media to that of ours while covering national disasters or crises. Take, for instance, their 9/11 and our 12/13. Our brave and beautiful copy the Americans in food, suit, lingo, fashion, slang and everything (mostly useless things); but not in how to keep the national moral, image and strength. Especially when the chips are down. At such times watch the *Time*, *Newsweek, CNN, BBC* etc. at work. They never talk about 'govt failure' until the disaster is overcome. Here every disaster is a godsend to tarnish the govt of the day, be it Kargil, Orissa or Gujarat. Given the contrast, are we to boast that our scribes are more dutiful, intelligent, responsible and wise in contributing to national strength and honour? No, just the opposite! Francois Goutier (the most senior foreign journalist, except Mark Tully, in India) rightly observed that Indian media behave like an enemy to its own government and people. Because, among other things, it suffer from the *dhimmi* disorder. So eager to show – at the cost of one's own brethrens – 'see, how secular, objective etc. I am'. It is a disorder needed to be exposed and remedied. Just think: how the very lot who always steer clear from dangerous individuals and organisations, become so vociferous when it comes to abuse 'Hindu fascists' or the 'fascist govt'? Simple: these fascists are anything but fascist! Hence the valor. As Ghalib had expressed so beautifully: *hamara bhi jor chalta hai gariban par*.

Such feverish and routine Hindu-bashing has done immense harm to the nation, society, economy and polity. By scrupulously avoiding any hard talk about Islamic problems - for instance, effects of *shariat* laws on Muslim women or the anti-national use of scores of madarsas - our media perform its 'social responsibility'. Only bravery it shows in harming the *Hindutvawadis*. Even by resorting to lies, or refusing to report plain truths. A lot of scribes won't report an event or publish a comment if that is likely to benefit, in the dorks' view, the Sangh Parivar. They unwittingly follow the Leftist, anti-Hindu, anti-national political agenda. But do the people living all over country feel like them? Do the countrymen see only what the fanatic secularists want them to see? No. [For example, to the opinion poll mentioned above 60% readers (that is, even secular ones; as Outlook patrons must be different from the Organiser's) favoured the fifth option, while only 2% and 1% supported the options one and two respectively. Thus the Outlook judgement on Modi, VHP, etc. was rejected decisively by its readers as well.] Hence the reactions. We have to recognize, sooner or later, that a Hindu mob violence is **always** an expression of cumulative frustration resulting from injustice done. This is the end result of fanatic secularism. What the secularists do is mostly *raksha men hatya*.

That, at least partially, explains the difference between US public reaction to 9/11 and Indian (in this case Gujarati Hindu) public reaction to Godhra. The commoners, watching for years the farce going on about Kashmir, secularism, terrorism, human rights and all, understood perfectly well, without effort, that there would nothing come by way of a justice (what happened to the Bombay blasts culprits, SIMI bombers, terrorists of all kind?). The burnt *Ram bhakts* of Sabarmati Express would be forgotten in due time (indeed they were forgotten the same day! as the *dhimmis* in all trades, including the edit-writing, blamed the VHP for the train carnage). There was no justice in sight. Hence the law in Gujaratis' own hands - unlike the Americans. Americans took their reprisal through their Govt, to teach a lesson, without caring for morality and justice theories. There was nothing despicable in US action in Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11, was it? After all, big settlements always come by way of a war. Always. Colonialism, communism, fascism, terrorism – in every case the warring sides fought for finish. Godhra, too, raised the stakes too high. The moot question appeared on horizon: would you accept the carnage meekly? No one

asked this aloud, but the question was in every mind. Answer yes, and you will perish. No? Then do something. So they decided, the hapless common people of Gujarat decided. Not some organizations, some leaders, few communalists – as brazenly publicized by secularist media. If that was so, why they opposed assembly elections on the first mention of it? Because they knew that Hindus in general either committed or supported the reprisal, not 'some communalists'. True, the reprisal was horrendous. But please accept: it was also a mad expression of a keen desire to defend Hindus from further killings and repeated humiliations. It can be criticized, rightly, but one should not deny that it was the people who did so.

Godhra and aftermath is a complex phenomenon. *Dhimmi* secularism cannot explain it, much less find a solution. For solution, getting rid of the *dhimmi* attitude is the first prerequisite. Face the hard truth first. Then try to find out the best way. There is no other option. In any case, Hindu bashing is certainly no option. Not any more.

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Who is a Hindu?

Contributed By Dr. Shriharsha Sharma

Who is a Hindu ? This question arises all the time in various situations and Hindus are unable to answer it exactly, precisely, satisfactorily and with confidence. I have asked this question to many people including eminent Hindu scholars, Sadhus, religious leaders, professors and Pandits but without a satisfactory reply. Fortunately I have found the most fitting , exact, precise and above all satisfying definition of a Hindu by a great revolutionary, author, orator, poet and patriot **Veer Vinayak Rao Damodar Rao Savarkar.** In 1905 while in the prison at Andamon- Nicobar island he thus wrote :

Asindhu Sindhu Paryanta yashya Bharat Bhoomika,
Pitribhu Punya Bhuschaiva Sa vai Hindu Riti Smritah.[1]

There is a vast land between river Sindhu and Hind Mahasagar called Bharat and those who accept that this is their fatherland or / and a holy land, land of pilgrimage are all Hindu.

This defination includes Sanatanis, Saivas, Vaishnavas, Buddhists, Jains, Arya Samasis, Sikhs, Harijans, members of International Society of Krishna Consciousness or ISKCON, Adibasis, Tribes, Yogis, Sadhus, Dalits, followers of Swaminarayan, atheists and various other sects without exception are all Hindus . This is the first lesson the Hindu parents can give to their children. Teachers and leaders must learn this definition and covey and spread the correct information to unify the Hindu society.

This is worth mentioning that acceptance of the Vedas with reverence, recognition of the fact that the means or ways to salvation are diverse; and realisation of the truth that number of gods to be worship is large, that indeed the distinguishing feature of the Hindu religion.--- Shri **Balgangadhar Tilak**.[Quoted by Supreme Court of Bharat on 2 July 1995.]

Hindus believe in One God. There is no god but God .Hindus are truly monotheist but worship many gods and goddesses and see the same God in them. This needs to be realised at intellectual level by others and all those who have failed to understand this fact. For example snow, ice, icecle, dew, and vapour are all forms of water but we call them by different names similarly Hindus see the same God in all the gods and goddesses as well as in all the living and non living things this is the most simple thing , Hindus understand this and appreciate this. Hindu scriptures say it boldly, clearly, distinctly and most beautifully.

Ekam Sadhvipra Bahuda Vadanti [2] means that He is one but we call Him by various beautiful names.

Further to this it may be appropriate to mention the following verse which also gives clear message that Hindusthan means place[sthan] of Hindus or land of Hindus or Hinduland [e.g. England, land of English people, Ireland, land of Irish people]

Hindusthan's ancient name is Bharatvarsh.

Uttare cha Samudrashya Himadreshu cha Dakshinam,
Tadvarsha Bharat Nama Bharati Tatra Santati. [3]

The land which is north to the Hind Mahasagar[Indian Ocean] and south to the mighty, magnificent Himalayas is Bharat, sons and daughters of this ancient land are called Bharati or Bbharatiya[Hindusthani]

Bharat also means knowdge or Gyan means away from ignorance or away from darkness so Bharat means land of source of light or knowledge.True knowledge is in the Ved so Bharat is also known as Ved Bhoomi.

Bhayam Ratam Bharatam [4] means Bharat is submerged in light or is full of light so foundation and backbone of Bharat is knowledge where life is lead by knowledge therefore ignorance and superstitions have no place in the land of Hindus.

What unites us is our spiritual and cultural heritage and its inner and most powerful strength since beginning of our civilisation.

Our heroes and heroines are supreme who inspire and guide us just remembering their names provide new and instant energy, strength, courage, hope and peace to name a few e.g. Raam, Krishna, Arjun, karn, Mahaveer, Buddha, Sri raamkrishna, Dhruva,Prahalad, Hanuman,Sita, Radha,Tiruvallavur, Adi Sankaracharya, Ramana Maharshi,, Guru Nanak, Samarth Guru Raamdas,Shivaji, Maharana Pratap, Sant Yogeshwar, Swaminarayan Meera Bai, Tulsidas, Guru Tegh Babadur, Guru Govind Singh, Valmiki, Vedavyas, Kalidas, Swami Dayanand, Swami Vivekanand, Soordas, Kabir,Subhas Chandra Bose,Bhagat Singh,Chandra Shekhar, Bankim chadra chattopadhyaya, Sri Arvindo, Sardar Ballabha Bhai Patel, Veer Savarkar, Mahatma Gandhi and Sai Baba there is no end to this list and we are proud of them.

We recite the following Slok while bathing which is so satisfying and unifying us from Himalayas to Hind Mahasagar and all the Hindus living anywhere in the world.

Gange Cha Yamune Chaiva Godavari Saraswati,
Narmade Sindhu Kaveri Jalesminsannidhim kuru.[5]

A Hindu while chanting this Slok prays to sacred rivers e. g. Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada,Sindhu and Kaveri to come and join in the water being used for bath or shower. It is a unique and enlightening experience and at the same time so unifying which inspires me to say that one Hindu is for all and all Hindus for one.

Origin of the word Hindu has been traced from an ancient scripture called Brihanardi Puran in which there is a verse.

Himalayan Samabhya Yavat Binusarovaram,
Hindusthanmati Gyatam Hii Antarakshar Ayogatah.[6]

It means the country between the Himalayas and Bindu Sarovar is Hindusthan so combining the first letter Hi of Himalayas and last compound letter Ndu of word Bindu forms Hindu so purely and simply this is a Sanskrit word. Our ancestors wrote so much including two largest epics Raamayan and Mahabharat and foreigners gave us a name cannot be accepted .This verse is also mentioned in the Nardeeya Puran

Which is a short version of original Brihannardi Puran.

Our motherland is also known as Ved Bhoomi, Rishi Bhoomi, Sanskrit Bhoomi, Sanskriti Bhoomi,Sabhyata Bhoomi, Sant Bhoomi, Veer Bhoomi,Raam Bhoomi, Krishna Bhoomi, Mahaveer Bhoomi, Bddha Bhoomi,Tiruvallavur Bhoomi, Guru Bhoomi, Maharana Pratap Bhoomi, Shivaji Bhoomi, Lakshami Bai Bhoomi,Guru Nanak Bhoomi, Hedegewar Bhoomi, Sardar Patel, Veer Savarkar Bhoomi the list is unending.

I am a Hindu, my ancestors come from Hindusthan and my holy places or places of pilgrimage are in Hindusthan.

In Hindusthan over many thousands of years the Dharma,culture, civilisation, traditions, philosophy, Yog vidya, Ayurved,music, literature, arts , fine arts, dance, and languages had developed without outside compulsion and force in total harmony with nature and eternal laws that is why it is so pure and unique and if you approach with open mind then you will love it and you will find vast treasure in it and that is the experience of many so try to know more about it you will be spiritually and culturally richer and peaceful.

Everything in Hindusthan is attached to word Hindu and greatest strength of Hindus has been the freedom of expression in thought, talk and action . The culture of this country is Hindu Culture, the history of this country is the history of Hindus, so is the architecture, literature, sculpture, folklore, poetry, dramas, stories, comics, sorrow and laughter, music, languages and heritage around us is all Hindu. We must go a bit back and deeper and infact it has all its source from Sanatan Dharma. All the religions of Hindusthan are branches of Sanatan Dharma which is generally known as Hinduism ..Hinduism has the capacity and capability to accommodate all those who believe in the freedom of individual in thought, talk and action following the eternal laws of equality, justice and freedom in development of humanity.

The time has come that Hindus must rename India officially as Hindusthan which is long over due, this will bring a new energy in them and make them feel proud, bold, assertive, responsible and courageous . This is the demand of majority Hindus and cannot be ignored anymore.

Avery simple fact I would like to mention is this that anybody can become a Hindu according to the above definition so you do not have to be a born Hindu . **Swami Dayanand Saraswati** first started conversion of Muslims and Christians who were converted from Hindus and later Swami Vivekanand came in favour of this and promoted this and recently **Swami Chinmayanand, Sivaya Subramaniya Swami** came in favour of this. The reconversion work is going on in Hndusthan to get Hindus back where they truly belong. This is a sacred duty of every Hindu to welcome these brothers and sisters whom we had lost and create a society so that we do not lose them to foreign faiths because we have been divided by these foreign faiths as a result our

motherland was divided. Before the arrival of these invaders we were the most prosperous, happy and peaceful this is the fact we must know. I wish quote a speech of Lord Macaulay given in British Parliament in 1835 regarding greatness, superiority and civilisation of Hindus----

I have travelled across the length and breadth of Hindusthan [India] and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief, . Such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such calibre, that I do not think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage, and, therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own , they will lose their self-esteem, their native self- culture and they will become what we want them, a truly a dominated nation.

This was the most unfortunate strategy adopted by British government and they destroyed everything good in India which had taken her to develop thousands of years.

So India was looted, plundered, cheated, betrayed by British rule. The conversion to Christianity of Hindus and tribes people began by Christian missionaries, moral values declined, people were divided on castes, race and religion for the benefit of British. English schools, universities were started to teach that everything native is inferior to English and a new class of people were trained to help the British to rule over India but none of them ever reached to the highest post.

The British rule further divided the already divided people and created new castes of Anglo-IndiansChristians and Christians who were the most favoured in key jobs and promotions .

Macaulay did the incalculable harm and succeeded in his plan to rule by destroying native way of life through English education in India but his poison is still doing the harm to India so in order to reverse the process and make India great again we have to organise, plan and bring back the lost values, morals by establishing faith in our native culture and spiritualism. It may take time but it is within our capacity and capability. We must take words of **Sri Aurobindo** and save ourselves by saving Sanatana Dharma.

India would rise with rise of Sanatana Dharma, that India would Sink if Sanatana Dharma sank, and that India would die if it were at all possible for Sanatana Dharma to die. ------ Sri Aurobindo.

This is the history that whoever came to our country until 8 th century they all accepted our way

of life and became Hindu without force and wherever we went we took our culture and message of Hinduism they accepted it as a great gift and these countries became Hinduised and this is visible even today the South East Asia.

Buddhism a branch of Hinduism spread and established in Sri Lanka , Burma, Thailand, Vietnam , Bourneo, Java, Sumatra, Cambodia, Japan, Korea, Tibet and Chiana where it established without a single conflict ,war or killing .Taoism Confucianism and Buddhism have lived and progressed side by side for thousands of years without violence , so what is the secret , because they have developed naturally following the eternal laws respecting each other and do not go for violence to convert or prove superiority . This is recorded that Buddhism had established itself in each and every village of China by year 65 A. D. without any force, violence or threat but with love, respect , help and understanding each others concerns for the sufferings around , to reduce or minimise the sorrow in order to make the world more peaceful and trouble free .Now Buddhism has spread in all the continents and so has Hinduism.

The world has changed a lot and for Hindus to survive they have to put a stop to conversion of Hindus to Islam and Christianity which has been going on in Hindusthan by force. First it happened during Islamic invasions and rule and now happening by the force of petrodollars . Later the conversion of Hindus started by Christian [French, Portugguege, Dutch, English] invaders and rulers. These conversions have been going on since arrival of Islam as invaders later joined by Christians destroying everything native. The time has come to pass a law to stop conversion of Hindus.This is a great game of numbers and everyday Hindus are decreasing in number and if this goes on then they will be in minority, this is a grave situation. This process can be controlled and reversed by the followings to make India strong and a developed nation.

I.. One civil law for all without exception.
2. One couple two children without exception.

Jai Hind!

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Human Voices
By Gautam Siddharth
The Pioneer, Saturday, January 22, 2000

The beginning of the new millennium should be of a special significance in the context of the Indic civilization. The celebrations heralding it must remind us, in this part of the world, how we have divorced ourselves from our own history and culture. When we observe the onset of the third millennium along with the Western world, we are actually travelling back in time, for the Indic civilisation is a lot older than two thousand years. Then why are we indulging in this exercise in collective self-hypnosis, of willy-nilly tending to believe that we are younger than our age? The answer lies in a complex of loss: The loss of the idea of who we as a people are, and a concomitant failure to relocate our space in the history of time.

It is an engaging irony that the people living east of the river Sindhu, south of the Brahmaputra, spanning more than the entire length of the Ganga, and down to the Vindhyas, were given their civilisational identity due to an error of phonetics. A people who called their land Aryavarta, and later Bharat, and were practitioners of
Sanaatan dharma, came to be recognised as Hindus because the Persians, an equally ancient civilisation, referred to their eastern neighbours by the name of the river Sindhu. Due to an inability to pronounce the first sound Sa in the Sanskrit word Sindhu, they altered it to the convenience of their tongue to say Ha . This is the short exegesis behind the origin of the word Hindu which, of course, is well known.

In this process, that could well have lasted hundreds of years, not only did the land begin being called Hindustan, the religion its people practiced too was given the term Hindu , and later Hinduism. The reason behind this too is clear: With the movement of people from the west and central Asia to the region across the Sindhu, the cultured inhabitants of the land, who knew themselves as followers of Sanaatan dharma and as
inhabitants of Bharatvarsha which was a civilisation, not a nation were caught in a great flux and, faced with the changing ground realities, had to reinvent themselves. Thus was the Sanaatani reborn as the Hindu.

With its fruition, this process led to a momentous happening. The practitioners of a dharma a word which incorporates the Western concepts of religion, duty, law, right, justice, practice and principle were understood to be, or perceived as, followers of an ism. But Sanaatan Dharma was not in the least an ism; it was partly knowledge from the well-springs of deep human antiquity, and partly an unending preoccupation with myths. At its dharmic centre was the Truth as it was revealed to the Vedic seers. There was not one seer; there were seers. Their dharma did not have a

central figure or a single book. The understanding of these people, Vedic people, about man, creation and universe clustered around one central idea. It was not just a credo or a faith; it was a fount with a worldview and conviction about existence, life and human experience. It is this self-knowledge, eternally at the moment of self-actualisation, that has been at the centre of Sanaatani values as consciousness.

If this civilisational continuity gave rise to rituals of the mind-boggling sort, it also proferred the seeker-practitioner ways and means for gnosis, austere, inspired and inspirational. Sanaatani life was wallowing in ideas and verities; it was most notably not an ism. An ism is a closed system of belief, distinct from living out an idea intellectual action which springs from memory and imagination. The institutional structure of Hinduism was gradually devised to keep the historical memory of the deep antiquity behind creation revealed in the Vedas and the Upanishads, alive. It was a Hindu tribute to the memory of creation and human existence, whose one unshakable pillar was intellection. Unfortunately, this intellection has become a thing of the past. The disorientation that we are witnessing today in our civilisation which is played out in people s lives more than mutely captured in monuments is a result of this collective Hindu amnesia.



Our quest to answer for our identity gets obfuscated with the understanding of Hindutva without its central precepts that lie in Sanaatan dharma. (The calcification of the adherents of the dharma on caste and creed lines, for instance, is not Hindutva.) But the singular unifying point with us who are all Bharatiya, or Indians is gradually being located today in what can be called an early phase of Hindutva, or Hindu resurgence. There are, though, people who doubt whether such a unifying point a centrality exists, a point common with all inhabitants of this large and diverse subcontinent. They say that Hinduism cannot be that unifying factor, arguing that Christianity never could unite Europe, and that its nations have till this century fought long and destructive wars.



This argument is specious. Christianity could never have united Europe because it never originated in Europe and Christianity is not ethnic to Europe like Hinduism is to India. Hinduism took birth, as Sanaatan dharma, in the land that is Bharat. In that sense, in the sense of having a defined geopolitical boundary, Hinduism stands alone in the pantheon of the great religions of the world. This alone reveals the truth that if there is any one single factor that unites the people of Bharat, or India, into forming one over-riding identity, it is the civilisational identity steeped in the universalism of Hindu thought. It is in the consciousness of our Hindu civilisation that our collective identity resides. And it this consciousness that has to be recreated. For, the neglect of the search for a locus has wounded the Indian civilisation.



If we are to make the new millennium of any relevance to us, then we must first recognise that the five-thousand year-old civilisational plate has been reinforced with the fifty-year-old national plate both of which form the bedrock of our existence today. And if our historical memory is not too short; if we dissolve small discords and instead look at the vastness of the dharma that binds us as sentient human beings above all, we will have not only paid our debt to the punyabhoomi that is Bharat but also resonated our timeless message: A worthwhile effect is born only out of a noble cause.

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'Lord Ram was born in 5114 BC'

AYODHYA, NOVEMBER 10:"Ram was and is for real. He was born on January 10, 5114 BC," says Commissioner of Income Tax Saroj Bala, with the assurance of one who has tangible facts. This tax mandarin, who zealously devotes her spare time to research in history, has taken on the contemporary historical interpretation of Ramayana as a religio-literary text, and Lord Ram as a semi-mythical figure. And she has chosen the unusual combination of astronomy, the Internet and literary texts to provide a startling picture of Shri Ram. This might change the way we look at history and religion. Saroj Bala says that we might refuse to begin reading Indian history from that comma, or hyphen called 'Indus Valley.' We might have to stretch the beginnings by a few thousand years because, for Ram was born on January 10, 5114 BC. When asked what got her started she says, "As an amateur historian, I've always been interested in Indian culture and heritage. I am proud that we're Indians and the products of one of the oldest civilisations".

Saroj Bala goes on to add, "However, British rule changed us; we developed a sense of being somehow inferior. But I could never reconcile to theories like the theory of Aryan invasion to India in 1500 BC. That would make Indian civilization only 3,500 years old. And if you choose archaeology to dig beyond 7,000 years, you'd have to dig more than 60 metres - something not being done in India as yet. So, archaeology is not the only answer. There's a lot of objective research of another kind that needs to be carried out in earnest". The question remains, how can one say Ram was born on January 10, 5114 B.C?

Saroj Bala has a ready answer for that, "My colleague Pushkar Bhatnagar of Indian Revenue Service is the real originator of this theory. He acquired a software named Planetarium, used to predict planetary movements and configurations.By entering in this software, precise details of planetary positions vis-a-vis zodiac constellations described by Maharishi Valmiki in the Valmiki Ramayan, it is possible to determine important dates starting from Shri Ram's birth-date to the date of his return to Ayodhya. More than just Ram's date of birth, the results have not just thrown up Shri Ram's date of birth; it has actually traced the entire sequence of incidents throughout Ramayan. Pushkar Bhatnagar starts with tracing Ram's birth. Then he moves ahead in the narrative. Valmiki Ramayan states Ram was 25-year-old when he went to exile. When the configuration of planets described at this point is fed into the software, the date thrown up matches perfectly with Ram's age at that juncture of his life - 25 years. Again in the 13th year of Ram's exile, during a war with Khar and Dushan, Valmiki describes a solar eclipse. The software proves that on that given day there was indeed a solar eclipse (with Mars in the middle). This solar eclipse and the particular configuration of planets could be seen from Panchavati (longitude and latitude plainly shown in the software). Hanuman Saw 8 Constellations while flying to Lanka... In the Sunderkand, when Valmiki describes Hanuman crossing the sea and returning

from Lanka to Rameshwaram, he gives details of 8 constellations. Usually, one can see not more than 6 constellations at a given point of time. But since Hanuman was flying across, and it must have taken him approximately 4 hrs to get there, he could see 8 constellations - in two hours one constellation would have moved out of sight and another become visible. So, in a period of 4 hrs he saw 8 constellations! Historicising Shri Ram. Man or God... After researching on Shri Ram, I do believe he's a man who walked the earth in flesh and blood. There is an essential difference between the Valmiki Ramayana and the Tulsi Ramayana. Tulsidas was a devotee who looked up to Ram, but Valmiki was a contemporary. Valmiki has written Ram's life-history, as a biographer does - he's a contemporary of Ram, and this is not very different from what happens all over the world. Kings have always had their life- history written".

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Did Jesus Christ visit India during his lifetime?

Puri: Did Jesus Christ ever visit the pilgrim city of Puri during his "unexplained twelve years" of life? We would know soon if German scholar Hj Trebst's research to unearth the missing twelve years of Christ's life bears fruit.

Dr Trebst, who had invited the scholars of this ancient city, yesterday said according to some scholars of the Orient and the West, Jesus had visited Puri where he had studied Veda and Yoga before returning home to preach Christianity.

Jesus Christ had also studied Buddhism in the Indian sub-continent, the scholar, who had done extensive research in Ladhakh and Nepal to trace evidence of Christ's itinerary in the Indian sub-continent, said.

A seminar was also organised under the aegis of Jagannath Gabeshana Parishad where eminent scholars like Dr Harekrushna Satapathy, Dr Siddheswer Mohapatra, Jagabandhu Padhi, Dr Debendra Dash and others deliberated over the Hindu religious texts which mentioned the activities of Jesus.

Dr Trebst said 2,000 years ago Puri was a famous seat of learning and history has revealed that over the centuries religious leaders of various sects and cults had visited this holy shrine.

It was most likely that Jesus had also visited this holy seat of learning, he said, though adding that it was a very difficult task to trace the history of his visit to Puri.

The German scholar was, however, optimistic that the scholars of the pilgrim city would be of immense help in analysing the ancient manuscripts and scriptures on the visit of Jesus.

Meanwhile, the local research scholars have suggested Dr Trebst to go through the library of the Jagatguru Sankeracharya, the oldest in the state, which had a large collection of palm leaf manuscripts since the time of Aadi Sanker (about 4th century BC) to find out the missing links in the life of Christ.

source: **http://sify.com/news/fullstory.php?id=13302549**

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ACCORDING to the Nilmat Purana, the land of Kashmir was occupied by a vast lake called "Satisara". Modern geological observations have supported this legendary view. On the basis of this fact, the word "Kashmir" is derived from Sanskrit "Kashyapa + Mira" which means the sea lake or the mountain of sage Kashyapa. Kashyapa was the originator of Kashmir. In Kashmiri, it

is called "Kasheer" and "Kashmir" in the Indian languages. Phonetically, "m" is eroded here as we find erosion in the word "Samudra" (ocean). "Samudra" changes into the form of "Sadur" (derived from Sanskrit Samudra in the Kashmiri language and "Samandra" in the Indian languages. "M" is retained in Hindi, Urdu, etc. but not in Kashmiri. Thus "Kashyapa + Mira" = Kashmir in the Indian languages other than Kashmiri and "Kasheer" in Kashmiri. Mir in English means the sea as Mariner. In Latin Marinus (more- sea).

Source : http://www.koausa.org/KoshSam/SanskritLiterature.html

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Patal Bhuwaneshwar

Nurturing mysteries of nature

By Sandeep Silas and Satbir Silas

http://www.indiagov.org/perspec/jun00/patal.htm

Here is a story which was written by Time not on the face of earth, but within it mysteriously.

This fable of the world is contained in the womb of earth, inside the deep dark black stone caves, which live to relate the tale of not years but yugas (ages); not of ordinary men, but of those who shaped the destiny of earth, the entire Hindu pantheon. Patal Bhuwaneshwar, 1350 m above sea level, is still hidden from public glare by mountain sentinels and an unaccessed village, 185 km. from the hill station of Nainital in Uttar Pradesh. That the Kumaon hills would contain something so unbelievable, so amazing, and a secret so well guarded, can hardly be guessed till you see it with your own eyes.

The entrance to Patal Bhuwaneshwar cave is ordinary, unpretentious. There are no indications to reveal the mysteries it holds within. There are no claims to glory. It is a simple three feet high opening kept ordinarily barred by the priest. Looks can surely be deceptive! You descend 82 steps into this cave, which is an over 100 feet deep wonder. The descent is sharp, sometimes you have to sit from step to step in your downward journey, sometimes you have to recline and pass the stone-way. As you move you become conscious of descending inside the earth. When you pause to heave a sigh of relief in the first cave enclosure, you realise that it is not one cave but many more. It is actually a cave city. There are caves within caves, caverns clinging to caves, niches peeping our of caves, holes leading to hollows, steps revealing platforms, cave doors unmasking deep secrets, water sources and narrow pathways. All within this cave. It is a natural wonder, not carved or created by hammer and chisel! It is surprising that not many enthusiasts and pilgrims have ventured to discover these secrets held by the nether.

What makes it more interesting is the fact that the cave is not silent, it is a speaking cave. Each stone, each stalagmite, each stalactite, each hollow, each cavern, each doorway, each step, each stone erection, each drip of water reveals the story of Hinduism down the ages. It is believed that King Ritupurna of the Sun dynasty discovered the cave in the Treta era, which has been described in chapter 103 of *Manas Khand* in *Sikandpuran*. The first Guru Shankaracharya in *Kaliyug* (The current age) consecrated this cave, and since 1191 A.D. a Hindu priest performs worship. Each day, from the times of the Kings of Chand and Katyuri dynasties, the priest descends 82 steps down into the cave and performs worship, keeps the incense burning, the flower petals fresh...

The journey inside the cave begins as you let go of the iron chains, which helped you alight and steady your steps to the feeble incandescent light of some electric bulbs. In the cave enclosure you

can make out the massive hood of a snake, in one corner. Do not be alarmed, for it is the *Sheshnaga* holding the earth on its hood as per Hindu belief. You are in *patal*, the world below the earth. The teeth, jaws and poison sack of *Sheshnaga* can be seen in stone. It is surprising how all this shape came to be naturally acquired by stones. It is believed that there are three loks (worlds) - *Patal* (below earth), *Prithvi* (earth) and *Akash* (sky). The *Sheshnaga* performs its relentless duty, holding the earth on its hood, preventing it from sinking into the *Patal*.

The stone body and ribs of *Sheshnaga* escort you to the rocky torso of *Adiganesh*, the son of Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati. Adiganesh had lost his head due to the anger of Shiva in a misunderstanding. To the wails of Parvati, Lord Shiva realised his mistake and gave new life to Ganesha, by placing an elephant head on his body. Ganesha, the elephant headed god is highly revered by the Hindus. The stone commemorates the headless Adiganesha. The *Sastradal Kamal* (lotus flower) rock just above this torso lets water drip into it, regularly. It is believed to be a divine *abhishek* (anointing).

Ahead is seen the *Kali Kamli asan* of Lord Shiva in a rock. This *asan* (meditative pose) is believed to be the supreme. Lord Shiva used to carry a *jhola* (cloth bag), and so we have inside the cave a porous bag like representation. If you knock on it with your knuckles, the sound shall tell you that the rock is hollow inside. Some truth! Next comes the figure of *Patal Bhairavi* with a lion mouth to one side – amazing!

A turning brings you to a curious combination of cave doors. Four cave doors reveal a story of their own – *Randwar*, *Paapdwar*, *Dharamdwar*, and *Mokshadwar*, together called *Chardwar* (four doors). Two of them are closed. The *Randwar* (door to war) was closed after the Mahabharata war. The *Paapdwar* (door to sin) was closed after the slaying of demon king Ravana by Lord Rama. Both *Dharamdwar* (door to path of religion) and *Mokshadwar* (door to salvation) are still open to man. The doorways exhort Man to take the path of *dharma* and achieve *moksha*, which is salvation.

To your left is seen in black rock the *Parijat Vraksha*, the tree that grants wishes. Legend has it that Lord Krishna brought this from Amravati. The stone tree inside the cave started growing and it would have broken the earth, had Lord Shiva not stopped its growth. You look wonderstruck at the tale and the trunk. It looks an actual tree trunk. On top of this trunk is a dense leafy structure, which leaves you stupefied at its shape. How can this be? The marvels of nature are too intriguing to be understood.

The huge stalactites, called the *jatas* (locks) of Lord Shiva are a beautiful sight. They flow down in stony silence and appear a real-life mane of hair. A part of them are white, which adds colour to the black stone cave. Tiny representations of Hindu gods and goddesses in stone eruptions relate how these are in perpetual attendence to the Lord. The famous Pandavas meditated inside this cave, below the *jatas* of Shiva.

As you move past this region the path is narrow and very slippery. Your feet must find stone cuttings and depressions lest you should lose balance. The Patal Bhuwaneshwar Mahadev – shivalinga in a trimurti image, is being anointed by the jatas of Lord Shiva. It leaves you expressionless as you observe that water drops, which drip from the jatas above, fall one by one over all three representations of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh in the trimurti linga image. Truth can be stranger than fiction!

All this while, inside the cave city, there was no insect, no bird or flying mammal, not even a whiff of stale odour that is associated with caves. It was most surprising that all life representations within were forzen in stone. Stone was the master of the cave city; it gave it a shape, a meaning and a reason to exist.

You return stunned after a two-hour sojourn. There are still three reminders, which the priest has not yet spoken of. First is the narration in rock of the *yugas* (ages) of the earth – *Satyug* (11,000 yrs.), *Tretajug* (9,000 yrs.), *Dwaparjug* (4,000 yrs.) and *Kaliyug* (4,000 yrs. completed). The stone erection representing Kaliyug has grown to its one-fourth length in 4000 years. Once this stalagmite grows the remaining three-fourth length in years and touches the roof, there would be *pralaya* (deluge) leading to the creation of yet another *yuga*. It is believed that the speed of this growth is determined by sin committed on earth. How rapidly would sin grow and along with it this stalagmite is to be seen. That this is the key to the world's destiny is indeed surprising.

Second is the one thousand feet representation of mythological elephant *Airawat*. The five trunk bearing elephant came out of the churning of the ocean between the gods and the demons. The gods have him and so will those whose deeds are godly. Between Airawat's feet flows the mythical river *Saraswati*, which is seen in white streaks. Third was the priest himself, Dan Singh Bhandari, whose family has been conducting worship here for the past 900 years. He is the 18th in the line of succession. Truly it is said that the meek shall inherit the kingdom of God.

The author, a senior civil servant, is a noted freelance writer.

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Hastinapur jewels

By Brajendra Singh
The Pioneer

The epic battle of Mahabharat was approaching its bloody climax. The Pandav had suffered grievous losses, including the death of Arjun's son Abhimanyu, who had been trapped inside the chakravyuh and then been simultaneously attacked by several senior warriors.

However, it was the Kaurav who had the real catastrophes heaped on them. One by one they had lost their mightiest fighters. Bheeshm Pitamah, the clan's patriarch, had been felled. Dronacharya, the preceptor, was dead, as were most of the hundred royal brothers. And it was only on the previous day that Duhshasan, the second eldest among the Kaurav siblings, had been torn apart by Bheem, the mace-wielding wrestler.

The formidable Karn(n), offspring of the Sun god, now took over command of the Kaurav army. Egged on by the eldest Kaurav prince Duryodhan, Karn(n) decided to personally take on Arjun and finish him off once and for all. Seeing his opportunity late that afternoon, Karn(n) cut his way ruthlessly through the Pandav forces, and
headed straight for Arjun. So violent and vicious was Karn(n)'s offensive that Arjun's defences soon crumbled before it. Karn(n) then moved in for the kill.

Arjun's charioteer, Lord Krishna, realised that only a miracle could save his ward now. And so it happened. Krishna caused the sun to set prematurely; and Karn(n), the honourable warrior that he was, postponed the day of judgement since fighting after sunset was banned in those days.

Back in Hastinapur, Sanjay, who had been endowed ad hoc with televisionary ability, narrated the day's events to the blind Kaurav King Dhritarashtr. The latter immediately realised that the Kaurav clan was doomed, since Krishna, despite having vowed not to physically take part in the battle, was obviously using his supernatural powers to help the Pandav.

Dhritrashtra's mind immediately went to the crown jewels of the Hastinapur royal house, a fabulous of treasure trove that had been built up over the centuries since the beginning of the dynasty. Somehow he had to keep the hoard out of the hands of the Pandav, whom he had now begun to passionately hate.

It is at this juncture when he was filled with ominous prospect that a plan came to his mind. One that would not ensure that the Pandav never found the priceless hidden cache, but also guaranteed its easy recovery in the unlikely event that the Kaurav emerged victorious from the battle raging at

Kurukshetra.

That night, a caravan under the command of a trusted aide, was despatched with the royal jewels it proceeded straight to Indraprasth, the Pandav capital. Taking advantage of the darkness and the absence of menfolk away at the battlefield, the treasure was buried at the intersection of two main roads. After all, Dhritarashtr had rightly reasoned, the Pandav (who eventually won the battle and totally destroyed the Kaurav) would hardly
think of the jewels buried in their own metropolis.

It is rumoured that excavations undertaken at the Old Fort (Purana Kila) in the early 1960s brought forth a tablet inscribed with the above story. Unfortunately, time has wrought extensive changes on the landmarks that could lead up to the hoary treasure.

The exact location of the treasure is impossible to ascertain. That is the reason why since then since 1960 the authorities have been continually and furiously digging up the roads of Delhi. In a desperate bid to find the Hastinapur jewels, put away darling by the blind Dhritrashtra's men somewhere in the entrails of Indraprasth's earth.

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Sanskrit: Our Crowning Glory
By Karan Singh

THERE ARE at least four good reasons why Sanskrit studies need to be encouraged in this country and given an appropriate place in our educational system.

First, as a classical language, Sanskrit is recognised as being among the most remarkable to have emerged anywhere on this planet during the entire course of human history. Its grammatical structure is so exquisite, and its sonic quality so superb, that it is universally recognised as representing a high watermark of human linguistics. It is not necessary to quote numerous Indian and foreign scholars to support this view. Providing as it does the foundation for most of the other Indian languages, it is to them what Greek and Latin together are to most Western languages.

Secondly it, represents, as it were, the great Himalayas of our cultural life, towering as a magnificent testament to the creativity and genius of the Indian mind. It is rich with unbounded treasures —the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, the Puranas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Yoga Shastras, which represent a cultural and spiritual tradition unique in its scope, depth and vitality, expressing the collective genius and richness of Indian civilisation. It also needs to be noted that Sanskrit has been enriched by people drawn from virtually all the linguistic and regional entities in India, from the mighty Himalayas down to Kerala and from Gujarat to Assam. Though it was never the popular lingua franca, it quite clearly provided the basis of our civilisational unity which has survived incredible holocausts and vicissitudes, and without which there could well have been a dozen countries on the sub-continent in place of one India. In fact, it would be correct to say that Sanskrit is to Indian civilisation what Roman Catholicism is to the Latin American or Islam to the Arabic civilisations. In addition, the impact of Hindu and Buddhist cultures on South and Southeast Asia took place largely through Sanskrit texts which were later adapted to the languages of those areas.

Thirdly, in literature, Sanskrit has produced outstanding figures such as Kalidasa and Banabhatt, Bharavi and Jaideva, Bhartrihari and Kalhan who can be compared to any in the world. It is a misconception that Sanskrit is concerned only with spiritual wisdom. Sanskrit texts cover the entire gamut of human activity including politics, economics, aesthetics, law, grammar, prosody, psychology, mathematics, astrology, astronomy and medicine, to name only a few. Many of these disciplines are of immense importance in our contemporary situation. The discovery of the ‘zero’, which emerged from the concept of shunya (or void), was a defining event in the growth of human knowledge. The very numerals that the world uses today, known as Arabic numerals, flowed from Sanskrit numbers. This is not to take the narrowly chauvinistic attitude that seeks to trace all major concepts back to India, but to single out the incontrovertible contributions of

Sanskrit to human culture and civilisation of which we can be rightly proud.

Fourthly, Sanskrit articulates significant global values. The Vedanta, which represents the apogee of Indian philosophy, is replete with concepts that are of tremendous contemporary significance. Such seminal ideas as the all-pervasiveness of the divine, the potential divinity immanent in each human being regardless of race, religion, caste or sex, the entire human race being an extended family; all religions representing different approaches to the same universal truth; the commitment to the welfare and happiness of the masses and so on are gaining increasing significance as our planet hurtles into an indeterminate future.

These values, which are very much in harmony with the values enshrined in our Constitution, need to be fully understood and interiorised, a process in which Sanskrit has a crucial role to play. The first two stanzas of our national song Vande Mataram are in Sanskrit, as is our national motto Satyameva Jayate. In the West, Latin and Greek are still taught, not to propagate Paganism but because they represent the very basis of Western civilisation. Why should we in India deny to millions of our citizens of their cultural heritage? Sanskrit should be an optional language for those who may wish to explore its many splendoured radiance; while alternate options for studying Arabic and Persian should also be provided, as these too are rich and powerful classical languages.

http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/211298/detOPI02.htm
Hindustan Times

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articles on hinduism

Modern science echoes Indian sages' insights

By Karan Singh

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/html/comp/articleshow?artid=34569012

Following is the full text of the inaugural address by Dr Karan Singh on a symposium ‘Science and Beyond: Cosmology, Consciousness and Technology in the Indic Traditions’.

As this symposium begins with cosmology, I would like to start my address by quoting the famous creation-hymn from the world's most ancient living scripture, the Rig Veda (X.IZ9/1-7- Griffith translation):

Then was not non-existent nor existent:

There was no realm of air, no shy beyond it:

What covered it, and where? And what gave shelter?

Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?

Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal:

No sign was there, the day's and night's divider.

That one thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature:

Apart from it was nothing whatsoever.

Darkness there was: at first concealed in darkness

All this was indiscriminate chaos.

All that existed then was void and formless:

By the great power of warmth was born that unit.

Thereafter rose desire in the beginning.

Desire the primal seed and germ of spirit.

Sages who searched with their hearts' thought discovered

the existent's kinship with the non-existent.

Transversely was their severing line extended:

What was above it then, and what below it?

There were begetters, there were mighty forces,

free action here and energy up yonder

Who verily knows and who can here declare it,

Whence it was born and whence comes this creation?

The gods are later than the world's production,

who knows then whence it first came into being?

He, the first origin of this creation,

whether he formed it all or did not form it,

Whose eye control this world in highest heaven,

He verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.

It is indeed astounding that modem developments in science, particularly cosmology, seem to echo some of the insights of our great seers and sages which have come down to us for thousands of years through the long and tortuous corridors of lime. It is almost as if, like the background.

Emanations from the Big Bang, the faint echoes of our ancient spiritual luminaries can still be heard in the background of all our post-modern discourses on the human condition.

Some years ago, when I was ambassador to the United States, I called upon the great scientist Prof S. Chandrasekhar in Chicago, and asked him as to how if was that the seers of the Vedas and Upanishads had two astounding insights which have emerged in modem science only very recently. The first is the concept of *Anantakoti Brahmanda* - billions of galaxies or universe. The second is the concept of vast aeons of times through which creation passes, the single day of Brahma being of 4.32 million years with a night of equal duration, so that a year of Brahma closely approximates the age of planet Earth. He really had no explanation and when I suggested that perhaps this knowledge came to our seers in enhanced states of consciousness, he said that was quite possible.

From cosmology, let us then move on to consciousness. In the Indic traditions, consciousness is not merely an epi-phenomenon of evolving matter, rather it is the prime principle which calls forth these millions of worlds. The great icon of Shiva Nataraja, lord of the cosmic dance, beautifully portrays this kinetic universe in which all things, from the majestic movement of the great galaxies down to the persistent agitation of sub-atomic particles, are in a state of flux. The drum in Shiva's left hand represents creation - the original Big Bang if you like, or perhaps a continual series of Big Bangs, while the fire in his right hand represents their ultimate destruction in the great cycles of time. However, if there were only the Big Bangs and the Big Crunches, there would be little space for you and me. Shiva's other two hands, therefore, point to the possibility of individual realisation amidst the cosmic chaos in which we find ourselves. One hand is raised in a gesture of benediction, telling humanity not to fear, while the fourth points to his upraised foot as the path of liberation.

The whole question of consciousness and its evolution is one that has attracted some of the best minds in the world, including the great evolutionary philosopher Sri Aurobindo. In India we have developed over the millennia systems of yoga which are surely the most profound and integral exploration of consciousness ever essayed by the human race. While we also developed path-breaking outer technology in such fields as metallurgy, medicine and mathematics; Indian civilisation took a turn probably unique in the history of thought. Our most creative minds turned the searchlight inwards towards the source of consciousness itself, and built up an entire science based upon this creative introspection. In his classic work on the yoga-sutras, the sage Patanjali has given us a seminal textbook for exploring the deeper recesses of our being.

Post-Freudian movements in psychology in the West have also gradually developed these deeper insights, notably with C.G. Jung and the post-Jungians, and moving on to Transpersonal Psychology.

The study of consciousness has now become a fully respectable and challenging area for intellectual and experiential exploration. I have personally had the privilege of discussing the nature of consciousness with some of the most creative minds of the 20th century — Stanislav Grof with his extended cartography of the mind, Rupert Sheldrape with his theory of morphogenic resonance, Ilya Prigogine with his chaos theory, Jonas Salk the great bio-chemist whose book *Survival of the Wisest* is a classic, Carl Sagan, who brought the mysteries of the cosmos into the minds and hearts of millions, Arthur Clarke, the astonishingly creative space author and many others. Indeed the study of consciousness is now one of the most fertile fields for research and experimentation.

Years ago, when I was minister for health and family planning, I had started here in Bangalore in the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS) a programme entitled ‘Project Consciousness’ in which I had assembled some of the most creative scientific minds in India as well as, involving Pandit Gopi Krishna whose books on Kundalini awakening are known throughout the world. Unfortunately, as so often happens, the project was wound up almost immediately after I left the ministry, evidently considered a mild eccentricity not worth pursuing. It has always struck me as tragic that we in India, with our unique spiritual and intellectual background in this field, should still be lagging behind. Had the project continued over the last quarter of a century we could well have produced the first Nobel laureates in the field of consciousness research.

Albert Einstein's famous remark that "science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind", makes a very important point. Before him, the Cartesian-Newtonian-Marxist paradigm of thought postulated an unbreachable dicotomy between matter and spirit. This concept dominated Western civilisation for several centuries and did produce spectacular results. However, with the Einsteinian revolution and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, Quantum mechanics and extra-galactic cosmology, the situation has now changed considerably. Science itself is in one of its great creative periods where old barriers are breaking down and some of us - perhaps a trifle optimistically - are beginning to discern the outlines of a convergence between science and spirituality.

I use the term 'spirituality' advisedly, because 'religion' carries a lot of baggage, much of it positive but some of it negative also, despite the work being done by interfaith organisations around the world, including the temple of understanding of which I happen to be chairman, whereas spirituality transcends theological divisions, and cuts across barriers of race and creed, religion and nationality. The seers of all the great faiths of the world have, in their utterances, sought to describe what is essentially an indescribable experience, whether it is the Beatific Vision of the Christians, the Bodhichitta of the Buddhists, the Noor-e-llahi of the Muslims, the Ek Onkar of the Sikh gurus or the Self-realisation of the Hindus. Clearly there are states of higher consciousness which transcend all barriers and which are the heritage of the entire human race. This flows from the persistent tradition of the light that illuminates the universe - the light of consciousness itself, and it is ultimately an awareness of this light in all human beings that alone can become the cornerstone of a sane and harmonious global society.

What is needed today, as the watchword of the emerging global society, is a new global renaissance, an integration between apparently conflicting concepts. We need to develop a benign symbiosis between the various elements of our personality - the inner and the outer, the quietist and the activist, the feminine and the masculine - and in the broader dimension between science and spirituality. It is my sincere hope that this international symposium on science and beyond will help to trigger the process of creative symbiosis whereby alone can the human race survive its own technological ingenuity. It is in this hope that I have the greatest pleasure in inaugurating this symposium.

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How the media lost its money - By Tavleen Singh

Introspection. If you were politically interested enough to have remained transfixed by your television set when the results of the assembly elections came out last Thursday you would have heard it a lot. It tripped gaily and recurrently off the tongues of political pundits and psephologists as they advised the Congress Party on its future course of action. I found myself laughing every time I heard the word because if there is anyone who needs to do more introspection, even than the Congress Party, it is the media. Last week, in this column I wrote about media bias against the Bharatiya Janata Party but did not realise then the extent to which this bias should be called dishonesty. Lying.

It was not just the polls that got the elections wrong, it was the media as a whole and where the media is concerned this happened, I believe, because our loyalty to a twisted, bizarre idea of secularism blinds us increasingly to reality. In Madhya Pradesh the writing on the wall was in big black letters and so impossible to misread but throughout the campaign we missed what was happening in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. I cannot speak for Chhattisgarh but having traveled through rural Rajasthan can say anyone driving down the same roads would have noticed that the word voters used most to describe what they wanted was parivartan. Change. Even those who said they did not think Ashok Gehlot had done a bad job said that change was a good idea.

My last visit to Rajasthan was before I left for New York in November and I came away convinced that Vasundhara Raje would win. This is what I told Indian friends in NYC and it surprised me when they said I could not possibly be right because according to the Indian newspapers they were reading on the web and according to the polls they carried there was no question of Gehlot losing Rajasthan. He had even been voted the best Chief Minister in India, they said. I remember reading that myself and puzzling over how this conclusion had been drawn. Compared to whom?

When my friends in New York added that one of the reasons for this was because, according to the reports they read, he had ‘handled the drought well’ I reminded them that people died of starvation in Vasundhara Raje’s own constituency. Remember? And, I can remember driving through the state — before the rains came — and everywhere I went people complained about fodder centres that existed in name only and drought relief that came not in the form of grain but in the form of strange promissory notes. Vasundhara Raje herself pointed out during her rath yatra that people could not eat paper. But, us political pundits, we were not listening. **We were too busy sneering at her Rajashtani costume, just as we later sneered at her chiffon saris. I have seen Sonia wearing a headdress of horns and beads in the Northeast but never heard anyone sneer.**

To return, though, to bias. What worries me is that it extends beyond the BJP and the RSS to India itself. **So, many a liberal hack is given to equating Hindu fundamentalism with the Islamic variety and making it sound as if a victory for the BJP is really a victory for Hindu fundamentalism. The result is that the American state department recently did the same and, perhaps, it is because of this kind of reporting that India routinely gets equated with Pakistan**. It is only when this happens that liberal columnists sit up and start pointing out that India is a very different country to Pakistan and the Indian state cannot by any stretch of the imagination be compared to the Pakistani state. But, it is our own fault if comparisons are drawn.

Our fault too that Islamic terrorist cells proliferate across the country because not a single newspaper has made the smallest attempt to investigate what is going on. It is politically incorrect even to call terrorism Islamic. So, it takes a Bernard-Henri Levy to write a book called Who Killed Daniel Pearl and in the process of writing it discover just how deeply the Pakistani state is personally involved in protecting people like Omar Sheikh.

Should at least one Indian journalist not have been following that story? Of course. But, we have all been too busy debating over the nuances of secularism and communalism without bothering to notice that the debate became irrelevant and meaningless long ago. The voter knows this and, to its credit, so does the BJP. So, not only did we not hear about temples and Hindutva during the election campaign but we also did not hear from people like Pravin Togadia. Yet, we had important TV pundits repeat ad nauseam that everything the BJP did was guided by the RSS. Anyone truly trying to analyse this would have discovered that the last powerful RSS chief was Balasaheb Deoras and the RSS has been gradually losing its hold on the party ever since he passed on. The RSS has opposed the Vajpayee government's economic policies from day one and been unable to make the slightest difference.

And, the truth is that neither Vasundhara Raje nor Uma Bharati needed the RSS on their side. It is increasingly the RSS that needs the BJP and if we take our own advice about 'introspection' we could find that it is time for us in the media to move on. The voter already has.

source: **http://www.indianexpress.com/full_story.php?content_id=36742**

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PLATFORM: Ideologically secure

Rakesh Sinha

http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/111200/detOPI02.asp

A debate has been sparked off by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's assertion last week that the construction of a Ram temple at Ayodhya where the Babri mosque once stood was the "expression of national sentiment which remains unfinished". While some political pundits have read this statement as an appeasing gesture to the 'hawks' of the Sangh parivar, others — particularly the intelligentsia from the Left — have questioned Vajpayee's credentials as a 'moderate'.

The 'secularist' strategy to rein in and ruin the RSS and its affiliates by drawing a line between Vajpayee and the RSS has proved to be a failure. Vajpayee has been the best communicator the parivar has ever produced. He has been groomed in the Sangh shakha, spent his days as Sangh Pracharak and edited the RSS mouthpieces, Panchajanya, Rashtra Dharma and Swadesh. Sangh ideology has never been a dilemma for him.

When in 1978 he suggested in an article that the term 'Hindu Rashtra' be replaced by 'Bharatiya Rashtra', it was presumed that he was departing from the traditional RSS line. The inference made by 'secularists' was based on their little knowledge of Sangh dynamics. The then RSS Sarsanghchalak, Balasaheb Deoras, initiated a debate on the change of term within the Sangh itself even before Vajpayee wrote the article. The Sangh treats both terms as interchangeable and synonymous.

A popular story which has been transmitted in the shakhas for decades is RSS founder Hedgewar's disapproval of naming a colony in Mumbai 'Hindu colony'. And one must remember that he preferred the term 'Rashtriya' instead of 'Hindu' when it came to naming the sangh after its formation. It is also an incontrovertible fact that there exists a symbiotic relationship between Vajpayee and the RSS. He has played an important role in the evolution of the RSS ideology.

Unlike the Congress culture, in which organisational discipline precedes ideological discipline, the RSS gives paramount importance to 'ideological purity'. A movement's impact and durability depends on its ideological commitment and its capacity to augur changes. To be a part of the saffron movement, one does not necessarily have to be a part of any organisational mechanism. What is mandatory is the ideological discipline.

Secularists want to treat Vajpayee as a 'secularist with a saffron tilt'. It suits their hypothesis that RSS shakhas are breeding grounds for Godses and Dara Singhs. These self-proclaimed 'secularists' unhesitatingly cooperated with Pakistan against the VHP's claim for an NGO status. While in the past, an anti-RSS campaign was confined to only India, now the movement has

spread to other parts of the world. It is such propaganda which led Singapore's former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew to believe that India is now less secular than it was in the past.

Vajpayee began his political activism as a chosen messenger of Shyama Prasad Mookerjee when the latter entered the prohibited land of Jammu and Kashmir to spread his message. He stoutly confronted the dual membership issue during the Janata regime in 1978-79. His exhortation for a debate on conversion and reinforcement that the RSS is a cultural organisation were responded in a strident manner by 'secularists'.

And when Vajpayee described himself as a swayamsevak during his visit to the United States, he didn't reveal anything new about his life. It was only an attempt to squelch secularist propaganda against him. Before embarking on his American tour, Vajpayee — along with Home Minister L.K. Advani and others — attended the gurudakshina function of the RSS in New Delhi. It is considered one of the most important programmes of the sangh where every swayamsevak reaffirms his loyalty and oath before the orchid flag. Thus, Vajpayee has repeatedly proclaimed his association with the RSS loud and clear.

Fear of the Muslim vote bank reacting against the NDA Government is regularly used by the leaders of the invisible Third Front to blackmail the allies of the BJP-led Government. The BJP must stand up to what it believes. It is not a 'post-ideological' phenomenon that it practises. It largely believes in the ideological formations of Hedgewar-Golwalkar. **The present chant of 'secularism' is not only hypocritical but also arises out of pure cynical opportunism with both eyes on the vote bank.**

When Vajpayee says that there is a consensus for a Ram temple at Ayodhya, one recalls the reconstruction of the **Somnath temple in 1950-51. The task was completed with active cooperation from the then President of India, Rajendra Prasad, the then Home Minister, Sardar Patel, and K.M.Munshi. The work on Somnath was carried out during the Congress regime. It does not mean in any way that the Government of the time was keen on a showdown with the Muslim community.**

The exercise undertaken at Somnath needs to be repeated at Ayodhya. A single gesture from the Muslims will unravel a new era in Indian politics and culture.

Finally, Vajpayee's differences over the 1990 rath yatra did not deter him from the real issues at stake. In an interview with *Gentleman* magazine (February, 1991), he frankly stated: "It is important that the temple should come up. It is a vow which is all the more important because there was a temple which was destroyed and a mosque was built in the place of the temple. So if we want Hindu-Muslim unity, then these irritants have to be removed."

No need for any semantic investigation here.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Reclaiming our story
By Neera K Sohoni
http://www.indianexpress.com/full_story.php?content_id=16640

Notwithstanding reader fatigue, the controversy over the saffronisation of education does not die. As a student of history, **it is amusing to see the jittery stance of earlier interpreters of history.**

At the outset I must offer my credentials for writing this essay not only as a student of History at Delhi University, but more recently and importantly as a parent of three erstwhile school-going children. Teaching and learning is and should be an evolving process.

Claiming sanctity shows an absurd disregard for sifting and re-evaluating evidence. The prime minister makes a valid point in claiming that NCERT is not engaged in re-creating history but in interpreting it more meaningfully.

There is nothing Hitlerite in presenting historical events from the indigenous people's rather than the coloniser's perspective. To paint the above effort at indigenisation as some devious Hindutva act is entirely indefensible.

To denigrate it as 'swadeshi' is inexcusable. (The term swadeshi, a proud epithet otherwise, has been hijacked and given a negative import, which is perplexing to say the least. What is wrong with the swadeshi approach? Why is it a calumny? Should it not be every Indian's prerogative to sift inherited facts and interpretations against the yardstick of indigenous experience and sensibility?)

Even a rapid reading of the much-contested and maligned NCERT Class IX book on Contemporary India is an eye-opener. Undeniably, the textbook contains ungrammatical writing and poor syntax. Some of the facts may even seem questionable or contrived. But in the main its approach appears sound. Its interpretation of British India, for instance, is refreshingly localised to Indian needs.

Earlier books in my own or my children's student days echoed the British, therefore the ruler's, take on events. Here is an effort to interpret British rule in terms of how it benefited the British but harmed India and the people England ruled. The book offers some harsh facts about the negative impact of British rule on Indian economy, agriculture, crafts, and development.

In my time, one had to wait to read Economic History of India at the graduate level before getting an inkling of the exploitative impact of British policies. **The textbook speaks bluntly of the racialism practised by the British, rather than the one-sided 'fair and enlightened rule' gibberish we were fed with.**

Even the foundation of the Indian National Congress is presented in more believable terms, not only as the benign act of well-meaning Anglican friends of Indians to enable Indians to taste and practise democracy, but also as a survival mechanism, to serve as a safety valve for the growing Indian restlessness.

Similarly, the performances of major British administrators (for example, Lords Wellesley, Dalhousie and Curzon) are briefly tackled for their divisive and deceptive nature, not as the earlier sources did, as indicators of great statesmanship and masterly rule. On the Indian side, there is vivid coverage of the

nature and incidence, even persistence, of popular revolt.

Every reader must feel inspired to learn of the heroic resistance put up against alien rule and repression. This is intrinsic to nation-building as much as to building the self-esteem of a people. It is comparable to native Americans and American Blacks re-interpreting US history to account for how events played out differently for them.

The carping about ‘packing’ of educational and cultural institutions and ‘packaging of history’ has to be seen in a historical perspective. The patron’s wealth and power as much as the historian’s personality (name, fame, currency) and the ideational school to which she or he belongs have ever been the more decisive factors than plain ‘facts’ or ‘available evidence’ when interpreting history.

The current effort to plant pro-India historians and culture-ists in key positions is an endeavour to use posts and their personalities to influence the products they command or help produce. This is no novelty. It has been the practice of Hindu, Muslim or British India, as well as Congress-dominated free India, and for that matter, the Communist-led Indian states. **British and other earlier scholars of India had their own agenda in presenting historical ‘facts’ in their terms and shaped by their compulsions.**

Historians under the Indian Marxist and Congress regimes spoke to their covert and overt concerns. The ruling party, but more importantly the swadeshi school of thought, should be expected to do no less. Just because the shoe is not on the radical foot does not mean it should pinch the student body more.

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articles on hinduism

What the Thunder Said
By Rajeev Srinivasan
http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/jan/31rajeev.htm

Cry, the beloved country, yet again. The photographs from Bhuj and other parts of Gujarat after the great temblor are extraordinarily powerful. The magnitude of the disaster is overwhelming: our senses get dulled by the enormity of it all, and our own insignificance in the order of things. I was reminded of Kumaran Asan in Veena poovu (The Fallen Flower):

Kanney madanguka! Karinjum alinjum aasu
Mannakum ee malar vismrtam akumippol;
Enneetuka aarkkum ithu than gathi; sadhyam enthu
Kanneerinal? Avani vazhvu kinavu kashtam!

Withdraw, mine eye! Scorched and withered
This flower will become dust, unremembered;
Truly, this fate awaits all; What can mere
Tears do? The world lives on dreams, alas!

Natural disasters will happen. The real question is how we respond to them. The frightening earthquake in Gujarat which has claimed so many lives and caused so much damage to property is a time for us to rise above our petty day-to-day preoccupations and to address what we owe to our fellow-Indians. After all, it is the contribution of the average Indian, including the urban and rural Gujarati, that has built the infrastructure for all of us to become whatever we have become.

Indians start with some handicaps in disaster relief. One is the perceived, and real, inefficiency of the state. The other is the astonishing and brutal cupidity of those in power who will almost certainly steal and divert the funds and the contributions in kind that are pouring in from all over the world. Why have we become so inured to the public good? Why do we have such a tendency for moral corruption?

Perhaps it is because we have forgotten self-control, the idea of charity, and compassion. **In The Waste Land, T S Eliot quotes from the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad the story of what the thunder said: "datta, dayadhvam, damyata" That is, "Give, Be Compassionate, Be Self-Controlled."** This is a particularly apt metaphor for the earthquake, for Bhuj and Ahmedabad and much of the Rann of Kutch and Saurashtra have become waste lands, and we, the living, are apathetic in our efforts to help.

Eliot has changed the order from the original Sanskrit, which had the story of the Prajapati, the Creator and Preceptor, and his interactions with his offspring, the devas, humans and asuras: the gods, the humans and the titans. (Renuka Narayanan recounted this myth in her excellent Faith Line column in *The Indian Express,* and I liked the way she called asuras 'titans' instead of 'demons'. There is no need to, as it were, demonise them unnecessarily.)

The Upanishadic story is beautiful. The devas, humans and asuras are students who want Prajapati to teach them.

First the gods say to Prajapati: "Teach us, please, sire!" and in response, Prajapati utters a single syllable: "Da". Then he says to them: "Have you understood?". The devas reply: "Yes, we have

understood. You said to us, *damyata:* be self-controlled." Prajapati says: "Yes, you have understood well."

The humans ask Prajapati: "Teach us, please, sire!" and once again Prajapati utters: "Da". He asks them: "Have you understood?" The humans reply: "Yes, we have understood. You said to us, *datta:* give." Prajapati says: "Yes, you have understood well."

The titans ask Prajapati: "Teach us, please, sire!" and yet again Prajapai utters the single syllable: "Da". He asks, "Have you understood?" The titans reply: "Yes, we have understood. You said to us, *dayadhvam:* be compassionate." Prajapati says: "Yes, you have understood well."

And the voice of God, the rolling thunder, repeats: "Da, Da, Da". It says, "Damyata, Datta, Dayadhvam, constantly reminding us. For, it appears that the gods and the titans have remembered, but humans have forgotten their command: "Give!"

In fact, I would say modern Indians have forgotten all three of the commands. We are neither self-controlled, nor giving, nor compassionate. This is perhaps why things have come to such a pass in this *kali yugam.*

I am ashamed that we did not have the self-control to recognise the scale of this human tragedy. 100,000 people feared dead. This is 0.01per cent of the country's population. We did not have the self-control as a nation to declare national mourning and to cancel all the festivities of Republic Day. They should have canceled everything in Delhi. I was in Trivandrum, and I wish they had canceled the dance performance by Mallika Sarabhai: she who might have had no information about her mother Mrinalini Sarabhai in Ahmedabad. *Damyata!*

Eliot stressed "*Datta!*" In this time of trouble, I can only echo that. Give. Be charitable. For it is a characteristic of our civilisation that we have forgotten to give. When a hundred thousand people are feared dead, and untold millions in a state of shock and total helplessness, we have to give. There is no use falling upon the old excuses: that the aid will not go to the deserving. That it will be diverted to the pockets of greedy men.

No, "*Datta!*" Give. For it is Gujarat today, possibly your home tomorrow. I have lived through earthquakes in California, including the Loma Prieta quake in 1989 or so. I know how it feels to be utterly helpless in the face of the fury of nature, as the distant thunder of the quake comes toward you. Even in the well-constructed buildings in California, designed to withstand massive quakes, we cower in primal fear when we face nature's wrath.

Dayadhvam! I know there are those who have given unselfishly. The armymen and the airforce personnel. The RSS volunteers who rushed to the scene. The Ramakrishna Mission. The countless good samaritans who pulled people out from the rubble. The worldwide charitable organisations. Medecins sans Frontieres, and the Red Cross.

But for the rest of us living comfortably in our homes, we must think: it could be our children, our parents, our siblings, our spouses out there buried under the wreckage of fallen homes. In Ahmedabad, it is the solidly middle class citizens living in well-appointed apartments who have suffered the most. People like us. There, but for the grace of God, go you.

I have been thinking of my beloved Kerala. We have lived in the comforting illusion that Kerala is somehow immune to all natural calamities. But in the recent past, the hill areas around Kottayam and Idukky have been rocked by a series of small temblors. Then I remembered, we have had considerable seismic activity in Kerala. For instance, centuries ago, a temblor caused the river Periyar to shift its course, thus spelling the end of Muziris (Kodungalloor) as a great port, and opening up the natural harbor at Cochin.

And untold centuries before that, Kerala arose from the Arabian Sea because of an underwater quake. This is when Parasurama, according to legend, raised the state by throwing his axe out to sea. Yes, Kerala, God's Own Country, too, is susceptible to tectonic shifts.

So are Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, the Garhwal Himalayas, the Northeast, in fact the entire country. Can you imagine your home town demolished like Bhuj?

So I repeat, give. If not in cash, then in kind. Rush medicines, water, canned food, blankets, construction material, fuel, tents, if you have the capability to organise all this. Give it to the nearest Army cantonment: they will direct it to the right place. The aftermath of the carnage is the possibility of epidemics. Let us at least help the survivors. If you can, send goods.

Otherwise, give money. There is no tithe in Hinduism, so I suggest that we should all give something that is absolutely fair: one day's salary. This is still much lower than what the traditional Muslim is expected to give in *zakat.* And give this money to the Army, or to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. The address that I have from *The Indian Express* is:

PM's National Relief Fund
C/o Secretary, PMO
South Block
New Delhi 110 001

Those who live abroad sometimes have a tendency to give a measly sum, say $ 50, thinking of the multiplicative factor of the exchange rate. This is nonsense. Give one day's salary, people! This is the least you can do. Let the pain be equally shared amongst all of us. One day's salary will not bankrupt you, by any means. If you make $ 100,000, give $ 274. Do not scrimp. For, one day, the shoe may be on the other foot. Do unto others…

If you are working for a company that matches employee charitable donations, this is an easy way for you to double your contributions. There are also a number of major corporations that will solicit donations from all their employees whenever there is a tragedy anywhere in the world. So tell your friends and colleagues about the enormity of this human devastation in Gujarat. Get them all to contribute.

In the US, here are some of the addresses to which you can send your money:

IDRF, 4807 Phebe Ave., Fremont, CA 94555-2502

Prime Minister's National Relief Fund
Embassy of India
Attn: Head of Chancery
2107 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Wire Transfer Information:

Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (Riggs Bank, Washington, DC)
Account Number - 08115910
Route Number - 054000030

Datta! Give. For, as John Donne said, "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main… any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Postscript

The Uttar Pradesh government should be congratulated for managing the enormous undertaking of handling 70 million pilgrims on a single day (*Mauni Amavasya*) at the Maha Kumbh Mela. That a penurious state administration was able to build hundreds of miles of pipelines for water, several hundred miles of roads, and all the other elaborate infrastructure to handle the largest assembly of human beings ever seen on earth for a single purpose is nothing short of wondrous. It is true, if Indians

put their minds to it, the most complex organisational problems can be overcome.

I read an article in the Indian media that alleged that some number of old people have been deliberately abandoned at the Kumbh Mela by their relatives. This may be true; and if so, it is a callous act. But there is an old custom in India and elsewhere that the truly old, when they have reached a stage where they are a burden to their families, voluntarily take *sanyasam* or even in some cases starve themselves to death.

I once saw a stark Japanese film by Imamura Shohei, *The Ballad of Narayama,* which is set in the remote interior countryside, an area of snow-capped mountains, where the peasants led a hand-to-mouth existence. The film is set perhaps two hundred years ago. The carrying capacity of the land is limited: only a fixed number of people can be accommodated. So, when a new baby is born, it is also an indication that some old person has to die.

There is a custom that the truly old are taken to the snow-clad mountains and left there to meet their end. In the film, the old matriarch of the family realises that the time has come for her to go. She forces her loving and reluctant son to carry her to the mountain peak where she will die, peacefully, amongst the snows, composed and prepared for her fate. In many ways, a more dignified end than being forced to live as a vegetable in an old-people's home, ill-treated and abused by some uncouth attendant.

Feedback

If you wish to write to me directly, do write to rajeevmail@yahoo.com -- I do read everything that comes to this account, even though the volume is so large that I can seldom respond. If you wish to write to the editors at *rediff.com* please fill out the following form.

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The new crusade: it's about ideology, not oil

By Rajeev Srinivasan

March 28, 2003

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Now that the long-predicted Iraq war is a reality, it is worth looking at possible post-war scenarios. What is the driving force behind the war? What is the desired end point? What are the likely outcomes?

There are a number of obvious factors: first, the American desire to mould the world in its own image, a sort of updated 'manifest destiny', with their ideas of democracy, McDonald's and an MTV culture. The US has the will and the means to impose its fiat through a *pax Americana.* The lure of oil is part of the picture, as the Americans would prefer to keep their own reserves in the ground and use up West Asia's supply. It is also true that the military-industrial-media complex needs a good little war periodically to keep its production going and to field-test new weaponry.

But what has become more obvious is the moralising angle. I am astonished at the venom expended on France just because it dared to foil American designs on a UN Security Council mandate. French fries have become 'freedom fries'! Frenchmen and even the hitherto revered French cuisine have become *persona non grata!* This is more than a little pouting, and can only be explained in moral terms

The Americans have always had a moralising streak; after all, the ruling WASP population is derived from the Puritans, who were kicked out of England for being unbending fundamentalists. There is a tendency on the part of Americans to be self-righteous, fire-and-brimstone types who see the world in Zoroastrian black-and-white, good vs evil stereotypes. They are not particularly moral people, but good at moralising and believing, literally, that God is on their side.

A large majority of Americans profess to be Christian believers; many are literalist believers in the Bible. Note the success of apocalyptic books about the so-called Rapture and the coming 'end of the world.' Clever cult leaders such as Pat Robertson and Oral Roberts have taken full advantage of unthinking flocks to build up hugely profitable business empires.

In this Manichean worldview, there always has to be an Evil to balance the Good that America is supposed to represent. When Ronald Reagan talked about the 'Evil Empire,' he meant it literally, and it resonated as such with a lot Americans. For a long time, the Soviet Union supplied the Evil. After its demise, for some time China was the main candidate. Then, fortuitously, along came 9/11 and Osama bin Laden and Islamists. It turns out they are the perfect enemy, and with good

reason: they have the same Manichean worldview, only with roles reversed.

There are a lot of Christian fundamentalists (and neo-conservative Jews) in the Bush Administration. They view with alarm the strategic future of West Asia, and especially the future of Israel. On a tactical level they are also worried about sites viewed as holy, like the Dome of the Rock, the Al Aqsa mosque, the Wailing Wall, the Church of the Nativity, all under dispute between Islamists and Christians/Jews.

A number of leading lights on the American Right put together a plan a while ago that outlined their view of the world: this included massive increases in military spending, an assertive forward approach to bilateral issues, and so forth. Much of this has now become institutionalised in the Bush Administration's policies. Which simply goes to say, Samuel Huntington was right after all: this is becoming a clash of civilisations. It was but a Freudian slip when George W Bush talked about a crusade.

For, despite loud protestations that the 'war on terrorism' is not a war on Muslims, the reality of it is a war on Islam, or more precisely, on Islamism. The unstated objective of the attack on Iraq is likely to be to contain Islamic power, to redraw the map of West Asia and make it a US protectorate, much like Japan after World War II. If so, this has serious implications for India.

West Asia has existed in its current form for only a few decades, as sovereign states mostly ruled by dictators. Previously, they were largely colonies, first of the Ottoman Turks and then of various European powers, especially the British. When these nations were merely inhabited by desert Bedouins, this did not much matter. However, with oil wealth, as well as the dispute with Israel, they have begun to matter.

What if the Americans were secure in the knowledge that Iraq and its oil reserves -- the second largest in the world -- were safely in the hands of a friendly post-Saddam Hussein regime? The US would feel free to uproot the House of Saud, for one thing. They have been treated as sacrosanct, even though they are the moneybags behind a global scheme to radicalise Islam through Wah'abi *madrassas*. Emboldened by an easy victory in Iraq, the Americans are likely to depose the House of Saud.

What if Saudi Arabia were to be taken over by the Americans? This would be a humiliating and bitter defeat for the Islamists, who have been propagating their fierce and triumphalist brand of Islam which glorifies the victories of Islam. There are two possibilities: one is that the 'Arab street,' that is, public discontent in West Asia, will boil over in massive anti-American fury and that these new American colonies will become ungovernable. The other possibility is that the average Arab will just carry on. It is not entirely clear which is more likely but I think it is the latter.

An Arab friend of mine suggests that attempts to bring democracy to Saudi Arabia may be counter productive, for the proportion of Islamists among the population is high, and it may bring to power someone even more retrogressive than the House of Saud. Americans will have to run the country as an occupied state, a colony. They may even redraw the boundaries in the region, for example separating oil-rich provinces in Saudi Arabia from pilgrim centers. They may fundamentally alter the national boundaries, too.

In this scenario, the loss of funds from Saudi Arabia, and the loss of face from an American

occupation of the country, will have a devastating effect on Islamist groups like Al Qaeda. This may lead them to efforts to impose pain on Americans, whereby terrorist attacks on US interests will go up. But unless they are able to mount some truly spectacular attacks on the US, the Americans will endure. They are also taking steps to systematically emasculate 'sleeper' cells in their country; I am sure they will not hesitate to take harsh steps against suspected Islamists living in America.

What does all this mean for India? Plenty on the minus side of the balance sheet. First, energy supplies needed for India's growth will be under the control of the US, which is a dubious ally. Second, there might be unrest among Muslim Indians in the wake of the war in Iraq: remember that the **Khilafat movement,** about the removal of the Caliph in distant Turkey, led to the horrifying **Moplah Rebellion in Malabar.** Third, the demoralisation of Islamist forces may nudge the Pakistanis into a desperation attack on India: as they may well be, as Musharraf has said, a target once the US sorts things out in West Asia.

On the plus side, reduced enthusiasm for jihad is clearly a good thing for India. The defeat of the Islamists will be a setback for our strategic enemy China, which has assiduously cultivated a Sino-Islamic axis and supplied Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and possibly Libya, Syria etc. with weapons of all kinds. Finally, the destruction of various multilateral power structures where India had no part to play -- NATO lies in tatters, and so does the UN Security Council -- will mean that India will be able to do more bilaterally from positions of some strength, especially as its economic power increases.

All in all, this is a deeply disturbing and volatile situation with highly uncertain outcomes. In addition to the human rights issues associated with the long-suffering population of Iraq, these strategic issues make Gulf War II a watershed. It would behoove the Americans to remember that hubris goes before nemesis. And Indians to remember that this clash between fundamentalists is not our problem: let us keep a very low profile.

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Millennium Fuss
Rajeev Srinivasan
http://www.rediff.com/news/1999/apr/15rajeev.htm

In the midst of all the fuss about the new millennium in the Gregorian calendar, most of us missed another centenarian event: the beginning of the 52nd century of the Kali Yuga in the Hindu calendar, on March 18. This is Yugabda 5101. So why should anyone care? Isn't this just another somewhat eccentric calendar like the Saka Era followed by the Indian government?

On the contrary, Indians or at least Hindus should care. The widespread popularity of the Gregorian calendar is a vestigial side-effect of European colonialism, and the fact that Anglo-American business practices have more or less become the default option in much of the world. Although we tend to take these European-derived practices as somehow rational and even pre-ordained, there is nothing inherently scientific about them.

For example, millions of Muslims get along just fine on the Islamic calendar, even given the fact that being a lunar calendar, the length of their year doesn't quite match the 365 or so days in the solar year. They also get by just fine with an Islamic system of banking that doesn't allow for interest payments. Other non-Gregorian calendars and non-Euro-centric practices are used elsewhere.

Therefore the Gregorian calendar is just a convenient device. Although it is supposed to be related to the life of Jesus Christ, it is not quite in sync -- nobody quite knows when the historic Jesus lived, except that it was probably somewhere between 6 BCE and 40 CE. However, this calendar is definitely ethno-centric and religio-centric.

For instance, people ask me why I refer to dates in the Gregorian calendar as CE/BCE (i e Common Era/Before Common Era) as opposed to AD/BC. This is because AD/BC has certain religious connotations -- AD stands for Anno Domini or The Year of Our Lord, which is meaningless unless you are Christian. It was Jewish historians in the US who initially started the use of CE/BCE, which is a non-committal term with no assumptions about religion.

Interestingly, Jews have a rather ancient calendar, wherein this year is 5759. Since Judaism has been around for some time, this calendar must date back to some significant early event in the history of the Jewish people. Similarly, one would assume, the length of the Hindu calendar signifies some early event in the history of Hindus.

However, the earliest known Hindu text is the Rg Veda, dated to about 1500 BCE. Thus the Hindu calendar should date back only about 3,500 years. Therefore, the business about the Kali Yuga and 5,000 years must be some convenient fiction made up by medieval Hindu scholars, right? This is certainly what we have been led to believe by the Macaulayite educational system in India.

According to conventional wisdom, the Hindu texts that state that the Kali Yuga began in 3102 BCE, and that there was some spectacular celestial configuration of planets to mark that event, are merely fanciful mythical accounts. For after all, in 3102 BCE, Hindus were still far from writing the earliest Vedic texts -- and they were not a civilisation until around the 1500 BCE date of the Rg Veda.

But wait, where did the estimate of 1500 BCE come from? Why, it came from Max Mueller, the eminent

German Indologist, who dated the Vedas after considerable study in the 19th century CE. And how exactly did Max Mueller come upon this date? It turns out that he just made it up, based on certain cyclical logic!

You see, Max Mueller, being a Christian fundamentalist/missionary, took it as an axiom that the world was created in 4004 BCE, as some British bishop had deduced from a study of the Bible and related texts. Therefore, argued Mueller, after Adam and Eve, it would have taken a 1,000 years or so to populate Europe (with pure Aryans, of course).

Thereafter, given the Aryan Invasion Theory, it would have taken the Aryans a thousand years to migrate from Central Europe to India, bringing the Vedas with them. So add 2,000 years or so to 4004 BCE, put in a little swag factor of 500 years, and hey presto, you have the Rg Veda dated to 1500 BCE! Impeccable logic, surely.

I exaggerate slightly above, but in substance, this is the ethno-centric and Christian-centric view that has illuminated, so to speak, Indian understanding of its own pre-history. And this has been the state of affairs until scholars such as Dr Koenraad Elst, Dr Subhash Kak, Dr David Frawley, et al began to question both the Aryan Invasion Theory and the dating of Indian pre-history.

I will not get into the wretched Aryan Invasion Theory controversy, but it is surely interesting to look at ancient Indian astronomy. It has long been assumed that Indian astronomy was derived from the Greek -- after all, Euro-centrics pre-supposed that Greek civilisation was the fount of all classical knowledge; the curious fact that the Indian and Greek astrological signs were identical was attributed to Indian borrowing from the Greeks.

It turns out, however, that Hindu texts do fairly accurately describe historical celestial events -- for instance the singular planetary configuration that is supposed to have taken place in 3102 BCE to mark the beginning of the Kali Yuga did in fact take place. This leads to two possibilities: one, that the astronomical events were actually observed then; two, that someone, after the laws of astrophysics became known (say Newton's time) back-caculated and inserted them into texts.

There is a problem with the first hypothesis: ancient Indians were not known to be astronomers, unlike, say the Chinese, who left detailed records of supernovae they observed, for instance in the Crab Nebula in 1054 CE. Second, if Indians were accurate astronomers 5,000 years ago, that presupposes an advanced civilisation by that time, which makes India the oldest of all known civilisations. This does not fit in with conventional wisdom.

But consider the other hypothesis. Given the notorious state of the authenticity of Indian texts, tampering is not out of the question. So let\rquote s say some clever 18th century Hindu mathematician manufactured the evidence and inserted it into allegedly ancient texts.

But there is a flaw in this argument. It turns out that Indian astronomy (and astrology) over the centuries has had an error in it: it does not take into account the precession of the axis of the earth as it rotates around the sun. This is the tendency of the axis itself not to be oriented in space in fixed fashion, but to describe a cone -- it spins like the axis of a top does.

This error has accumulated over time. So for instance, Hindus celebrate the Winter Solstice on Makara Sankranti day, January 14th; however the real Winter Solstice is on December 22nd. Similarly, the Indian astrological months are offset by a couple of weeks from the real dates on which the sun enters those constellations.

Therefore, if an Indian mathematician were to recognise this error in Indian astronomy, take it into account, correct it, and backtrack to 3102 BCE, it would take a prodigious amount of computing power, that was not available until the recent creation of supercomputers. Therefore, the second hypothesis is impossible -- it was not back-calculated. The event was in fact observed in 3102 BCE.

We are left with the possibility then that Indian civilisation was already well-established in 3102 BCE. Which is interesting in and of itself. Furthermore, the Hindu calendar does speak in cosmic terms -- and

it establishes the age of the universe as some 8.64 billion years, which fits in with modern, scientific cosmology (see **Carl Sagan** at **http://www.rediff.com/news/jan/29sagan.htm**).

I understand that the Indian government has denoted this year of the Hindu calendar as the Year of Sanskrit. Maybe in some of those crumbling palm-leaf manuscripts rotting away unsung, unwept, and unhonored, there are other ancient treasures like the astronomical observations from 5,000 years ago.

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articles on hinduism

Blaming the Hindu Victim: Manufacturing Consent for Barbarism

By Rajeev Srinivasan

http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/mar/07rajeev.htm

Now we can add one more cursed date, February 27, 2002, to the black days in the Indian calendar: April 13 (Jallianwallah Bagh, 1919) and the days on which the battles at Panipat and Plassey were lost. **On February 27, a horrific and brutal crime was perpetrated on Hindus: fittingly, it happened at the birthplace of the most fanatical and brutal Muslim tyrant in India, Aurangzeb.**

The facts are indisputable:

- A regularly scheduled Sabarmati Express was carrying, in a few coaches, several hundred Hindu pilgrims, including many women and children, returning from a trip to Ayodhya, where they had participated in some rituals
- The train was leaving the town of Godhra, which has a 30 per cent Muslim population, when someone stopped it by pulling the emergency chain
- A mob of some 2000 people, apparently Muslims, then attacked the train with firebombs and acid bombs, and burned alive at least 57 people inside the locked coaches, including a dozen children

The response in the English-language media in India has been quite intriguing. The editorials and reports generally blamed Hindus for provoking Muslims by the act of wanting to build a temple in Ayodhya. The tone, generally, was: 'We told you that Hindu provocation in wanting to build a temple will lead to a Muslim backlash. So here it is. It's the Hindus' fault.'

Here is an excerpt from an editorial in *The Hindustan Times*:

A number of innocent people have already died and more may suffer if the Centre, even now, doesn't step in to stop the insanity unleashed by the VHP. Right from the time when this outfit of Hindu fanatics announced its provocative plan to begin the construction of the temple in Ayodhya, it was known that trouble was brewing. But the BJP at the Centre, perhaps hoping that the VHP's belligerence will consolidate the Hindu vote behind it, did nothing more than mouth pious platitudes.

Here is an excerpt from a report in *The Washington Post*, with a quote from a well-known

Hindu-baiter and Muslim apologist, whose organisation, for the sake of truth in advertising, should be renamed 'Hinduism Combat':

Teesta Setalvad, head of Communalism Combat*, a group that opposes religious extremism in India, said that 'while I condemn today's gruesome attack, you cannot pick up an incident in isolation. Let us not forget the provocation. These people were not going for a benign assembly. They were indulging in blatant and unlawful mobilisation to build a temple and deliberately provoke the Muslims in India*.'

Even by the standards of the Indian English media and its 'secular' 'progressives', known for their Marxist blinkers, this is astonishing. For they are conveniently pinning the blame on the victim. If I were to take the usual liberal position, this is the equivalent of blaming a raped woman for the crime of wearing revealing clothes, which led to the rapist losing control. Most civilized people would consider it the fault of the rapist, not of the raped woman. No 'provocation', most people would argue, justifies rape. **But not so India's media or 'intellectuals'.**

This issue of provocation is quite illuminating. **What could possibly provoke the cold-blooded execution of a large number of people, including women and children, trapped inside a locked railway carriage and burned alive? What could their sin have been?** It is alleged that there were altercations between those on the train and Muslim hawkers at Godhra station. But notice there was no physical violence between them.

So how does this altercation escalate within a few minutes, and that too in the early morning before many people are up and about, into a large mob of Muslims arriving at the scene equipped with Molotov cocktails and acid bombs? Does this look like a spontaneous response to an act of provocation, or does it look like a pre-planned, well-thought-out plan for mass murder? What kind of 'provocation' leads someone to randomly execute women and children in the most gruesome manner possible, by burning them alive?

This is not a rational response to any provocation; it is pure terrorism. Premeditated violence inflicted on civilian populations with the intent to terrorize them. A good exposition of this is available in *The Quranic Concept of War* (see **N S Rajaram's** review at **www.bharatvani.org/reviews/rev-quranic.html**).

How does this compare with the infamous 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre? In both cases, unarmed civilians, going about their daily tasks, were attacked and murdered by a band of ideologically hardened individuals. What was the 'provocation' by the people in the World Trade Centre? Some fantasy that they were part of a Jewish-Zionist conspiracy to take over the world's finances? A recent Gallup Poll shows that 61 per cent of those surveyed in nine Muslim countries accounting for half the world's Muslims refuse to believe that it was Arabs who attacked the

WTC! There is an element of denial among Muslims that their co-religionists could be such barbarians.

It appears as though it takes very little to provoke Muslims. What was the provocation for murdering Daniel Pearl? That he was a Jew? After all, he was forced to say to the camera, 'I am a Jew, my mother is a Jew,' just before his throat was slit, in the macabre video his captors created. What, then, was the provocation by the Hindus in the case of the Sabarmati Express? That they were Hindus? That they were alive? That appears to have been sufficient 'provocation'.

Consider the 'provocation' for similar acts of Islamic barbarism in Kerala in 1921: the Moplah Rebellion in Malabar. There was no provocation by Hindus, who were minding their own business. However, in distant Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Pasha had abolished the caliphate! This was the reason for the murder, rape and forcible conversion of thousands of Hindus -- who were purely convenient bystanders -- and looting, arson and destruction of much property.

What was the 'provocation' by poor Hans Christian Ostro, the Norwegian tourist abducted in 1994 by Pakistani terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir, and later beheaded? That he happened to travel in India? What was the 'provocation' for the Shi'ite Muslims murdered by drive-by terrorists in a mosque in Pakistan recently? What about the 100,000 Algerians massacred, mostly by having their throats cut, by fellow-Muslim terrorists?

No, it is pretty clear that there does not need to be any 'provocation' before sections of Muslims unleash their blood-lust on all and sundry, especially non-Muslims, and if such have already been extinguished, on fellow-Muslims. The entire Muslim world has bloody borders, as Samuel Huntington pointed out. Furthermore, even in their societies, there is incredible violence.

Liberal Muslims should ask themselves why this is so: is there something in their religion that easily turns some people into bloodthirsty barbarians? If so, isn't this something they need to cleanse from their religion? As Edmund Burke once said, 'All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.'

After this latest bout of bloodletting, I am beginning to wonder if Mohammed Ali Jinnah was right, after all. Maybe Muslims cannot live with Hindus, or anybody else for that matter. Maybe the Two-Nation Theory is in fact true. That is an awful possibility: because it would mean that the pluralistic, liberal, tolerant world-view that has been the hallmark of Hinduism for millennia is no longer an appropriate paradigm, and Hindus have to become like Muslims, Christians and Marxists: dogmatic and intolerant, just to survive. I would hate to think this is the future.

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articles on hinduism

Hindu pilgrims massacred; but the show must go on

By Rajeev Srinivasan

http://www.rediff.com/news/2000/aug/18rajeev.htm

It is no great surprise to me that the so-called 'ceasefire' by the shadowy Hizbul Mujahideen in Jammu and Kashmir came to an ignominious end. As I said in my previous column ('Beware of Greeks bearing gifts!') it was a propaganda exercise for the separatists and the Pakistanis to claim that see, they were willing to talk, it was India that was intransigent.

For once, India did the right counter-propaganda by immediately responding to the 'ceasefire' offer. With such alacrity that the Pakistanis (and their puppet, the Hizbul Mujahideen man Salahuddin in Islamabad) were caught on the wrong foot. They might actually have had to sit down and negotiate with the Indians, which they really don't want to do. Therefore, Plan B was put into action.

That was the brutal massacre of a hundred Indians, including Hindu pilgrims on the Amarnath Yatra and Hindu laborers from Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. This was trigger-happiness, intended to a. show the Indians who was boss, b. cause mass outrage and calls to abort the talks. But the Indian government still did not withdraw from the negotiations; the Indian public did not rise up in anger.

Therefore Plan C had to be hastily constructed: add some unreasonable demands. Yes, ask for Pakistan to be included in the talks post-facto -- this is guaranteed to be rejected by India. Thereafter, feigning injured innocence, the Hizbul Mujahideen wrings their hands about Indian 'unreasonableness' and goes back to business as usual, murdering people.

The theatrics have backfired: anybody who cares could see that India acted in good faith, and it was Salahuddin and the Pakistanis that sabotaged the talks. So no little gold stars for the dictator Pervez Musharraf; his propaganda ploy got him no plaudits whatsoever. So it is back to square one -- Situation Normal All Fouled Up.

Except for one small detail -- one hundred innocent people, mostly Hindus, who were murdered. In particular, many were pilgrims, going on an arduous pilgrimage to the ice cave at Amarnath. Pilgrims are always treated with deference everywhere in the world, for their closeness to the Infinite. Yet, the Indian media did not see fit to dwell on them; I don't remember seeing anywhere a full list of the people killed, their family backgrounds, any details about them. I know nothing about who these unfortunate people were. They have already been forgotten.

And I don't remember seeing the professional Human Rights mafia raising a ruckus. Let me pick on the most visible of these 'progressives' -- Shabana Azmi, Teesta Setalvad, Communalism

Combat, SAHMAT. Not to speak of John Dayal and the National Christian Council or whatever. Not one of them, unless I am gravely mistaken, even turned an elegantly coiffed hair. You see, the dead were Hindus, so they were not human. So they had no human rights. QED. Only Muslims and Christians have rights.

Can you imagine the fuss if 50 Muslim or Christian pilgrims were slaughtered in India? Do you remember the breast-beating about attacks on Christians? The god-awful fuss made over exactly one missionary ('Death of a Missionary') burned to death? The mea culpas are still resonating. The manhunt for the perpetrators was most energetic. We get periodic interviews with the missionary's saintly wife who forgives all and sundry for all their sins, whether they committed any or not. I wouldn't be surprised if the Vatican saints Graham Staines any day now, even if he was not a Catholic.

Where are the interviews with the wives of the Hindu laborers and the pilgrims? Why doesn't anybody care if they forgive the killers of their kith and kin? Are they even getting any compensation money? I suppose not. They have already been forgotten. They are only Hindus.

This is what it means to be a Hindu in the great Socialist Progressive Secular Republic of India. You are a second-class citizen. Jawaharlal Nehru must be laughing in his grave -- he has succeeded in what he set out to do: destroy Hinduism. He put in place a perfect system of apartheid, one in which the silent majority is explicitly handicapped and exploited by law; and they believe they deserve it. While the 'minorities' are coddled. How this is different from the erstwhile white-supremacist regime in South Africa I really am not sure.

The Nehruvian Indian Constitution is a discriminatory document, as it expressly curtails the freedoms of Hindus, but not of 'minorities'. For instance, Hindu religious institutions come under government control and grand theft, but not Muslim or Christian ones. Hindus are not allowed to run schools, but 'minorities' are. The list goes on and on. It is apartheid, codified.

Each of these dead Hindus is a victim of Jawaharlal Nehru's megalomania. For it occurred to me recently that Nehru was anti-Lincoln. Whereas Abraham Lincoln gave his life to preserve the American Union, Jawaharlal Nehru gave the lives of several million Indians to destroy the Indian Union; primarily to massage his ego. As I said in my previous column 'Let Us Now Praise Famous Men,' Nehru was the reason for Partition, for the Kashmir problem, for Pakistan. He and his dynasty have been India's sorrow.

As India looks fearfully to August 15 and the mayhem on that day, it is worth remembering Saadat Hassan Manto's words: "There, behind barbed wire, on one side, lay India; and behind more barbed wire, on the other side, lay Pakistan. In between, on a bit of earth which had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh." We in the subcontinent all seem to inhabit an illusory homeland, just like that disappeared village, Toba Tek Singh.

All thanks to the wholly unnecessary Partition. All the other nations that were partitioned in the binge of partition in the mid-1900s have reunited or will reunite: for instance, Germany, Korea, etc. But Nehru's vanity and desire to be king have forever blighted this beloved country. Pakistan will never give up its struggle to destroy India: we will never reunite the old India.

Macaulay must be laughing too. He too has succeeded beyond his wildest imagination. This

country has an entire two generations of Nehruvian Stalinists in positions of influence and power who have been brainwashed into despising themselves and being bilious shadows of others, in this case Chinese, Russians and Americans. Not the British, though, alas for Macaulay.

I read a lot of reports in the worldwide media about this whole ceasefire charade. Most of them scarcely mentioned the massacre. Practically none of them mentioned that these were pilgrims. I suppose the world media also hardly thinks of Hindus as human beings. How can you blame them if the Indian media doesn't? Self-respect is needed before others will respect you.

At best, Hinduism falls in the 'Other' category of religions according to the New York Times. This is the way they reported on the Peace Summit (which His Holiness the Dalai Lama was excluded from): Rev. XYZ, Monsignor ABC, Rabbi XYZ, Mullah ABC, and then 'representatives from the Buddhist, Hindu, Native American, Shinto and other faiths.' Once again, note that these are nameless, un-individualised people. Only the Semites deserve names and individuality. Only the Semites are people. So, naturally, they have human rights. Hindus are mere statistics.

Ramesh Rao in a column on rediff.com suggested that the New York Times has been unremittingly hostile to India in the recent past. I agree, at least from the time Barbara Crossette used to file unvarnished tripe from Delhi. I think this has hurt the Indian propaganda cause quite a bit, as the paper is practically the mouthpiece of the foreign policy mafia in the US. I suggest that India's ambassador to Israel should ask the leaders there to put in a good word with the NY Times, who are after all Jewish and very pro-Israel. This could be a tangible benefit from the growing Indo-Israeli warmth.

What bothers me most is the casual way in which devout Hindus were butchered by Muslim terrorists. Don't they realise the worm can finally turn one day? After all, Muslims do go on pilgrimages too. Or maybe these terrorists are so bloodthirsty that rational thought does not occur to them. They have massacred some 50,000 of their co-religionists in cold blood in Algeria. And god knows how many in Afghanistan.

Look at the list of killings of Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir (from India Today, August 2, 2000). This is in addition to 350,000 Hindus ethnically cleansed from the Kashmir valley. Most of the following are in the Jammu region. These were cold-blooded executions of unarmed civilians by heavily armed mercenaries, often Afghan or Arab.

2000

August 2: 11 in Doda district
August 2: 7 in one family in Kupwara district
August 1-2: 27 labourers in Anantnag district
August 1: 31 Amarnath pilgrims at Pahalgam
February 28: 5 drivers in Anantnag

1999

July 19: 15 in Doda
June 20: 15 in Anantnag
February 20: 11 in Rajouri, 9 in Udhampur

1998

August 8: 35 in Himachal Pradesh (Islamic terrorists responsible)
July 28: 16 villagers in Doda
June 19: 25 in Doda
April 18: 27 in Udhampur

1997

March 20: 7 in Budgam in Kashmir
January 25: 25 in Ganderbal

Who cries for the Hindus? Are we children of some lesser god? Will the world notice us only if we take up the gun in self-defense?

And why is it that explosions do not disrupt Pakistan's Independence Day? What exactly is RAW doing? Pakistan can relate to counter-terrorism: being fanatic bullies they will be able to appreciate pain when it is applied to them. Pakistan is a fairly porous country, as demonstrated by the roving bands of mercenaries: why aren't some of them in India's employ, wreaking large-scale havoc and terrorising people?

India needs to ally with the Israelis to understand both the psychology and the tactics of protracted action against religious terrorism. After all, the Hindus and the Jews have both been victimised for millennia; it is time that both stood their ground. Especially for the Hindu, there is no outside help, at least not until India gets to be a major economic power. We are the Other, those of the frighteningly timeless religion, that which Islam and Christianity must worry about -- for Hinduism was there before they came about; and Hinduism will still be there after they disappear.

Postscript

Thank you to the readers who wrote to the United Nations regarding the shameful blackballing of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In particular, I liked reader Kaustubh's gentlemanly yet firm note. However, it appears the insult will stand: the Lama is not going to the conference.

I read somewhere that the Pakistani information minister took umbrage to L K Advani referring to 'South Asia' as the 'Indian subcontinent'. "India is only one of the countries in 'South Asia' " quoth the Pakistani. (Quotes mine.) Now you know where all this 'South Asia' garbage is coming from. As I said in my previous column, 'Why I am not a South Asian' it is a desperate Pakistani information warfare attempt to reduce India's brand equity. After all, the only things people associate with Pakistan are "Paki-bashing" and "wild-eyed, bushy-bearded, fundamentalist terrorists including Osama bin Laden."

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Children of a Lesser God

By Rajeev Srinivasan

http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/feb/23rajeev.htm

The rantings of one T John, an erstwhile minister in the Karnataka government, are now well known: he claimed that "God was punishing Gujarat and Orissa for attacks on Christians." My first thought on hearing this was that John was logically challenged. For I too can come up with plenty of interesting theories for the earthquake:

1. God is punishing India for allowing that Christian fundamentalist Sonia Gandhi to take a half-hearted dip at the sangam at Prayag during the Kumbha Mela.

2. God is punishing India for allowing the Christian Pope to come here and preach hatred recently, when other sensible Asian countries refused to allow him in.

3. God is punishing India for not controlling those Taleban-like missionaries and their vicious acolytes in the northeast, who are running around killing Hindus and Buddhists.

4. God is punishing India for allowing that missionary, M Teresa, to do immense harm to India's image and self-image, with the sole and lamentable intent of conversion.

5. God is punishing India for having welcomed with open arms the first Christians who came to India, the group of Syrians led by one Thomas of Cana in the 4th or 5th century CE, who were fleeing persecution probably at the hands of other Christians in West Asia.

6. God is punishing India for not having retaliated in kind against that madman Vasco da Gama in 1498 CE. An emissary sent by the Zamorin of Calicut to meet the Portuguese ships was sent back with his ears, nose and hands chopped off and strung around his neck.

7. God is punishing India for having tolerated that Inquisition-happy "Saint" Francis Xavier of Goa who dismembered children alive in front of their parents (whose eyelids were cut off so they had to watch), carefully cut off the extremities of people so they were still conscious when they were nothing but torso and head, chopped off and burned the genitals of men, cut off breasts, and penetrated vaginas with swords, all in the name of his religion.

Good theories, aren't they? I know these are absurd, but then I am merely following in the footsteps of Tertullian, (ca 160 CE), a major figure in early Christianity, who said, *credo quia absurdum est* (I believe, because it is absurd). He also said, "And the son of God died, which is immediately credible because it is absurd. And buried he rose again, which is certain because it is impossible." Thus my absurd theories must be right, true? QED.

There was also the curious case (much like the singular event of the dog in the night-time in Sherlock Holmes) of the sudden silence of the 'secular' 'progressives'. Let us consider the usual suspects. What T John said is patently communalist; but *Communalism Combat's* Teesta Setalvad did not fly into her customary rage. Shabana Azmi was surprisingly silent. **Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International did not wax eloquent. Why? It is as I have said *ad nauseam* before: these people are themselves extremely communalist. According to them, only semites have human rights.**

Similarly, the many Christians in the Indian media were also thunderously silent. Pamela Philipose, B G Verghese, Sevanti Ninan, Amrita Abraham, Gita Abraham, *et al*, all well-known and highly opinionated journalists, expressed no righteous indignation, so far as I can tell. (T J S George did condemn T John, but bracketed the VHP for good measure.) Nor did Christian fundamentalist columnists like A J Philip, Gail Omvedt or *rediff.com's* own Dilip D'Souza, all of whom are quick to condemn Hindu foolishness. From their own texts, I ask them: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

Incidentally, none of these worthies condemned the Pope's outrageous statements in Delhi nor the deplorable *Dominus Iesus* document either. Nor do they give any column-inches to the ongoing murders of Hindus and Buddhists by neo-convert Christians, who have become a majority in parts of the northeast. The plight of the Reang tribals, ethnically-cleansed from Mizoram by Christian thugs, does not get their attention. Why? I am forced to conclude that their silence implies agreement, sympathy, or collusion.

There is an eloquent statement in their own scripture: Bible, Mathew 23:13: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

Now what about other natural calamities occurring elsewhere in the world?

1. The 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake in San Francisco: how many Christians were being attacked there?

2. The 1994 Northridge earthquake in Los Angeles: how many Christians were being attacked there?

3. 80 black Christian churches across the US South were burned to the ground by unknown assailants in the recent past. Why wasn't there an earthquake in the South?

4. What about all the hurricanes and tornadoes that hit the US all the time? Are they the result of Christians being attacked there?

5. The great plague that practically wiped out Christian Europe in the Middle Ages: was this the result of attacks on Christians by anybody?

6. The recent landslides and floods in Latin America, a staunchly Christian place: were these the results of any attacks on Christians? Similarly volcanoes and other calamities in the Philippines.

7. Two hundred years of slavery and several hundred years of apartheid (almost all of the victims

were Christians) didn't produce any retaliation for the attacks on Christians?

The obvious common-sense answer to all the above is that they have nothing whatsoever to do with Christians or anybody else. These are just periodic natural things that simply happen with no divine intervention. God, one would imagine, is too busy to be worrying about such piddling affairs as the religious affiliations of his creations.

In point of fact, Christians have been the greatest perpetrators of large-scale holocausts. The Jewish holocaust is well-known; less well-known is the genocide of the Gypsies of Europe. They also committed genocide against the native Americans of both North and South America. They practically wiped out the natives of Tasmania (English sailors simply kidnapped all their women to enjoy them sexually and then throw them overboard). They reduced native peoples in the Pacific Rim and much of Africa to absolute misery. See the the sad state of the once-proud Maoris after Christianization, in the graphic film "Once Were Warriors" (New Zealand, 1995).

There is the horrifying book ***Late Victorian Holocausts*** by Macarthur Fellow Mike Davis (Verso) that shows how Christian greed directly caused the deaths of some 50 million people in India, China and Brazil. For instance, during the great famines in North India in the late 1800s, record amounts of grain were being exported to England from India! Amitav Ghosh's *Glass Palace* (HarperCollins) details how Christian imperialist thievery decimated once-prosperous Burma, ravaged its forests of all old-growth teak, and reduced Burmese to penury.

And Christians moan about "attacks"? Theirs has been a civilisational attack on the rest of the world, their religion no more than a convenient facade for European imperialism.

Furthermore, what exactly are these loudly trumpeted "attacks on Christians" in Gujarat? The Sarvodaya leaders who reported on this last year were clear: it was Christian missionaries who created the problem, by getting the tribals to dishonor their gods. I understand that they even went to the extent of urinating on images of Hanuman. I remember one reader writing to me in high dudgeon about how she, as a Christian, would be attacked in Gujarat. Reader dear, you will be just fine in Gujarat if you simply keep your fly buttoned: just don't pee all over the place. The same holds good for all the other missionary types. Have some self-control.

There is also the belief some Christians have held that the year 2000 of their calendar would see the end of the world. In 1999, I publicly made an offer to wager US $ 1,000,000 with any Christian fundamentalist that the world would not end in the year 2000 CE. My rationale was that the alleged anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ had absolutely no significance in the large scheme of things.

I was right; alas, no fundamentalist chose to take me up on my offer, or else I would have been a million dollars richer. So much for the courage of their convictions. Clearly, they don't themselves believe in the Christ legends, or in the literal truth of the Bible. All that is for marketing purposes, strictly for the consumption of the gullible targets of their conversion machinery. Did I ever mention they were hypocrites?

There really is nothing unique about Christianity. Jesus was yet another preacher, of which there have been many; Christianity is just one of many religions that have come and gone; it will also disappear when its time has come. The only thing unusual about it is the

remarkable amount of havoc -- cultural and environmental -- its adherents have been able to wreak all over the globe.

On further thought about T John's statement it occurred to me that I was looking at this whole thing from the wrong frame of reference. I was thinking about God as a Hindu would: God as the omnipotent One, Lord of all Creation, It that pervades the Universe and is the Universe. I have a lot of Christian Indian friends and most of them share the same definition for God. But T John's definition of God is different: he is looking at the God of the Fundamentalist Christians (GOF for short). In that frame of reference (odd though it may be), his statement is internally consistent.

For T John's GOF is only the God of Christians -- not a Universal God. The GOF is a limited god, a tribal god. A tribal god has no existence without his tribe, and is therefore a lesser god, a second-class god: one dependent on the tribute of his flock. He is afraid of losing his tribe, and is most jealous about their affections. He is a pathetic and neurotic God, whom his tribe can only fear, not love. Notice that, significantly, Christians never talk of themselves as "God-loving", only "God-fearing". This God is not worth loving, it appears, only worth fearing.

So T John's GOF, this God only of Christians, may be unhappy at anything that affects the attempts of his tribe to dominate. But then, I wonder: being a second-rate god, would this tribal GOF be able to produce earthquakes? I understand he once parted a sea, a pretty good special effect indeed, but earthquakes? Are they within his powers, this old man with a long, flowing beard?

This GOF is roughly like one of the *devas,* demi-gods, in Hindu mythology: like Indra, always insecure about his position, always trying to convince people to pay him obeisance. This is one of the many things that makes Christian theology unsatisfying: they have not progressed beyond this idea of a second-rate, jealous GOF. They have not figured out that beyond the many demi-gods lies a Formless, Absolute, One, that which is beyond all attributes. Their monotheism is naïve when compared with Absolute Monism.

The GOF is merely a desert god, one invented for desert people: in the desert, you must follow a few simple rules, or else you die. Therefore he is the god of a few simple rules. He is also known as the God of the Israelites: a parochial God, who only looks after the welfare of his tribe. For instance, there is the story of the Canaanites. These people were unfairly harassed and hounded and destroyed by the Israelites, with their partisan GOF cheering from the sidelines.

This narrow-minded GOF is only the God of humans even in the broadest interpretation of Christian texts. For it is said that the Christian God made man in his image. And therefore, obviously, animals and plants are inferior creations, made for the exploitation and pleasure of humans. This concept works today, because humans are more intelligent than other flora and fauna.

But what if there is a day when we discover there is indeed extra-terrestrial intelligence, and those intelligent beings are nothing like humans? Maybe they are like spiders, or cockroaches? Since they are not in the image of the Christian God, then they must have a different God. And what if, horrors, these creatures are more intelligent than humans are, and can exploit and enslave humans like we have the other animals? Then that God, the God of the spider-creatures, would be clearly a greater god than the GOF.

So it is up to Christians to decide: are they children of some lesser, second-rate GOF, like T John is? Or are they children of the real God, the One who created everything? If they are the latter, then they must know that the One True God would not discriminate against any of Its creations: It doesn't care about their religions. It does not send calamities indiscriminately to hurt Its children, all of whom are equally dear to It because they are all part of It.

As Albert Einstein said famously, "God does not play dice with the Universe". The God he was referring to was the One, the Absolute, the True God, not the GOF. Most Christians do not believe they are children of this lesser god; but there are some like T John who, alas, believe they are. Only they make inane statements like T John's.

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108 buried Siva temples found

By M. V. Subramanyam

http://www.hinduonnet.com/stories/2002060301550400.htm

SIDDAVATAM (Cuddapah dt.) June 2. The surfacing of five ancient Siva temples partly in sand dunes along the Pennar river in Jyothi village in Siddhavatam mandal has led to the discovery that as many as 108 Siva temples have been buried under sand at the place.

Besides the rare presence of 108 Siva temples dating back to 1213 A.D., a silver chariot and a diamond crown said to have been presented to the Jyothi Siddhavateswara Swamy temple by Kakatiya Rudrama Devi were present in Jyothi village, according to inscriptions discovered.

The 108 Siva temples were said to have been constructed by King Rakkasi Gangarayadeva and his aide, Jantimanayakudu, in the 12th century and were buried under sand during the Muslim Kings' rule, says Pothuraju Venkata Subbanna, a retired headmaster and chairman of several temples in Siddhavatam mandal, who has been conducting a study for the past eight years and has authored a voluminous book running to 1,200 manuscript pages, which he hopes to publish shortly. The king's nephew, Nachalappa, is said to have constructed the "Aleru Katta", stairs leading to the Pennar from the group of temples, he stated. The main temple called Jyothi Siddheswara Swamy temple, in which the local people have been performing pooja of late, has a big Sivalingam and a gaping hole to the right of a Sivalingam is a very long tunnel, presently inhabited by bats. A handful of villagers who ventured into the tunnel at the behest of Venkata Subbanna have returned after crawling barely for a few metres due to suffocation. A life-size inscription in the temple has Swastik symbol on the left and the Sun, Moon and a sturdy bull on the right. The sculpture in the main temple, a temple gopuram and a mantapam, which partly surfaced, depicted that of the Vijayanagar Kingdom, Venkata Subbanna told *The Hindu*. The "Vaanara" king, Sugreeva noted in an inscription that during his search for Goddess Seetha, he entered Siddhavatam which has countless Siva temples, whose architectural splendour were a feast to the eye. Aghorasiva, a Mathadhipathi of Pushpagiri Math, stated in an inscription dating back to 1313 A.D. now present in Vaidyanatha Swamy temple in Pushpagiri Matham, that Siddhavatam had several Siva temples of significance, Venkata Subbanna said.

Women of Jyothi village have been entering one of the temples, having Goddess Kamakshi icon, whose entrance is partly opened up, by crawling in and performing pooja of late. A gopuram built with bricks and a very long 11-feet high and two-feet wide compound wall, said to be encasing the 108 temples, partly surfaced in October last year, thanks to the floods, Satya Sai Lakshmi Reddy of Cuddapah, studying MBA at Chennai, who spent a fortnight doing a project work on the ancient temples, told this correspondent. In all half a dozen temples partly surfaced from the sand

dunes so far.

The second Vikramarka King, who ruled with Alampur in Mahabubnagar district as capital, has visited the Siddheswara temple and impressed by it, constructed Nava (nine) Brahmeswara temples on the northern side of Pennar, according to an inscription, he said. There is a mantapam built with huge rock boulders, which has partly surfaced. The rich ancient cultural heritage and temple of historical importance at Jyothi village needs to be unravelled by planning excavation of the temples under expert guidance, to prevent their damage.

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RAMAJANMA BHUMI: AYODHYA - NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

http://www.sulekha.com/hoppercomments.asp?cid=180125

Below I am producing a report on the archaeological findings in the Ramjanambhoomi complex during the ground-leveling operation undertaken by the UP government in April-June this year. The report was submitted to the Home Ministry, and then subsequently was published by the 'Historian Forum' New Delhi in the form of a beautiful booklet with colored pictures on glossy paper to demonstrate the original colors of the objects unearthed during this operation. Totally there are 32 pictures of these startling objects of a Hindu temple, which conclusively prove that there was a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Rama/Vishnu at the site where now the dilapidated Babri structure stands. To ask any further proof is to degrade one's own intelligence.

RAMAJANMA BHUMI: AYODHYA - NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

ON THE 18TH OF JUNE 1992, when the ground near the Ramajanma Bhumi was being levelled, a most startling archaeological discovery was made at Ayodhya. At a depth of about 12 feet from the ground level near the Ramajanma Bhumi temple, towards the south and beyond the fencing, a big hoard of beautifully carved buff sandstone pieces was located in a large pit, dug down below the old top level.

A careful study by a group of eight eminent archaeologists and historians found that all these objects are architectural members of a Hindu temple-complex of the 11th century A.D.

The group comprised Dr. Y.D. Sharma, former Deputy Director General, Archaeo logical Survey of India, Dr. K.M. Srivastava, former Director, Archaeological Survey of India, Dr. S.P. Gupta, former Director, Allahabad Museum, Prof. K.P. Nautiyal, Vice-Chancellor, Avadh University and former Head of the Ancient History and Archaeology Department, Garhwal University, Prof. B.R. Grover, former Director, Indian Council of Historical Research, Shri Devendra Swarup Agrawal and Dr. Sardindu Mukherji of the Delhi University, and Dr. (Mrs.) Sudha Malaya of Bhopal.

The Temple: The experts who visited the site on behalf of the academic organization, "The Historians' Forum", on the 2nd and 3rd of July 1992, are unanimously of the view that the temple, to which these fragments belong, is of the developed NAGARA style of ancient temple architecture which was current in northern India during the later part of the early medieval period i.e. the period after 900 A.D. and before 1200 A.D. The temples of this style are characterized by a distinctly imposing Shikhara, which is a tall and tapering spire over the Garbha-griha or sanctum sanctorum, which houses the main deity.

The Shikhara Amalaka: The developed Shikhara is like a mountain with several tiers of subsidiary Shikharas, rising one above the other and projecting partially from the main Shikhara. The Shikharas are crowned with a very distin- ctive circular piece of stone, called amalaka, which is shaped like a cogged wheel, with bead-like mouldings along the periphery. It is so very typical of the tepmles of northern India that no one in the world who knows even a little about the Hindu temples can cast any doubt about its position in the temple structure. There are two examples of half-amalakas, in the present hoard of objects, evidently used on the top of the subsidiary Shikhra, called Shikharas of Karnas, i.e. fringe spires.

The Shikhara Jala: The second most significant find is the curvilinear part of the Jala mouldings present on the Shikharas. It is beautifully decorated with scrolls. It also belongs exclusively to the north Indian temples of the period after 900 A.D. since the technique of its carving involves the method of scoop- ing out of the areas around the floral elements so that the art-motifs are framed with surface absolutely plain. It is called 'Stencil' technique.

The Capital: The third most noteworthy sculptured piece of stone in this collection is a rectangular capital of a piller with beautiful mouldings in the form of highly stylised lotus petals arranged as narrow parallel strips carved in low relief around the capital.

The Cornice: The fourth example of stone sculptures belongs to the most characteristic member of the Nagara style of temples -it is called Chhadya, and in Hindi Chhajja, sun-shade, where the straight wall over the high plinth meets the base of the Shikhara. It is carved and shaped like rectangular Mangalore tiles to serve not only as a sun-shade but also allow the rain water to run off quickly and protect the structure. It is a corner-stone of the cornice.

Floral frieze: There is one frieze of continuous leaf-moulding which decorates one of the top lines of the plinth of the temple.

Door-Jamb: There is one example of a door-jamb or dvara-shakha of the main entrance of the temple. It is decorated with a meandering floral design, carved in 'Stencil' style.

Images of Vishnu's Incarnations: There is also a fragment of a stele embellish- ed with the most significant sculptures of a number of Vaishnavite gods, viz. a Chakrapurusha, i.e. a youthful male figure standing gracefully at an angle (tribhanga) and holding vertically in the palm of the right hand the character- istic wheel or Chakra of Vishnu.

Another image is that of Parshurama, sitting cross-legged and holding a battle-axe in the left hand. Below him is the image of Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna, with a canopy of serpent-hoods and having a wine-cup in his hand. Still below him is the image of a mother godess (matri-devi), the bestower of all good luck.

As per the iconographic stipulation, there should have been an image of Dashrathi Rama, i.e., the son of Dasharatha, above the image of Parshurama, in order to complete the trio of three Ramas in the full set of ten incarnations of Vishnu. Evidently, the temple to which this stele belongs has necessarily to be a Vaishnabite one.

Shiva-Parvati: Besides the above, there are several other images. One is of Shiva-Parvati, also called Uma-Maheshvara. It was found from a shallow mound called Nala, located some 200 meters away from the site of the above hoard of art and architectural pieces. Though Shiva's head is now lost, his hand hold- ing a Trishula or trident is fully intact. Similarly, although Parvati's face is not extant, her hand from behind Shiva's neck is found resting on his right shoulder in an embracing position. Stylistically, it is also datable to the 11th century.

Terracotta Figurines: Art objects of burnt clay belonging to the earlier periods, such as the Kushana (1st-3rd century) have also been found. These images belong to various Hindu gods and godesses.

EXPLORATIONS

From 4th July through 18th July 1992, Prof. B.R. Grover camped at Ayodhya, during the period when the ground acquired by the UP Government was being levelled up. It is during this operation that he came across towards the east and south of the Ramajanma Bhumi, large floor-areas, in the pre-Islamic levels, which were carefully paved with burnt bricks. These places were then systemati- cally exposed and photographed in situ for permanent record. He located some brick-walls as well. He noticed similar flooring and also brick-walls at the so-called Janmasthan area, across the modern road, built by the British after cutting the Rama Kotmound. The floor covered with burnt-bricks spreads over thousands of

square metres now largely encircled by the newly constructed Rama Divar. During that period Prof. Grover had released as many as three reports of his findings to the press which prompted the Historians' Forum to send two eminent field-archaeologists to examine the reported discoveries.

FRESH EXCAVATIONS

Huge Brick Walls: On the 22nd and 23rd of July Dr. K.M. Srivastava and Dr. S.P. Gupta went to Ayodhya and scraped the section facing east and also dug at least two feet still deeper in a small area along this section. They discovered a huge burnt-brick wall of more than a dozen courses running along the section and beyond it. Below this, after a little break, the remains of another brick- wall have been found. At two different pre-Islamic levels, there are the remains of brick-laid floors.

Mass Destruction: There are clear cut marks of massive destruction of the huge wall mentioned above since brick-debris and large pits have been located here. Further, there are two hard rammed floors of Chunam and Kankar, laid one above the other with a significant break in between but over the level of the brick- wall.

There is therefore, enough new archaeological material which conclusively proves what Prof. B.B. Lal, the previous excavator of this site, has been repeatedly saying that here at the Ramajanma Bhumi there was an impressive structure of the 11th-12th century built on pillers standing on a series of parallel burnt-brick bases which was destroyed in the early 16th century, in all likelihood the bases carried on them the same temple-pillers which are fixed in the 'mosque'.

These new archaeological findings also confirm the views expressed earlier in 1990 by Dr. S.P. Gupta that the 16 black stone pillers and one piece of door- jamb with carvings of gods and godesses existing in the so-called 'Babri Mosque structure' and also the adjoining areas, belong to a 11th century Hindu temple, possibly Vaishnavite.

Muslim Testimony: The new discovery further confirms the claims of all early Muslim authors, like the grand-daughter of Aurangzeb whose writing was cited in Sahifa-i-Chihal, Nasaih Bahadur Shahi, Mirza Jan, the author of Hidiqa-i- Shahada and a large number of other 18th, 19th, and even 20th century scholars like Shri Abdul Hai, have repeatedly mentioned that anciently here, at this very site, called 'Janmasthan', there was an imposing Hindu temple which was destroyed by the Muslims and a mosque was built over its debris.

Mir Baqi's Claim: Indirectly though, the newly acquired archaeological evidence also equally confirms the statement made by Mir Baqi in his inscriptions, still found fixed in the structure of the 'mosque', that at this very place he built a structure for the angels to descend, specifically at the command and permiss- ion of Babar.

The Hindu Testimony: And finally, it lends full support to a long standing Hindu tradition of the Valmiki's Ramayana, the Vishnu and other Puranas and a host of other works of the Sikhs, Jainas and Buddhists as well as the Sanskrit classics like Kalidasa's Raghuvamsham, according to which for thousands of years this ancient settlement with Rama Kota was occupied and reoccupied following desertions and destructions, the story of which has, however, been recollected in two important monographs, one is entitled Ayodhya by Hans Bakker and the other is Ram Janmabhoomi vs. Babri Masjid by Koenraad Elst published in English in recent years.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CONTROVERSY

Babar Stayed at Ayodhya: The so-called 'Babri Mosque' was built in 1528 A.D. The Babarnama, Babar's diary of everyday events and autobiography, mentions that on March 28 in the year 1528 Babar came to Ayodhya, called 'Oudh' in those days, and camped on the river-side of a tributary of the Saryu, flowing near the township. Here he stayed for a few days, till April 2nd, 1528, after defeat ing the then Afghan ruler of this place who had rebelled against him. He may have stayed longer, but no one knows exactly how long since the original pages of his hand-written diary pertaining to the period between April 2nd

and Sept. 18 of 1528, were lost in a storm that overtook Babar's tents in 1529.

After Aurangzeb: The successors of Babar continued to rule over this place till the early 18th century. After Aurangzeb's death (1707 AD), the territories of Awadh were marked by lawlessness. During the reign of the Mughal Emperor Md. Shah and the tenure of the governorship of Burhan-un-Mulk Saadat Ali Khan, a serious riot took place between the Hindus and the Muslims (1735 AD), the former claiming their right over Ramajanma Bhumi. This is the earliest judicial reference available in this regard so far.

What the Europeans Saw and Wrote?:In 1767 itself, a Jesuit missionary, Joseph Tieffenthaler, who stayed at Ayodhya for a number of days and left behind his account written in Latin, found that in spite of the Mughal Kings' efforts to prevent them, the Hindus had re-occupied the courtyard, raised a 'Rama Chabuta- ra' thereon and worshiped there by circumambulating it three times and finally prostrating before it. On the Rama Navami day they congregated here in lakhs. Significantly, they continued to worship under the domed structure as well. More details are available in the accounts of Montgomery Martin, Edward Thorn- ton, P. Carnegy and others.

Serious Riots: In 1855 once again a big clash took place in which scores of men were killed; such riots and killings never subsided: there are several historical, judicial and revenue records to prove their occurrences.

During the British Raj: After the establishment of the British rule in Avadh in 1856, the battle for Janmabhumi was primarily fought in the courts of Law. How- ever, in 1934 a very serious riot took place in which the domes were destroyed to a very large extent. After this, it is common knowledge that the authorities repaired the structure and closed it down for some time. However, it was opened in favour of the Hindus, step by step, after 1949 under various judicial orders

New Evidence: In continuation of its earlier efforts, the Historians' Forum feels happy to place in the hands of the public and the government this new uncontrovertible archaeological evidence which proves that there did exist at this very site a magnificient temple, from at least the 11th century, which was destroyed to build a mosque-like structure over the debris of the temple in the 16th century. There is every possibility that there existed at this site one or more temples of still greater antiquity, some of which were built with burnt-bricks in which images of gods and goddesses made of terracotta were installed

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That mosque there stood as a symbol of atrocities of Babar and his commanders. No one liked to see a that being considered as a "place of worship". That certainly can not be a holy place, which stands there after razing a nice temple down.

Given that everybody knows this (assuming that it is proven with sufficient evidence that there was a temple once upon a time), the question is very simple : Why do Muslims want a mosque there?

The platform is humanity, screw the constitution. From the humanity point of view, that mosque sucks! it is was a tyrannical thing.

Second question is : Do Muslims love Mosque or do they love Baber? If they love Mosque then it can be relocated, no problems. If they love Baber then we got some problems honey. That man killed 1000s and converted people and destroyed temples. Some one who is criminal in our eyes can not be hero in others' . We needs synchronization of opinions to coexist peacefully.

Secularism means upholding human values, it does not mean not hurting other religious feelings. Ayodhya issue is a reflection of a deeper malaise in elite Indian society - macaulay putra...

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articles on hinduism

A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

A fine blend of religion and culture

By V. Sundaram

http://www.the-hindu.com/stories/13180611.htm

FREEDOM OF worship is one of the fundamental rights our democracy offers. It is postulated in the preamble to our Constitution and several Articles define the scope and extent of the right. We are a people with deep religious moorings. At the same time, we have a living tradition of religious tolerance - result of the broad outlook of Hinduism that all religions lead to the same God. It was this tradition that brought about a happy co-existence of the different religious groups in the country.

True, the forces of secularism, socialism and science in post- independent India have released the people from the clutches of meaningless tradition of superstitions, but at the same time they have created in them a certain moral and spiritual vacuum that has not been filled by any substitute.



The violent disturbances that take place at the slightest provocation bear ample testimony to this trend. The remedy lies in the proper understanding of our religion and culture. Religion brings about a certain discipline which touches our conscience and helps us tackle evil and sordidness, saves us from greed, lust and hatred, releases moral power and imparts to us courage in the enterprise of fighting for a better social order. This discipline implies the surrendering of our thinking and conduct to the truths of the spirit and the generation of a binding force that strengthens the solidarity of human society.

Religion is not to be associated with meaningless dogmas and creeds, rights and ceremonies but with the deepest wisdom of the ancient seers of the Sanathana Dharma which can safely guide us through the bewildering chaos of modern thought. Religion is to be associated with that ancient wisdom of ours which is universal in feeling and intention and which, by virtue of its vitality, has affected men of all races and has been able to survive political and social changes through the ages, and which must remain forever even while other achievements of man change or perish.

One should remember that religion is not in any way opposed to secularism. On the other hand they are closely inter-related. Indian secularism is not alien to Indian culture, despite the

mischievous and vicious attempts of several politicians and irresponsible journalists in recent years to prove it to the contrary. Secularism is part and parcel of Indian culture.

In modern India, ``secularism'' has been converted into a mischievous slogan by unscrupulous politicians and their journalistic cohorts. Secularism as the concept is commonly understood today is a force contrary to moral and spiritual values. Secularism is capable of three distinct meanings, spiritual, rational and materialistic.

There is a common ground for all these interpretations. It is that in the political and economic life of India, parties and policies and loyalties should not be based on religion but should cut across religions and be based on the objective of national welfare. While this may appear to be satisfactory for practical purposes, the more fundamental attitude towards secularism will have in the long run a decisive impact on national outlook and behaviour.

The spiritual interpretation of secularism is that all religions spring from the primary human craving to understand and feel God or the Infinite in which the entire universe in general and man in particular has his being. Therefore, it is far more important that one should recognise and feel its presence than the manner in which it should be named, described and worshipped. Hence the truly spiritual human being will respect all religions while clinging to his own. He will not allow differences of religion to come in the way of fullest cooperation in those fields where reason and science should prevail. This in essence was Gandhiji's view on secularism. According to the rationalistic view of secularism, religion is essentially irrational and superstitious and it should be progressively eliminated through scientific education. Till then it should be prevented by all possible means from intruding into the social, political, economic and cultural life of the people. It should be strictly relegated to the home for the present and ultimately expelled from that refuge also. In trying to prevent the intrusion of religion in national and public affairs, coercion and physical force should be avoided to the extent possible, but wherever necessary the help of coercive legislation may be taken. This was the policy of the Congress(I) under the leadership of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

According to the materialistic interpretation of secularism (Karl Marx), religion is essentially an evil and has been instrumental in enslaving the masses by the classes. Therefore it is necessary to suppress it by organised propaganda if possible and by force if necessary. In India, except for the small number of communists the general public opinion is vaguely divided between the first two interpretations.

Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the rationalist meaning of secularism come to prevail generally among the politicians and the Central and State Governments have during the past 50 years tried to function as if religions did not exist in India or at least they should not be given any quarter or recognition unless they came under the category and label of `minority faiths', such as Christianity and Islam. Any religion or faith coming under the category of ``Minority faith/religion'' becomes automatically `secular' and `cosmopolitan'. Applying this thumb rule, `Hinduism', by virtue of the fact that it is the faith of the majority, automatically becomes a `communal and non-secular' faith.

Nehru's agnostic and rationalistic thinking had a disastrous impact on the philosophy and working of several academic institutions established by the Government of India, for instance the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), the Institute of Advanced Studies in Shimla and the

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). All these institutions were packed with intellectuals who were all inducted as part of ``Jawahar Employment Programme". As Arun Shourie brilliantly puts it: ``These intellectuals and their patrons have worked a diabolic inversion: the inclusive religion, the pluralist spiritual search of our people and land, they have projected as intolerant, narrow-minded, obscurantist; and the exclusivist, totalitarian, revelatory religions and ideologies - Islam, Christianity, Marxism-Leninism - they have made out to be the epitomes of tolerance, open-mindedness, democracy and secularism."

In India today, in the name of ``secularism", anti-religious forces sponsored by the so-called `secular' humanism or communism, condemn religious piety, particularly in the majority community. Privileged minorities are immune from such attention and have succeeded in getting their demands, however unreasonable, accepted. In its name again, politicians in power adopt a strange attitude. They condone the susceptibilities, religious and social, of the minorities but are too eager to brand similar susceptibilities in the majority community as communal and reactionary. These unfortunate postures have created a sense of nihilistic frustration in the majority community. If, however, the misuse of this word ``secularism" continues; if Sanskrit, the bond of unity, is not given its due place in our language formula, if every time there is inter-communal conflict, the majority is blamed, regardless of the merits of the question; if our places of pilgrimage such as Benaras, Mathura, Dwaraka, Haridwar, Rishikesh, etc., continue to be converted into secular ghettos through mindless enforcement of pernicious, unimaginative and soulless Government policies, the springs of traditional tolerance of the ages will soon dry up.

Distorted view

I am convinced that this distorted view of secularism has been at the root of deterioration in the standards of probity, decency, decorum, dignity, integrity and honesty in all walks of national life in India. I think it is also at the root of the general frustration and discontent among all sections of our people and more particularly the youth. It is certainly possible for a rational agnostic to be a highly moral and responsible person. But for a people whose moral life derives its strength essentially from an ancient religion, indifference to the latter inevitably means the decay of the former. The unnatural bifurcation of the spheres of life into the secular and the spiritual has had its bad effects on the minds of men in India. It has tended to slacken moral standards in the name of efficiency and expediency. It has worked for a colourless anaemic religion to which men pay lip homage.

We have created a generation of men and women who are smart, superficial, trim and alert, but have no moral earnestness or love of the truth. Our knowledge is diffuse, directionless and we are all distraught in mind and tired in body and listless in our manner. We have given up the strife against lusts of the flesh, and rationalised it with the help of the behaviourist psychology of Freud and others from the West. In our behaviour, there is an increased insensibility and a frightening decrease of civility, decency and sense of justice. We just shift and drift and erect defence machines to hide our real nature. All this is the result of the dethronement of faith and the enthronement of ``sham secularism" of post-independent India.

The only way out is a call back to religion and the influence of religion not only on the individual but also on the public. Mahatma Gandhi in his speeches and writings preached that politics, to be useful or popular or true, must be founded on religion. He stood for the spiritualisation of politics.

He had found politics in the rut of Western materialism and opportunism and he wanted to save it from the low state into which it had fallen. ``Back to religion'' was his exhortation. And India today must listen to his call, if it is to save not only its soul but its body, that is, its physical well-being.

According to Sudhanshu Ranade (author of the articles in The Hindu `The great betrayal' (February 7, `99) ``Religion and Politics'' (August 1, '99) and ``Religion and Politics'' (August 15, '99) the linkage between religion and politics during the Vedic Phase of the Hindu religion ended in a total disaster 2500-3000 years ago. **Eminent men including Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita, Anne Besant, Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi** (whose academic and other credentials can be considered equal to that of Mr. Sudhanshu Ranade) **have all passionately underlined the man-making soul-elevating and nation-building impact of Hinduism through the ages on the people of India. Mahatma Gandhi** had professional intellectuals like Sudhanshu Ranade in mind when he observed: **``Rationalists are admirable beings; rationalism is a hideous monster when it claims for itself omnipotence. Attribution of Omnipotence to reason is as bad a piece of idolatry as is the worship of stones believing them to be God. I do not plead for the suppression of reason but for the recognition of `that' in us which sanctifies reason.''**

Instrument of integration

Especially as a means and instrument of national integration, religion will prove more dependable than `secularism'. Religion holds people together while secularism is divisive; religion is constructive while secularism erodes; religion inspires while secularism criticises; religion builds while secularism dissolves; religion unites the people while secularism makes people look at one another with doubt if not suspicion.

True and positive secularism derived from the timeless culture of India should keep all religions in India at peace. It should care for religion so intensely as to validate every pathway to God without any hindrance. In short it should regard all religions as sacred. **Radhakrishnan** dealt a blow to all the self-styled pseudo practitioners of ``secularism'' (including politicians and our ill-informed journalists) when he observed: **``The ideal of secularism means that we abandon the inhumanity of fanaticism and give up the futile hatred of others and other faiths. In a secular state, there will be the true spirit of religion, and the environment necessary for the development of a gentle and considerate way of life.''**

Are we going to be brave enough, wise enough and mature enough to accept this great challenge of the future?

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Leadership Qualities In Vighneshwara

By SWAMI SWAROOPANANDA
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/xml/uncomp/articleshow?msid=153219

Ganesha, the elephant- headed God, combines within himself all the essential qualities of a successful leader. Pati means master or leader. Gana stands for the attendants. Hence He is also called Vinayaka, the supreme leader of the ganas, one who attends upon and follows at all times Lord Shiva. He is also Vighneshwara, Lord of all obstacles.

Ganapati has two spouses: Buddhi or intellect and Siddhi or achievement. Ganesha represents perfect leadership. He is the possessor of perfect wisdom — a fully realised being. To a student of Vedanta, the "path of knowledge" is the prescribed path, which is essentially intellectual. So, a leader must have a 'great head' to conceive and understand the logic of spiritual thought. The truth of Vedanta can be comprehended only through listening to a teacher. Therefore, Shravanam or listening is depicted by Ganapati's large ears. Difficult and thorny issues are resolved by intelligent listening. Quarrels and conflicts come up in an organisation, at the workplace, or in the family — all because no one is ready to listen.

After listening, the individual must independently reflect (manana) upon what he has heard. For this he needs to be sensitive enough to be aware of all creatures. His intellect must have the depth and width to understand the entire world of plurality. He must have the subtle discriminative power, viveka, to distinguish the changing perishable matter from the Eternal. He must be able to filter all information, and retain only the good and the noble in his mind.

A cool, clear head is a necessary attribute of a powerful leader. The trunk coming down the forehead of the elephant is an instrument which can bulldoze a massive oak tree; equally, it can perform the subtle task of picking up a needle from a haystack. A capable leader must be aware of the grossest aspects of a job as well as its minute, meticulous details. Like the elephant's trunk, the discriminative faculty of a leader with an evolved intellect can help solve gross problems as well as settle subtle issues. Good and evil are represented by the two tusks of the elephant. A strong leader must discriminate between right and wrong and all other dualities, and then form his judgment before taking action.

Ganesha has a wide mouth and a large belly, indicative of a healthy appetite and enthusiasm for life. Similarly, a successful leader is ready to stomach all types of experience, whether auspicious or inauspicious. The mouse is a tiny fidgety creature that darts from one food to another, nibbling a little from everywhere. This denotes a mind full of desires, ever-hovering from one longing to another. There is a mouse with - in each of us, capable of eating away all merits. The mouse is surrounded by an assortment of enticing sweets but it looks up at Ganesha, seeking His

permission to eat. A competent leader must check all temptations, and rise above selfish desires, personal ambitions and aspire to work for the welfare and happiness of all his followers.

Vighneshwara has four arms representing the four inner equipment, antahkaran. In one hand, he has a rope and in another an axe. With the axe he severs the attachments of his devotees and with the rope he pulls them closer to the Truth, and ultimately binds them to the highest goal. In his third hand, he holds a riceball (modak) representing the rewards of the joys of devotion to God. With his fourth hand he blesses all his disciples and protects them from all obstacles.

(Tomorrow is Ganesh Chaturthi)

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

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THE COLONIAL GENESIS OF ANTI-BRAHMINISM

Ram Swarup on the oppression of Hindu priests

http://www.hindu.org/publications/ramswarup/brahminism.html

Ram Swarup, Nayee Dillee, is a leading thinker in the contemporary dynamics of Hindu renaissance ideology. Here he recounts the tragic decimation of Hinduism's religious leadership -- its priestly brahmins. He reveals the motivations and historical forces underlying the continuing propaganda against, and oppression of, Hindu clergy.

A country is never fully defeated as long as its martial and intellectual leaders exist. A self-conscious imperialism undertakes to reduce them as its first important task. Muslims coming to India found brave, armed men and a brahmin class providing cultural and spiritual leadership. Dr. Ambedkar, quoting Muslim historians, says the first act of religious zeal by Mohammad bin Qasim, the first Arab invader, was circumcision of brahmins. "But, after they objected, he put all above the age of seventeen to death."

When the Portuguese came, St. Xavier wrote to the king of Portugal, his patron, "If there were no brahmins, all pagans would be converted to our faith." He hated them with hatred that evangelists alone are capable of. He called them a "most perverse people." Brahmins became a persecuted people. Next the British came. They physically disarmed India. Then missionaries and orientalists led an ideological disarmament.

Rev. C. Buchanan said Indians should be baptized because "it attaches the governed to the governors." They thought that brahmins came in the way of their dream of a baptized India. They started blackening and discrediting them. A brochure called The Book of Wisdom in 279 verses was widely circulated by missionaries under William Carey, touted as the father of the Indian press. It was one of the first he printed and is addressed to the "mean, despicable Brahmins." The brochure promises hell for heathens and salvation through Christ.

The administration found brahmins to be the only "national" caste, held in much respect and capable of providing political leadership. This was enough. They fomented anti-brahmin movements in different parts of the country which are still very powerful in today's secular India. Their fears were well-founded. Brahmins were the intellectual leaders of the Independence struggle. Thus anti-brahminism was a construct of the last two centuries. And though learnt under the colonial- missionary aegis, it became an important category of future social thinking and political action. Brahmins began to be described as cunning, parasitic exploiters and authors of the iniquitous caste system. Much scholarship and intellectual labor was put into this thesis before it acquired its present momentum and currency. Anti-brahminism originated in, and still prospers in

anti-Hindu circles. It is particularly welcome among Marxists, missionaries, Muslims, separatists and casteists of different hues. When they attack brahmins, their target is unmistakably Hinduism. They know their only chance is a disintegrated India.

The success of their mission is seen today in the brahmins' new poverty. Sorokin describes brahmins as "world's poorest aristocracy," as a "caste of priests without church organization; teachers without state educational institutions; moral and social leaders without wealth, army and support of state organization." It is a faithful description. In the past, their poverty was voluntary--renunciation was their way of life; but the old glory has gone. Their new poverty, not chosen but imposed by circumstance, is also ideological and cultural. In the past, brahmins were connected with temples which were also great centers of learning. When these were destroyed, brahmins became poor as well as illiterate. A nation bereft of fighters now lost its teachers and thinkers. When the British came on the scene, they were already destitute. Independence brought no relief; they remained the poor est section in the country, followed probably by Rajputs. A Government study of incomes was made in Karnataka State. The figures given in its Assembly in 1978 show that brahmins were the poorest, poorer than scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Among the brahmins themselves, the poorest are those connected with Vedic learning, temple service and religious functions. At Tamil Nadu's Ranganathaswamy Temple, priest's monthly salary is Rs.3 (us8 cents, from Census Department studies) and a daily allowance of one measure of rice. The government staff at the same temples receive Rs.250 plus per month. But these facts have not modified the priests' reputation as "haves" and as "exploiters." In Marxist-secular social sciences, social facts do not change social theories. The destitution of Hindu priests has moved none, not even parties known for Hindu sympathy.

Traditional India is long-suffering and used to neglect. But how will a nation fare which treats its temples and priests so shabbily? And brahmins themselves should take up this challenge -- not in any narrow spirit, but by recovering their old vocation, by fearlessly speaking for dharma and by again becoming brahma-vadins, God beings. The world needs it, and needs them.

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Indo-Romanian Cultural Confluences

By Daniela Tane

http://www.indiagov.org/perspec/dec99/indo-rom.htm

Lying at the crossroads that link the Orient and the Occident, Romania claims to belong to both. If modern Romanian literature is the offspring of Romanian culture grafted onto Western cultural trends, the old Romanian legends and beliefs lie under the sign of another spiritual zodiac, that of myth and ancient sages.

Since time immemorial, the *Getae*, a branch of the *Thracians*, believed in the immortality of soul and considered the body an obstacle which should destroy itself at the moment of death. According to them, humans should aim at freeing themselves from the body so that the soul could lead its life in the kingdom of *Zamolxis* (a god similar to *Varuna* of the Vedic mythology), This is similar to the Hindu concept, according to which when the body dies, the human soul returns to the infinite spring of life, to *Brahma*. The history of the Dacian-Getic invasion by the Roman conquerors is somewhat similar to that of India's invasion by the Aryans (a theory now in dispute). In both cases, there was a native background, characterized by a passive, dormant resistance to the new spiritual forms imposed by the conquerors, whose traces are extremely difficult to identify at present.

Similarities do not stop here. "Miorita", the most widespread Romanian myth, has been found to practice a doctrine resembling *ahimsa* - non-violence. Folk books like "Alexandria", "Sindipa" or "Panchtantra" helped Romanians become familiar with Indian literary, philosophical and moral values.

Interestingly, in Romanian religious art - in Voronet monastery, for instance - we can see saints sitting on lotus flowers just as Buddha and some mythological characters are represented in the Indian sculptures and miniatures. All this made Lucian Blaga, one of the greatest poets and the philosophers of the Romanian culture, state: "Taking into account the level, dimensions and internal proportions of the Romanian culture, I think that nowhere else in Europe has the Indian thought had a greater influence than in Romania." It may not come as a surprise then that some of the greatest names of the Romanian literature - Eminescu, Hasdeu, Cosbuc, Brancusi, Blaga, Mircea Eliade - have been deeply marked by the encounter with the Indian thought, an initiation experience that was bound to reflect in their works.

The continuity of the archaic thought made India preserve the symbolic dimension of the spirit and of the world. India's greatest masterpieces, both artistic and theoretical, must be related to the dialectics of symbol. We deal here, as Eminescu so nicely put in a famous line, "with a world that thought in terms of legends and spoke in rhymes."

Except for old Romanian literature - which came to a close with Dimitrie Cantemir - before the early 19th century, and before Romanticism reached Romania, the Romanian spirituality was deeply rooted in the universe of folk culture, which was loaded matter emerging from the remotest archaic springs. Romanticism, which marks the transition from the ancient to modern culture, does not contradict other cultural ideas; on the contrary, it unveils the tradition it claims itself from and takes farther on. Under the circumstances, India's reception was made in a space related to it in its very core. This explains why with Eminescu, India became, as Blaga puts it, "the inalienable presence of our culture", the cosmic and cosmogenic pathos - with its symbolic and sacred significance. It can be simultaneously related both to the Indian view of the world and to that of the Romanian national folklore.

After Eminescu, Lucian Blaga discovered the magic of the Indian symbolical forms. One can certainly state that Romanian literature has two *kavis* - poet-sages - to use the Indian term. Like all great Indian poets, from the Vedic sages to Rabindranath Tagore, they clothed their philosophical view in the veil of poetry. Mircea Eliade, the reputed historian of religions, has also stated that India taught him what symbolism meant. By discovering the archaic roots of Indian culture, he came to understand the deep structures of his own national folklore. Mircea Eliade emphasized that what is characteristic to Romanian culture and differentiates it from the European one is, in fact, its affiliation to the ancient background of universal values.

In 1937, the same year when Mircea Eliade was trying to highlight the importance of India in the context of symbolical thought in Romanian folklore, Constantin Brancusi, the Romanian sculptor, left for India, to Indore. This is where his artistic works, inspired by Romanian folklore were to be a part of a funeral monument, a fact in perfect harmony with the sacred traditions of Indian architecture. Brancusi's sculptures display primeval cosmogenic symbols - The Egg, The Bird, The Pole/Column, The Couple which diminish eventually the manifestation of forms to their essence. What can be more relevant than his "Endless Column" which is also found in the Vedic texts as the World Pole that separates the Heaven from the Earth? The entire work of Brancusi, inspired from the endless source of ancient Romanian folklore, represents the reiteration of India's cultural ethos through the centuries. It is an attempt at conceiving the new in compliance with the old and which becomes richer and richer owing to the ever more fresh torments of creation. This similitude reveals the undeniable affinities between the two cultures, owing to the similar manner in which they perceive the sacred.

As Lucian Blaga said about Romanian spirituality: "Through a total assimilation, the motifs of Indian origin have so deeply penetrated our being that they can be taken away only by tearing off vital tissues." The Indian values which reached Romania directly or indirectly have represented for the Romanians a world in which they have re-discovered their own cultural vitality.

The author is a member of the Romanian Foreign Service.

Courtesy: Diplomatic Club Monthly (Romania)

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Sadhus, sand, chillum and three Americans

By Vinay Tewari
The Times of India News Service
http://www.timesofindia.com/today/10kumb2.htm

ALLAHABAD: It was just past 5 am and not dawn yet. Justin Gooding sat silhouetted against the river bank, gaping at a bunch of Naga sadhus smoking *chillum*.

A first-timer in India, Gooding is a clothes designer in New York. ``I have seen nothing like this before. It's sad Americans back home know nothing about this country, what to say the size and atmosphere of the Kumbh mela," he said on Tuesday.

Gooding next made the most blasphemous of statements. ``You know, I am sitting here wondering how it would be to dress up these sadhus," he said, without realising the import of his words.

``I think nudity is a faux-pas in India...it's okay only if it's religious," he said. ``In fact, I had expected Indians to have a more relaxed attitude towards it," he added.

Thanks to the Kumbh, Gooding managed his very own *triveni*, meeting two other New Yorkers - Ken Cooper, a social worker, and Keith Gemerek, a carpenter, - here.

But what attracted three Americans to a land which few know about in the US? ``Well, I was clearly in awe of these people the last time I came here (1989). It was hard for me to imagine what motivates them (the devotees) to come here in such numbers," said Cooper, who works for a support group for the elderly.

But varied as their backgrounds may be, Cooper, Gemerek and Gooding were chanting a common mantra...the devotees all seemed so happy. **``You know, we Americans are basically miserable people and life is so insecure there. We are just not happy...not as engaged as you guys. May be it's the rat race, I don't know,"** Gemerek said.

But they had a complaint. **``You guys seem to be going our way. This Kumbh seems far more commercialised than the last one. The corporate, urban influence is very visible this time around,"** Cooper said.

The trio are now keenly awaiting the next big day, January 14. ``We basically want to see the processions being taken out by the *akharas*...that should be good fun," Gooding said, trying to avoid a mass of devotees gaping at the three spread out on the sand.

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Secularists to blame

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The naked dance of death in Gujarat must stop forthwith. If the frenzied mobs do not stop, they must be made to stop. That is the least the administration in Gandhinagar can do. For, whatever the provocation - and, we must grant, it was indeed great - no government worth its salt can allow marauders to take the law into their own hands. Chief Minister Narendra Modi owes it to himself as he does to the people of the State to restore order at the earliest. Already, the alleged laxity of the authorities on Thursday caused anarchy-like conditions in large parts of the State. In particular, Ahmedabad, that old cauldron of religious hatreds, bore the brunt of violent attacks. Incensed by the horrendously inhuman attack on the train bringing back 'kar sevaks' from the Ayodhya, on Wednesday morning, tens of hundreds of people in the Gujarat capital took to the streets, targeting shops, homes and other establishments of the minority community.

In the surcharged mood of anger -when reason goes out of the front window - these mobs torched men and materials belonging to the minority community. Over one hundred people were reportedly killed in this macabre death of dance. The forces of law and order were found wanting in taming the tempers of the mobs who were provoked into action by the killing in cold blood of their co-religionists a day earlier in Godhra.

While the reaction of the mobs in Ahemdabad and elsewhere in the State could be ascribed to the red-hot passions generated by the torching of the two compartments of the Sabarmati Express, the insanity behind the torching itself was hard to understand. **What kind of a human being can set fire alive to young women, children and unarmed men in cold blood. And without any provocation. That of the 60-odd people killed at the Godhra station over 40 were women and children speaks of the barbaric mindset of the perpetrators.**

They were more like biped cattle than human beings. They had deliberately chosen to target the

particular compartments because these were mostly occupied by women and children. And there was no denying a pre-meditated plan to torch them.

After all, you cannot produce cans of incendiary material like petrol, diesel, etc. at the spur of the moment. A deeper conspiracy to cause a wide-spread communal conflagration in the country cannot be ruled out. The ISI finds it easy to penetrate sections of our people precisely because it uses the Islamic card to the hilt and deploys currency notes, genuine and counterfeit both, to turn Indians into traitors against this country.

Unfortunately, this seditious compact between the ISI and a section of the Indian Muslims is wittingly or unwittingly aided and abetted by our misguided secularists. **Notice the muted criticism of the horrific incident of cold-blooded massacre at Godhra by the so-called secularists and compare it with the hue and cry raised by the same people at the doubtless gruesome killing of the Christian missionary Graham Staines a couple of years ago.** Nobody in his right mind could have justified the killing of Staines. No, nobody. But, then, can anyone in his right mind justify the dastardly attack on 'kar sevaks' at Godhra? **It seems our secularists have two sets of standards to gauge human tragedy.**

One is for people like Staines and other members of the minority community. **And the other is for the large majority community.** The cold-blooded massacre of the 'kar sevaks'does not evoke angry comment from the secularists and their accomplices among the editorialists precisely because they were 'kar sevaks'. **That would explain why the secularists did not stall proceedings in Parliament on the Godhra outrage though they were foremost in creating a nation-wide shindy over the tragic killing of Staines.**

In this context, the statement issued by the AIADMK Supremo, **J. Jayalalitha,** is most apt. Chastising political leaders for making a crass differentiation between violence perpetrated against the majority and minority community, she said the Godhra outrage should be viewed as a crime against humanity. "

It is very strange and saddening to see that when such acts are perpetrated against the minorities, all political leaders rush to issue statements of condemnation. But when persons belonging to the majority are subjected to similar perpetration of heinous crimes, not a single political leader has so far issued a statement condemning this barbaric crime. Such acts of senseless violence should be condemned no matter who is responsible for them and no matter who the victims are..." For once, we whole-heartedly endorse Jayalalitha's sentiments.

Indeed, the failure of the secularists to condemn unequivocally the Godhra incident may well have exacerbated further the feelings of the majority community in Gujarat. Ordinary people felt so angry that they took to the streets to wreak vengeance on members of the minority community some of whose members had perpetrated the foulest of foul deeds in Godhra.

The secularist argument that the minority community needed special treatment and protection has over the years created a Hindu backlash. The secularists with their blind opposition to anything which respects the sentiments and wishes of the majority community have only helped to justify the rise of militant Hinduism. The mealy-mouthed arguments of the secularist establishment fail to convince ordinary Hindus when they contemplate the grisly wreckage of the Sabarmati Express. Given the fact that Muslim communalism has acquired a sharper edge in recent years thanks to the

influx of petro dollars, the ISI penetration and the general misuse of madrasas to foment anti-national sentiments, our secularists should pause and ponder the folly of their deeds.

They have inflicted untold damage by wittingly or unwittingly providing succour to those who mastermind heinous crimes like the burning of innocent women, children and men in the Sabarmati Express. They need not have died merely because they were 'kar sevaks.'

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Hinduism & Semitic faiths

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The fellows excerpt has been taken from Shri Ram Swarup's chapter, 'Hinduism vis-a-vis Christianity and Islam', in Politics of Conversion edited by Devendra Swarup (Deendayal Research Institute, New Delhi: 1986)

In a world suffering from so much unnecessary conflict, the truth of unity and harmony has to be emphasised. If a man is the same in his more common sensibilities, he must also be the same in his spiritual ones. If he laughs when he is tickled and pained when he is pricked, he must also be filled with a sense of awe, wonder and holiness in the presence of the profundities and, mysteries of life.

Mile this truth comes naturally to a Hindu or Buddhist, it is denied both in theory as well as in practice by Christianity and Islam. They believe that not only are they different, but they are also superior. From the start, they believed that the god they worshipped was superior to the gods of their neighbours and
their religion was invested with truth while others wallowed in falsities.

The scriptures of Semitic inspiration are hortative, admonitory; they urge, they re. prove, they enjoin, they warn, they even enforce. There is a note of feverishness in them. But the atmosphere of the Hindu scriptures is unhurried, relaxed and expositional. The first variety seem to goad you; the second
one to lead you step by step.

The first one is passionate, zealous, the second one calm and detached. The first one plays on your hopes and fears; it threatens you with a hell and promises you a paradise; while the second one aims at opening up your understanding.

There are other differences as well. Christianity and Islam are religions of faith; Hinduism and Its powerful offshoot, Buddhism, are religions of Prajna, wisdom. The former deal with Intensifies of feelings, the latter aim at awakening the mind. The former have been religions of piety with a strong tendency to deny reason. The latter are religions of 'understanding', giving due place to reason though it will have to be purified and separated from the dross of desire before It becomes an instrument of a higher life. In Hinduism, faith is rendered by the world shradha, that which lies hidden in the recession of
the heart; so, faith means faith in the hidden truths of the soul, faith in the unrealised possibilities of the mind.

In Christianity and Islam, faith means belief in the established dogmas of the Church, or belief in the external authority of a particular book, or a prophet. Similarly, the word 'reason', too, has different connotations here.

In Islam, reason was overpowered by faith from the very start; In Christianity when eventually it earned some kind of uneasy place, it had to become the handmaid of faith. It was apologetics.

In the West, people had to wage a grim battle against Christianity in order to liberate reason from its shackles.

The Islamic world has yet to learn to evaluate its religious dogmas, its history, its book, its Prophet, his personality and his revelation in the light of reason, both secular as well as spiritual.

There are other very important differences. Christianity and Islam are built round historical personalities; Hinduism round the truths of man's own higher nature.

So if there was no Jesus or no Mohammed, there would have been no Christianity and no Islam. But according to the Hindu approach, man's religion does not depend on any such exigency. There is a dharma for all times, sanatan dharma, because it lies there always in the soul.

According to Christianity and Islam, God has given his truths finally and once for all through his favourite, intermediary and these are now deposited in a book.

The other revelations and books are either denied or they are considered as merely preparatory: They exist merely to confirm the truths of the new revelation. Subsequent revelations become false or redundant.

Hinduism also does not teach a God who reveals himself only to a chosen individual, letting others receive their truths from this exclusive channel. It speaks of truths which are revealed wherever there is seeking, purity of aspirations and motives, necessary preparation.

It believes that all nations share God's grace. It does not believe that there are pagans and infidels waiting to be converted to a particular system of beliefs and ideas or a race of the damned waiting to be saved. Hinduism respects differences and seeks God's working in different races and peoples.

One can see for oneself that in this kind of approach, there is no place for 'conversion'. True religion can neither be borrowed nor lent. A man carries his religion with. in himself wherever he goes and he has to be his own lamp. The conversion one experiences at this level is inner and it is very different
from the conversions that the countries have known under the aegis of Christianity and Islam. These conversions are political and military acts, acts of aggressive hard sale.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

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Discovering the Indian Self

The Pioneer Edit Desk

http://www.dailypioneer.com/edits/EDIT1.HTM

Although it might not consciously occur to us, there is a crucial difference in the way India greets the new millennium and the rest of the (western) world celebrates it. For the young nation-states of Europe and America, which emerged only over the last 400 years, the year 2000 is a cataclysmic event for a very important reason it lends them an awareness of continuity, a link with antiquity. Much of the frenzied millennium festivities in the West are, therefore, a heady assertion of being, of having been. But for India, the rites of passage into 2000 are not as epochal. Because we in India are not looking to the turn of this millennium for a sense of history. After all, the Indian civilisation has been there for 5000 years, if not more. Let us not forget that we began at Harappa and Mohenjodaro.

By the time the western nation state crystallised, India had already travelled a long way in its evolution. We had established an urban culture in the subcontinent as far back as 2500-1800 BC when a complete civilisation grew and flowered in the Indus Valley. Our turbulent civilisational journey continued through vast empires and petty kingdoms ruled by short-lived dynasties, through monarchies, oligarchies, chieftainships and republics to the modern nation-state. The road has been uneven there have been only brief moments of consolidation, and long periods of scatter and fragmentation. There have also been recurring ruptures in this continuous history when the civilisation was forced to confront the outside world through border skirmishes and deep invasions, when raiders and conquerors brought with them dislocation and dispossession.

Yes, many milestones in this journey have brought shame too. Down the ages, there has been a hardening of ritualism, a widening of disparity and inequality. Many waves of repression, and religious bigotry have also been unleashed, stifling creative energy. The millennial moment, then, should not become the pretext for lapsing into a self-indulgent nostalgia, for glorifying and romanticising a golden past. It is certainly the opportunity, however, to relive the grand historical sweep of the Indian civilisation, to celebrate its unique resilience and survivability. There must be a reason why India has lived on through the millennia, why it has had a stable and manifest existence through time despite its chronic inability to erect a persistent and coherent political center. The explanation lies in the perfecting of a remarkable social order and in the development of traditions and values that have had a lasting effect on all subsequent periods. Basically, the Indian system has been a loose accommodation between a stable social order and a transient and unstable political order.

Underpinning the stability of the Hindu social organisation has been, paradoxically, its openness to change. It is its flexibility and permeability that helped it to assimilate even the many

movements of internal dissent. A whole line of dissenting and reformist movements through history followed Buddha and Mahavira, the great dissenters of Hindu society be it the Bhakti movement in North and South India or the Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj during British rule. It was this open-endedness again that helped it to survive hostile collisions with alien systems like that of Islam and Christianity. In fact, these encounters gave birth to unique cultural forms that draw their life and energy from the confrontational tension they embody. It is a function of that same openness that no sharp cleavages can be sighted between the traditional and the modern in India. Models of social change that conceive of modernisation as a rejection of tradition and a transformation on modern lines do not apply to India. Indian reality eludes even those models that deny potency to modern institutions and values and simply assert the durability of tradition. The fact is that modernity and tradition are not polar opposites in present day India. The fact is that older differentiations of caste, religion, language and region have taken on new organisational forms in the modern nation state. Despite a great degree of differentiation and complexity, the traditional Hindu social order has shown great resilience and adaptability making Indian society a unique mix an ancient society coming to terms with the demands of a new age, and achieving a new identity without destroying older identities. At the same time, however, there is danger in overemphasising the apparently seamless continuity in the Indian civilisation. It is necessary to remember that this has not always been easy, and that it has extracted a heavy price. It has also been an incomplete process. Many unresolved tensions still fester in modern India. They threaten to sabotage its integrity, and undermine its attempts to consolidate itself for the first time under a common political centre.

As it deals with the continuing birthpangs of a nation-state, what India lacks most, perhaps, is a sense of its self. Ironically, the civilisation that has continued through millennia lacks pride in its own history, and faith in its future. Hopefully, as we stand at the joining moment between two millenniums today, that lofty vantage point will enable us to look back and retrieve some of the scattered fragments of our lost identity. The truth is that without a sense of the past, we cannot step into the future.

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Vedantic Flavour in Puranic Literature

http://www.timesofindia.com/articleshow.asp?art_id=2501108

THE Puranas are among the most widely read religious scriptures in India. The word purana literally means "narrative of ancient times". The puranas are said to be contemporaneous with the Vedas.

The Chandogya Upanishad calls them the fifth veda.

Eighteen major (maha) and eighteen subsidiary (upa) puranas are recognised. The authorship of all the puranas is attributed to rishi Vedvyasa, who also compiled the four Vedas, the Mahabharata and the Vedanta Sutras.

The puranas deal with a variety of Gods, mainly Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti, catering to the diverse human temperaments and their varied approaches to spirituality.

The puranas are sectarian in that each one glorifies its own particular chosen deity, considering him to be supreme among all the deities and whom one can worship, communicate with, pray to, love and serve. In ancient times, whereas the accessibility of the Vedas was restricted to the upper castes, the puranas were read by everyone.

The puranas present Vedanta philosophy in a simplified and attractive literary style, making it reader-friendly. Puranic ethics are founded on dharma or duty, which embraces all the factors that contribute to the progress and well being of the individual and society.

The Bhagavata Purana also known as Srimad Bhagavatam, containing 18,000 verses, is universally accepted as being supreme among the mahapuranas. It is wisely studied and commented upon by scholars of all Vedic sects.

No other purana inculcates loving devotion with such sublimity, fervour and comprehensiveness. The conciseness of its language and the lyrical beauty of its poetry are unequated and it is recognised as one of the greatest literary and spiritual productions of India.

The story goes that after having completed the vast range of Vedic literature, Vyasadeva was still dissatisfied and despondent, not knowing why. Sage Narada appeared before him and told him it was because he had not yet written about the transcendental glory and greatness of Krishna, the son of Devaki and Vasudeva. Thus Vyasadeva wrote the Srimad Bhagavatam, which, in its own words, "Glorifies Bhagavan Sri Krishna in every word of it".

The Bhagavatam contains Vedanta's metaphysics and philosophy of the Upanishads. It tells us how we should follow a life of dharma (righteousness) in kaliyuga, the evil age of Kali.

To the layman it is full of wonderful stories and anecdotes that unfold spiritual and philosophic truths with simplicity for them to be understood easily.

To scholars and serious spiritualists, however, it is one of the most profound and difficult scriptures to understand in all its nuances and esoteric spiritual wisdom, and they deem the Bhagavatam to be a touchstone of their erudition.

Though Vaisnava and therefore sectarian, its philosophic import is neither narrow nor exclusive. It inculcates loving devotion to Lord Krishna, and extols Him and the bhagavata dharma propounded by him.

It recognises Krishna as the Supreme Brahman (Bhagavan swayam), the supreme personality of godhead, depicts Krishna's majesty and greatness as Bhagavan, and narrates the Krishna saga in a wonderfully endearing manner. Because of this matchless masterpiece, to this day Krishna remains the beloved supreme God to millions of Hindus.

In India the Bhagavatam is traditionally recited in the course of one week in emulation of the way Sukudeva Goswami narrated it to Maharaja Pariksit while awaiting his impending death.

The theme is pure, unalloyed loving devotion to Krishna. In its lower forms bhakti is based on the three gunas of prakriti or modes of material nature. Devotion in tamoguna propitiates asuric (demonic) deities for acquiring the power to control and destroy others; in rajoguna such deities are worshipped who ordain material welfare and prosperity, and in sattoguna, understanding the miseries associated with material existence, one worships the deity who can give mukti (liberation).

While the Bhagavatam accepts these three forms of bhakti, it goes beyond mukti. Its devotee does not lose his individuality by merging with God, and, even on attaining mukti, continues to serve Krishna with unalloyed selfless love.

Monist thinkers consider mukti as the highest goal of human life and bhakti as merely a means to this end, but the bhakti of the Bhagavatam is the highest end itself. Bhakti is elevated to the fifth purusartha (objective in life) above the four accepted purusarthas — dharma, artha, kama and moksa.

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US and them

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?art_Id=5402256

Indians, both within India and outside, often cringe at many of the stories about India in the foreign media – mostly the western press – that show the country in poor light. There is an assumption, not entirely correct, that foreign reporters are fixated about India's social maladies such as dowry and casteism, and that they never lose a chance to write about the sores and pustules of benighted India.

Anecdotally though, it appears there has been more positive coverage of India over the past decade than negative writing. Stories of Indian energy, entrepreneurship, and achievement in areas such as entertainment, science, engineering, literature and the arts are frequent and copious in the western press now as the famine and flood stories of the 1970s and 1980s.

Still, Indians never lose an opportunity to fulminate about the occasional negative coverage and the latest round of religion bloodletting in Gujarat has had many of NRIs frazzled, when they were not hiding in embarrassment. Indian officials have expressed (in private) their resentment at the reporting by western journalists. They are even more incensed that some Indian-American reporters based here, and sent to India by their papers to cover the events, have been far more critical in their reportage than their western colleagues. "They probably know India even less than their western colleagues, who at least make an honest attempt to learn about the country," one diplomat fumed after reading dispatches by Indian-American reporters in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and other prominent publications. In his mind, they were doing great disservice to the country of their origin.

In contrast, Indian reporters are often accused of not reporting on the negative aspects of American life and society. **After all, one NRI community leader bristled recently, if American reporters can incessantly describe India as "largely Hindu India" or the BJP as a "Hindu Nationalist" Party, then Indian journalists should be describing the United States as "largely White Christian America" and Republican Party as the "White, Christian, Nationalist Party."**

Besides, he argued, the United States has almost every malady India is stricken with. There are droughts (one right now in much of the East Coast), floods, hunger, disease (even outbreaks of plague). Planes crash, trains derail, and there are false alarms over hijackings. There are also similar societal woes, especially discrimination based on gender and race. So how come foreign reporters in the US spend so much time and energy covering piffle from the American entertainment world and what the state department spokesman says?

There is some validity to this criticism. Mostly understaffed and under-resourced, and largely based on the East Coast or West Coast, foreign publications (and not just Indian) in the US rarely go out to report on the hinterland. **Out there in Middle America, there exists discrimination, fundamentalism, violence and degradation that seldom make it to the front page of newspapers in the United States, much less outside America.** In a crime as revolting as Roop Kanwar being burnt on her husband's funeral pyre, a black man was dragged to death in Texas some years back. A gay youth was shot to death in Wyoming because of his sexual orientation. And gun violence in schools is endemic.

In one of the more egregious cases of hate crime, a 17-year old girl in Denver was attacked early this week and the word "dyke" (lesbian) was carved into her forearm with a razor, according to the *Rocky Mountain News*. April Mora was walking to a store through an alley near her house at about 2 pm last Tuesday when she encountered three teen-age white males in a black Honda. The teens ragged her, began calling her dyke, and when she protested, they slashed her face with a razor blade. They then carved out the letters "RIP" on her stomach and "dyke" in inch-high block letters on her forearm.

Indian nationalists here say such incidents are as common in the United States as the burning of missionaries or the raping of nuns in India, which is to say it is fairly uncommon and cannot be seen as a pattern. Yet there is no human rights report originating from any other country in the world chronicling such gristly events.

There is one big difference though between societies such as India and Pakistan, and the United States. In each of these cases, it is inconceivable that the guilty parties will get away with their crime. The state does not dilute or dissemble the gravity of the act. The criminals are prosecuted and justice is usually swift and severe. Now look back and count how many of perpetrators of the most horrendous atrocities in our part of the world have been prosecuted. Perhaps that might answer why the "negative" reporting hurts so much.

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The Purity of Agni

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?art_id=1020697191

VENERATION of nature is characteristic of Indian tradition. The *Rig Veda*, the oldest Hindu scripture focusses on nature worship such as that of air, water and fire.

In a world ridden with squandering of natural resources, pollution and greed, the Rig Veda teaches us to respect nature and to live in harmony with the biosphere. Natural phenomena are personified as different divinities; yet they are inter-linked into a holistic oneness, a supreme power.

Indra, armed with lightning and thunder, stands for rain, cattle and destruction of evil. *Varuna* is the God of sky and waters. *Rudra* symbolises fury of nature. Thunder that reverberates through the firmament is his roar; he is the father of *Maruts*, the storm deities, who rage through the skies, sending rain, whose approach makes the Earth fertile.

The waters from the mountains carry the powers of healing herbs and have a purifying quality. The Indian tradition attaches great importance to *theerthayatra*, literally pilgrimage to holy waters. The sun God or *Surya* gives us day and night and seasons.

Agni, the fire God is an important Rig Vedic divinity. The use of fire, which started 400,000 years ago, is the most important step in the progress of the human race. Voluminous mythology was woven around fire. Greek mythology says Prometheus stole and brought fire from heaven to the Earth. The Tasmanians and the Koreans never let their house fires go out. The Russian peasant carries fire to his new house and says, ``Welcome grandfather, to the new home".

As times changed, most Vedic deities underwent transformations; but *Agni*'s sway over us continues. The Hindu household keep a lamp burning before the gods. The Hindu marriage is solemnised before the sacred fire. At funerals, the sacred fire is carried to the burning ground. The spirit of the dead person is believed to rise with the smoke to the heaven.

Agni is prayed for food, cattle, prosperity, happiness, progeny and for destruction of evil.

The Vedic religion preserved the fire cult of the ancient inhabitants of Earth who gazed with awe at fire-seething volcanoes and brilliant streaks of lightning that ignited primeval forests into fast-spreading flames. Rig Veda refers to the fierce and radiant woodland fires accompanied by Maruts, which ``roared like lions".

The notion of fire as a purifier is universal. Christianity believes in the purificatory fires of the purgatory, and the eternal fires of hell. Sita's fire walk, to prove her purity shows that such practice existed in ancient days. Fire-walking exists to this day in many parts of India.

To the devotees, passage through the embers unharmed signifies purity and undiminished faith. The Rig Veda says, ``Burn away from us the sin, flame out on us the bliss. When the fire is kindled we speak indeed the truth". Agni dispels darkness or *tamas* that fills the world. Spiritual yearning of the ancient Hindus is evident when they prayed to Agni, for discriminating between virtue and vice.

Agni strides forth in his golden chariot drawn by red horses. Wild fires blow away burning fragments that set off spot fires miles away. Vivid images of this particular aspect of Agni can be seen in the modern times.

The report of the British Royal Commission examining bush fires in Victoria in 1939, said: "The spread of the fires was appalling. They leapt from mountain peak to mountain peak, far on to the lower country, lighting the forests six or seven miles in advance of the main fire."

The Vedic bard appeals, "Grant, brilliant Agni, happiness to our sons and grandsons...to ourselves". Fire is the intermediary between people and gods and receives oblations from the humans. It sends up to the skies whatever is burnt at the altar. Judicious use of the energy of fire is the key to human progress.

Lord of the dwelling and friend of Man, Agni needs to be approached reverentially. Agni is "mortal, divine, all-wise" truly a divinity that is worshipped by us.

The Hindu temple is the continuation of the Vedic fire altar, that was in the open air. The innermost sanctuary of the temple, the *Garbagraha*, is built on a square plane, the basic shape of the Vedic altar. Indiscriminate dealings with Agni will be catastrophic and is the main cause of human woes. Let Agni lead mankind from darkness to light.

Just as fire, though one, entering the world
Adopts the shapes of the different objects it burns,
Similarly, the one atman of all living things, though one,
Assumes the forms of the various objects He enters
And exists also beyond.

Kathopanishad

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Krishna, Lord of Love and Life

http://www.timesofindia.com/articleshow.asp?art_ID=381530155

THE eighth incarnation of Vishnu, Krishna, has evolved into a distinct and composite persona over the millennia. Krishna devotees ardently look upon him as the Godhead, more emotively evocative than most of the other avatars.

His birthday on the eighth day in the dark fortnight of Sravana, in or around the month of August, is still celebrated with great joy and enthusiasm every year as Janmashtami. In many places, especially in Mathura, where he was born, *jhankis*, comprising glimpses into his childhood episodes, are displayed with lights and images of the divine child.

In Maharashtra, pots of curd and buttermilk are hung high in the streets and human pyramids are formed to go up and reach out for their contents, reminiscent of the child Krishna's playful exploits for wresting milk and butter from the pots kept beyond his reach. A similar ceremony is observed in south India, where people climb up poles to win the prize money.

The Jagannath temple at Puri has wooden images of Jagannath (Krishna), a Balabhadra (Balaram) and Subhadra, their sister.

The popular Rathayatra from the temple to the countryside, about two km away, is a ritual enactment of the journey of Subhadra to Dwarka in a chariot, escorted by Krishna and Balaram; the festival is celebrated on Asadha Sukla dvitiya, around June.

According to another legend in the *Bhagavata Purana*, Akrur was sent by Kansa, the king of Mathura, to Gokula to ask Krishna to visit Mathura.

Krishna and Balaram, therefore, travelled in a decorated chariot to Mathura, followed on foot by the gopis (milkmaids) and the cowherds on this day. Hence the Rathayatra procession today.

The festival of Holi heralds the advent of spring and a new world of colour and gaiety, recreating somewhat the ambience in which Krishna played with the gopis, splashing colour all over.

Since the venue was Vrindavan, the most lively celebration of the festival takes place in this region. It is during Holi that effigies of Putana are burnt every year in parts of northern India.

Putana, as the legend goes, was a female friend sent by Kansa to Gokula to suckle the infant Krishna and poison him to death. But the omniscient Lord sucked her blood out, killing her in the process. Her death symbolises the destruction of evil despite heavy odds.

Holi is called *dol* (swing) *purnima* or *dol yatra* in certain parts of eastern India.

An image of Krishna is kept on the swing and worshipped.

Central to Krishna's childhood was his dance with the gopis, called *raasa-lila*, which later became the object of worship by many of the devotional sects. Scenes from raasa-lila are now enacted with great verve not only in the Mathura-Vrindavan region but also in Assam and Manipur, sometimes in the Manipuri dance style.

But the intensity of feeling portrayed in such episodes in the Puranas and Harivamsa is an outgrowth of bhakti, a form of religious sentiment enunciated comprehensively for the first time by Krishna in the *Gita*, on the eve of the battle of Kurukshtra in the *Mahabharata*, an earlier text. Rig-Vedic hymns did allude to the nature of devotion but not so cogently. Bhakti, as advocated in the *Gita* entailed total self-surrender to the supreme Lord in the form of Krishna, shorn of the wasteful accessories of costly rites and rituals, as a simple way to salvation, without displacing the methods of moksha through karma and gnyana which evolved out of the Vedic religion.

As for the theophany in the eleventh chapter of the Gita, Arjuna has a vision of Krishna's awesome cosmic form and feels overwhelmed. The Lord assures him that those with an unswerving devotion to him, in the true spirit of bhakti, can see him. A complex amalgam of the human and the Divine, he is seen differently by different people. To the Pandavas he was their true friend and guide, to the cowherds he was just one of their own, to the Vrajagopis the highest object of love and the yogis saw him as the absolute truth. While his concept of bhakti as preached in the Gita has undergone changes, developing more passionate and even sensuous overtones in the hands of poets like Jayadeva, the philosophic message of the Gita has remained a perennial source of inspiration for all.

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He's a Muslim, but heads Ganesha temple panel
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?art_id=3802253

Shivaratri celebrations were a tad different at Nagarabhavi this year. At Varasiddhi Vinayaka temple in Canara Bank Colony, Muslim resident T. Rahaman was at the helm of activities, distributing *prasad*, taking part in the worship and offering prayers till the last devotee left around 11 p.m.

The Shivaratri celebration began at dusk and continued till 11 pm. Over 500 people attended the ceremony from areas as far as Koramangala. *Bhajans* were sung and a bharatanatyam dance performance symbolising Lord Shiva was the highlight of the evening. All throughout, Rahaman was in charge.

He has been managing the temple as its committee president for four years. ``When nobody came forward to take over the temple administration, Rahaman offered to step in," S.K. Rao, one of the trustees, said.

For Rahaman, religion has never been a hurdle: ``I don't differentiate between Hinduism and Islam."

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Vedanta's Version Of the Big Bang

http://www1.timesofindia.com/articleshow.asp?art_id=1100502

N Vedanta, the second capsule of the Brahma Sutras is the most fundamental, cardinal, sacrosanct, and is also the most famous. Janmadyasya yatah — Brahman is that from which the birth and the evolution of the universe follow.

It says Brahman is that ultimate 'world' which we gain access to by distilling the world down to its inmost content, or the furthest stop from where we get off by travelling backwards in time-space. Astronomical observations have confirmed more or less beyond doubt that stars, galaxies and clusters of super galaxies are receding from the earth and from one another.

The clinching evidence comes from the Doppler Effect or the Red Shift. The shift in the spectral lines towards the longer wavelengths identified by the red colour in the spectrum confirms that the source of light is moving and is not at rest.

What is more, even the speed of the recession can be easily calculated with the help of high school maths.

If the whole universe is expanding at a rate that is calculable, then by regress, we can go back to the starting point of this expansion.

That is, we can go back in time to meet janmadyasya yatah. And when we do, we meet this janmadyasya some 14 billion years away in an extremely dense and absolutely inconceivable concentration of time-space-mind-matter-energy.

It is now established more or less beyond doubt that the world started out from a big bang. The most clinching evidence comes from the prediction of the existence of a sea of background microwave radiation in the universe and its subsequent detection.

At the beginning of time, and at the beginning of space, all the matter-energy and its container, the time-space-mind, were concentrated in a primeval 'fireball' of extreme inconceivable density and temperature.

From a massive explosion, the big bang, the universe started and has been expanding ever since. So this is that Inmost Content and the Furthest Stop — janmadyasya yatah — this primeval 'fireball'.

There is nowhere to progress from here, for the three-dimensionality of being collapses here. Where the 3-D of the world crumbles is the zero point of the world — the final content and the last stop.

Prior to the big bang there was nothing existing. Absolutely nothing. To exist, a thing needs space around it to exist in. To be is to be in space. Prior to the big bang there was no space and therefore there was nothing existing — not even a God or heaven.

The primeval 'fireball' which exploded to become the universe was not existing in a space, but, on the contrary, space was existing within that 'fireball' in extreme inconceivable density or concentration. This

zero degree of being is absolutely unimaginable.

Thus in that primeval ‘fireball’, we meet God face to face, and look Him in the eye. God is that primeval ‘fireball’ which blew up this sea of time-space-mind-matter-energy through the big bang.

The janmadi or birth and evolution of the world is the blow-up of the God-stuff. The world stuff and God stuff are one and the same that is, ‘The creator is in the creation and the creation in the creator’ (Kabir) and world stuff-God stuff is the primordial ‘fireball’ which ‘existed’ before the big bang and which suffuses the universe after the big bang. After the big bang, whatever is there within that blow-up is its own distortion — vikara as Vedanta puts it.

Perhaps ‘fireball’, ‘big bang’, and ‘explosion’ are not the exact words for it. Perhaps our insight and terminology need to be something finer, but anyway we are with the substance. We have identified God. His identity mark is the point where the 3-D of the world collapses.

In Vedanta the big bang is vak sphota from which AUM originates first and from AUM, the whole world. The constituent three sounds A, U and M make the three dimensions of space and from their interaction the whole ‘audio’ and ‘video’ of the world follow. The evolution of the world from Brahman and AUM is called vivarta meaning unfolding or opening out.

Its opposite is avarta meaning folding, closing in. The world is the vivarta or parinama (atmakriteh parinamat, B S-1.4.26) of Brahman of the world stuff through the medium of vak sphota, and what existed before the big bang, janmadyasya yatah, is its avarta or avarana.

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Waking & Dreaming, Both are Illusory

http://www1.timesofindia.com/articleshow.asp?art_id=1002060

HE world is a dream. **Diogenes of Sinope** lived on this one idea. In bright daylight he moved with a lantern, looking for an honest man.

During moments of extreme physical pain someone asked him whether he still thought that the world was a dream.

He replied, ‘‘Yes, it is a painful dream’’.

The Mundaka Upanishad tells us that both the waking state and dream state of our life are ultimately illusory.

These two states are a mere creation of our ordinary consciousness. The highest level of our consciousness is the stage of Turiya, when we cease to see the world of matter and feel only one consciousness everywhere.

The views of many famous philosophers of the West about this world and the life therein are frustrating besides being sceptical to the core.

Bruno said, ‘‘The world is an eternal enigma, and our only connection with it is that we form part of it when we live. At our birth we are ushered into a world whose origin is unknown and with which we come into contact for the first time then. A man is no more than an ant in the presence of the infinite. Man, petty creature, may measure the heavens, sound the ocean depths and calculate the movements of the distant stars, but he is himself a phenomenon among the phenomena of the universe. He must finally quit the scene to reappear no more. Death annuls all the features of life and life after death has supervened as an exercise of pure imagination possible only in life. Truth, God, immortality are delightful concepts, it is true, but standing on no verifiable basis’’.

How would Vedanta tackle the position of the sceptic? Before examining his conclusion Vedanta would dispute the correctness of the premises.

It would point out the initial error in assuming that world and our waking state are different entities. The world perceived in our waking cannot be logically separated, from the state of waking because the world without it is a mere abstraction.

The conception of a world by itself existing independently of the mind that perceives (seer) does not accord with experience. The world is only a determination of the waking state.

Vedanta turns the pessimism of the sceptic into a permanent bliss. The three main principles of Vedanta are — Brahman is real (satya), the world is unreal (mithya) and the ego (jiva) is none other than the real (Brahman).

The third one, the identity of jiva and Brahman is considered as the most important. The Vedantic stance is that time, space and objects are not real entities. They are super impositions upon Brahman. The whole universe of things and beings is a long dream.

Atman or Brahman has been called eternal, all pervading. But one feels that Atman is born and dies. This is because of one's wrong identification with one's own body and mind, while Atman is pure consciousness, the inner self. The illusion exists in the vision of one who is seeing it.

The non-apprehension of the real creates mis-apprehension. Everything gets superimposed upon consciousness, me. Nothing can ever destroy me, who is of the very nature of awareness.

If one incessantly contemplates upon this idea — ''nothing can destroy me; nothing can ever destroy me'' and gets really convinced of it, then one can rid oneself of the fear of death, the fear of all that is known here.

If anyone threatens such a man, he will be able to retort: ''Whom are you threatening? At the most you can destroy my body, but I am not that''.

There have been great saints and mahatmas in the past, who replied thus even to emperors and monarchs.

The emperor would threaten 'I will kill you'! The mahatma would peacefully reply, ''You are going to kill me? That is the greatest joke I have heard. Even Bhagvan cannot kill me, who are you to kill me? And when you kill me, I too will see my body falling here. And when you cut off my head, I too will see it falling down; because I am that which is in you, which is holding that sword. Thus when you have killed me, I shall still remain and survive in you as you''.

The unique experience of a man of realisation is described as: ''That effulgent conscious am I, which is self-established, all full without beginning and end, and in which the illusory ideas of the worlds, the individual, the disciple, the teacher and God, are all extinct.

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Physics is the New Bhashya of Vedanta

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?art_id=6008770

VEDAS are four in number: the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda. Each of these four Vedas has four parts: the Samhita, the Brahmana, the Aranyaka, and a number of Upanishads. The first three parts of all the Vedas are collectively called the Vedas, and the fourth and the last, the Upanishads, are collectively called Vedanta.

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These four parts of the Vedas represent the historical order of their development over millennia. The Samhitas are the most ancient, and of them, the Rig Veda Samhita is the earliest. The Samhitas are considered the Vedas proper; the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads are periodic additions, made by way of growing with the changing times.

The Samhitas are hymns addressed to gods representing the forces of nature, followed by rites and sacrifices to propitiate those gods. The famous Nasadiya Sukta occurs in the Rig Samhita. The Brahmanas were added to the Samhitas by way of updating. The Satapatha Brahmana and the Aitareya Brahmana are well known.

The Aranyakas are so called because they were composed in the forests. During this period the sages and seers took to the practice of retiring into the forests to contemplate ‘the cream of all and what takes place’.

In the fourth and the last stage, the Upanishads appeared. There are 10-12 principal Upanishads: the Chandogya, the Brihadaranyaka, the Aitareya and the Kaushitaki, forming the end part of the Rig Veda. The Kena concludes the Sama Veda, with the Taittiriya, Isha, Katha and Shwetashwatara topping off the Yajur Veda, and the Mundaka, Mandukya and Prashna signing off the Atharva Veda. These terminals of the Vedas are generally called Vedanta or Shruti.

The Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita make post-Vedic literature, and are called Smriti as opposite to Shruti.

Together, Shruti and Smriti (the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Gita) are called Prastana

Traya meaning the 'Threefold Movement', and this Prastana Traya is said to be the scripture of the Hindus.

The Prastana Traya has a self- perpetuating spirit and mechanism by which it adapts itself to periodic reinterpretations in order to fit in with the changing times. These periodic reinterpretations are called Bhashyas. The latest Bhashyas to the Prastana Traya are by Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa. These Bhashyas have now lost their edge because of the passage of time. The Prastana Traya needs a new Bhashya to be in tune with the present age. The Prastana Traya looks for a new Shankara for a new Bhashya.

In the Samhitas, the Vedic literature starts with a passion for the truth — 'truth in clay, truth in iron'. It grows in search of this truth through the Brahmanas and the Aranyakas and ultimately in the Upanishads, that truth is arrived at and declared to the world.

What is that truth? The ultimate essence of the universe is space (akasho ha vy brahma). Consciousness is but a condition of space (prajnanam brahma). The content of the world is the distortion, vikara, of its container, consciousness-space. The distorted 3-D space is Saguna Brahman and space minus its vikara or distortion, that is the unified field, is Nirguna Brahman. Brahman-space is the ultimate reality underlying all existence: it is the biggest 'I' that contains all our small 'I's. Our small 'I's can be merged in the Big 'I' through contemplation or tapas and that is salvation or moksha.

Modern physics takes us to the same conclusion. Physics is the study of how and why the Nirguna distorts to become Saguna. Shruti lives in Smriti which is the progressive knowledge and understanding of Shruti over ages. Physics is the new Smriti; Physics is the new Bhashya of Vedanta.

There is talk in the air of introducing Vedic studies in schools and colleges. However, what should be taught there is not the traditional Vedic studies, but Vedanta as the anta (omega) of not only the Vedas but also of modern science, and as an intellectual and spiritual force capable of enlightening, inspiring and bettering the modern global village. Introducing mere traditional Vedic studies will further only narrow agendas, and will not serve the meaning or purpose of modern public education. We need to widen our vision by looking beyond the written word; and for this, it is essential that we rise above mere dogma.

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Everest Cleaners
http://www.timesofindia.com/today/06edit3.htm

It has got to be the highest paid clean-up job in the world, in more ways than one. In a month from now, climbers from Japan, Nepal and South Korea will be traversing the northern slopes of Mount Everest to retrieve garbage dumped by previous expeditions. Japan's Ken Noguchi is quoted as saying the plan is to collect between 2.5 to three tonnes of garbage. He will be heading the team on the Tibetan side of the world's highest mountain, some 29,028 feet tall though there have been reports of some diminishing of height, presumably due to geological factors which the layman cannot quite comprehend. The cleaning is supposed to start between the advanced base camp at 20,997 ft and the final camps which are pitched at 27,230 ft. Noguchi is not the first to take note of pollution on Everest which has been described as "the world's highest garbage site". He is the first to do something about the estimated 100 tonnes of garbage up there, including empty oxygen cylinders, ropes, plastic bags, canisters, ladders, tents and faecal matter, all left behind by previous expeditions. The reports do not, however, mention whether Noguchi & Co will, during the course of their clean-up, also attempt to climb the summit or return empty-handed with not-so-empty plastic bags.

It is intriguing that the members of this team are all Asian.

There are no members of the Caucasian race involved in this unprecedented exercise. In the good old days when the likes of Bishop Heber carried the white man's burden, the right reverend prelate even wrote a poem ending with the words "Where every prospect pleases, but only man is vile".

Hopefully, Everest, or Chomolungma to give it the native name for Mother Goddess, will one day become the point to which man can once again raise his eyes in respectful worship instead of being completely degraded into another stepping stone for unsatisfied over-achievers who, like the proverbial bear, climb every mountain just to see another mountain they can climb up. "Because it's there" cannot be an alibi for abandoning junk on the once pristine slopes of the highest mountain in the world.

In retrospect, it would have been far more in the fitness of things if the first clean-up expedition had been a truly multilateral one representing every country whose mountaineers had climbed or sought to climb Everest. This summer's all-Asian team can only mark the beginning of the highest cleaning operation in the world.

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A TRIBUTE TO HINDUISM

articles on hinduism

Monsoon Magic: Creating Rivers of Hope in India

Timesofindia.com

It is no secret why floods and droughts occur in India — because some parts of the country receive much more than normal rainfall leading to floods, especially in the Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers.

At the same time, large chunks of peninsular India receive less than normal rainfall, leading to droughts. We cannot control rainfall in India. But we could manipulate the manner in which rainwater is allocated. It is a distribution issue; and like most distribution problems, it has to be solved by removing the demand and supply side bottlenecks.

That is why I am so upbeat about the recently announced river interlinking plan for India's peninsular and Himalayan rivers. The government's grand proposal, which seeks to retrieve floodwater going waste to the sea and distributing it to water-scarce areas, will link 37 rivers through 31 links and 9,000 km of canals.

This is necessary because water resources in the **Brahmaputra and Ganges** basin make up 60 per cent of the country's total resources. In contrast, water resources in Gujarat's Sabarmati basin account for only 0.2 per cent of India's total resources. The result? The **Brahmaputra** region is the most flood-prone region; and Sabarmati the most drought-prone.

If we add to this the problem of shifting patterns of precipitation and run-offs associated with climatic change, as well as an inability to predict and manage the quantity and quality of water, we have a king-sized crisis during bad years. In 2002, for example, India incurred a loss of Rs 250 billion just on account of crop loss because of the drought.

Relatively speaking, lack of water is a bigger problem than excess water in India. The country's annual requirement of water is projected to increase from 634 billion cubic metres to 813 billion cubic metres by 2025. Unlike floods, which are restricted to eastern India, droughts persist over a much bigger geographical area. As a result, the impact on the economy because of a lack of water is much more severe.

This is why the project is so significant. Take its impact on food security. The Planning Commission estimates that the country will need 450 million tonnes by 2050. At the current growth rate of production, India will have to import heavily to meet this forecasted demand. On the other hand, once river interlinking enhances India's irrigation potential by 140 million hectares, foodgrain production could double from the current level of 212 million tonnes to 450 million tonnes.

In other words, India could continue to retain its food security 47 years from now, even if population grows at the current pace to 1.8 billion by 2050. Or consider the impact of the power sector. The project is estimated to produce up to 35,000 megawatts of hydroelectric power, and meet the increasing energy demands of an expanding economy.

So far, we've only looked at the benefits of the project when it is completed. Actually, the physical task

of creating a network of water storage reservoirs across the country will also have a huge multiplier effect on the economy. Every once in a while, the country needs a big push to make it roll forward, and then gather a special momentum on its own. The Golden Quadrilateral Project is one such project: The government kick-off, linking India's metropolitan cities, has created thousands of jobs for India's rural landless, besides giving a fresh lease of life to India's steel, cement and automobile industries.

India now needs another heave to keep the growth momentum going. This is where the river networking project could fit in nicely. There will be huge requirements of steel, cement and other construction materials.

Hundreds of feasibility reports and geological studies will require a large number of consultants, and hundreds of housing agencies could be involved in rehabilitation work. But the most positive impact of the project, however, will be in the number of jobs it manages to create: 10 million through direct employment and ano-ther 10 million through outsourced contract jobs.

The big question: Will this mega project work? There is no reason not to hope. China has begun work on a $59 billion project to divert water from the damp south to the arid north. Scheduled to be completed by 2010, the first phase of the project will deliver water through two massive aqueducts. Each as big as a medium-sized river, the two aqueducts, up to 1,300 km long, will bring water from the Yangtze river to Beijing and the nearby industrial towns.

In fact, we needn't even look outside India for inspiration. Drought conditions in western Rajasthan are now virtually history, thanks to the transfer of surplus water from the Ravi-Beas to the deserts of Jaisalmer in Rajasthan through the Indira Gandhi Canal.

But here's the bigger question: Will divergent interest groups allow this project to work? Will there be political issues to be resolved? Will the government be able to win over environmental sceptics who are already voicing concerns about degradation?

Equally important, will the government be able to hardsell the financial viability of this project to potential investors? Most important, of course, the project will have to be sold to the people. Sure, the road ahead won't be easy, but river interlinking is an idea whose time has come.

(*The author is chairman & managing director, Kirloskar Brothers Ltd*)

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Hinduism through Western Glasses
A Critique of some Western views on Hinduism
By Gaya Charan Tripathi

Source : **Hinduism Reconsidered**. Editors Gunther-Dietz Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke. Pp-123.

The easiest and the most common way in the West to deny a non-European people an achievement or a phenomenon whih the Europeans are proud of calling as their own and which they wish to lay their exclusive claim on, is to define it in such a way and so narrowly, that only the Western pattern of this phenomenon would fit into it.

It is widely thought that true philosophy is a prerogative of ancient Greece and the modern West, and that India has not given rise to any philosophy because the definition of the philosophy is ….this this this…and the Indian philosophy obviously does not fall within this definition.

India does not have any true religion, in the true sense of the term should be defined as….such such such…. And that these characteristics do not apply to Hinduism nor, for that matter, to Buddhism or Jainism. As illustration to this mentality the reader is referred to the book Hinduism and Buddhism by Monier Williams in which he denies the status of "true religion"to Buddhism because according to his self-invented definition, a "true religion must have a belief in one single personal God which Buddhism does not have."

Some Commonly held Views of the West on Hinduism

Let us now examine some of the most common misconceptions of the Western scholars about Hinduism.

They represent a sort of *communis opinio,* general opinion of the people at large, who may or may not have had the occasion to come into direct contact with Hinduism.

It is obvious that these views have been generated and propagated in the West basically and in the first instance through the writings on Hinduism by the Indologists and the Historians of Religion.

The Caste System

Those who wish to criticise Hinduism hardly ever fail to highlight the point that Hinduism breeds social inequality and, tries to justify it with its religious code.

I donot think that it is proper to see and evaluate the caste system exclusively in terms of social inequality or social injustice. The system is so complex and multifaceted that it usually defies its

comprehension in totality to an outsider. No social system, especially a system which is based on or which aims at exploitation of a group of its members can last so long and be so firmly rooted in the psyche and behavior of the people as the Indian caste system has been, withstanding all historical changes and strong and social upheavals; nor can it be said to be only negative and disadvantageous to the society. Its role in preserving the social and ethnic identity of a group, in building resistance against foreign religious and cultural influences has also to be taken into account.

It is not widely known that a sort of strong "family relationship" transcending the caste barriers existed and still exists among the members belonging to different castes and different castes and different social groups in the village society where the persons belonging to different castes are brothers and sisters, maternal and paternal aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, etc, to each other and this relationships is zealously maintained in personal behavior and in social interactions.

The myths of the "other worldly" character of a Hindu.

Following the views of certain Indologists of the earlier generations, it is very common with the Western scholars (e.g. Albert Schweitzer) to stress the "world-fiendly" (weltfeindlich" = hostile or inimical to the world) character of Indian religions, especially of Hinduism. According to the opionion of these scholars Hinduism is "Weltabgeneigt", i.e. averse to the worldly affairs and is primarily and mainly concerned with the problem of salvation or getting rid of the cycle of life and death since it considers the human life on this earth so burdensome and the material world as an illusion. Now this is an over-exaggeration of the Hindu view of life and does not represent the true nature of Hinduism.

A normal Hindu is as much concerned with the world and its affairs as his Western counterpart. He is in no way less practical and in no way less involved in the material world than the followers of any other religion.

We should not forget that besides *moksa*, to a Hindu, there are two other very important *purusarthas* ("aims of life")to be achieved in this life namely *artha* (wealth) and *kama* (fulfillment of desires), which have precedence over the final *purusartha*, which is *moksa*. The illusory nature of the World and the idea of *moksa* may be of relevance to a handful of *sannyasins* who live away from the society, much like the Christian monks in the monasteries of medieval Europe, but when a common Hindu thinks about the life after death, he thinks of and aims rather at going to ‘heaven’ and does not strive towards ultimate salvation leading to the complete dissolution of his personality.

The picture of a Hindu as a person averse to the pleasures of life and as the one who does not accept the realities of this world has been generated by overemphasizing (or should we say:misinterpreting"") the Advaita branch of Vedanta Philosophy which is but one school of Vedanta besides at least five others.

Lack of Charitiable activities and social responsibility

Some Western critics of Hinduism, especially those inspired by missionary spirit, highlight the charitable activities of Christianity, and point towards its absence in Hinduism. To my mind this is neither kind nor fair to a people whose knings (eg. Karsavardhana of Kanauj, 606-47 A.C.) are known to have distributed the entire collections of their treasury to the poor and needy every five

years at Prayaga as attested by Xuanzang (Hsuan-tsang) in his memoirs (cf. Also *Raghuvamsa of Kalidasa*, Canto 5.15).

Charitable activities are parts of every high religion because they constitute the core of their social philosophy. In India, too, charity or danam has been praised directly and through a number of myths and legends right since the time of RigVeda throught the Upanisads, to the Mahabharata, Puranas, and Dharmasastras.
The much publicised caritative activities carried out by an organized Church, especially in Asian and African countries, with the money received from its Western followers as church tax, revolve round the idea of presenting a superior picture of Chrisitianity and ultimately aim at luring "heathens" to the Christian fold.

The polytheism of Hinduism

The tendency to see and judge all Indian religious, cultural and philosophical phenomena in the light of Western ideology is also seen in the strong condemnation of the Hinduistic polytheism by Christian writers, espeically missionaries of the nineteenth century. The presence of a large number of gods and temples dedicated to them in India annoyed them and the belief in many gods instead of a single, the most exalted one, was depicted as something primitive, a stage preceding the emergence of a high religion. It was neither properly understood nor properly represented that the existence of myriads of temple as well as faith in and worship of a multitude of gods for various worldly purposes does not affect or impair the belief of a Hindu in the Highest Divine Substance, which is but one and which alone is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe.

Further, to regard polytheism as something inferior to monotheism is an undue imposition of a semitic religion on Indian culture. Why should monotheism be regarded as a sort of philosophical advancement over the polytheism?

The monistic/monotheistic character of Hinduism is of late origin.

Europeans often take pride in contending that the Jewish folk was the first to resort to monotheism and feel proud that the religion which they follow and which believes in one single God has its origin in the cultural background of Judaism. First of all it is not a historical fact that the Jews were first with a religion with a monistic system of thought. A number of references may be cited right from the Rgveda through the pages of the Upanishads to show that in spite of directing their prayers to a multitude of gods, the Vedic Aryans, basically believed that there is only one single abstract source of the origin of this world which is beyond the categories of sat (existent) and asat (non-existent). This one substance holds the world, destroys it in the end and is the only one which/who is to be worshipped and amired.

The " idolatry" of Hinduism.

Hinduism came under heavy attack in the tracts of many western writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the first instance it would look rather strange because Christianity all along its long and glorious tradition has been excessively friendly and favorable to the "cult of Images" and has produced some of the best religious art of the world in all possible mediums. And when we add to this the fact that the Christian churches in a number of South-European countries have the same type of cult images in their sanctum and the ritual of offering worship to them

consisting of sprinkling of holy water, offering of flowers and lamps and distribution of "prasada" (in the form of wheat wafers) is not much different from the ritual practised in Indian temples, the strong condemnation of Hindu "idolatry" by some Western writers seem neither logical nor reasonable.

In spite of this, some western scholars, driven by the Anglican-Protestant ideology whetted by missionary zeal launched a scathing attack against the "monstrous" cult images of Hinduism – especially those having semi-anthropomorhic features – ignoring their subtle symbolism. It was strongly projected that the practice of having images as cult-objects and of worshipping them represents the beliefs and practices of culturally backward and unadvanced social groups and those who worship abstract symbols are religiously far more advanced.

Western scholars also miserably failed to appreciate the aesthetics of Indian art. Biased in their opinion by the aesthetics of Greek and Christian art and basing their opinion on the canons derived therefrom they could never come to terms with the Indian deities having some unanthromorphic features like multiple arms and multiple or animal faces. They either remained blissfully ignorant about the deep symbolism of these images or deliberately ignored it. They also failed to properly understand the subtle ritual of the ceremony of *Puja* underlying the worship of these images.

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ARYA – INCAS

By Swami B.V. Tripurari

Excerpts from "Ancient Wisdom for Modern Ignorance."
By Swami B.V. Tripurari. Clarion Call Publishing 1994.

Here is a fascinating piece of information about Hindus and Mayans connection.

According to Ambassador Poindexter, in his two volume 1930s treatise "The Arya-Incas", called the Mayan civilization was 'unquesionably Hindu' in origin.

Alexander von Humbolt (1769-1859) an eminent, European scholar and anthropologist, was one of the first to postulate the Asiatic origin of the Indian civilizations of the Americas. What mysterious pyschological law would have caused Asians and Americans to both use the umbrella as a sign of royalty, to invent the same games, imagine similar cosmologies, and attribute the same colors to the different directions?

The Aryan civilization of India is a logical choice for the beginning of the diffusion of our planet's civilization. American historian Will Durant, in his book 'Our Oriental Heritage', described India as the most ancient civilization on earth, and he offered many examples of Indian culture through out the world. He demonstrated that as early as the 9th century B.C. E. Indians were exploring the sea routes, and reaching out and extending their cultural influences to Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Egypt.

Most modern day historians prefer to accept ancient Egypt and Babylon, as the most ancient civilization. Because they have no living representation and thereby pose no threat to the status quo.

But India is alive and kicking. Prominent traces of ancient Vedic civilization can still be found today not only in India but outside her borders as well. If we recognize ancient India as a spiritual giant, we will have to reckon with her modern-day representations. This poses a threat to modern civilization and the current world-view. Vedic literature and spiritual ideology loomed as the greatest threat to the British in their imperialistic conquest of India.

The Aryans' footsteps are found throughout neighboring Southeast Asia. They were skilled navigators and pioneers of many cultural developments. According to several sources, these Aryans ruled in Java, Bali, Sumatra, Borneo, Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Annan, Burma, and Thailand until the 14th century. Even today, the kings of Thailand bear the title of Rama after the Indian epic of Ramayana. The story of Ramayana is depicted on the palace walls of Bangkok.

Cambodia, the ancient Kamboja, boasts the largest temple complex in the world, named Ankor from the Sanskrit language meaning 'the capital city'. It was built in honor of Lord Vishnu. The

complex extends over an area more than twice the size of Manhattan and took 37 years to complete.

Vietnam once called Champa, figured prominently as a stepping-stone of India's cultural expansion. The Hindu state of Java was founded by the King of Kalinga (Orissa) in the 1st century C.E. Java is said to be the ancient Yava-Dveepa mentioned in the Ramayana. The Indonesian national flag flies the symbol of Garuda, the bird carrier of Vishnu.

In 1949, two scholars, **Gordon Ekholm and Chaman Lal**, systematically compared the Mayan, Aztec, Incan, and North American Indian civilizations with the Hindu-oriented countries of Southeast Asia and with India herself. According to them, the emigrant cultures of India took with them India's system of time measurement, local gods, and customs. They found signs of Aryan civilization through out the Americas in art (lotus flowers with knotted stems and half-dragon/half -fish motifs found commonly in paintings and carvings), architecture, calendars, astronomy, religious symbols, and even games such as our Parchesi and Mexican Patolli, which have their origins in India's pachisi.

Both the Hindus and the Americans used similar items in their worship rituals. They both maintained the concept of Four Yuga cycles or cosmological seasons, extending over thousands of years, and conceived of 12 constellations with reference to the sun as indicated by the Incan sun calendar. Royal insignias, system of government, and practice of religious dance and temple worship all showed remarkable similarities, pointing its strongly to the idea that the Americas were strongly influenced by the Aryans.

Another scholar, **Ramon Mena, author of the "Mexican Archeology**" called the Nahuatl, Zapoteca, and Mayan languages of Hindu origin. He says that ' their writing and their personal adornments.. their system and style of construction clearly indicate the remotest antiquity....they all speak of India and the Orient.'

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Caste System – Excerpts
BY MARK TULLY

Although all men may be equal in God's eyes, they can never be equal in the eyes of other men, and because of that basic flaw in the doctrine of egalitarianism we in the West now talk of "equality of opportunity". The pursuit of equal opportunities for all has many achievements to its credit, but this ideal too is going to be realized only if there is another life after this one.

Our differences of opportunity start the moment we are conceived. The gap widens as we live in different families, go to different schools, are inspired or bored by different teachers, discover or fail to discover our individual talents and are given or not given the resources to develop those talents. So it goes on throughout our lives. There will always be winners and losers.

The alienation of many young people in the West and the loneliness of the old show the suffering that egalitarianism inflicts on those who do not win, the superficiality of an egalitarianism which in effect means equal opportunities for all to win and then ignores the inevitable losers. Imagine how many losers there must be in a country like India where many children have their physical and mental growth stunted by malnutrition.

Imagine also what would happen if egalitarianism and its companion individualism destroyed the communities which support those who start life with no opportunities. For all that, the elite of India have become so spellbound by egalitarianism that they are unable to see any good in the only institution which does provide a sense of identity and dignity to those who are robbed from birth of the opportunity to compete on an equal footing –

Caste is obnoxious to the egalitarian West, so it is obnoxious to the Indian elite too.

One way to discredit any system is to highlight its excesses, and this only adds to the sense of inferiority that many Indians feel about their own culture. It would lead to a greater respect for India's culture, and indeed a better understanding of it, if it were recognized that the caste system has never been totally static, that it is adapting itself to today's changing circumstances and that it has positive as well as negative aspects.

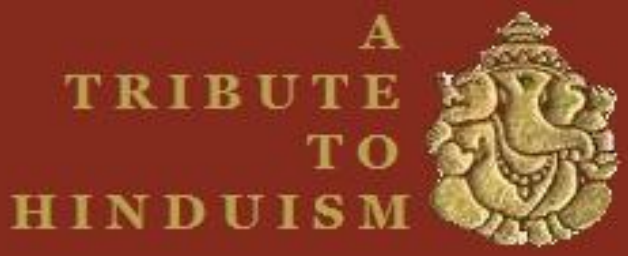
The caste system provides security and a community for millions of Indians. It gives them an identity that neither Western Science nor Western thought has yet provided, because caste is not just a matter of being a Brahmin or a Harijan: it is also a kinship system. The system provides a wider support group than a family: a group which has a social life in which all its members participate.

In the **September 1989 issue of Seminar** magazine, **Madhu Kishwar**, one of India leading feminists, wrote, " The caste system provides for relatively greater stability and dignity to the

individuals than they would have as atomized individuals. This is part explains why the Indian poor retain a strong sense of self-respect. It is that self-respect which the thought-less insistence on egalitarianism destroys."

Source: No Full Stops in India by Mark Tully
Penguin Books 1991 pages 5-7

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articles on hinduism

Rediscovering Rabindranath Tagore
Jan 15, 2000
The Forgotten Genius
India's celebrated champion of East and West
By Jon Spayde, Utne Reader
http://www.utne.com/bBooks.tmpl$search?db=dArticle.db&eqheadlinedata=The%20Forgotten%20Genius

Given the torrent of books and tapes and classes that draw on Asian wisdom (real or spurious) to help us meditate or levitate or find our lost Western selves, it's easy to forget that the coming together of East and West goes a lot deeper, and is a lot older, than the contemporary New Age.

Ever since greedy and energetic Europeans began to colonize, convert, and trade their way into Asia in the late Renaissance, Western values (from the sublime to the unspeakable) have been thrust into the faces of Asian people. Their responses have varied from angry rejection to ecstatic embrace to wary sifting. At the same time, the colonizers have interpreted Asia for the home market, in ways that have ranged from the starkest racism to the most conscientious scholarship.

While every Asian culture had its inspired leaders who faced the Western challenge in their own way, two figures were able to absorb the Western impact, find a living relationship to their own traditions, and then become world famous for bringing this mix to the West in the form of wisdom. They were the Indians M.K. Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore.

As Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson point out in the introduction to their splendid book, **Rabindranath Tagore: An Anthology (St. Martin's, $30),** Gandhi is very much alive in the West today and Tagore is all but forgotten. That's a major shift of taste. Between winning the Nobel Prize for his poetry in 1913 and his death in 1941, Tagore was simply one of the most famous men on the planet. His poetry and prose, deeply colored by his reformist, highly philosophical Hinduism, had a serene weightiness that appealed to Westerners who were being hurtled from one World War toward another.

Both cosmopolitan and deeply Indian, he seemed like the perfect bearer of Eastern wisdom into the modern world. He was received by kings and presidents, discoursed publicly with Albert Einstein on the nature of the world, and mixed with the West's literary elite: William Butler Yeats was a friend, and Ezra Pound not known for low self-esteem confessed that he felt inferior to Tagore.

Yet, by one of the ironic rules of our shrinking planet, the longevity of an Asian writer on the world scene depends on the quality of translations into English. Once the photogenic, prophet-bearded poet/philosopher was gone from the scene, his poetry in stiff English renderings from the Bengali made mostly by Tagore himself just couldn't stand the test of time. Dutta and Robinson are helping revive interest in Tagore by downplaying the poetry (which, as they point out, still awaits a great translator) and making fresh translations from the many other literary genres that Tagore mastered: theater, the short story, the polemical essay, memoir, travel writing, and especially the familiar letter, which he handles as powerfully as Keats.

In the process, the editors also reveal the power of a personality that transcends his specifically literary achievements. Tagore, scion of one of the richest and best connected families of 19th-century Calcutta, never suffered feelings of inferiority before the "sahibs" the English masters of India. He was a leader of the pre-Gandhi Swadeshi (self-rule) movement in Bengal at the turn of the century, but turned away from nationalist politics in disgust at the violence and bitterness that came with it. His wary friendship with Gandhi never prevented him from

expressing grave doubts about the wisdom of Gandhi's advocacy of "nonparticipation" with British rule while the British still, in Tagore's view, had modern lessons to teach India.

But Tagore was no political fence sitter. His 1919 letter to Lord Chelmsford, viceroy of India, protesting a British massacre in the Punjab region and handing back his knighthood, is a masterpiece of icily correct invective.

Tagore comes closest to us, though, when he calls on his Western friends to imagine a world in which East and West give each other spiritual gifts free of imperialistic coercion, a world in which science is honored but spiritual and humane values rule. "When our universe is in harmony with man, the eternal, we know it as truth, we feel it as beauty," Tagore told Einstein in 1930. Coming from a man with few illusions about either East or West, this noble sentiment sounds less like pure idealism than a hard-won way of living decently in a violent century.

Tagore's gift for us today, splendidly presented in this anthology, is his insistence on speaking for the highest human values and loftiest human aims. At a time when our public discourses have descended into the mud of marketspeak and realpolitik, we need Tagore's courageous and undeceived conviction that we were born for something wildly and brilliantly better.

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Why frame Veer Savarkar?

by Ved Pratap Vaidik

http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/181_217494,00120001.htm

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was sentenced to two life imprisonments running into 50 years when he was 27 years old. When he escaped from a British ship in 1910, the world came to know for the first time — much before Gandhi and Nehru joined the mainstream freedom movement — that India was trying to free itself from the clutches of the British. Savarkar internationalised the Indian freedom movement by being the first person whose case was fought at the International Court in the Hague.

Considering all this, why have there been objections over Savarkar's portrait being installed in the Central Hall of Parliament? Three reasons are advanced: One, that he was involved in the conspiracy of Gandhiji's assassination; two, that he is the father of Hindu communalism; three, that he wrote an elementary petition to the British government while he was in the Andamans and thereby grovelled at the feet of the British for clemency.

Savarkar, no doubt, was implicated and prosecuted in the case involving Gandhi's murder. He was, however, duly exonerated. A comparison between Savarkar and Gandhi is totally uncalled for. Luminaries like Gandhi are born only once in centuries.

But Gandhi was by no means the sole spokesman of Indian nationalism, a fact borne out by the presence of stalwarts such as Subhas Chandra Bose, B.R. Ambedkar, Bhagat Singh, Periyar and Savarkar. Can the nationalist strands represented by these leaders be written off so easily? Hegemonic claims of secular nationalism have always attempted to marginalise the alternative voices as much as the Right-wing has contested the legitimate claims of a secularist agenda. In this battle, whoever is in the position of power begins to wield the stick of historiography. What the BJP and the Shiv Sena are doing at the moment is what the Congress did when the latter was in power. Take the example of Ram Manohar Lohia. Attempts were made to write off Lohia as a credible leader. But as soon as his disciple Rabi Ray became the Lok Sabha speaker, he had a portrait of Lohia installed in the Central Hall of Parliament.

Now the prime minister is a member of the BJP and the speaker of the Lok Sabha is a Shiv Sena member and they wish to accord a status due to a national hero to Savarkar. Could there be a more opportune time for the installation of the portrait of Savarkar in Parliament? Imputing to the BJP motives other than this would be wide off the mark.

Coming to the question of Hindutva, the small book Hindutva, written by Savarkar in 1922, presents facts, arguments and conclusions. Eighty years ago, when the Khilafat movement was at its peak, Amanullah, the king of Afghanistan, was being invited to rule over India by Muslim leaders just because he was a Muslim. Muslim communalism was beginning to raise its ugly head and instead of joining the bandwagon of the Congress, Savarkar preferred to plough his lonely furrow. Gandhi and other leaders were also finding it difficult to stand their ground — either out of goodwill or helplessness. Savarkar shook Hindu society out of its slumber by writing Hindutva.

His actions are very much in line with what Ambedkar did for the Dalits and what Periyar accomplished for the Dravidian movement. Although the majority of Hindus went with Gandhiji, it was Savarkar who

was the first to oppose the rising tide of Muslim communalism by calling it so.

Another much criticised aspect of Savarkar has been his support to Jinnah's 'two-nation theory'. Savarkar, in fact, was a votary of 'Akhand Bharat' — United India. He did recognise that the Hindus and Muslims were living like two nations during those unfortunate times. But he always argued the case for an Akhand Bharat which never relegated Muslims to second-rate citizenship.

This idea of second-rate citizens was a later insertion into the Hindutva ideology. In his presidential address to the Hindu Mahasabha in 1937, Savarkar spoke of giving special guarantees to Muslims for protecting their language, culture and religion. He reiterated on several occasions: "Nobody would be discriminated against on the basis of religion, caste or creed. Absolute equality for all would be ensured and no one would be allowed to dominate others." He opposed not the Muslims, but the 'blackmail' being practised by the Muslim leadership.

There is no doubt that his articles and speeches created an 'anti-Gandhi' atmosphere and sharpened the lines of India's Partition unwittingly. But the Muslim leaders did not even touch the 'balm' proffered by Gandhi and Nehru. The cleavages of Partition had already been dug up much before Savarkar came to the scene.

One does not know which brand of 'Hindutva' India would have accepted — Gandhi's 'soft' Hindutva or Savarkar's 'hard' Hindutva — if Savarkar had not remained interned for 27 years and had returned to India in 1910 having qualified as a barrister. Gandhi's 'soft' Hindutva failed and Pakistan was born out of the appeasement of the Right-wing Muslim leadership. Even Lohia, in The Guilty Man of India's Partition, holds Nehru and other Congress leaders responsible for Partition. Savarkar, instead, consistently opposed Pakistan.

Savarkar's Hindutva was very different from the one being touted by the BJP and their allies today. Can anyone imagine that the 'Father of Hindutva' advocated beef-eating (in special circumstances), rejected the divinity of the Vedas, denounced the sanctity of the caste system and launched a virulent attack on the hypocrisy of the priests? It was not easy for the RSS to digest and appropriate such a revolutionary.

The acrimonious verbal duels that took place between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sangh parivar till 40 years ago were more raucous than the current battle between the Congress and the parivar. If the unveiling of the statue of Savarkar reveals the desire of the Sangh parivar to claim a new icon for itself, it should only gladden the hearts of the opposition parties that Savarkar's India is rooted in the rationalistic philosophy of life and not on some theological rockbed.

As far as the question of Savarkar tendering an apology to the British is concerned, whose version should one accept as authentic? The one propagated by our know-all politicians or that of the British officer to whom the petition was addressed? In 1913, Reginald Craddock, representative of the then governor-general, had gone to Port Blair on Savarkar's pleadings to look into the most inhuman conditions prevailing in the cellular jail.

The petitions were submitted to Craddock by five revolutionaries — one of whom was Savarkar. These were petitions for clemency and not apologies. In these petitions, all the five revolutionaries had mentioned the inhuman atrocities being perpetrated against them and were demanding civilised behaviour from the government.

In these petitions, they had resorted to a sugar-coated phraseology for securing their release. It is true that Savarkar gave the assurance of eschewing the path of bloody revolution and violence and of following the constitutional norms and loyalty to the British government. But this was in consonance with Shivaji's tradition of 'one step backward, two steps forward'. As far as loyalty to the British raj was concerned, one comes across several such letters by Gandhi in his early phase. It is also noteworthy to see what Craddock had to say about Savarkar's petition.

In his secret note of December 19, 1913, he noted that Savarkar was shamming his 'change of heart' and that he did not express the slightest remorse or regret for what he had done. Craddock further said: "In the case of Savarkar, it is quite impossible to give him any liberty here and I think he will escape any

Indian jail. So important a leader is he that the European section of the Indian anarchists would plot for his escape, which would, before long, be organised." When the petition did not convince the British, why are our politicians today so eager to accept it as a symbol of national betrayal?

The writer is a former editor of *Nav Bharat Times*

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Hare Jesus: Christianity's Hindu Heritage

By Stephen Van Eck

http://www.mantis.co.uk/sceptical/3hare94.html

"Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned" (Prov. 6:28)? But of course!

Objective and open-minded scholars long ago conceded that Christianity is at heart a revamped form of Judaism. In the process of its development as something distinct from its mother religion, it became hybridized with so much pagan influence that it ultimately alienated its original Jewish base and became predominantly Gentile. The source of this pagan influence is varied and vague in the minds of most advanced Bible critics, but it may owe more to Hinduism than most people suspect.

The average person does not connect India with the ancient Middle East, but the existence of some trade between these two regions is documented, even in the Bible. Note the reference to spikenard in the Song of Solomon (1:12; 4:13-14) and in the Gospels (Mark 14:3; John 12:3). This is an aromatic oil-producing plant (*Nardostachys jatamansi*) that the Arabs call *sunbul hindi* and obtained in trade with India.

It is axiomatic that influence follows trade, and the vibrant culture of India could not help but impact on anyone exposed to it. The influence on Judaism came for the most part indirectly, however, via the Persians and the Chaldeans, who dealt with India on a more direct basis. (Indeed, the Aryans, who invaded and trans- formed India over 1500 years before Christ, were of the same people who brought ancient Persia to its greatest glory. Persia's name today--Iran--is a corruption of *Aryan*.) The ancient Judeans absorbed much of this secondhand influence during the Babylonian captivity of the sixth century B. C., and during the intertestamental period, when Alexandria became the crossroads of the world, intellectuals both Jew and Gentile were exposed to a variety of ideas, some of which originated on the subcontinent.

The precise pattern of influence was neither observed nor documented, but it can be inferred from the numerous uncanny similarities in concept and expression, not all of which can be coincidental. Let us examine the telltale evidence (none of which, it may be added, depends upon any apocryphal account of the alleged "lost years" of Jesus in India).

Most Christians are familiar with Galatians 6:7, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Less known is Proverbs 26:27, "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein, and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him." Both express the Hindu principle of karma (the sum and the

consequences of a person's actions during the successive phases of his existence), but since no direct connection can be deduced, we'll merely consider it an interesting coincidence and move on.

The concept of a soul that is distinguishable from the body and can exist independently of it is alien to Judaism. It is first known in Hinduism. Only after the Babylonian captivity did any such concept arise among the Jews, and it is in the epistles of Paul, the "debtor to both the Greeks and the Barbarians," that the notion receives its first clear expression. (See 2 Corinthians 5:8 and 12:3.)

The Brahmin caste of the Hindus are said to be "twice-born" and have a ritual in which they are "born in the spirit." Could this be the ultimate source of the Christian "born again" concept (John 3:3)?

The deification of Christ is a phenomenon often attributed to the apotheosis of emperors and heroes in the Greco-Roman world. These, however, were cases of men becoming gods. In the Jesus story, the Divinity takes human form, god becoming man. This is a familiar occurrence in Hinduism and in other theologies of the region. Indeed, one obstacle to the spread of Christianity in India, which was attempted as early as the first century, was the frustrating tendency of the Hindus to understand Jesus as the latest avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu. It is in the doctrine of the Trinity that the Hindu influence may be most clearly felt. Unknown to most Christians, Hinduism has a Trinity (or Trimurti) too: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, who have the appellations the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer (and Regenerator). This corresponds to the Christian Trinity in which God created the heavens and the earth, Jesus saves, and the Holy Spirit is referred to as a regenerator (Titus 3:5). It is interesting to note, furthermore, that the Holy Spirit is sometimes depicted as a dove, while the Hebrew language uses the same term for both "dove" and "destroyer"!



The Trinity was a major stumbling block for the Jews, who adhered to strict monotheism. The inherent polytheism in the Trinity doctrine cannot be explained away with the nonsensical claim that three is one and one is three. Besides, Jesus himself undermined any pretense of triunity (or omnipotence, for that matter) in Matthew 19:17, "And he said unto them, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God...." Matthew 20:23; Mark 14:32; John 5:30; 7:16 and 14:28 also contradict the Trinitarian concept. The Hindu scriptures, which are the oldest in the world, contain a number of astonishingly familiar expressions. The Upanishads mention things like "the blind led by the blind" (Matt. 15:14) and God's being "the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow" (Heb. 13:8). The path is said to be "narrow and difficult to tread" (Matt. 7:14). They also make reference to "a voice from out of the fire" (Ex. 3:4) and a man's face shining after en- countering God (Ex. 34:29). They refer to those who are "wise in their own conceits" (Prov. 34:29; Rom. 12:16), warn against "fleshly desires" (1 Pet. 2:11), and advise that "it is not by works alone that one attains the Eternal" (Gal. 2:16), and "to many it is not given" to know of metaphysical truth (Matt. 13:11). They describe the Self as "smaller than a

mustard seed" (Matt. 17:20), and they speak of "the highest knowledge, having drunk of which, one never thirsts" (John 4:14). And how about this: "Man does not live by breath alone, but by him in whom is the power of breath" (Matt. 4:4)?

Sounds a little too familiar, I'd say!

Then there is the Hindu epic, the Bhagavad-Gita, a story of the second person of the Hindu Trinity, who took human form as Krishna. Some have considered him a model for the Christ, and it's hard to argue against that when he says things like, "I am the beginning, the middle, and the end" (BG 10:20 vs. Rev. 1:8). His advent was heralded by a pious old man named Asita, who could die happy knowing of his arrival, a story paralleling that of Simeon in Luke 2:25. Krishna's mission was to give directions to "the kingdom of God" (BG 2:72), and he warned of "stumbling blocks" along the way (BG 3:34; 1 Cor. 1:23; Rev. 2:14). The essential thrust of Krishna's sayings, uttered to a beloved disciple, sometimes seems to coincide with Jesus or the Bible. Compare "those who are wise lament neither for the living nor the dead" (BG 2:11) with the sense of Jesus' advice to "let the dead bury their own dead" (Matt. 8:22). Krishna's saying, "I envy no man, nor am I partial to anyone; I am equal to all" (BG 9:29) is a lot like the idea that God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11; see also Matt. 6:45). And "one who is equal to friends and enemies... is very dear to me" (BG 12:18) is reminiscent of "love your enemies" (Matt. 6:44). Krishna also said that "by human calculation, a thousand ages taken together is the duration of Brahma's one day" (BG 8:17), which is very similar to 2 Peter 3:8.



In fairness, however, one purported similarity needs to be discredited. Skeptics sometimes cite Kersey Graves in *Sixteen Crucified Saviors* or Godfrey Higgin's *Anacalypsis* (which Graves drew from) in asserting that Krishna was a crucified deity. No such event occurred in the Gita or in any recognized Hindu scripture. Given the pronounced syncretic tendency of Hinduism, it is safe to assume that any odd tales of Krishna's being crucified arose only *after* the existence of Christian proselytism, in imitation of the Christian narrative. It is neither authentic to Hinduism nor is Hinduism the source of that portion of the Christian narrative. The same may be said for most of the purported nativity stories. In my opinion, both Higgins and Graves are highly unreliable sources and should be ignored.

That notwithstanding, the existence of uncanny similarities in concept and phraseology in those Hindu writings that *are* both ancient and authentic leaves Christians in a difficult quandary. With the historical reality of Indian influence on the Middle East being an established fact, how can they account for these similarities with anything less feeble than coincidence, or less bizarre than the notion of "Satanic foreknowledge and duplication," which is sometimes invoked to explain the similarities of Judeo-Christian precursors?

I'll close with Ecclesiastes 1:10, another inconvenient and uncomfortable passage: "Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us."

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The empire strikes back
Author: Suma Varghese
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I know this is a slightly delayed reaction, but I cannot resist making it. I refer to the much-publicised British Golden Jubilee Banquet held in London a few weeks back. It was here that Cherie Blair, the PM's wife, stole all our hearts by turning up in a sari. But I refer to a more momentous event than that. Namely, Prince Charles speech.

The Prince made some remarkable disclosures. First, he thanked India for "its civilising influence over Britain", then proposed a toast for "real India, the enduring and everlasting India", an India that had preserved its identity through its experience of colonisation, and which must now fight the invasion of satellite television.

This is amazing. India having a civilising influence over Britain? Where does that leave the white man's burden? Imagine, the crown prince of Britain admitting that the civilising had been as much from the invaded country to the invading country as vice versa. **What a volte face for a nation that systematically during its 300 years of rule, denigrated every aspect of the 'native' culture, including its philosophy and spirituality, and supplanted it with its own imperial values, attitude and approaches. The prince of a nation that has done more than any other to alienate us from our traditional culture and way of life, today acknowledges the "civilising influence" of such a tradition.**

In the same vein, he went on to congratulate us for having withstood the experience of colonialism, a 'colonialism' his own country imposed! Here is an implicit acknowledgement of the less

than salubrious impact of colonialism; a concession that their conquest may have damaged us. Considering that his mother did not have the bigness to apologise for the Jallianwallah massacre, this is downright handsome of the son.

And to think he should have the sensitivity and depth to penetrate into "the real India, the enduring India."

There is, in the Prince's speech, a profound shift from the popular perception of the Indo-British relationship. Instead of seeing India as a former imperial colony and a Third World nation, he sees it as a perennial civilisation, one nothing can vanquish, and which can, in rum, not vanquish, but transform its invaders.

We can see this happen in the case of the Prince himself If the British conquered us yesterday with their superior strategy and physical might, today we seem to have conquered them with the force of our philosophy. On the same occasion, **the Prince quoted Vedic hymns, revealing his acquaintance with the heart of India's philosophy and spirituality. His fondness for Indian classical music, which derives its aesthetics from the same philosophy, is yet another indication of the Prince's attraction and affinity for our culture.**

Nor is he the only one in the Royal household to feel the lure of the East. His late ex-wife, the Princess Diana, was also attracted to the sub-continent -- mostly Pakistan, and had an active interest in spirituality. The Duchess of York, who came recently to India for a homeopathic cure, is reportedly an admirer of India's holistic therapies.

Our ancient hoary land has wrought its magic once again. It's as the sages and philosophers have always maintained. By constant transformation, India remains her essential self; in turn, this essential self is the instrument of the world's transformation.

Listen to Vivekananda, for instance. "What may be that force which causes this afflicted and suffering people, the Hindu... to survive when other nations perish? The cause can only be their spiritual force."

Says Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose, "By continuous living tradition and a vital power of rejuvenescence, this land has readjusted itself through unnumbered transformations."

Asks Dr S. Radhakrishnan: "By what strange social alchemy has India subdued her conquerors, transforming them to her very self and substance..... ? Why is it that her conquerors have not been able to impose on her their language, their thoughts and customs, except in superficial ways?"

So what indeed is the secret of India'a enduring vitality? How do we account for its transformatory power? What did Prince Charles mean when referring to the 'real India, the enduring and everlasting India"?

The tragedy is that while the prince of an alien nation could see this aspect of India, most of us in contemporary, urban India are out of touch with it. Caught in the maelstrom of change, it is difficult for us to step back far enough to see the continuity of our culture. At the most, the Prince's words will conjure up some vague images of our Vedic past, but of its real relevance to our present life, we have little or no notion.

Yet that "real" India survives, and even thrives. Indeed, if we continue to exist despite our manifold problems, it is her we have to thank.

The real secret of India's survival is its tolerance, its inclusion. What has kept it from being swallowed whole by its conquerors, or warped beyond recognition, is its limpid ability to accept the cultures, tradition and above all, the religions of alien rulers. The Muslims came, and we accepted them. Islam began to flourish in all corners, but if it did not become the dominant religion, it is because we did not resist its spread. The same
with British rule and the spread of Christianity. The number of Christians in the country are certainly not enough to threaten Hinduism, and that is because Indian coexisted with them, rather than trying to wipe them out.

There is a profound lesson for all of us in this approach. Indeed, now that personal growth has become such a mainstream activity, it is one of the first principles of transformatory technology.

What we resist, persists; what we accept, can he transformed. Almost all of us will have had occasion to encounter the truth and wisdom of this observation.

Make the mistake of hating someone, and you will forever be yoked

to thoughts of that person. You cannot get away from them. Wherever you go, his presence pursues you; no matter what you think, eventually, your mind wanders back to the hated object. Had you loved him, you would not have been so much possessed by your feelings as you become in hate. The same is true of any vice we attempt to give up. The more we resist it, the greater the urge. The more we hate ourselves for giving in to it, the greater its power over us. It is only when we accept ourselves implicitly. weakness and all, that it loosens its hold over us. From a larger context, if we were to stop protesting against the manifold flaws of the country and moved towards accepting it instead, we would be in a position to solve them.

Awareness and acceptance, as anyone interested in personal growth will tell you, are the twin mechanisms of transformation. They will also tell you that they are about the most difficult and challenging aspects to attain. How then, did our country, which is to say, all of us as a whole, achieve this feat?

Here is where we glimpse the continuity that binds us, and which makes us uniquely Indian. The answer lies in the Vedic heritage, with its belief in the unity of all creation. Believing as we did that all is one and all is holy, we naturally inclined towards interconnection and a sense of reverence towards all that exists. If this has made us respect and serve all forms of life, our traditional pursuit of self-realisation as the purpose of life, has given us respect for all forms of religion, which we see as different paths to the same truth. Little wonder then, that we are tolerant and open-minded, and accepting of diverse viewpoints.

This catholicism is part of our heritage, and whether we are conscious of it, of our personality. Moving consciously towards it, and making it a part of ourselves will give us an untold edge in effective living. It will also ensure, as the Prince solicitously advised us, that we don't lose our essential selves to the satellite revolution.

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Of Cosmic Wakes and Humbler Heavens

An essay on India's contribution to the world in terms of basic sciences and spirituality

By Gopal Venkatesan

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way,
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler heaven.

Alexander Pope

India's contribution to the world, in general, is manifold. Over the centuries she has shared generously all her treasures (material and otherwise) with her guests - travelers, missionaries, traders and conquerors - without distinction, expecting little in return, in the spirit of this verse from the Upanishads - "the cow drinks water and gives milk." Yet her pivotal role in the history of civilization has been overlooked, forgotten and misinterpreted. The "Father of History," Heredotus (ca. 500 B.C.), at a time when Buddhism was holding its sway across the length and breadth of India, mentions India as being a land where people killed and ate their enfeebled parents to save the trouble of caring for them in their old age! Today, to many Westerners, India is nothing more than a nondescript part of the East with elephants, snake charmers and the Taj Mahal. Alexander Pope, in the above excerpt from his poem *An Essay on Man* may have been addressing either the Indian of the East or of the West. Regardless he summarizes quite nicely the popular view of the West towards the people of India. Using two phrases from the poem as my theme, I hope to give, in this essay, a brief introduction to certain key contributions through which India has influenced the world.

His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way

India, over the centuries, has been far ahead of the West in many basic sciences. An appreciable part of this knowledge has been disseminated around the world over the course of time and survive even today with their source being grossly misinterpreted.

In my opinion, the most important contribution that India has made to the world in the basic sciences is the decimal number system and the so-called Arabic numerals that can be seen on the rock edicts of Ashoka (ca. 250 B. C.) found all over India. It is worthwhile to note that the simplicity of the decimal system in associating the value of a number with an absolute value as

well as a value by position escaped the genius of men like Archimedes and Apollonius (try writing the current year 1997 in Roman numerals!).

Less than four hundred years ago Johannes Kepler infuriated the Church by proving the earth was not the center of the universe. He formulated quantitatively the elliptical orbit of the earth around the sun. This fact was known in India to a group of astrologers/astronomers known as the Siddhantas before the Christian era. The implications of this fact are very profound. First of all, to work with elliptic equations requires a mastery of simple algebraic equations, but for algebra to work the existence of negative numbers and the concept of the number zero has to be understood. Invention of negative numbers and the concept of zero lays the basic foundation of abstract mathematics, which is the mathematics beyond simple manipulations of positive numbers that can be easily interpretable as counting experiments in the real world. In fact, from Vedic mathematical texts available it is clear that the properties and behavior of numbers were clearly understood from ancient times. Aryabhatta (ca. 400 B.C.), after whom India's first satellite is named, discusses in verse mathematical concepts such as quadratic equations, sines, cosines and the value of zero. He explained eclipses, solstices and equinoxes, announced the sphericity of the earth and its diurnal revolution on its axis. Indeterminate equations of the second degree were solved (unknown in Europe until Euler's work a thousand years later) and the square root of two was computed as early as the eighth century in India.

Contributions in the basic sciences were not limited to mathematics alone. Indians were masters of calcination, distillation, sublimation and preparation of metallic salts, compounds and alloys. For example, the art of tempering steel was practices to near perfection. The secret of manufacturing these "Damascus blades" was offered to Alexander the Great in place of gold and silver. To this day an iron pillar dated to be at least 1800 years old stands close to the Qutub Minar. Its purity has prevented it from rusting over the centuries, a level of perfection that cannot be emulated even with today's technology. The magnetic field of the earth was discovered in India at least 2500 years ago and records exist as early as the first century of Indian ships navigating the seas using a compass made of an iron "fish" floating in a vessel of oil. **Vachaspati** (ca. 150 B.C.), like Newton did almost 1500 years later, interpreted light as composed of minute particles emitted by substances and striking the eye. Brahmagupta (ca. 300 B.C.) wrote about the gravitational force of the earth - "the earth owing to its force, draws all things to itself." Nagarjuna (ca. 160 A. D.) devoted a whole volume to the properties of mercury. The design of stringed musical instruments, wherein the pitch of the note varies inversely as the length of the string between the point of attachment and the point of touch, was quantitatively known in the second century. Anticipating Weismann 2400 years earlier, Atreya (500 B. C.) deducted the basic tenet of genetics and wrote that the parental seed is independent of the parent's body, and contains in itself in miniature the whole parental organism.

Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler heaven

Humble heavens, a heaven within one's reach, can be more appealing than an undefined paradise in an after-life beyond comprehension. Can heaven be within one's reach before death? Can paradise be a place on earth? Various Indian philosophies have expounded over the centuries that questions such as these can be answered in the affirmative. Some such schools of philosophical thought, in my opinion, are futuristic even by today's standards. The doctrine of the Upanishads is

my favorite philosophy in this context and I will touch upon it briefly.

The Upanishads have no parallel in the history of thought. They propound a philosophy of life, that does not touch the realms of divine intervention or salvation. In the words of Shri Aurobindo who wrote a commentary on the Upanishads,

"The Upanishads are the supreme work of the Indian mind, and that it should be so, that the highest self-expression of its genius, its sublimest poetry, its greatest creation of the thought and word should be not a literary or poetical masterpiece of the ordinary kind, but a large flood of spiritual revelation of this direct and profound character, is a significant fact, evidence of a unique mentality and unusual turn of spirit."

Proposed, nurtured and promulgated in the first few centuries of the early Christian era by individuals drawn from all levels of society, it attempts to apply abstract truth to practical life.

In this body, in this town of the Spirit, there is a little house shaped like a lotus and in that house there is a little space. There is as much in that little space within the heart as there is in the whole world outside. Heaven, earth, fire, wind, sun, moon, lightning, stars; whatever is and whatever is not, everything is there ... What lies in that space does not decay when the body decays, nor does it fall when the body falls. That space is the home of the Spirit. Every desire is there. Self is there, beyond decay and death; sin and sorrow, hunger and thirst; His aim truth; His will truth.

from the *Chhandogya Upanishad*

In time the world will progress enough to embrace its philosophy in an undiluted form.

Another poet, **Walt Whitman,** comes much closer to the truth.

The nest of languages, the bequeather of poems
The race of old
Florid with blood, pensive, rapt with musings, hot with passion,
Sultry with perfume,
with ample and flowering garments,
With sunburnt visage,
with intense soul and glittering eyes
The Race of Brahma comes!

In India there is a word - "Dharma," which has no equivalent in English. It is too difficult to translate. Dharma loosely means Code of Duty - Duty towards God, Duty towards others in one's family, Duty towards society, Duty towards birds and animals, every living thing, Duty to give without expecting anything in return. It also means love for all creation. India has preached this message of love for over fifty centuries.

In writing this article, I have borrowed generously from the information in Chaman Lal's book *India, mother of us all*, and also from a quotation by Annie Besant on the word Dharma.
more at this site:
http://www.ee.umn.edu/users/gopal/cosmic.html

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Monotheism and its discontents (excerpts)
By Gore Vidal - author and critic has written numerous books.
Lecture given at Harvard University.

"The great unmentionable evil at the center of our culture is monotheism.



From barbaric Bronze Age text known as the Old Testament, three anti-human religions have evolved - Judaism, Chritisianity and Islam. These are sky-god religions. They are literally, patriarchal - God is the omnipotent father - hence the loathing of women for 2,000 years in those countries afflicted by the sky-god and his earthly male delegates.
The sky god is a jealous god, of course. He requires total obedience from everyone on earth, as he is in place not for just one tribe but for all creation.Those who would reject him must be converted or killed for their own good.
Ultimatley, totalitarianism is the only sort of politices that can truly serve the sky-god's purpose. Any movement of a liberal nature endangers his authority and that of his delegates on earth. One God, one King, one Pope, or master in the factory, one father-leader in the family home.

The founders of the United States were not enthusiasts of the sky-god. Many, like Jefferson, rejected him altogether and placed man at the center of the world. The young Lincoln wrote a pamplet against Christianity, which friends persuaded him to burn.

Although the Jews were sky-god folk, they followed Book One, not Book two, so they had no mission to convert others, rather the reverse. Also, they have been systematically demonized by the Christian sky-godders.

Many of the Christian evangelists feel it necessary to convert everyone on earth to their primitive religion, they have been prevented- so far- but they have forced most tyrannically and wickedly - their superstitions and hatred upon others. So it is upon account that I now favor an all-out war on the monotheists.

Monotheism and its discontents
http://eserver.org/govt/monotheism.txt
This article (in a somewhat different form) was originally 'The Lowell Lecture' at Harvard University given April 20. Gore Vidal is an author and critic. He has written numerous books and

has appeared on many TV and Radio news and talk programs. Gore Vidal is the grandson of Oklahoma's blind Senator T. P. Gore, son of a West Pointer who became an FDR administration member, stepbrother of Jackie Kennedy Onassis, cousin to Al Gore.

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Remains of history

By Chitra Viji

http://www.the-hindu.com/2000/03/19/stories/1319049d.htm

Located a little off Chennai, the ancient port town of Mamallapuram reclines unnoticed on its legendary past. Perhaps underwater archaeology may provide answers about some of the sunken structures and our maritime heritage, writes CHITRA VIJI.

THE PALLAVA king, Narasimhavarman I, had the title "Mamalla" and ruled in the early part of the Seventh Century A.D. and is credited with creating Mamallapuram. This historic site is referred to in early literature in the hymns of the Alvars as Mallai. In the 17th and 18th Centuries, European travellers and seafarers, who viewed the pagodas or spires from the sea, mention seven of them which presumably include the five rathas, the old Vijayanagara towers and the Rajasimhesvara temple.

Marine archaeology might answer a few questions on the ancient port town and clear doubts on sunken structures, if any. We know that Mamalla, who had a successful reign, kept the Chalukyas of Vatapi under check and sent envoys abroad and maintained a successful naval presence in the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean. Mamallapuram would reveal its seafaring past, if underwater or ocean archaeology is initiated seriously.

When we approach Mamallapuram, wending our way by keeping the Buckingham canal to the West, we would notice the abandoned monolithic rathas with their unfinished carvings. On scrutiny, one understands that all the rock carvings start top down. The rathas have superbly finished crowns but with an unfinished rock base bearing rough chisel marks. One is tempted to view the abandonment as the result of a cataclysmic past but in truth the advancement of building technology freed our sthapathis from being confined to sites where rock was available and to move freely to create temples where required.

From here we arrive at the site of the five exquisite rathas or monoliths popularly known as the Pancha Pandava Rathas. The first rock structure is delicately executed in the shape of a thatched village home. Inside is portrayed an astonishing incident of a young man holding a machete to his head, ready to sacrifice himself. This cult of sacrifice is eulogised in a number of inscriptions on tablets called the hero-stones found in this part of the country and these glorify the warrior clans and their valor. However, in this instance, the event is scripted in an elegaic form on the wall of a shrine dedicated to the most powerful mother figure - Devi or Durga. A statue of the lion associated with her is carved independently and positioned in front of this shrine.

The Arjuna ratha has great similarity in style and form to the Dharmaraja ratha, which bears the

king's inscription and portrait. There is similarity in the idiom of architecture as both are derived from the style of the Rastrakutas with whom this king had close family ties. Stone architecture of the Chalukyas and of Mamallapuram bear remarkable similarity and arise out of a common shared tradition. The artisans, profoundly influenced by the woodwork, create pillars with corbelling, showing tenon joints and exhibiting the style of wood carvers in their detailing.

On Arjuna's ratha, a portrait of Siva leaning nonchalantly on the Nandi is the iconic representation of the Vrshabadevar. This imagery is further developed by the Cholas, who cast this concept in exquisite bronze. Further on, there is Indra on the elephant Airavata and

Vishnu on Garuda.

The Bhima ratha would have been a temple for Vishnu in his form of Sayanamurthy, as is evident from the elongated rock bed, that is so hewn to create just such an image. Since the public has no access to view the vimana or tower where the rock work is better finished, it would be educative, if the site museum could have an audiovisual unit to explain the architecture and show the finer details. This need becomes critical at the Dharmaraja Ratha for it is the tower that carries the most exquisite carvings revealing a pantheon of gods. Working on a challenging stone such as the granite, the Pallava sculptor has hewn a wondrous ratha with its beauty partly concealed from us. The selection of a hard rock in the first place has preserved these monuments from the constant battering of salty winds and the Archaeological Survey continues to strive to maintain them for posterity, this being a Heritage Site.

Dharmaraja ratha that should perhaps be named Mamalla ratha, in honour of its creator, is a charming piece of architecture. Notice the waterspouts, shaped like monkeys with their mouth wide open, introduced to bring levity to the serious aspect of a royal temple. The calligraphically written Grantha inscription gives two titles of Narasimhavarman i.e. Sri Megha and Trailokyavardhanavidhi. The Ardhanaresvara image is a composite of Siva and Parvati and is an early representation of this form. There are also icons of Harihara, Brahma, Siva and Skanda and in the upper tiers, we have Siva as Gangadhara, that is when he unties his matlocks to receive the Ganga and ease her descent to the earth, a picturisation popular with the Pallavas. Then you have the image of Natesa, which is the dance form of Siva followed by Vrshabadevar. The Pallava kings were celebrated for their scholarship, their consummate understanding of the fine arts and the icons of Siva as Vinadhara and of Dakshinamurthy and Gangadhara are a reflection of that culture. The aesthetics of the Dharmaraja ratha is pleasing.

Moving to the Nakula-Sahadev ratha, which is fashioned in the apsidal idiom, the architect has carved a lovely free standing image of an elephant by its side. Here he teaches you to look at the evolution of the gajaprishta form that was particularly popular in the early phase of architectural evolution in India.

In the rock outcropping, you notice grooves and wedge-shaped holes of varying sizes. These were meant to hold the chisels, which would have been arranged according to their blade size. The largest would be used to prise or split large chunks of rock while the finer and smaller chisels were worked to create finer shapes and moulding, the sculptor wielding them to shape the rock to yield the form he desired. Proceeding to the rock face depicting Arjuna's penance, you are a witness to a landmark in art in which the largest sculptural canvas has been created in Mamallapuram, that was never attempted by the artists once they abandoned the rock cut carvings

in favour of developing friezes and relief that could be worked into structural temples. The contents of this magnificent panel have gone through endless debate - is it the legend of the descent of the Ganga in which case it is Bhagirata's penance? Or it could be Kirartajunya, an episode where Arjuna prays for some powerful weapons to help bring an end to the battle in Mahabharatha. The large expanse of relief carved with attention to detail and with the sense of the quotidian is a delight to observe. The central split, through which the rain waters course, and the spatial balance of the panels being centred around this channel leads us to believe that this relief is related to Bhagiratha's penance. The image of Siva as Gangadhara is reworked many times in the Pallava scheme of portrayal. The large sculptural frieze is an attempt to portray a stringent penance witnessed both by heavenly hosts and the denizens of the netherworld. The frieze is dynamic and draws you into observing the grouping and as each one is recognised, you tend to wonder "Ah, that's what this is all about." The light touch of the sculptors is found here more regularly than anywhere else. The ascetic with his hands in obeisance in the eka pada tapas is drawn with his ribs showing, indicative of an arduous penance. Making light of such practice, is the cat in a similar pose standing on its hind legs mimicking the ascetic.

In the upper panels, the devas, the kinnaras and other heavenly hosts witness the proceedings with bhakti and reverence. In the real world called earth, cats, monkeys and elephants go about their grooming, monkeys de-licing one another.

The mastery of the artist entices the spectator to watch the tableau unfold before him. In such a vast canvas the eye focuses on each cluster without fatigue or boredom. At the end you are mesmerised by the linear rhythm and the counterpoise of the relief. You are fascinated at the understated subtleties and come away admiring the excellence in workmanship.

Leaving this panel to wend your way behind the hill or rock, you go past a small temple for Ganesha. In the course of the walk you will see the spectacular work of the royal craftsmen, who have created cave temples for the enjoyment of the royal family perhaps in their privacy. You have steps carved out to make the climb easier. There is a Royal bed, even if it is a hard one being carved in granite, a water-tub to meet the demands of the Pallavas and their gods and a storeroom with steps, peg holes and markings which indicate that the imperial family took shelter and pitched camp in this area. Certainly the ground reveals the existence of brick structures and holes for tents poles.

The Varaha cave or mandapa with Gajalakshmi and Durga has Vishnu in his avatar of Trivikrama. You then walk past a dilapidated Vijayanagara Gopura to enter the Royal enclave, where the sculpture of the lion stands guard. There is a modern lighthouse and a structure of the Vijayanagara age, often referred to as the old lighthouse, that is, in fact, a temple sans its tower. It is at this point, that your mind traverses the horizon and dwells on the possibility of a royal Pallava naval force waiting in the harbour, quite capable of venturing forth to Sri Lanka, Khmer and such other countries. Mamalla, the port town, has not received our focus and it is time to rediscover our seafaring past and our maritime history.

Walking towards the stretch of sand, the striking silhouette of the Rajasimhesvara temple complex bathed in ocean spray beckons you to visit and sit awhile, soaking in the ambience of this unique site. King Narasimha II, also known as Rajasimha, had a passion for the arts and was a creative genius, who took the art of building to new heights. This is further revealed on visiting the

Kailasanatha temple at Kancheepuram where the king's creative genius is evident.

The west facing shrine on the approach to the complex is the one dedicated to Somaskanda, that has a bas-relief, which is a group portrayal of Siva in the company of Uma and Skanda, their young son, seated between them. This theme has found particular favour with the Pallavas and we do not find the continuation of this practice spilling into other areas or dynasties. In all probability these friezes would have been coated with plaster covered with fine painting, to create charming images. Adjacent to this shrine is an icon of Durga vanquishing Mahisasura.

Behind this shrine, is another one for Vishnu reclining on the Sesha in the primordial ocean. An inscription of the Cholas identifies the shrine as Jalasayanamurthi. The larger shrine facing the rising sun is dedicated to Siva. Within this shrine is a fluted Linga that has high polish and may not be contemporaneous to the shrine.

In recent years, to create a pleasant ambience and to keep the shifting sands in check, the land around the complex was turfed. In the process of digging, new structures, a lot of artefacts and a well with a wonderfully designed well-ring has been unearthed. The restoration work on the main temple complex, undertaken years before this discovery, needs to be reassessed in the light of the new finds, as the stones unearthed obviously belong to the structure, that we see at the shore temple today.

The effect of erosion on the shore temple has been debilitating and the problem has been compounded by the soft laterite rock, which has been used in the construction. Central agencies use blotting paper and distilled water to remove the salt accretions and clear the micropores on the rock tablets, which is why visitors see a creamish mush plastered on the walls. The friable nature of the stone leads to rapid deterioration. The constant chemical clearing and stabilisation work done to strengthen the structure and slow down the process of erosion helps us enjoy this national heritage site. A large number of Nandi images scattered and parked like sentinels around the enclosure must have adorned the enclosure to the temple. Mamallapuram in its entirety has maintained the aesthetic beauty and refinement from the period of Mamalla and Rajasimha. The administrators of this heritage site need to understand the ethos of protecting the past for future generations, so that Mahabalipuram does not fall victim to modern intrusions.

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The Hindu Way of Awakening

By J. Donald Walters (Swami Kriyananda)

excerpts from his book The Hindu Awakening: Its Revelation, Its Symbols

Hinduism is often omitted from rosters of the world's great religions. Everyone knows of course, that Hinduism exists. Even so, it is confused in many people's minds with what they think of as Buddhism. For Buddhism fits into their concepts of what a religion ought to be. For one thing, it is founded by one individual, Gautama Buddha, who was a historic personage like Moses, Jesus, Lao Tse, Mohammed, and Zoroaster. Buddhism, moreover, like most other religions, has an organized structure, a set of specific dogmas, and an officially recognized way.



Hinduism, in its plethora of symbols and images, is endlessly complex and therefore endlessly misunderstood, but its true mission is both simple and universal: soul-enlightenment. In other words, its focus is the ultimate attainment, Self-realization in God.

Even today, thousands of years since they were first expounded by the ancient rishis (spiritual sages), the religious teachings of India nourish what continues to be the most spiritually grounded civilization in the world.

Scriptures based on true revelations are never melancholy, pessimistic, or depressing. True scriptures conveys a spirit of infinite hope.

The insights of which the Hindu teachings are based were revelation in the highest sense of the word. An aspect of the greatness of the Indian scriptures, indeed, lies in their own claim to universality. In this Vedic revelation is in the words of the American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, " sublime as heat and night and a breathless ocean. It contains every religious sentiment, all the grand ethics which visit in turn each noble poetic mind….: eternal necessity, eternal compensation, unfathomable power, unbroken silence.

Symbolism in India:

Symbolism, for two reasons, plays a greater role in the religion and art of India than in those of other nations. For one thing, India's is the oldest continuous civilization in the world. Its traditions extend back long before recorded history. For another, the Indian mind, having established itself firmly in the belief in a transcendental reality, is completely comfortable with an exuberance in its expression of images and allegories that comes from knowing and accepting that everything is illusory anyway. The profusion that has merged from this cheerful "come one, come all!" attitude

might be compared to an old tree, grown gnarled and twisted with age, its branches of tradition spreading outward in all directions with abandon. Thus, the lofty teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads had to be clothed in symbolism and presented in allegories. The purpose of concealing them was in part to protect the truth from profanation, and in part also to ensure their endurance during centuries of spiritual darkness.

Dating Indian Civilization:

Archaeologists reject out of hand the rapidly growing body of evidence that advanced civilizations existed in ancient times, for it contradicts their neatly framed picture for prehistory: Primitive hunters settling down eventually to till the land, then building cities, and only slowly and reluctantly renouncing superstition with the dazzling appearance on the scene of Galileo, Newton, and the rest of the gang of scientific ghost busters.



The new myth is that primitive man evolved from the ape a few hundred years ago, and from then onward grunted and clubbed his way through the vaces and backwoods of what is called the ‘Stone Age, to emerge somewhat awkwardly a mere 3,000-4,000 years ago into the relative sophistication of the Bronze Age. Since then he strode, increasing self-confident, into the modern age, where he now stands proudly in the full glory of his bulldozers, tractors, skyscrapers, and spreading pollution.

If anything can that tickle the Divine sense of humor, it must surely be man’s presumption at setting the standard of perfection at his own level of material "accomplishments". This attitude must seem comparable to an ant’s airy dismissal of descriptions of an elephant as "absurd exaggeration". To judge civilzation by man’s ability to create tools, merely because modern man has achieved some skill in this regard, is too typical of human arrogance to be accepted without the raised eyebrow of skepticism.

In ancient India, the criteria of cultural advancement were far more refined than those of present-day Western culture, which might justifiably be termed "toolism." Advancement in those far-off days was judged by *what every human being really wants from life.* The ancients realized that human desires will never be satisfied by material fulfillment alone. The goal of life, they understood, is Self-Realization. That is indeed why the human race was created: to realize the essence of all being in Infinite Consciousness.

Material tools can never fulfill the heart’s innermost desire. Nightclubs, a rising stock market, a traffic-clogged highways can’t fulfil it. Nothing outside ourselves can ever satisfy us for long. Everything disappoints, in the end. Excessive reliance on "toolism" as the means of fulfillment has brought mankind to the brink of self-destruction, whether through atmospheric pollution, global epidemics, or nuclear warfare.

Archaeologists object, " if mankind was highly advanced in prehistory, why haven’t our excavations unearthed the tools that his advancement should have produced?" Their question simply betrays a materialistic prejudice.
Wet cell batteries have been found among ancient artifacts in Baghdad, Iraq. They were recognized as such by Wilhelm Konig, a German engineer, during a visit to the Baghdad museum. A hole, perfectly round, was discovered in the skull of an antelope dated circa 100,000 years ago.

Such a clean penetration could have been caused only by a high speed projectile, such as rifle bullet. Any primitive weapon – a spear or an arrow, for instance, would have shattered the bone.

Evidence has been found of the possibility that nuclear explosions occurred in ancient times. Large areas of vitrified sand have been discovered in the Gobi desert and elsewhere, evidence of such intense heat as might not be explicable otherwise.



And records have been found in India detailing the ancient existence, and construction, of flying machines.

Archaeologists, being human like everyone else, deny this abundance with a sneer. "It can't be so, therefore it isn't so". Napoleon, no bit-part actor on the stage of time himself, described history as " a lie agreed upon ".

My present point, then, is to re-state without apology an age-old belief in India that in ancient times mankind reached a stage when civilization was far more highly advanced than it is at present. Indeed it is amusing to reflect on Mahatma Gandhi's reply to the question, "What do you think of Western civilization?" With a smile Gandhi remarked: "That is a wonderful idea!"

Philosophy, Religion, Science, or – What?

The Hindu Way of Awakening, emphasizes experience over theory, and intuition over logic. Its aim is to inspire the longing for blissful union with God.

When Western missionaries first arrived in India and tried to familiarize themselves with its ancient teachings, they were bewildered by such seemingly impious and presumptuous declarations as, "I am Brahman(God)." Where, in these sentiments, were the traditional sentiments of humility and self-approach? The rishis didn't lament their lives as sinful! They didn't beg for God's mercy. Beg! Quite the opposite, they seemed to expect grace as their divine right. Besides-a lesser point to be sure-where were their religious institutions? their hierarchies of priests? Who, in short, was in charge? In the end, the missionaries decided that those rishis abstractions belonged, not to theology, but more properly to the realm of philosophy. Philosophy, then, surely was the safest category in which to file away their teachings and, hopefully, to forget them.

But India's teachings were not speculative. They were based on divine revelations. Because the statements were so categorical, a few Indians have proposed that they belong in the realm of science. Indeed, the revelations are so cosmic that they approach more closely the findings of physics and astronomy than the pious pronouncements of preachers.

Scientists, however, unlike the ancient rishis, claim no absolute knowledge of anything. Their knowledge is intellectual, and is based on outer experiment rather than on direct inner experience. Science doesn't even consider the heart's feelings and the intuitive aspects of consciousness, without which human understanding, limited to intellection, is like a man hopping along the street on one leg.

The greatest difference between the ancient rishis and modern scientists is the rishis' apparent lack of dependence on tools and technology. True, the rishis made claims so cosmic that even modern physics seems only to be catching up with them, (and realizing, after every scientific break-through, that the ancients were there long before them)". Even as recently as a century ago, the West was still reeling under the impact of the discovery by geologists that the earth was formed eons ago, and not in 4004 B.C. as theologians had determined.

It is human nature to accuse others of any faults one possesses in himself. They accused the rishis of arrogance and presumptuous for claiming to have realized oneness with God. They also concluded, that the Hindus, are a hopelessly pagan people, amazingly resistant to conversion: they hold bizarre beliefs to which no pious person ought to listen.

The missionaries wouldn't face that, when Jesus Christ made the same statement, and the Jews accused him of blasphemy for making it, he answered them that the scriptures themselves make this claim for *everyone."* (* "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" John 10:34) Mystical experience, however, lies outside the power of priests and organizations to control.

The Gnostics of early Christendom believed in seeking personal spiritual experience. For this reason, they were branded as heretics. The Church succeeded at last in suppressing the entire Gnostic movement. So did the Sufi mystics who were persecuted by their Moslem co-religionists.

India, alone, among the great world religions, preserved the deeper spiritual teachings undisguised and undiluted. It was able to do so precisely *because* religion in India was never formally organized. It had no priest hierarchy.

The result has been an excessive diversity in the outer aspects of the religion, but it has also been an extraordinary development of the inner.

India, has accomplished in the field of spirituality what, in the world of finance, the free market (as opposed to a controlled economy) has succeeded in doing: The individual seeker has been left free to explore and develop his own spiritual potentials. Other scriptures have hinted at the deeper truths of inward religion. But the priests in every religion seldom quote those passages, which they rightly see as threatening to their institutional preeminence.

India concealed deep truths behind a veil of symbolism, and offered only the tip of the iceberg, as it were for those earnest seekers to see who might want to know more. Symbolism and outward religion are synonymous. Few people are capable of even imagining transcendental truths. Symbols, for the majority, take the place of that which lies above rational comprehension.

Even the rocks, according to the ancient teachings, manifest a certain glimmering of awareness. This claim has been made by famous scientists such as India's Jagadis Chandra Bose and Germany's Karl Bonhoeffer, both of hwom succeeded in stimulating a response in apparently "inanimate" matter. Their conclusion is that no clear dividing line exists between "animate" and "inanimate" matter.

"God sleeps in the rocks," proclaims the Indian scriptures, "dreams in the plants, stirs toward wakefulness in the animals, and in mankind is awake to his own ego-individuality." God is beyond all possibility of definition. The Bhagavad Gita, the best known scripture of India, states this point clearly: "Though I manifest Myself in all things, I am identified with none of them.

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articles on hinduism

A Hindu Quest for Some Holy Water

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A10141-2003Feb14.html

Attempt to Unearth Ancient Waterway May Affect Indian History and Politics

KATGARH, India -- In a verdant valley amid the foothills of the Himalayas, Hindu villagers prayed in silence and piously threw petals into a small puddle they believe was a mighty river some 4,500 years ago. Not far away, an archeologist leaned over a trench to examine freshly excavated pieces of broken pottery.

"We have found remains of so many ancient settlements here. There must have been a very important river flowing," said Sanjay Manjul, 35, squinting as he held up a piece against the sun. "It must have been our holy Saraswati River."

Manjul is not the only one looking for the Saraswati, which was mentioned in the oldest Hindu religious text, the Rig Veda and which devout Hindus believe disappeared mysteriously thousands of years ago. Dozens of archeologists like him have fanned across the northern Indian state of Haryana in the last seven months to look for traces of the river. A group of geologists and glaciologists, armed with satellite imagery maps and remote sensing data, are studying rocks, glaciers and sediments in the Himalayas, seeking any trace of the river's course.

A heady mix of religion, politics, science and archeology drives their efforts, and the results of the search may not only challenge some fixed notions about the earliest civilization on the Indian subcontinent, but could also confirm fears among India's secular historians that the country's Hindu-nationalist ruling party is trying to rewrite history to suit its agenda.

For decades, history books have maintained that the Indus Valley people, who settled an area that straddles modern India and Pakistan about 3000 BC, were the subcontinent's earliest civilization, preceding the birth of Hinduism. Historians have held that the Aryans, said to be the descendents of an Indo-European race who came to India from near the Caspian Sea around 1500 BC, gave birth to Hindu thought.

Hinduism became the region's predominant religion. Today, 84 percent of India's 1 billion people are Hindus.

That predominance, however, did not prevent India from embracing secularism when it achieved independence in 1947 and enshrining it in the country's first constitution. Ruled by the staunchly secularist Congress party for most of the past five decades, India pursued policies designed to ensure equality for Muslims, Christians and followers of other minority religions.

Nevertheless, many Hindus regarded their religion and culture as supreme. A political force since the 1920s, Hindu nationalism reached the peak of its influence in 1998, when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) formed a coalition government with several other parties. The BJP-led coalition set about a slow but systematic program to place historians sympathetic to Hindu-nationalist ideology in charge of research institutions and to introduce changes in history textbooks in schools.

Last summer, the Culture Ministry appointed a special committee of experts to prove that the Saraswati

was not merely a mythological river, dismissed by historians as nothing more than a figment of the imagination of Hindu sages who praise it as the "greatest of mothers, greatest of rivers and greatest of goddesses" in the Vedas. If the panel succeeds, the birth of Hinduism would be pushed back at least 1,000 years by establishing that the ancient Indus Valley civilization was Hindu in character.

"Saraswati is not only a matter of Hindu faith, but also fact," said Ravindra Singh Bisht, director of the Archaeological Survey of India, who supervises excavation along what is believed to be the course of the river. "The overwhelming archeological evidence of ancient settlements along the course of what was once the Saraswati River proves that our earliest civilizations were not confined to the Indus river alone. Those who wrote the Hindu Vedas on the banks of the Saraswati were the same as the Indus Valley people."

The BJP-led government already has taken steps to make these findings official. In October, it ordered several significant changes in the history textbooks, one of which was to change the name of the Indus Valley civilization to the Saraswati River civilization.

The first real boost to the Saraswati believers came in the 1970s, when American satellite images showed signs of channels of water in northern and western India that disappeared long ago. When popular folk memory was matched with the images, some historians ecstatically claimed they had cracked the riddle of the revered river. In 1998, groundwater experts dug wells along the dry bed identified in the images and they found potable water, even under vast stretches of desert.

"We still need to study the sediments to prove the origin of the river was in the Himalayan glacier like our Vedas claimed," said Baldev Sahai, a member of the Culture Ministry's expert committee, who was the first, in 1980, to use remote sensing data to study the course of the river. "After that, we can proudly claim to be the oldest living civilization and culture with an unbroken link to our past."

Once the entire course of the river, "from the Himalayas to the Arabian sea" is established, the Culture Ministry plans to turn archeological sites of lost cities along the Saraswati into tourist hubs. And water specialists in the government wish to give new life to the Saraswati River, by reviving old water channels.

The Hindu-nationalist government's quest for the Saraswati has split historians along political lines, with some accusing the government of giving a deliberate Hindu slant to Indian history and others alleging that much of Indian history was written from a Eurocentric perspective by British colonizers and needed to be "Indianized."

"Hinduism was not brought to us by a foreign race called Aryans. It was born here on our land. The Rig Veda was composed here on the banks of Saraswati by indigenous people around the time of the Indus Valley period," said Arun Kesarwani, professor of ancient history at Kurukshetra University. "That is why the quest for Saraswati is important. It will shatter all the prevalent theories to pieces."

But many say that history is being distorted to suit the ruling political ideology.

"This is an assault on history," said historian Arjun Dev. "This version of the past is crucial to their political and religious ideology of Hindu supremacy. They will go to any lengths to achieve this -- even put forth a fake, invented past."

"It is propaganda work," said Suraj Bhan, a retired archeologist. "The quest for Saraswati is not about history, it is myth-making."

For the devout Hindus who pray at tiny ponds and puddles, the Saraswati is both a real river and a deity.

"In our hearts we know this is the water of holy Saraswati," said Prem Vallabh, 75, head priest at a Saraswati temple. "We don't need any scientific proof."

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comments on sulekha.com

This is comparable to what Romilla Thapar said in the BBC Channel 4 radio programme on Mystic River Sarasvati: Sarasvati river was there, but then it is hijacked by Hindutva!

Sarasvati is the very embodiment of divinity, a river and a mother who had nourished a civilization. She is va_k, the divinity of knowledge, arts and crafts.

How pathetic these marxists and p-secs are, that they have lost all sense of perspective in evaluating evidence of archaeologists and geo-hydrologists and glaciologists like Prof. Valdiya and Dr. VMK Puri; Hindutva is the big stick which can be used to deny everything about the cultural heritage of a civilization. Blinkers on, the p-secs refuse to face the ground-truth.

I am amused at the intellectual contortions that these eminent historians will go thru to deny historical and archaeological reality. In India the standard of discourse has fallen to such an extent that no longer is it a question of 'is it true, is it plausible ?' but a question of 'who supports it'. Forgotten is the fact that no Hindu (even extreme right wingers) is suggesting that because there was a Sarasvati, that non-Hindus are Children of a lesser God or that India should revert to an era when tehe Sarasvati flowed. The search for the Sarasvati is a search for Indic roots and what is so 'Hindutva' about that ?

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Eons of Hinduism

By Heinrich Zimmer. Edited by Joseph Campbell. "Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization". Pg 11-21)
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0691017786/o/qid=944273421/sr=8-3/103-4559356-3757423

India's treasure of myths and symbols is immense. In the teeming texts and multitudinous architectural monuments eloquent details so abound that, though scholars since the end of the eighteenth century have been editing, translating, and interpreting, it is by no means an infrequent experience to come across tales hitherto unnoticed or unknown, images undeciphered, expressive features not yet understood, esthetic and philosophical values uninterpreted.

From the second millennium B.C. the Indian traditions have been handed on in unbroken continuity.

Since the transmission have been mainly oral, there is left to us only an imperfect record of the long and rich development: certain periods, long and fruitful, are barely documented; much has been irretrievably lost. Nevertheless, though tens of thousands of pages remain in manuscripts still waiting to be edited, the great works already published in printed Western and Indian editions are so many that no individual may hope to cover them in a lifetime.

This inheritance if both prodigious and fragmentary.

The wonderful story of the Parade of Ants opens before us an unfamiliar spectacle of space and throbs with an alien pulse of time. The time and space conceptions of India will at first seem to us of the West unsound and bizarre. The fundamentals of the Western view are so close to our eyes that they escape our criticism. They are of the texture of our experience and reactions. We are prone, therefore, to take them for granted as fundamental to human experience in general, and as constituting an integral part of reality.

The astounding story of the re-education of the proud and successful Indra plays with visions of cosmic cycles-eons following each other in the endlessness of time, eons contemporaneous in the infinitudes of space-such as could hardly be said to enter into the sociological and psychological thinking of the West.

In "timeless" India these extensive diastoles give the life-rhythm of all thought. The wheel of birth and death, the round of emanation, fruition, dissolution, and re-examination, is a commonplace of popular speech as well as a fundamental theme of philosophy, myth and symbol, religion, politics, and art. It is understood as applying not only to the life of the individual, but to the history of society and the course of the cosmos. Every moment of existence is measured and judged against the backdrop of this pleroma.

According to the mythologies of Hinduism, each world cycles is subdivided into four yugas or world ages.

Krita - 1,728,000
Treta - 1,296,000

Dvapara - 864,000
Kali. - 432,000

For the Western mind, which believes in single, epoch-making historical events (such as, coming of Christ, or the long development of invention during the course of man's mastery of nature) this casual comment of the ageless god has a gently minimizing, annihilating effect. It vetoes conceptions of value that are intrinsic to our estimation of man, his life; his destiny and task.

The Wisdom of Life:

It is easy for us to forget that our strictly linear, evolutionary idea of time (apparently substantiated by geology, paleontology, and the history of civilization) is something peculiar to modern man. Even the Greeks of the day of Plato and Aristotle, who were much nearer than the Hindus to our way of thought and feeling and to our actual tradition, did not share it. Indeed, St. Augustine seems to have been the first to conceive of this modern idea of time. The Augustinian Society has published a paper by Erich Frank, in which it is pointed out that both Aristotle and Plato believed that every art and science had many times developed to its apogee and then perished. "These philosophers," writes Frank, believed that even their own ideas were only the rediscovery of thoughts which had been known to the philosophers of previous periods.

This belief corresponds precisely to the Indian tradition of a perennial philosophy, an ageless wisdom revealed and revealed, restored, lost, and again restored through the cycles of ages.

The Greeks had great historians who investigated and described the history of their times; but….the history of the universe they considered as a natural process in which everything recurred in periodical cycles, so that nothing really new ever happened.

This is precisely the idea of time underlying Hindu mythology and life.

The history of the universe in its periodic passage from evolution to dissolution is conceived as a biological process of gradual and relentless deterioration, disintegration, and decay. Only after everything has run its course into total annihilation and been then re-incubated in the boundlessness of the timeless cosmic night, does the universe reappear in the perfection, pristine, beautiful, and reborn. The perfection of life, the human capacity to apprehend and assimilate ideals of highest saintliness and selfless purity-in other words the divine quality or Dharma – is in continuous decline. And during the process the strangest histories take place, yet nothing that has not, in the endless wheelings of the eons, happened many, many times before.

This vast time-consciousness, transcending the brief span of the individual, even the racial biography, is the time-consciousness of Nature herself. Nature knows, not centuries, but ages, geological, astronomical ages-and stands, furthermore, beyond them. Swarming egos are her children, but the species is her concern, and world ages are her shortest span for the various species that she puts forth and permits, finally to die (like the dinosaurs, the mammoth, and the giant birds).

India – as Life brooding on itself-thinks of the problem of time in periods comparable to those of our astronomy, geology, and paleontology.
India thinks of the species, not of the ephemeral ego. The latter becomes old: the former is old, and therewith eternally young.

We of the West on the other hand, regard world history as a biography of mankind, and in particular of Occidental Man, whom we estimate to be the most consequential member of the family. We think of egos,

individuals, lives, not of life. Our will is not to culminated in our human institutions the universal play of nature, but to evaluate, to set ourselves against the play, with an egocentric tenacity.

As yet our physical and biological sciences – which, of course, are comparatively young-have not affected the general tenor of our traditional humanism. So little, indeed, are we aware of their possible philosophical implications that when we encounter something of their kind in the eons of the Hindus, we are left, emotionally, absolutely cold.

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The Dance of Shiva
By Heinrich Zimmer

Shiva, the lord of the Lingam, the consort of Shakti-Devi, also is Nataraja, “King of Dancers”.

Dancing is an ancient form of magic. The dancer becomes amplified into a being endowed with supra-normal powers. His personality is transformed. Like yoga, the dance induces trance, ecstasy, the experience of the divine, the realization of one’s own secret nature, and, finally, mergence into the divine essence. In India consequently the dance has flourished side by side with the terrific austerities of the meditation grove- fasting, breathing exercises, absolute introversion. To work magic, to put enchantments upon others, one has first to put enchantments on oneself. And this is effected as well by the dance as by prayer, fasting and meditation.

Shiva, therefore, the arch-yogi of the gods, is necessarily also the master of the dance.

The dance is an act of creation. It brings about a new situation and summons into the dancer a new and higher personality. It has a cosmogonic function, in that it rouses dormant energies which them may shape the world. On a universal scale, Shiva is the Cosmic Dancer; in his “Dancing Manifestation” (nritya-murti) he embodies in himself and simultaneously gives manifestation to Eternal Energy. The forces gathered and projected in his frantic, ever-enduring gyration, are the powers of the evolution, maintenance, and dissolution of the world. Nature and all its creatures are the effects of his eternal dance.

Shiva-Nataraja is represented in a beautiful series of South Indian bronzes dating from the tenth and twelfth centuries A.D. The details of these figures are to be read, according to the Hindu tradition, in terms of complex pictorial allegory. The upper right hand, it will be observed, carries a little drum, shaped like an hour-glass, for the beating of the rhythm. This connotes Sound, the vehicle of speech, the conveyer of revelation, tradition, incantation magic and divine truth. Furthermore, Sound is associated in India with Ether, the first of the five elements. Ether is the primary and most subtly pervasive evolution of the universe, all the other elements, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. Together, therefore, Sound and Ether signify the first, truth-pregnant moment of creation, the productive energy of the Absolute, in its pristine, cosmogenetic strength.

The opposite hand, the upper left, with a half-moon posture of the figure (ardhacandra-mudra), bears on its palm a tongue of flame. Fire is the element of the destruction of the world. At the close of the Kali Yuga, Fire will annihilate the body of creation, to be itself then quenched by the ocean of the void. Here, then, in the balance of the hands, is illustrated a counterpoise of creation and destruction in the play of the cosmic dance. Sound against flame. And the field of the terrible interplay is the Dancing Ground of the Universe, brilliant and horrific with the dance of the god.

The “fear not” gesture (abhaya-mudra), bestowing protection and peace, is displayed by the second right hand, while the remaining left lifted across the chest, points downward to the uplifted left foot. This foot signifies Release, and is the refuge and salvation of the devotee. It is to be worshipped for the attainment of union with the Absolute. The hand pointing to it is held in a pose imitative of the outstretched trunk or “hand” of the elephant (gaja-hasta-mudra), reminding us of Ganesha, Shiva’s son, the Remover of Obstacles.

The divinity is represented as dancing on the postrate body of a dwarfish demon. This is Apasmara Purusha, “The Man or Demon (purusha) called Forgetfulness, or Heedlessness (apasmara). It is symbolical of life’s blindness, man’s ignorance. Therein is release from the bondages of the world.

A ring of flames and light (prabha-mandala) issues from and encompasses the god. This is said to signify the vital processes of the universe and its creatures, nature’s dance as moved by the dancing god within. Simultaneously it is said to signify the energy of Wisdom, the transcendental light of the knowledge of truth, dancing forth, from the personification of the All. Still another allegorical meaning assigned to the halo of flames is that of the holy syllable of AUM or OM. This mystical utterance stemming from the sacred language of Vedic praise and incantation, is understood as an expression and affirmation of the totality of creation.

A – is the state of waking consciousness, together with its world of gross experience.

U – is the state of dreaming consciousness, together with its experience of subtle shapes of dream.

M – is the state of dreamless sleep, the natural condition of quiescent, undifferentiated consciousness, wherein every experience is dissolved into a blissful non-experience, a mass of potential consciousness.

The silence following the pronunciation of the three, A,U, and M, is the ultimate un-manifest, wherein perfected supra-consciousness totally reflects and merges with the pure, transcendental essence of Divine Reality – Brahman is experienced as Atman, the Self. AUM, therefore, together with its surrounding silence, is a sound-symbol of the whole of consciousness-existence, and at the same time its willing affirmation.

Shiva as the Cosmic Dancer is the embodiment and manifestation of eternal energy in its “five activities” (panch-kriya)

1. Creation (sristi) – the pouring forth or unfolding
2. Maintenance (sthiti) – the duration
3. Destruction (samhara) – the taking back or reabsorption
4. Concealment (tiro-bhava) – the veiling of True Being behind the masks and garbs of apparitions, aloofness, display of Maya,
5. Favor (anugraha) – acceptance of the devotee, acknowledgment of the pious endeavor of the yogi, bestowal of peace.

In the Shiva-Trinity of Elephanta Caves we saw that the two expressive profiles, representing the polarity of the creative force, were counterpoised to a single, silent, central head, signifying the quiescence of the Absolute. And we deciphered this symbolic relationship as eloquent of the

paradox of Eternity and Time: the reposeful ocean and the racing stream are not finally distinct; the indestructible Self and the mortal being are in essence the same. This wonderful lesson can be read also in the figure of Shiva-Nataraja, where the incessant, triumphant motion of the swaying limbs is in significant contrast to the balance of the head and immobility of the mask-like countenance.

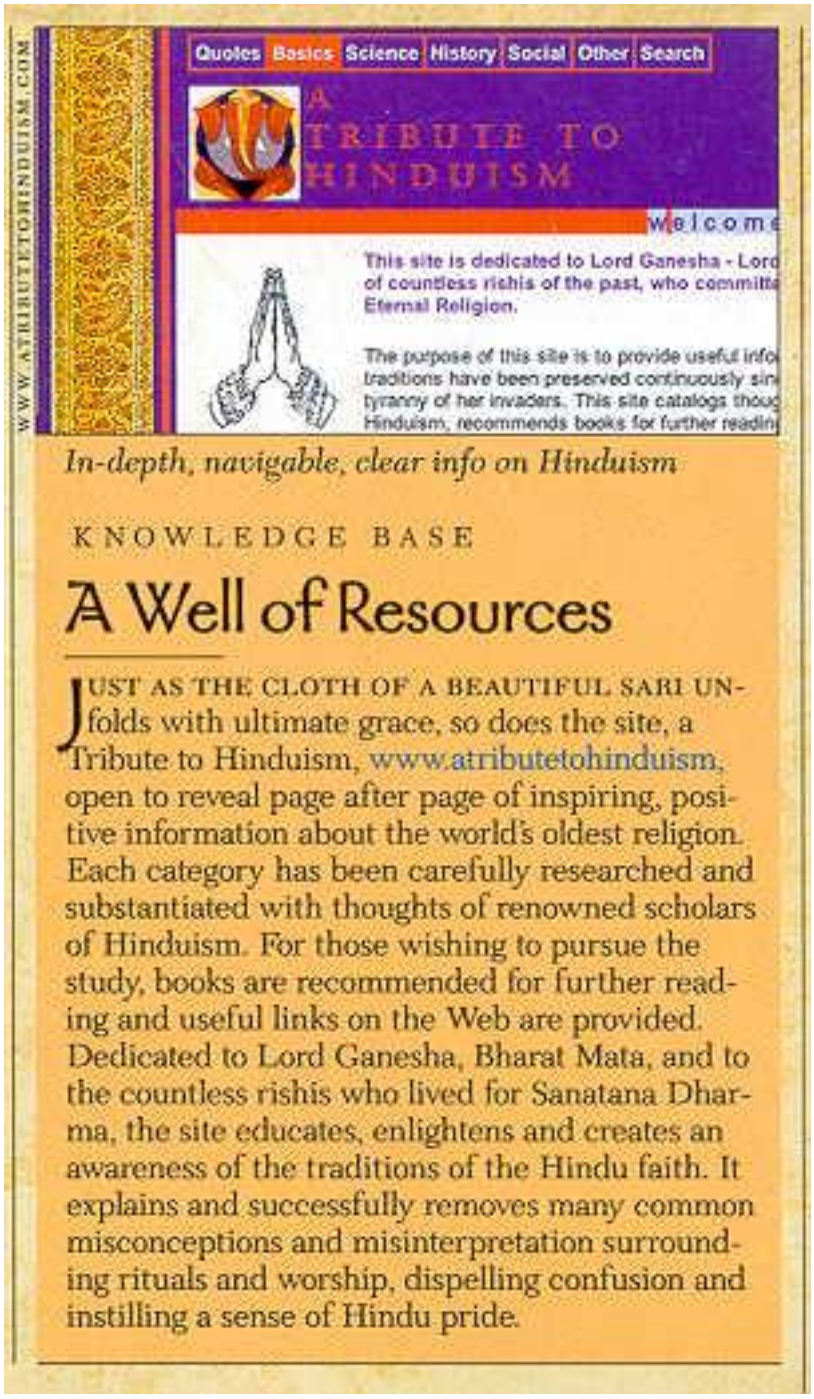
Shiva is Kala, "The Black One" "Time"; but he is also Maha Kala, "Great Time", "Eternity". As Nataraja, King of Dancers, his gestures, wild and full of grace, precipitate the cosmic illusion; his flying arms and legs and the swaying of his torso produce –indeed, they are-the continuous creation-destruction of the universe, death exactly balancing birth, annihilation the end of every coming-forth. The choreography is the whirligig of time. History and its ruins, the explosion of suns, are flashes from the tireless swinging sequence of the gestures. In the medieval bronze figurines, not merely a single phase or movement, but cyclic rhythm, flowing on and non in the unstayable, irreversible round of the Mahayugas, or Great Eons, is marked by the beating and stamping of the Master's heel.

But the face remains, meanwhile, in sovereign calm.

Shiva is the personification of the Absolute, particularly in its dissolution of the universe. He is the embodiment of Super-Death. He is called Yamantaka. "The Ender of the Tamer" , He who conquers and exterminates Yama the God of Death, the Tamer. Shiva is Maha-Kala, Great Time, Eternity, the swallower of Time, swallower of Ages and cycles of ages.

Shiva is apparently, thus, two opposite things, archetypal ascetic, and archetypal dancer. On one hand , he is Total Tranquility-inward calm absorbed in itself, absorbed in the void of the Absolute, where all distintions merge and dissolve, and all tensions are at rest. But on the other hand, he is Total Activity-life's energy, frantic, aimless, and playful.

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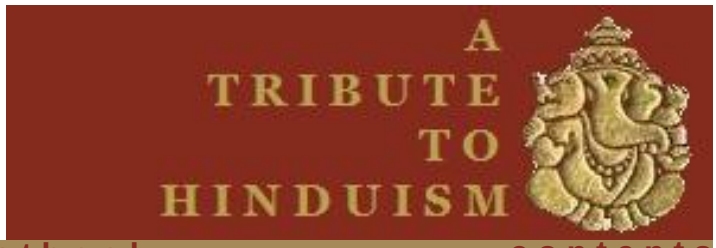


In-depth, navigable, clear info on Hinduism

KNOWLEDGE BASE

A Well of Resources

JUST AS THE CLOTH OF A BEAUTIFUL SARI UNfolds with ultimate grace, so does the site, a Tribute to Hinduism, www.atributetohinduism, open to reveal page after page of inspiring, positive information about the world's oldest religion. Each category has been carefully researched and substantiated with thoughts of renowned scholars of Hinduism. For those wishing to pursue the study, books are recommended for further reading and useful links on the Web are provided. Dedicated to Lord Ganesha, Bharat Mata, and to the countless rishis who lived for Sanatana Dharma, the site educates, enlightens and creates an awareness of the traditions of the Hindu faith. It explains and successfully removes many common misconceptions and misinterpretation surrounding rituals and worship, dispelling confusion and instilling a sense of Hindu pride.



Entries: 860-811

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 12/22/03 - 3:13 PM
Name: Ajit Singh Kalura
Email: ajitsinghk@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Atlanta, USA.
Comments: Mind opening website. Keep the good work going on guys. I'll recommend this website to my other friends. Once again best of luck. Ajit.

Date: 12/21/03 - 2:48 PM
Name: Srinivasan
Email: guus.en.co@12move.nl
Site:
Location: Netherlands.
Comments: Excellent site - rich with information! A must for anyone desiring to learn about Hinduism.

Date: 12/17/03 - 6:37 PM
Name: Doug Cope
Email: drduzzzstuff@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Gainesville, Florida, USA.

Comments: Thank you for going to a lot of trouble to make an education in history available to those who have been raised in the shadow of the book burners. I would be very interested in any further revelations of parallels between the Vedic and Hebrew scripts/history (www.viewzone.com/abraham.html www.veiwzone.com/noah.story.html). Or revelations of codes in the Vedic scripts, do you know if any ones ever looked for them?

Date: 12/17/03 - 2:43 AM
Name: Evelyn
Email: evelyn.ildefonso@chello.at
Site:
Location: Vienna, Austria - Europe.
Comments: I never knew what I have been missing not until I browsed in your wonderful homepage. Gee! Simply beautiful and amazing....very informative and interesting. Keep up the good work.

Date: 12/17/03 - 12:50 AM
Name: Swamiji Balayogi
Email: swamiji@tm.net.my
Site:
Location: Malaysia
Comments: It is wonderful to note the historic fact of the rich culture of Hinduism which was in China few hundred years ago. Religion & Culture breeds love and affection among human being. We were scrolling the web pages for such an enlightening research and happy to be fullfilled today. We look forward for the Chinese Government to earmark Hindu Temple in Republic of China for research purposes. Warmest regard to the Editor. Swamiji.

Date: 12/16/03 - 3 :30 AM
Name: Sreetheran Maruthaveeran
Email: sreetheran@frim.gov.my
Site:
Location: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Comments: It was a very resourceful article.

Date: 12/11/03 - 8:01 PM
Name: Vivek Chauhan
Email: v_chauhan@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: United Kingdom.
Comments: Thank you for a wonderful showcase of Hinduism and Indian culture. Through this kind of dedication and work, Hinduism and its philosophies will live forever….

Date: 12/3/03 - 10:48 PM
Name: H. Krishnan
Email: hkrishnan@india.com
Site:
Location: Mumbai, India.
Comments: Greak Work.

Date: 12/2/03 - 2:54 PM
Name: Shukla
Email: lmg303@yahoo.co.in
Site:
Location: Germany.
Comments: I am inarticulate to put my words for this tremendous work done by you. Here I have one thing more to add (though you have to read and think a little bit deeply as I am expressing what I have concluded and not came across anywhere).This seems more real and an addition to this page. You think of the Einstein's special theory of relativity, and think of Lord Krishna and Arjun's conversation on the battle ground. He (Arjun) said that if you are God, a real God then why don you show me your true face and true you. Then he said that for that you need special vision and eyes, which I am going to give you now. He gave him and what he saw was astonishing...a huge figure of Krishna, and everything (Horses, elephants, chariots, battalion.....what not) was entering in his stomach. Now you think of special theory of relativity which is very impossible to realize but needs special instruments to prove it or you can prove it with the motions of moons. It means that in ancient times it was well known to the Indians about length elongation and mass expansion and traveling ahead of present.(Either you increase your mass, which is by law impossible. You will collapse, or you decrease your mass and size to an electron) and feel the theory. Similarly Hanuman's(monkey God)eight skills in which one is Laghima enables him to reduce to a size of electron and fly or reach anywhere in a blink. This is quite in

consensus with what you have written in the page "Who sees me in all things, and all things in me, he is never far from me, and I am never far from him." Aum.

Date: 12/2/03 - 2:50 PM
Name: Nadira Ramudit
Email: nramudit@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very informative and well put together. A treasure trove for any hungry Hindu enthusiast.

Date: 11/30/03 - 7:10 PM
Name: Bibek Kumar Anand
Email: anand_bibek10@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: Tilkamanjhi, Jawaripur, Bhagalpur, Bihar 812001 – India.
Comments: Excellent and invigorating site, full of insights of our ancient prowess in the field of science and technology, and other well known aspects. Really my soul is so much grateful to your pious efforts, that simply I am quite short of words for expressing myself. Expressing gratitude from the core of my heart - Bibek Kumar Anand.

Date: 11/26/03 - 4:27 PM
Name: Bhikku Pai
Email: bhikku.g.pai@citigroup.com
Site:
Location: New Jersey, USA
Comments: This site is a great resource. You are doing God's work. It's an inspiration to all of us. God bless you.

Date: 11/18/03 - 12:15 AM
Name: Uma Narasimhamurthy
Email: uma_n_murthy@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Seychelles.

Comments: I am extremely impressed with the way you have classified the articles and especially Aryan Invasion Theory, Caste System to name a few. Your website is an eye-opener to many, many. Hats off to your tremendous efforts!

Date: 11/17/03 - 12:57 AM

Name: trsiyengar

Email:

Site:

Location: Mumbai, India

Comments: Oh, if everyone understands the real meaning and ethics of Hinduism in clear, no other religion would fight for its survival on the Earth. May God give the tolerance and understanding the faith to all other Relilgions! trsiyengar http://devoted.to/srivaishnavam

---

Date: 11/15/03 - 2:01 PM

Name: S. Shenoy

Email: Sat081@cs.com

Site:

Location: USA.

Comments: I was particularly impressed, by your section on REVIVALISTS. These are the true patriots and not some of the later day 'mahatmas' and professional hunger strikers.

Date: 11/15/03 - 7:51 AM

Name: Vijay Rawat

Email: vj__vijay@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Indian, working in Kuwait

Comments: Van De Ma Taram, First of all charan-sparsh-pranaam to ShushmaJi, a great person who has done it when rest of us were only thinking about it, building such a informative (for ones seeking information), beautiful (for ones seeking beauty) and a truly excellent site that presents to the world and it's viewers a proud & glorious image of our once a very rich, colorful and beautiful nation. We really need more web sites like this one ... to educate firstly our own people who have lost confidence and faith in their own nation and it's culture, to help our people unite and proudly stand up together and understand the spiritual powers of our ancient texts - the Vedas, Puranas, Bhagwat Geeta ... Jai Hind and keep the flame of knowledge burning.

Date: 11/14/03 - 10:08 PM
Name: D Taylor
Email: dougietabla@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Toronto, Canada.
Comments: India is once again poised to conquer the rest of the world by the sheer power of her wisdom and love. She has repaid her karmic debt and is about to blaze forth in all her glory. Arise, All Indians, Rejoice !

Date: 11/14/03 - 2 :49 AM
Name: Jayant Nilkanth Madge
Email: Jayant.Madge@skf.com
Site:
Location: Chinchwad 411 033, MS, India.
Comments: This is my internet site. It is really an Encyclopedia. May Lord Ganesh and ShriHari shower Their fondest blessings on all of you taking enormous efforts in beautifying such sites. I do not have any more words to express!

Date: 11/14/03 - 2:04 AM
Name: Eezzalorna Bautista Formoso
Email: eza1068@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Manila, Philippines.

Comments: This website is very useful and reliable. The information in this site had helped me a lot in my studies and presentation reports. Thanks a lot. Your site is very interesting. Through your site I felt I have reached India. I love India next to my country. I wish i could personally visit the place in the future, and hopefully could be a community volunteer in some place of India. Once again my thanks to the organizer of this site. MABUHAY…

Date: 11/12/03 - 12:46 PM
Name: P. S. Naidu
Email: psnaidu@excite.com
Site:
Location: Toronto, Canada.
Comments: It is so nice, may your efforts towards this be crowned with glorious success! With Divine love.

Date: 11/11/03 - 11:28 AM
Name: trsiyengar
Email:
Site:
Location: Mumbai, India
Comments: A decent and dedicated site worth to its name. Thank you for allowing me surf these pages. trsiyengar Website: http://devoted.to/srivaishnavam.

Date: 11/10/03 - 12:07 PM
Name: Rakesh K Jindal
Email: jindalrk@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: New York, USA.
Comments: Awesome work!! done by you. You deserve the higehst appreciation and praise. Keep it up Rakesh.

Date: 11/6/03 - 3: 33 PM
Name: K. Bundoo

Email: punjabi_angel122@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: California, USA, North America.
Comments: Thank you very much for this wonderful page. It provided me a ton of information. Everyone must have put lots of effort into finding all these articles.

Date: 11/5/03 - 5 :15 PM
Name: Raj Sadanand
Email: raj0425@indiatimes.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: I am so proud of your work. After going through your pages I indeed feel very proud of myself too as a Hindu.

Date: 11/2/03 - 1:02 PM
Name: Kashyap Desai
Email: kashyapdesai@sprint.ca
Site:
Location: Ottawa, Canada.
Comments: Absolutely wonderful! The site gives ample information on Hindu culture and Hinduism as a whole. I would recommend this site to all Hindus and people of all religions around the Universe.

Date: 10/31/03 - 8:14 AM
Name: Shanmugam S
Email: toshanmugam@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Chennai, India.

Comments: I hope this would be an useful information to share with you. U.S. adopts catamaran technology
http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2003/05/29/stories/2003052904851200.htm
The Hindu International Edition Washington May 28. The United States adopted ancient Indian catamaran-making technology to construct fast ships which were used with dramatic effect in the Iraq war, says a media report. Among the equipment the Americans used to win the Iraq war were 100-feet catamaran ships to ferry tanks and ammunition from Qatar to Kuwait. The ships, built with technology adapted from ancient Tamil methods to make catamarans, can travel over 2,500 kms in less than 48 hours, twice the speed of the regular cargo ships, and carry enough equipment to support about 5,000 soldiers, the Wall Street Journal reported yesterday. Having a shallow draft, the boats can unload in rudimentary ports, allowing troops to land closer to the fight. - PTI. (Note: For more on this topic please refer to chapter on Seafaring in India).

Date: 10/30/03 - 10:46 AM
Name: Samit Roy
Email: samiroy99@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Mumbai, India.
Comments: It is a wonderful site. A great historical and cultural experience. Recommended for every one to know the glory of Hinduism. It is a very nice site. One of the best that I have ever seen so far. I want you to publish about Hindutva, nationalism, Savarkar, bjp/vhp/rss, and present Indian politics on why we need a Hindu nation. Also publish about Ayodhya's fact with the help of ASI report. Hindutva is not anti-minority or anti-Islam. It is simply a cultural nationalism. Hindutva is humanism.

Date: 10/29/03 - 6:22 PM
Name: Aaryaman Singh
Email: aaryamansingh@yahoo.co.uk
Site:
Location: India.
Comments: Indeed, a very laudable effort! This website condones my pride in being born in India and I pray that I will be born again and again and again - always an Indian!

Date: 10/27/03 - 12:29 PM
Name: Kanwarjeet Singh

Email:
Site:
Location: Louisville, KY USA.
Comments: Wish you all a very happy Diwali. I just moved to Louisville a few weeks ago and was really impressed to be at the Diwali celebrations at the local Hindu temple. I must commend the work of all the people who have taken efforts to build such an impressive structure and are making constant efforts to keep the community together - their work makes us feel proud. *** This is in response to the comments by Bharat and Avinash Rai on 9/9/03. Hey, friends, I appreciate you holding the Sikhs in high esteem and feel honored - however I have to make some corrections to your comments: A) Sikh religion is distinct from Hinduism and has not branched out from it. B) Sikhs were not created to protect Hindus from Moslems - as you bluntly put it - rather Sikhs were created to protect the right from wrong irrespective of whether you are a Hindu, Moslem or even for that matter a Sikh. By the way I am not a Hindu but am proud to be a Indian and of India culture and heritage. No offense intended. God bless. With warm regards and best wishes Kanwarjeet and Sonal. (Note: for Sikh-Hindu relations, please refer to chapter on Glimpses IX).

Date: 10/25/03 - 11:35 PM
Name: Rick
Email: rs2800@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Everett, WA. USA.
Comments: Happy Diwali Everyone!

Date: 10/23/03 - 4:00 AM
Name: Srinivasa Reddy Kapidi
Email: srinivas.kapidi@ecomenable.com
Site:
Location: Vadodara, India.
Comments: Thanks for providing good articles and good knowledge bank of our history.

Date: 10/22/03 - 4:11 PM
Name: Arun Kumar Garg
Email: ak_daiict@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: India.

Comments: This is a very nice site. What I found lacking on the Internet is that the Indian literature is not available. Whatever literature is available is mostly by Western thinkers and is not pure. We all must make an effort to conserve and make available this rich heritage to the whole world. I think world is one day going to realize the nobility of Hinduism and thus man will achieve peace within and outside himself.

Date: 10/22/03 - 8:41 AM

Name: Sneh Soni

Email: sonisneh@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: United Kingdom.

Comments: How enlightening! What a positive experience I have had reading this material. I am proud to be a Hindu woman. THANKS.

Date: 10/21/03 - 10:35 AM

Name: Nicolas

Email: nic@satchidananda.de

Site:

Location: Berlin, Germany.

Comments: Thank you for such a beautiful and knowledgeable website.

Date: 10/20/03 - 4:49 AM

Name: Ashok Krishnan

Email: ashokkris@indiatimes.com

Site:

Location: Bangalore, India.

Comments: I may have overlooked it, but I could'nt find a reference to Suniti Kumar Chatterjee's "India and Ethiopia" in your pages. You may wish to include it in your section on India and Egypt. Congratulations on constructing a fine resource for students of Indology everywhere.

Date: 10/15/03 - 10:20 PM
Name: Rob Jones
Email: thedanceofshiva@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Columbus, Ohio. USA.
Comments: I offer much gratitude towards you, for such a wonderful and informative site. Even as a Westerner, my life has always been touched by the East. Hinduism in particular has been more than an interest. It abides in my heart. Thank you for providing an enormous reference center of knowledge. I will be visiting this site quite frequently.

Date: 10/14/03 - 10:44 PM
Name: Dinesh Mohan Raturi
Email: jhangora@elvis.com
Site:
Location: Suwon, South Korea.
Comments: Namaskar Sushama Ji, This is a great one. Very happy to find it. I will return back many times and also recommend it to my friends. Great Job. I am at a loss of words to praise your marvelous work. Regards, Dinesh Mohan Raturi.

Date: 10/12/03 - 8:25 AM
Name: Alok Akolkar
Email: alok_akolkar@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Pune, India.
Comments: The Site is wonderful. It covers all the aspects which encompasses Hinduism i.e Sanatan Dharma. Ek marathi mansani lihilele pahun ajun anand zhala. Different ideas which I had about Hinduism are very well depicted in the site.

Date: 10/9/03 - 7:44 PM
Name: Amar Ramessar
Email: amar_ramessar@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Guyana, South America.

Comments: This is an absolute fantastic site. The information i received on the caste system alone is unparalleled to the other sites i have visited. My most profound commendations to the individuals who are responsible for maintaining the site. JAI SHRI RAAM.

Date: 10/8/03 - 5:42 PM

Name: Dial V. Gidwani

Email: sindhulogy@aol.com

Site:

Location: 1740 Ridge Avenue, Evanston Ill 60201. USA.

Comments: Sushama, Congratulation. This is a great website to educate our children/Elders and everyone. TRUE HINDUISM. I invite you to visit website www.sindhulogy.org. The founding Directors established this organizaion to promote awareness of Indus & Saraswati civilization Globally. The movement is gaining momentum. Our book distribution program RETURN OF ARYAN to the libraries in the US has been very well received. 2) AIS's school program 3) Field museum Exhibition plan. I welcome your comments/suggestion. Dial V. Gidwani - Founding President.

Date: 10/8/03 - 8:57 AM

Name: Rahul Joshi

Email: rahuljoshi31@rediffmail.com

Site:

Location: Noida, India.

Comments: Absolutely brilliant! I was searching for SOMETHING on Dwarka and here it is.... EVERYTHING. I haven't gone through the whole site yet but I sure will. I am no Scholar but a Believer and this site is definitely a Helper. Keep up the good work!

Date: 10/7/03 - 10:40 AM

Name: Indra Jainandunsing

Email: angelindra@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Comments: This is really a great site. I've learned sooooo much! All this information has changed my way of thinking and my actions. Good job.

Date: 10/2/03 - 4:19 PM
Name: Ajay
Email: ajayosho@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: Wonderful introduction to Hinduism. Thank you for putting it together and sharing it.

Date: 10/2/03 - 9:01 AM
Name: Dr. Ramachandra K.Pudupakkam. M.D.
Email: seetha@wcoil.com
Site:
Location: Ohio, USA.
Comments: Outstanding and very practical information. I hope everyone will read, understand and follow our vedic scriptures. Keep it up. Dr. R. K. Pudupakkam. M.D.

Date: 10/1/03 - 3:38 AM
Name: Abhishek Kapoor
Email: abhishekapoor@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Mumbai, India.
Comments: Absolutely fantastic. Over the years the true meaning of our scriptures and idols has been shrouded with so many theories but finally this web site clears all of it and helps us understand the true and indepth origination of hinduism. one cannot express the amazement one feels when you begin to comprehend the brilliant genius of the rishis and sadhus who actually put this together so many thousands of years ago. superb job. keep up the good work and I hope this web site makes a difference to the world.

Date: 9/29/03 - 8:53 PM
Name: Harish Gupta
Email: hari_gupta@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Bangalore, India.

Comments: A heart warming and wonderful website. With best wishes and much admiration of what you have done. God bless and keep up the great work!

Date: 9/22/03 - 12:22 PM

Name: Jenni

Email:

Site:

Location: Louisville, Kentucky USA.

Comments: This is a really nice website with lots of information; it was helpful for my project on Hindu culture. Keep up the good work!

Date: 9/21/03 - 3:07 PM

Name: Rupa K. Modi

Email: Rupita@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: PA. USA.

Comments: A lovely, lovely site ... amazing. Thank you for he who passed this, as I will continue to pass this along to the young, the old, and to many many souls for upliftment. Thank you!!

Date: 9/19/03 - 4:44 PM

Name: Nassir Hudda

Email: nassirhudda@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Toronto, Canada.

Comments: I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your excellent web site! " My very humble Respect and a Tribute to Hinduism ". Please Kindly Keep Up the Good work! Loka Samasta Sukhi nav Bhuvantou.

Date: 9/17/03 - 8:50 PM

Name: prateek

Email: prateek021@yahoo.co.in

Site:

Location: Hamilton, New Zealand

Comments: Its really great to read such appreciation about Hinduism from western world. and I'm feeling proud to be a Hindu. Finally someone has done amazing work to get this stuff together.

Entries: 860-811

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

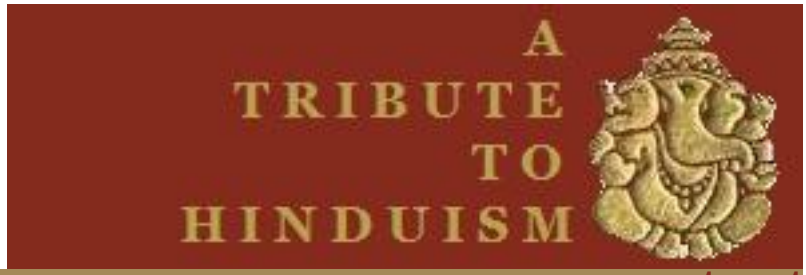
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home guestbook contents

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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002



Entries: 810-761

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 9/15/03 - 10:07 AM

Name: Radhakrishna

Email: aruna_kumarin@rediffmail.com

Site:

Location: Hyderabad, AP India.

Comments: It is excellent!! I cherish that every Indian must know about the true culture and heritage of India. Government should see that our history is properly inducted into the text books. I also wish many Indians look at this site and learn about our religion more and tell their children. I wish you all the best and May god bless you for doing this great work.

Date: 9/13/03 - 12:56 AM

Name: Avinash J Rai

Email: avinashjrai@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Texas, USA

Comments: This site simply made me ecstatic. It is vindication of all that I have known for long. Everything about our glorious Hindu past, our contributions to the world (which have conveniently been forgotten or has been claimed by other cultures) and especially Islam's despicable effect in India. Regarding the present...the following says it all - (from Islam's Other Victims: India By Serge Trifkovic FrontPageMagazine.com | November 18, 2002) "Nowadays, the Indian equivalent of political correctness downplays Moslem misdeeds because Moslems are an "oppressed minority" in majority-Hindu India. And Indian leftist intellectuals always blame India first and hate their own Hindu civilization, just their equivalents at Berkeley blame America and the West." This thought has affected so much of our younger generation, it is devastatingly sad to see that they do not understand that thinking like a leftist intellectual will surely see the decline of our great religion, Hinduism. I, as a young man, educated and raised in countries outside India, will do everything I can to ensure that this does not happen. Personally I feel that we must unite with Christians and Jew and other 'sister' religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, etc. to save India and the world from Islamic extremism. I hope with the blessings of all our Gods and Goddesses, we can all, someday, accomplish the restoration of the greatness of India. Jai Hindustan!

Date: 9/12/03 - 1:26 PM

Name: Sunita Lal

Email: sunita@thevedicfoundation.org

Site:

Location: Austin, TX - USA.

Comments: My compliments on your site. The passion with which you have researched topics and provided extensive details on every topic is admirable. I belong to The Vedic Foundation which is a non profit educational organization focusing on "Re-establishing the Greatness of Hinduism" I would like to send you a complimentary Book "The True History and the Religion of India" light on, which can substantially add to your site's topics.and point you to a few of our articles and factoids, that this literary work sheds I have no doubuts you will value the writings of His Divinity Shree Swami Prakashanad Saraswati who has authored this book. After your review of our sites and Book, I would also like you to add our websites and this Book to your recommended list links. Our site address is www.thevedicfoundation.org and the Book website is www.authentichinduism.org. Please check them out. I look forward to heairng from you. If we can in any way join hands and together propagate the same message we will all be stronger for that. Great site. Great work. Sunita.

Date: 9/12/03 - 11:22 AM

Name: Vishwanath

Email: vishi_ds@indiatimes.com

Site:

Location: Bangalore, India.

Comments: hi, I am really a fan of Indian Science & Math, so I am looking for a site which provides me contents regarding that, so I got all the information from your site that I am looking for. I have a small club regardign ufo/aliens, interested visitors can see following link: clubs.indiatimes.com/clubs/ufoclub Thanks for hosting such a good site for us Indian and others. Vishwanath.

Date: 9/9/03 - 4:58 PM

Name: Bharat

Email: info@theagnigroup.com

Site:

Location:

Comments:

In response to Mina... right on young lady... anybody who read the excellent letter in Asian Voice recently, by a Hindu youth about the goings on in Bradford and the victimization of Hindus there has to ask themselves one question... are we, descendents of a culture that predates any other, going to stand for the offense that is propagated against us each and every day?. Or do we use our educational, economic and cultural clout to show those guys in Government that Gandhi did not suffer in jail for nothing. That enough is enough, the time of the Great Saint is over, he has done his part and the time of Arjun is upon us. And Arjun was a divine warrior. Our youth, especially the girls, have to resist the cultural genocide that is being carried out by the Muslims and the Christians. On God's earth there is a place for us all – let's us not forget that, but do not, turn away from your own kind just because your parents have no idea of what Hinduism means. To the parents, stop trying to keep up with the Patels and start teaching your kids the grandness of our divine culture (and you might have less head holding when your precious little daughter runs away with a Muslim/Christian whatever, who has paid her more attention then you have), to the Hindu young men (and I include Sikhs in this, as Guru Nanank founded the Sikh religion to protect us from the Muslim hordes... we owe the Sikhs a great deal), stand up throw away your backward base ball caps and your patois, that is not your culture, research and rejoice in a culture that has endured over 10,000 years and given the world so much (look at this site itself) - 50 Cent and TuPac are not gonna teach you anything new... and to the Indian middle class professionals... put down your wine glass and stop the wholesale criticism of your heritage, and have the courage of not being a coconut and aping the White Man's ways (too many Indians died in the World Wars - oh did you not know that Indian solider were the first to storm Italy and were massacred by the Nazi's - and the struggle for independence for you to insult them in this way) Be proud of your own culture. A lot of you might hate me for what I have written, even more will not care and write me off as just another fanatic - but you know what - I could not care less. I am a Hindu, I am English (I was born in England, I even had an English nanny and God forbid... I have white and Muslim friends), I am proud of my culture and my religion, I love football and I listen to rock music... but when the chips are down, when the words have been spoken and the music has ended... I stand alone in the darkness and I realize who I am and I am proud I am product of my Mother, Bharata-Mata and no one will ever take that way from me. Jai Hind! and let the message of peace (that is inherent in the Vedas) reach around the earth. Many people say that religion is the cause of war, no its man's ego-driven interpretation of religion that is the cause of war.

Be Proud; Be Hindu: Be the best that you can be!!!!

Date: 9/9/03 - 12:21 AM
Name: High School Student
Email:
Site:
Location: Kentucky, USA.
Comments: I am in the process of doing a report for school and I came across your site. It is probably the best one yet that had as much information and is very well put together.

Date: 9/8/03 - 7:27 PM
Name: R.N.Tripathi
Email: rntripathi@aol.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: Dr Paul Brunton's dates need to be corrected as it shows "1989-1983" which is anachronistic. Thanks.

Date: 9/7/03 - 8:20 AM
Name: Purnachandra Rao Narra
Email: purnanarra@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Vijayawada, AP India.
Comments: It is rather a pity I came to know of this site so late. It is great and connects us with past glory so effectively and factually. I suggest each and every Hindu to browse through it and get enlightened. Thanks a lot for sponsoring such worthy site.

Date: 9/4/03 - 11:56 AM
Name: Ajay Shah
Email: ajay_shah@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Banglore, India.
Comments: This site transcends all others on the topic of not only Hinduism, but Indian culture as well. While other sites fail to think outside of the box created by paranoid Christian European imperialists, this site goes above and beyond that boundary, and presents our history in a truthful and inspiring manner. The webmaster deserves a lot of credit and thanks from every visitor!

Date: 9/1/03 - 1:11 PM
Name: Mina
Email:
Site:
Location: United Kingdom
Comments: I like coming to this site to clarify information especially after reading the garbage churned out by those with ulterior racially biased motives. We are witnessing the 'westernising' of hinduism in all its forms. You have books on yoga which now state that yoga has nothing to do with Hinduism, the buddha was from the west and dravida is a race...! I think India has been hijacked by the various ego maniacs over centuries; this time around it is Mcdonaldization and Gates coupled with the punjabization (mughal mentality) of India. We hear about the aryans as if they were a 'race' of people...not so...most likely the explanation for the differences in people in India is due to the equator,climate and geographical location. The hindus of the punjab and kashmir may actually not be the offspring of hindu ancestors but of muslims who converted to hinduism from neighbouring countries and mixed with the locals thus accounting for their lack of pigmentation and culture. We need to break free from the shackles of ignorance and endeavour to seek out the truth.

Date: 8/28/03 - 11:30 AM
Name: Miller
Email: themill@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Middle of Nowhere.
Comments: I found your website very informative and well-constructed. Your section on Vimana is especially intriguing. I was deprived of all of this information during the course of my education, and I thank you for making it available to all of us.

Date: 8/26/03 - 2:27 AM
Name: Prakash.K.M
Email: prakashrrl@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: Trivandrum, Kerala India
Comments: It is mentoned that Dwaraka was given to Krshna by Samudra deva. But the history of dwaraka says that it was land of hunter ekalavya. How does the land of Ekalavya got to samudra deva. Was there any war happened between samudra deva and ekalavya or does eakalavya given it to samudra deva? Kindly clarify the doubts. Prakash.K.M

Date: 8/24/03 - 12:43 PM
Name: kanubhai nanulal thakar
Email: hemszone@yahoo.co.in
Site:
Location: surat, gujarat India
Comments: i was working as a priest in canada for 3-4 years. i know all type of religious holy work. contact me for performing any type of religious ceremonies. thank you.

Date: 8/23/03 - 2:35 PM
Name: Sajith Chandran
Email: sajith_chandran@redifmail.com
Site:
Location: India.
Comments: Great India and Hindus. The site is a great tribute also. please update me.

Date: 8/22/03 - 9 :03 AM
Name: Saket Soni
Email: saket_soni75@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Leicester, UK.
Comments: || Ram || Brilliant Site. Love it. Very detailed and full of information. One of a kind. Jai Siya Ram.

Date: 8/14/03 - 7:08 PM
Name: Sudhakar GNVS
Email:
Site:
Location: Bangalore, India.
Comments: Itz really the 'need of the hour'. Very happy to see details of many truths which I faintly know.

Date: 8/8/03 - 1:41 PM
Name: Rani
Email: ranivunnam@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: New York City, NY. USA

Comments: I stumbled into this website accidentally and I am hooked to it since then. Thank you very much for doing such an invaluable service to hinduism and people in the world at large. Every article is informative and extremely interesting. Keep up the good work and may lord Krishna give you more and more energy and keep you in good health. Rani

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Date: 8/5/03 - 7: 03 AM
Name: Casper
Email:
Site:
Location: Denmark.
Comments: This is a great site, which I have learnt alot from, keep up the good work! best regards Casper.

Date: 8/1/03 - 3:09 PM
Name: Srinivasa Raghavan
Email: raghavan_vs@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Madras, India
Comments: This is a wonderful site. It really makes me feel proud of India and proud of being a Hindu. I like especially the Quotes section, and it is really very inspiring.

Date: 8/1/03 - 1:25 PM
Name: R.Soma Varma
Email: soma_varma@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Bangalore, India.

Comments: I appreciate very much the amount of effort you have put in and the information made available. It will be educative for all interested in understanding the facets of a tolerant humanism which is very much required in the present era of cut throat competition to make the fastest buck! Thank you. I am also enlightened by visiting the site. I am sure it will be an eye opener for many more.

Date: 7/30/03 - 9:39 AM

Name: Rakesh K Jindal

Email: jindalrk@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Detroit, MI USA

Comments: Jai Sri Ram, I been introduced to this site by one of my friends and after spending 15 -20 mins I found out that it is like ocean which goes deep and deep and never ends. I would like to salute the author of this site for doing such a great work. This site is truly a treasure. I am sure I will visit this site everyday. Great work pal. Rakesh.

Date: 7/28/03 - 3:05 PM

Name: S.Geethakrishna

Email: itzgk@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Chennai, India.

Comments: Madam, Can I get a hard copy of your website. I am ready to send any money for this as the contents of this website is invaluable. If not available please take measures for this, i think by this way we can spread our indian culture and reinvent the wheel of Vedic civilization. thanking you. s.geethakrishna.

Date: 7/27/03 - 11: 07 PM

Name: Nagappan Karuppiah

Email: nagz_84@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Perth, Australia.

Comments: I really like your website. I had similar thoughts of doing a single website which covers from history and culture of India, but have not yet put into work. I salute. This website is what we need to boost Indians. Keep up the good work. Please let me know if I can do anything.

Date: 7/23/03 - 11:05 AM

Name: Cdr bvn

Email: vaidya@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Kochi, Kerala India.

Comments: An excellent work indeed. An eye opener to all foreigners. I wish many Indians look at this and learn about our religion more. I find many foreigners know about this than Indians. I wish you all the best and May god bless all who are doing this great work.

Date: 7/20/03 - 1:25 PM

Name: Seyed Amir Mahmoud Assadollahi

Email: Amir@altern.org

Site:

Location: Ottawa, Canada.

Comments: Thank you for your hard work. I enjoyed your website. I am a political and social scientist, and while I was conducting my research, I came across your website. Your website has valuable wealth of well referenced information in which should be recommended to all seekers of knowledge. I am conducting my research on similarities between cultures, and amongst many things that I do my research on is discovering the similarities between philosophies, religion, customs, and behaviours. I am not a religious person, but I have my own way of spirituality in which is unique to me. However, although I lack the fellowship of belonging to a particular religious front, I have discovered my own philosophy of life. Certainly some aspects of Hinduism philosophy is imbedded in my values as do other philosophies values can be found in my own way of understanding of things. I am in a belief that we as human beings all share one-thing or another in common with each other; and thus to end the conflict and prejudice amongst ourselves we have to focus on those similarities rather than the differences. My research is about gathering scientific evidence on the historical links amongst the contemporary nations, and interestingly your site provided me with some unique information that I was searching for. You website is well organized and maintained. I wish to thank you for your hard work and valuable information that you have put together. Sincerely, Seyed Amir Mahmoud Assadollahi.

Date: 7/17/03 - 3:21 PM

Name: Anu (Erin Diane Jackson)

Email: Irishedj@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: New Mexico, USA.

Comments:

Thank you for such a beautiful and knowledgeable website. I am a 41 year old, single, American woman of Native American Heritage and have been studying and living Hinduism for the past 3 years. A detailed and systematic history of Indian Culture remains yet to be written. But there is hardly any doubt that. before it can be successfully undertaken continued spade-work is necessary in various fields of study. The cultural history of a people is no less complex than its political one, and it becomes all the more so when it extends through long centuries and represents the outcome of diverse currents and cross-currents of forces. The study of Natha and Siddha sects is a preliminary to a thorough study of mediaeval Indian Thought. Even this study has its different aspects. And it may be hoped that the subject, will be taken up for investigation and an attempt will, be made to throw light on the many obscure issues involved. My own recent writings include those on the chakra systems in the tantrik traditions. There are more systems of chakras in the tantrik tradition than most people realise. One of the most ancient appears in chapter nine of the Kaulajnana Nirnaya, attributed to Siddha Matsyendranath. Said to be the progenitor of the Kaula school of tantra, this chakra system is eightfold. Each of the lotuses has eight petals and these represent the 64 yoginis, famed in Kamarupa. "The letter ksa is in the Brahmarandhra, la in the forehead, ha between the eyes, sa in the mouth, sa in the throat, sha in the heart, va in the navel, and ha in the genitals. Dear One, listen to the collective meditation in these chakra places. "The first of the eight is a celestial eight petal lotus of pure crystal effulgence, a heavenly fire or flame, completely without stain, free from all duality, from the fires of cruelty, devoid even of nothingness. One should avoid perturbation and practise equipoise (Sama) consciousness. One my see even beyond the future, one with the endless circle of time, having knowledge of what is spoken at a distance, able to both grant boons and to paralyse, with the ability to seize and subjugate pashus, or to destroy or to kill them, mortal, always truthful, and in equipoise, becoming eloquent, a Siddha, and able to do anything. "One should meditate on the second as having eight petals, as bright as a beautiful pure flame. One conquers death and becomes the cause of great excitation. Meditating one-pointedly on this multi-fold form one becomes an emperor amongst kings, doing whatsoever one wills, and may destroy all in the three worlds, whether animate or inanimate - like Kruddha, the cause of both creation and dissolution, always engaged in love. "The third great chakra is the deliverer from the nine tattvas. After meditating on the Guru in that chakra for six months, one my achieve whatever is wished for, destroy old age, be able to see at a distance, able to obstruct, even if one hundred yojanas distant. In a

lonely place one should meditate on that multi-fold form. "The fourth chakra is the cause of peace, increasing happiness and pleasure. By always meditating on it, afterwards one becomes immortal, eloquent, victorious over death and disease. Practising it daily, one causes death to flee. By continual practice for a period of sixteen seasons on this great chakra, one becomes able to destroy in a day and a night. "O Surasundari, the fifth great lotus has eight petals. One should always meditate on it as being of a smoky colour, then one my shake the three worlds. It causes eloquence and avoidance of untimely death, and allows one to both enslave and paralyse. "If one should meditate devotedly on the sixth royal chakra, fiery, with a pericarp of eight petals, as bright as liquid gold, the cause of Iccha Siddhi, it enables one to see into the future, giving Anima and the other seven siddhis - of this there is no doubt. "Dear Mahadevi, the seventh is as bright as the full moon, auspicious, within the body, bestowing both enjoyment and liberation, destroying fever and death, enabling one to enter into another's body. what may not be done? One becomes the best within a circle of people. "Pretty-Eyed One, the eighth great chakra, adorned with eight petals, gives Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha." It is inspiring to meet someone of your ability and knowledge. Will visit this portal often. Namaste, Erin Diane Jackson (Anuradha) New Mexico, USA.

Date: 7/16/03 - 1:49 PM

Name: Karthik Santhanam

Email: pharmregulations@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Atlanta, USA.

Comments: Respected Madam: One of the best hindu websites i have ever seen. I have a couple of ideas to propagate these information to a common man in India, if you have any thoughts please let me know. If you think this website needs any financial investments to get more people to look at it please let me know, i will be glad to do it. May god bless people like you to the fullest extent. Karthik

---

Date: 7/16/03 - 7:04 AM

Name: vishal deshpande
Email: vishaldeshpande4@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Mumbai, India
Comments: This is one of the best site for resources on Hinduism. This kind of site was BADLY NEEDED. Hope it gets the highest number of hits and people all over the world know the truth about Sanatana Dharma - eternal way of life.

Date: 7/14/03 - 5:52 PM
Name: Shah Bari
Email: shah_bari@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: San Diego, USA.
Comments: I liked your web page. Please keep up the good work.

Date: 7/11/03 - 3:02 AM
Name: jothisan
Email: jothisan_1@hotamil.com
Site:
Location: Chennai, India.
Comments: Site is realy good and nowhere else we could get these information. It is time to remember our past History.

Date: 7/5/03 - 5:10 AM
Name: Siddharth S Malu
Email: malu@cmb.physics.wisc.edu
Site:
Location: Madison, WI USA.

Comments: Dear Ms. Londhe -- I am sure you have noticed this curious fact, but I thought I'd spell it out anyway: Indians living outside India are VERY enthusiastic about your site, and do not hide their encouragement or excitement at having discovered it; however, Indians living inside India do not seem to appreciate it very well, or, in the very least, are not all that enthusiastic about it. I wonder what this says about us. Maybe we do not learn to appreciate ourselves until we lose touch with our heritage? I would very much like to say that I would not have said anything differently had I been living in India, but I guess it isn't worth a discussion. I must say that I need to visit your site ever so often to remind me of Sri Aurobindo's dream, simply because the reality of India today just makes me angry. I do not have Mahatma Aurobindo's Vision, and perhaps that is why I cannot see anything going right for the one country that has the potential to both save humanity and take it up to its potential. In essence - WE NEED THIS SITE BADLY to remind us. Siddharth.

Date: 6/29/03 - 10:51 AM

Name: K. Thirugnana Sambanthan

Email: shivaperuman@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Tuticorin, India.

Comments: This website is very nice. Happy to see about Arumuga Navalar in your website. Please make a link to my saivism website at www.geocities.com/shivaperuman.

Date: 6/24/03 - 8:12 AM

Name: Goura Nataraj das (Jorge Brand)

Email: nataraj@bol.com.br

Site:

Location: Curitiba, Brazil.

Comments: Great Site! I specially enjoyed the high number of pictures and valuable information on all the subjects.

Date: 6/19/03 - 2:26 PM

Name: S. Geethakrishna Srihari

Email: itzgk@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Chennai - Tamil Nadu, India.

Comments: The most comprehensive website covering almost all essential details which I have found on other sites moreover plenty of information which I have not got from other sites or books. Personally I feel rejuvenated of my religion and ethics. Why cant these made a subject in schools? Why not we Hindus take pride in ourselves? My best wishes to carry this service to Hinduism.

Date: 6/15/03 - 2:17 PM

Name: Dhaval

Email: dhaval.sangani@pathology.ox.ac.uk

Site:

Location: Oxford, UK.

Comments: Excellent site, made me feel proud about being a Hindu. The unopinionated nature of the site must be pointed out . It is a real eye opener, more so for us the Hindus, of our prodigious past and our majestic roots and at the same time our humbleness. I hope the same golden age returns for the good of the world. Incidentally, I would like to point out that the art of "cloning" was known to the Kuru dynasty and there is mention of some kind of a container to split the embryos , which could only have been an incubator (in modern biotechnological terms). This is believed to be the source of 100 sons of Gandhari (clones , split froma single embryo), as no human female is capable of conceiving 100 times(or so) and each time have a successful delivery. So the Ancient Hindus knew the "Cell Theory"!! Pity they did not have a "Nature" magazine to publish in!!

Date: 6/13/03 - 1:53 PM

Name: Katie

Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Great site! I especially enjoyed this section on fables and games. (The first name of Chaucer is Geoffrey, not Edumund, however :).

Date: 6/13/03 - 2:55 AM
Name: Krishna
Email: vmkrishna26@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: India.
Comments: Very exhaustive and thouroughly prepared contents. But at certain places there has been an unnecessary effort to correlate all the findings of the west with the those in Hindu scriptures. For eg: The evolution theory. No hindu scripture supports it. Dasavatharam does not represent theory of evolution. According to the famous Srimad Bhagavatha purana, Varaha avatar is the first avatar and not matsya avatar. So, the evolution theory has no ground or foundation in any of our ancient scriptures. Moreover the contents at some places have to edited further for correctness. Overall a good site which sheds light on ancient India.

Date: 6/12/03 - 11:26 PM
Name: Dr Milind Sathye
Email: milinds@management.canberra.edu.au
Site:
Location: Canberra, Australia.
Comments: A great website!! Keep up the good work. Milind.

Date: 6/12/03 - 8:04 PM
Name: mahendra dev

Email: mahdev@msn.com

Site:

Location: durham, north carolina - usa.

Comments: i am really amazed at the vast material available at a single site. what an effort! i am really proud of you. please keep up the good work. MAY GOD BLESS YOU. MAHENDRA.

Date: 6/12/03 - 3:44 AM

Name: Priya Thakur

Email: thakurpriya912@rediffmail.com

Site:

Location: Bangalore, India.

Comments: Hi, I am a student and pursuing my research studies in Ancient Indian History , Culture & Archaeology. Your site is really very informative and interesting. Keep up the good work.

Date: 6/5/03 - 11:13 PM

Name: Monserrat M. Ocampo

Email: MonserratMO@aol.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Thank you for a very informative site. This would greatly help me in my research pertaining to Hinduism and its relation to ecology and environment.

Date: 6/5/03 - 3:37 PM

Name: Venkata Mangala

Email: venkatamangala@aol.com

Site:

Location: United States.

Comments: This site is very good and is auspicious to look. Please reach as many as possible. I will recommend this as much as possible to both friend and foe alike. Let the friends rejoice and foes learn to shed their hate. I can see glory and fame returning to our culture and civilization, our Dharma, soon through efforts like that of yours. With best wishes. Sincerely, Venkata Mangala.

Date: 6/4/03 - 1:18 AM

Name: Janardan Mali

Email: jrm@bom4.vsnl.net.in

Site:

Location: Mumbai, India.

Comments: I have been studying practical aspect of Bramhavidya with the help of Patanjali Yog Sutras. Some of the Sutras I found are most obscure. I will be grateful if anybody knows of doing Sayam on sutra No.44 and 47 of Vibhuti Pada and will guide me.

Date: 5/26/03 - 8:33 PM

Name: John Inman

Email: jinman@wetherhaven.com

Site:

Location: Sheridan, OR USA.

Comments: Thank you so much for recommending this resource. I will have much to research. My quest is to learn all that I can about the Telangana as my little girl is from the Telangana and I want her to have a complete picture of her proud heritage. I have much to lean and will study these resources and any others that I can find.

Date: 5/26/03 - 11:57 AM

Name: Shyam Ayyalasomayajula

Email: shmkmr@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Watertown, CT - USA

Comments: This is the site I've been searching all these years for. I thank you for introducing it to me.

Date: 5/20/03 - 3:33 PM

Name: rojer adamson

Email:

Site:

Location: KY, USA.

Comments: A very informative site, I would like to become a hindu by following the laws of karma and discover the truth .....

Date: 5/20/03 - 11:24 AM

Name: Sanjeev Joshi

Email: sjoshi@gsb.uchicago.edu

Site:

Location: Potomac, MD USA.

Comments: Fascinating ! Content is powerful, I kept searching your site to see if there was a link to a hard copy version (ie.. book) with the same content.

Date: 5/16/03 - 5:26 PM

Name: Raj Mohanka

Email: rajmohanka@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Boston, MA. USA.

Comments: Very nice website. If possible, please provides links to my 2 websites: http://www.DharmicScriptures.org and http://www.NewDharma.org. Thank you! - Raj.

Date: 5/16/03 - 1:23 PM

Name: Anand Awasthi

Email: awasthi@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Norristown, PA. USA.

Comments: This is wonderful endeavor to put the facts in place. Our history and facts have been battered more brutally by invaders than our lives and souls. It calls for a great effort to put the facts in place and let the coming generation of our country know what great a culture they belong to. Lots of people are doing this work, who will never come to light. We need more collective efforts from our Archeologists, Historians and Media to work on this with zeal. Some suggestions: 1. I too like red colour but I agree with one of the entry that you should avoid using RED colour as this represents is very strong emotions and is not comfortable to eyes. Probably a blue font or a yellow highlight can be good idea. 2. Add some topics on Prehistoric India i.e. new discoveries on Human establishments dating back to 30,000 years to 100,000 years. I am sure this will better support the fact that our culture and values has flourished with time.

Date: 5/9/03 - 9:07 PM

Name: Geeta Gokhale

Email: geeta_gokhale@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: California USA.

Comments: The site is very informative. But I would like to suggest a few things. The red colour is the font is not pleasant for eyes. Instead of that, some light colour like blue can be used. Also it's very vast, so please divide it into more logical chapters.

Entries: 810-761

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

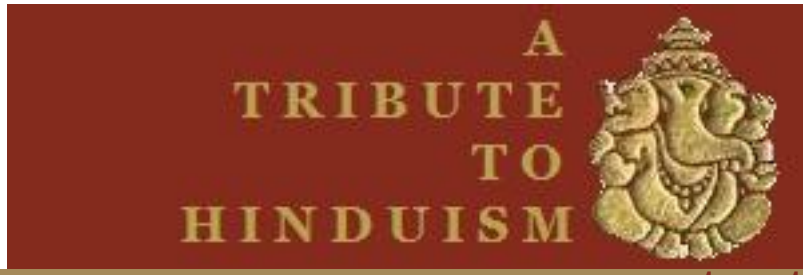
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h o m e g u e s t b o o k c o n t e n t s

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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002



Entries: 760-711

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 5/7/03 - 12:22 PM
Name: Sudhir
Email: gsudhir_rao@yahoo.co.in
Site:
Location: Raleigh, NC, USA.
Comments: It was by chance that I was able to get a look at this website. I am impressed. I have been going through a bad phase for the past one month and this site has re-inforced my belief and confidence. I dont not want to get into the details but I am grateful that I had a chance to go thorough this site. I will be regularly visiting this site for motivation and self satisfaction. Sudhir.

Date: 5/6/03 - 12:22 PM
Name: Swami Murugananda Saraswathi
Email: dharmapracharak@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Thiruvannamalai, India and USA.
Comments: Hariom. Delighted to see a very meaningful site dedicated to the propagation on the loftiest thoughts in Hinduism. I sincerely congratulate the author on the detailed exploration made to correctly capture and plainly portray the oldest spiritual practice. God bless all the noble efforts undertaken. Jai Bharatmata. Hariom.

Date: 5/4/03 - 9:01 PM
Name: Bhavesh Mehta
Email: mbhavesh@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Belgium.
Comments: Oh oh oh. I am really, really surprised that now the site is with lot more content. I visited 8 months back. Congratulations for that.

Date: 5/4/03 - 10:52 AM
Name: shakti
Email: shaktisinh4u@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Jamnagar, Gujarat India.
Comments: This is very good work. Congratulations to you.

Date: 4/23/03 - 3:15 AM
Name: Bedajii Harnesberry
Email: bedajii@cox.net
Site:
Location: America.
Comments: Thank you soooooooo much for this web site. I am a practicing Hindu and have been called upon by my anthropology class to do a report on the Hindu culture. The text that we use in the class is a copyrighted 2000 collection of things from the 1800 to the 1980's. So many discoveries and acknowledgements of Hindu culture has happened since then. I wanted to write a report on how the culture practiced in India today is different from ancient India, and how it is different and most importantly WHY. Textbooks don't like to say people were so much more humane around the world before British colonialism. I wish there was a site like this about African culture that I could draw off of.

Date: 4/22/03 - 5 :10 PM

Name: Santosh Kulkarni

Email: santosh_kool@Yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Mumbai, India.

Comments: WOW. Awesome!!! Fantastic, Superb. It is hard to believe that this was an achievement of a single person and out of personal interest, service and hobby. This site is fit to be a Ph.d thesis or even more a literature that will be cherished and revered forever. My personal compliments and regards for this great achievement. Needless to say you have done a great service to mankind by bringing out the right perspective of Hinduism, as it is known today and hopefully this will be a catalyst to inspire the great minds out in the universe to rise above the human imposed boundaries of religion and awaken to the one truth, The ekam Sat, that will ring peace happiness and prosperity to all mankind. Sushama, I wish you success in your endeavours and may Ganesha bless you.

Date: 4/19/03 - 2:37 AM

Name: Jagan

Email:

Site:

Location: India.

Comments: I think slowly but surely rays of sunlight are beginning to awaken the hindu spirit. If you look at things from a non imperialistic, superiority complex driven perspective the truth will eventually out. Another good site with a wealth of information that should not be ignored is: http://www.megrisoft.com/ because of its network about india.

Date: 4/17/03 - 1:55 PM

Name: Vinoo Ramakrishnan

Email: vin_oo@rediffmail.com

Site:
Location: New Jersey, USA.
Comments: You are doing a great service to Hinduism with this website. Hats off.

Date: 4/17/03 - 7:16 AM
Name: Pratik Dholakia
Email: info@growthmirror.com
Site: http://www.growthmirror.com
Location:
Comments: Congratulation to this excellent site.

Date: 4/16/03 - 3:22 AM
Name: C M Venugopal
Email: cmvenugopal@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Vasai, Mumbai, India.
Comments: My My My!!! What a site! Pity that I came across it by accident. I have yet to go thru fully, but I couldn't help but noting in the guest book. I wish each and everyone Indian, irrespective of their religious affiliation, to go thru your site and understand it's meaning. I wish you should mark it all VHP, RSS and Bajrang Dal leaders. They will do a great service by teaching the rich Indian tradition and about the REAL Hinduism. It is a shame on us that our children are not able to grasp this. a small gesture (the least i can do right now) from me is to recommend ur site to all my friends. God Bless you to do more research and enlighten all of us. I will write to u later, after going through ur site fully.

Date: 4/13/03 - 9:56 AM
Name: Alex Varghese

Email: alex_azadi@yahoo.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Dear Sushamaji, Even though I am yet to completely go through the site, the data collection and the systematic arrangement of the same is just great. Very soon when we are able to recognise the real colours of people, we shall truly value the Supreme Court of India's ruling that Hinduism is a way of life rather than an organised religion as being potrayed. Your site shall go a long way in correcting many misconceptions which many people have. My suggestions shall reach you after a thorough study of the site is over. With Light and Love, Alex Varghese.

Date: 4/11/03 - 5:54 AM

Name: sachin dahake

Email: sdahake99@indiatimes.com

Site:

Location: Mumbai, India

Comments: very good site, regular visitor of the site. also check out www.esamskriti.com for very good material of same kind. jai bharat, jai shriram.

Date: 4/10/03 - 11:17 AM

Name: website design

Email: adv@xponsewebs.com

Site:

Location: Kolkata, India

Comments: Nice web site. Very good designing team. Thanks to the designing , developing team and company.

Date: 4/9/03 - 7:40 PM

Name: Haresh Apanna

Email: hareshapa@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Long Island, NY USA

Comments: I was just wondering if all this infomation on A Trubute To Hinduism is in a book form. If there is a book please tell me how I can get hold of one. If there is not maybe you should consider putting on together. As a Hindu I would be happy to have one. Thanks

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Date: 4/3/03 - 4:01 PM

Name: Guggi

Email:

Site:

Location: France.

Comments: The 'war'...I think it is more like murder should be stopped before we plunge into darkness. I do not believe the false doctines of judaism, christianity and islam have anything to offer humanity as a whole. .... As money is more important to people now a days, should we strike at the root cause of evil? I think answers can be found in sanatana dharma but only for those who are objective and clear headed. Keep up the good work.

Date: 3/30/03 - 11:14 PM

Name: gwen

Email: veganerd@sbcglobal.net

Site:

Location: St. Louis, Mo USA.

Comments: i am wanting to tatoo the word 'ahimsa' in sanskrit on my neck. however i do not want to get it done to find outlater that it was mistranslated. i have a picture, but i am not sure it is correct. can anyone direct me to a plain black text piece of the sanskrit word 'ahimsa.' thank you.

Date: 3/25/03 - 4:25 PM
Name: Puneet Mishra
Email: puneetpost@yahoo.co.in
Site:
Location: Stavropol, Russia
Comments: thats good to read. well done. i wish all my hindu brothers & sisters best of luck, peace, wisdom & bravery.

Date: 3/17/03 - 9:00 PM
Name: Siddharth Savyasachi Malu
Email: siddharthsmalu@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Madison, WI - USA
Comments: Dear Ms. Londhe -- I thought I'd gone through your site earlier, but I am just beginning to discover its depth now. May I please quote from your site on my own website on Bharat? I shall acknowledge all quotes clearly. With Namaskars Siddharth.

Date: 3/10/03 - 9:14 AM
Name: Anon
Email:
Site:
Location: England.

Comments: I come to this site often to enrich my knowledge. It is a great source of inspiration. I do hope others will benefit but I sincerely feel that it will be a long time coming. I recently had a converstaion with a Indian friend who was talking about the marriage of a relative. I asked for description of the male party and her first word was 'fair' ...apparently he was very very fair and as was the bride they would 'look good together'. All the other superlatives followed later. This is a sad reflection of the Indian diaspora in the west but a true one.

Date: 3/8/03 - 9:08 AM

Name: Arno Krimmer

Email: krimmerarno@yahoo.de

Site:

Location: Austria.

Comments: Namaste, I just wanted to say that I am a scientist working on the field of theatre and film dramaturgy - I was researching the last two years on Natyasastra - the holy knowledge of theatre and dance as given from Lord Brahmadeva to Bharatamuni - and I enjoyed your page very much!! It is clear, well structured, offers a deep insight into the Sacred culture of India plus gives a wide range of sources and links. Although I am an European scientist I am a great admirer of Bharat Mata, Mother India. I am truly convinced that time will show that India is the primordial culture, the source of all civilisations, cultures, languages, arts and sciences, that Sanskrit is the primordial language, the Vedas the primordial knowledge, and India not only the Mother of Indians but of mankind. I realized long time ago that the myth of Greece as source of theatre, medicine, philosophy, mathematics etc. is nothing else than a subtle form of imperialism and racism because it was hard for the Western childish Ego to give the appropriate respect to its own Mother. The excavations in Dwarka were an important step in the process of setting things right. I found the kind of tribute European scholars were giving to the Ramayana and the Mahabharata always most cruel. The Ramayana and Mahabharata are the reports of the miracle of God becoming human. This is their unique quality. But Western scholars were praising these two works always as aesthetically absolutely interesting fairy tales. But that would be like telling a devoted Christian that the New Testament is really a very interesting piece of literature, and that, by the way, Jesus

Christ of course never lived. I feel that we are now entering a time were religion and science get agian integrated into each other and that west and east should now - as rabindranath tagore formulated it in his philosophic work sadhana - perform the marriage of humanity.

Date: 3/6/03 - 8:02 PM

Name: Anjaneyulu Tallapaneni

Email: atallapaneni@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Hyderabad, India.

Comments: Dear Madam, I have no words to appreciate your great work for Hinduism and India. I learned a lot of things from your site. My heart melted after reading the Britsher's injustice to our history. We Indians should save our heritage and religion. JAI HIND. Regards Anjaneyulu.

Date: 2/27/03 - 12:27 PM

Name: Uma Barathur

Email: umabarathur@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: California, USA.

Comments: I read with great pride about MOTHER INDIA- and the great education that was offered at HER ancient universities. I am so proud to be part of this great and eternal civilization.

Date: 2/25/03 - 7:11 PM

Name: Chhagan J Dabhi

Email: cjdabhi@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: London, United Kingdom.

Comments: Namashkar. A brilliant site that encompasses the vast religious and cultural heritage of India. Very simple to follow and in depth information with excellent illustrations on every aspect of Hinduism. Highly commendeble work of a true genius.

Date: 2/23/03 - 10:11 AM
Name: rakesh
Email: radhapada_gkg@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: Mumbai, India.
Comments: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.

Date: 2/18/03 - 4:34 PM
Name: Donna n Nelson
Email: drnelson88@msn.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: I found your site while performing research for my World Religion class. It's very informative and easy to navigate. I will return to this site. Thank you.

Date: 2/17/03 - 1:57 PM
Name: Mina
Email:
Site:
Location: United Kingdom.

Comments: I read this article on the BBC website with disbelief. What is happening in India when Hindus cannot express themselves ? http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2743881.stm There needs to be discernment between what is right and what is wrong. Would you find the reverse hapeening in Islamic countries ? Highly unlikely, in fact would you be allowed to live in peace in these countries ? How about banning the cross because of the Ku Klux Klan?

Date: 2/17/03 - 8:40 AM

Name: Venkataramankarthikeyan

Email: globaleximpco@eth.net

Site:

Location: Tamilnadu, India.

Comments: dear sir/madam, I am a free lance journalist and writer. I came across your site. It is excellent work incidentally I was asked to write by a website about some Indian festival that takes place in my in my area. I am enclosing the article that I have written to be shared by our readers. In fact one of the footnotes on astrology (now the west is crazy about how Christianity tried to show its dislike for it) and how it could not do it. Read and enjoy it.

Date: 2/15/03 - 5:33 AM

Name: Bharat Sarollia

Email: info@theagnigroup.com

Site:

Location: London, UK.

Comments: Ladies and Gentleman, we are indebted to our friend Sushma for bringing us together in this forum. After my first posting with regards to creating a TV series on the Impact of Ancient India on the modern world, I have received quite a few emails with offers of help and suggestions. Too all of you I thank you. Now it is a time to take a stand. Are we happy with the way the Hindus and the religion is represented in the world's press? Are we going to stand around and watch the western media print and broadcast one sided rubbish about our great religion to the great unwashed? Are we so tolerant (weak) that we sit by and do nothing but talk?

Date: 2/12/03 - 4:12 AM
Name: Chelvi
Email:
Site:
Location: United kingdom
Comments: Very informative site. How about more information explaining the origin of diet, clothing and the family structure ? I shudder when I switch the TV on and see the utter filth being churned out of Bollywood and India generally.

Date: 2/11/03 - 4:51 PM
Name: Mythili
Email:
Site:
Location: United Kingdom.
Comments: Good site. http://www.bharatvani.org/books/htemples2/app3.htm.

Date: 2/11/03 - 4:51 AM
Name: Kaushik K Bhatt
Email: kaushikkbhatt@yahoo.com
Site:

Location: Vadodara, Gujarat India

Comments: I am really happy and want a copy of your website for learning to new generation...All credit goes to YOU.

Date: 2/10/03 - 11:29 PM

Name: Siddhartha

Email: braveheart_1947@indiatimes.com

Site:

Location: Chicago, USA.

Comments: A truly great website. It opens our eyes to the injustices committed on Hindus. We have withstood so much. It is time to stand up to our adverseries and make them pay for their misdeeds.

Date: 2/10/03 - 2:03 AM

Name: Dr Gautam Sen

Email: g.sen@lse.ac.uk

Site:

Location: London, UK.

Comments: Congratulations, you are doing a splendid job. This site accomplishes more than most of the politicking some of us do on behalf of India and Hinduism.

Date: 2/8/03 - 12:57 PM

Name: Achuthan Choi

Email: tridentact@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Singapore.

Comments: A very comprehensive and well-researched account on the various topics covered. It is surprising, a lot of hard work to be able to produce such an excellent site. An excellent service for mankind, God bless.

Date: 2/8/03 - 10:42 AM

Name: Sojourner

Email: quietman@RespectNature.com

Site:

Location: Isle of Éire

Comments: Your website is truly beautiful. I will visit again many times; so much here to be more fully appreciated. Please drop by some time to read, "The Prophecy of a Unified Theory" Sojourner http://www.rivers2c.com/ave37.htm

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Date: 2/7/03 - 11:54 PM

Name: Stephen Knapp (Sri Nandanandana dasa)

Email: Srinandan@aol.com

Site: http://www.stephen-knapp.com

Location:

Comments: This is a really nice introductory site for Hinduism and Vedic culture. There is a great need to help spread the genuine insights and profound realizations that are available within the Vedic knowledge and understanding. It is refreshing to see someone as dedicated as You are to helping spread such information through the internet and thus preserve, protect and even expand the knowledge and culture. Keep up the good work.

Date: 2/7/03 - 6:04 PM

Name: Meenakshi

Email: holistic-life@yahoo.com

Site: http://geocities.com/holistic-life/

Location:

Comments: Beautiful exposition of esoteric Hinduism and the ancient wisdom which is universal and is acknowledged to be so, by scholars. Worth revisiting to catch all the information! Thank you for your beautiful work.

Date: 2/5/03 - 8:54 AM

Name: Karunakara Rai B

Email: karunarai@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Bangalore, India.

Comments: Excellent!!! Lot of information. I am happy that now it is for all to know more on Hinduism through net.

Date: 2/4/03 - 3:03 PM

Name: Guruprasad

Email: bcguruprasad@lycos.com

Site:

Location: Bangalore, India.

Comments: A great site on various aspects of Hinduism. The site has moved into my favourite list. Keep up the good work.

Date: 2/4/03 - 10:49 AM

Name: Haresh Apanna

Email: hareshapa@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Long Island, NY USA.

Comments: I am so happy that someone like yourself took the time to research and put it all together to enlighten not only us Hindus but all peoples of our great heritage. Thank you very much. Ps I agree with you on the subject of making Sanskrit a must learn language not only in India but to all Indians. I noticed you wrote Krishna and not Krsna the Sanskrit form in here. God bless you and your loved ones.

Date: 2/2/03 - 1:30 AM

Name: Indranil

Email: indranil.nag@med.ge.com

Site:

Location: USA

Comments: Dear Sushmaji, I have visited your magnificent site after a long time,and I am so pleased to see that so much of information has been added to it. I had forgotten the exact name of the site, but I just typed in "hindu culture" in google, and lo, your site popped up, second on the list. This is what I had wanted when I had come to your site, more than a year back. I am so happy that you introduced me to your site. I suggest that you create a group mail, so that new info can be passed on to interested persons. I believe that spirituality is the foremost contribution of India to the world. While all of us involved in so many things , we hardly know about our true self. I think it would be great if you publish on this web page, information related to yoga, meditation, spiritual chakras etc. as well. This wonderful site would then truly reflect the ethos of Indian culture and at the same time, inspire visitors towards self introspection and knowledge. God bless you. Indranil.

Date: 1/29/03 - 5:30 PM

Name: Bharat Sarollia

Email: info@theagnigroup.com

Site:

Location: London, UK

Comments: Namaste Sushma; all I can say that is that you are a gift to all those British Born Hindus who have heard tales of the great culture that was ancient India. I am creating a Television series on the Impact of India on the world and would welcome any comments, suggestions by email. Any one who is interested in helping with the research please send me an email.

Date: 1/29/03 - 12:43 PM

Name: Harish Kr. Sharma

Email: harish_web@rediffmail.com

Site:

Location: New Delhi, India

Comments: A wonderful site overall. I'm spending lots of time in reading and forwarding these articles. Also I would like to draw your kind attention towards another site which is www.swordoftruth.com . A remarkable site which talks about present scenario. If you've found atributetohinduism as a great site then you must go for swordoftruth.com as well.

Date: /27/03 - 3:45 PM

Name: Arvin Shah

Email:

Site:

Location: United Kingdom

Comments: There are lots of people out there who don't know about Hinduism, let them know what Hinduism is really about, disperse the messages you learn from this site to all your fellow friends, Hindu or not. Let the world know what a great religion and belief Hinduism is. Let them hear it. Mail the address of this site to your relatives and friends, let them be proud to be a Hindu as well.

Date: 1/27/03 - 3:19 PM

Name: Sandeep Saha
Email:
Site:
Location: England.
Comments: This is one of the most informative pages which exist about the real truth of Hinduism and any Hindu reading through your site should be proud to be a Hindu and defend their beliefs from the West. Hindus should understand that they are indeed the most socialised civilisation on this planet and should not feel downgraded by other religions. Keep up the good work. OM…

Date: 1/26/03 - 9:48 AM
Name: Archan Kulkarni
Email: archkul@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Nashik, Maharashtra India.
Comments: This was my first visit to this site. I'll visit again and again. Very informative. Iti. Archan.

Date: 1/25/03 - 12:58 AM
Name: ganesh
Email: mganesan2@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: Simply superb and wonderful website which could match and excel the totally sponsored non hindu religious sites. You have done the greatest of jobs yourself scientifically, academically, spiritually with proofs from the east, west, known and unknown scholars and sources. Tens of millions of hindus have been slaughtered thorougout history because they refused to convert or give up their religion of truth . Money, power and women bought the cowards but thank God there are people like you to bring truth to the doorsteps of the sleeping children of god. Keep up your most wonderful work. Its totally amazing that there are souls who are preserving, protecting and promoting Hinduism with utmost enthusiasm and energy.

Date: 1/21/03 - 3:12 AM

Name: Siddharth Savyasachi

Email: siddharthsmalu@yahoo.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: A truly wonderful and well-researched site, right after my own heart and mind. I vainly try to maintain my own webpage, but bow down to yours.

Date: 1/20/03 - 1:10 AM

Name: A. Madhukar

Email: www_2madhu@rediffmail.com

Site:

Location: iisc, Bangalore India.

Comments: i came to know about this site from our yahoogroup. after going through this site i feel more proud of being a hindu. Thank you for ur valuable information.

Date: 1/19/03 - 12:50 AM

Name: Kameshwara Rao

Email: kamesh_y@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Mississauga, Canada.

Comments: Am i a Hindu? After browsing your site my doubts have been cleared and i am now proud to be a Hindu.

Entries: 760-711

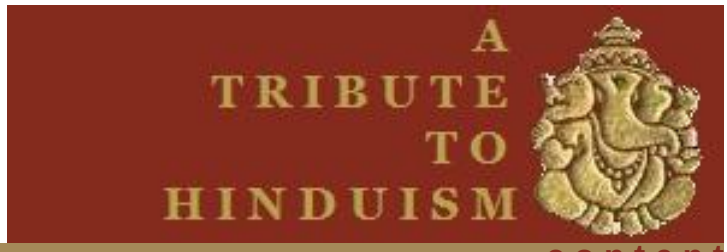
[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002



Entries: 710-661

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 1/18/03 - 3:05 AM
Name: Nem Kumar Jain
Email: nem_jain@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: SLIET, India.
Comments: Respected Sushma ji, Really you have done very much hard work. Its full of knowledge about our ancient Bharatvarsha. All the best.

Date: 1/12/03 - 6:56 PM
Name: Dilip Sarkar
Email:
Site:
Location: Pennsylvania, USA.
Comments: Very, very interesting website with tons of information based on excellent research. Love to support you through monetary contribution. Thanks, Dilip.

Date: 1/11/03 - 7:13 PM
Name: Ramakrishna
Email: tramakrsna@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: United Kingdom.

Comments: Namaste Sushmaji, I really wondered at the great job and research you have done. Especially when I was reading the article on ancient vimanas, it is simply enthralled me. But I believe if someone builds those vimanas now and shows to the world, it would be a miraculous effort. I believe many innovations in modern science are having the basis of vedic knowledge, as many of our forefathers were migrated to different parts of the world with the some vedic knowledge. I would like to know the names of different continents in sanskrit. Dhanyavadh... Vandemataram, Ramakrishna.

Date: 1/10/03 - 7:49 AM
Name: Anand Nerkar
Email: anandner@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Nagpur, Maharashtra India.
Comments: Excellent Web Site! It's a wonderful effort to support our great and ancient religion "Hinduism". Jai HIND, Jay BHARAT.

Date: 1/10/03 - 12:27 AM
Name: Ashwin Jadhav
Email: ashjad@earthlink.net
Site:
Location: Boston, MA USA
Comments: Dear Sushma, I would like to thank you for creating such a wonderful web site which gives information about our great religion and civilization. I am very very pleased to see the web site. Please keep the good work on as it is really making a difference and bring more and more hindus closer to there culture. Today we are faced with a great challenge of false information from the marxist Indian english media. I hope this web site will definetly make an impact. A few good men & women can make a difference Thanks and lord genesha bless you and your family.

Date: 1/7/03 - 12:45 PM
Name: Swaminathan Venkataraman
Email: e_swami@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: California, USA.

Comments: I like your website very much. I want to bring your attention an extract from "Unfinished Journey", the memoirs of Yehudi Menuhin, the great Western Classical violinist about the superiority of Hindustani and carnatic music when it comes to creativity. It is great reading and I think must be a part of your site. http://www.msci.memphis.edu/~ramamurt/icm.htm Thanks Swami.

Date: 1/7/03- 8:50 AM
Name: Dr. D.P.Verma
Email: vermadp@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Patna, India.
Comments: You have collected information in a fine way. The photographs are without caption. This may please be improved.

Date: 1/4/03 - 11:24 PM
Name: J.Persaud
Email: vyas_021@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Toronto, Canada.
Comments: Simply remarkable; by delving so deep and retrieving such valuable gold I hope that this site will be remembered for what it is. Thank you.

Date: 1/4/03 - 6:13 PM
Name: Ricky Sood
Email: rs2800@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Everett, Washington. USA.
Comments: This is an excellent site! I had always known about the greatness of Vedic culture, but I never knew about all the various contributions made by it towards common society. The creators and the researchers of this website have done an exemplary job. Keep up the good work!

Date: 12/28/02 - 6:14 AM
Name: Varishna Tewarie
Email: varishna_tewarie@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: The Hague, Netherlands.
Comments: Namaskar Sushamaji, thank you very much! You have a great site! Keep up the good work! Namaskar, Varishna.

Date: 12/24/02 - 3:22 PM
Name: Naresh Yallapragada
Email:
Site:
Location: Chicago, IL, USA.
Comments: Just Amazing. Incredible.

Date: 12/24/02 - 10:51 AM
Name: Keith Aitken
Email: ka@sitraka.com
Site:
Location: Toronto, Canada.
Comments: Wow!!!! what a great website. I have been fascinated by the teachings of India and this web site will provide a huge wealth of knowledge. Thank you!

Date: 12/19/02 - 10:14 PM
Name: Devanathan Raghavan
Email: raghavandr@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Los Gatos, California, USA.
Comments: Thank you! Just reading a few of the quotes made my day!! Boy, am I proud or what, to be an Indian and a Hindu!!! - raghavan.

Date: 12/18/02 - 1:50 PM
Name: Ravi
Email: greatr_in@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: India.
Comments: I am sorry and angry at myself for coming to know about this site so late. But am glad, very glad that I have. A great site indeed and a must site for people interested to know about Hinduism and ancient India and for the ignorant too. Sincerely hope more people research and give in good inputs for enlightening all of us.

Date: 12/14/02 - 9:28 AM
Name: ashok odedra
Email: frozen_hindu@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Porbandar Gujarat, India.
Comments: Res. Sushama Londhe, I am very happy to know about your site. Thanks. Your Brother - ashok. Please Save Hindu woman and Sign the Petition. Recently, in Bihar, a woman, Kanchan Mishra, who has a 4 year old child, was abducted by local Muslim Gangster Sultan Mia, and forcibly "married" in a mosque. The local party (Rashtriya Janata Dal's) muslim MP later "blessed" the "couple". The husband and the brother of the woman have been threatened with dire consequences if they tried to rescue her. This incident was reported in one paragraph news item. Thats the importance of the Hindu honour for these liberals. www.outlookindia.com/fullpopuptop.asp?fodname=20021202&fname=State+Gazat te&sid=6 Note: please Sign the Petition ; http://www.petitiononline.com/abd45621/petition.html

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Date: 12/13/02 - 8:31 PM
Name: Made Arya Sutawan
Email: aryasutawan@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Indonesia.
Comments: Om Suastiastu, This is one of the most remarkable site i found. A great work. This site give me more clearer insight about Hinduism. In fact, Hinduism is more than religion. It's Sanathana Dharma. Om, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti Om.

Date: 12/12/02 - 7:31 AM
Name: Dr. Raju N. Sagi
Email: rsagi@by4now.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: Dear Sushmaji - accept my pranamams for I determined that the right words did not exist to express minimal gratitude for undertaking and continuing to excel in this monumetal work. Your systematic peeling of the many layers of inferiority driven stench soaked covering rags fabricated by 18th and 19th century neanderthals exposing little by little the essence of 'Sanatana Dharma' is beyond value to the shattered pysche of Bharat progeny. Live long and prosper.

Date: 12/9/02 - 1:57 AM
Name: Dhivya Jairam
Email: dhivyajairam@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Melbourne, Australia.
Comments: This is an excellent site. Thank you. I have re-discovered my roots. If possible, do e-mail me when the site is updated.

Date: 12/6/02 - 4:02 AM
Name: Nitin Naik
Email: naiknitin1@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: India.
Comments: Actually this site is very good. Hinduism is not a religion, it is a culture that tells you how to live, how to speak, how to sleep, how to behave ?

Date: 12/5/02 - 5:02 AM
Name: Vineet Khanna
Email: vk011@india.com
Site:
Location: New Delhi, India.

Comments: This is a very good site and i have liked the information given in this and also i,d sometime like to contribute something to this site. I do have a lot of info. on various aspects of religion and philosophy. I want to ask u that how can i do that . And if any one who likes to talk about this more can mail me.

Date: 12/5/02 - 2:45 AM
Name: Arun J Pillai
Email: arunjpillai@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: India>Dubai>Canada.
Comments: May your effort be for some great cause.

Date: 12/1/02 - 4:00 AM
Name: J E Menon
Email:
Site:
Location: East Med
Comments: An highly commendable effort. Keep up the good work.

Date: 11/28/02 - 1:43 AM
Name: Bhaskar
Email: vellakbx@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Saudi Arabia
Comments: Namaste Sushamaji, A wonderful site on Hinduism. I accidently came into contact on the web. Your work is superb and removes all the delusions on our sacred beliefs and culture which has survived even after immense of brutal foreign attack. No other country has been invaded in the history of the world by foreigners like ours and still the sanatana dharma survives is a msytery. Our tolerance is misunderstood as our weakness, but there is limit for everything and the time has come up to rethink at this time where our sheer existence itself in our own home is questioned. Good luck and God bless you.

Date: 11/27/02 - 3:13 AM

Name: Urvashi

Email: urvashirajkumar@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Chennai, India.

Comments: There is so much misinformation on Hinduism nowadays that this site is a sight for the sore eyes. Sushmaji, there are people with diabolical plans and hidden agendas who have been tarnishing the image of Hinduism and also denigrating the entire community. Particularly repulsive is the site http://www.aiccindia.org. I wanted to post a message in their guestbook but was either refused entry or there was some error. Anyway here is the text of that message. I hope all your readers would take the time to peruse the site and get to know first hand the sinister design that runs through the site and it's links. "Sir, up until now I was quite amused whenever anyone talked of Christian conspiracy, but having perused your website I have become convinced of it. Your selective quoting of news, incendiary articles and provocative analysis runs contrary to your claims of peace loving Christian community. Our country is very ancient and has a rich cultural heritage. Instead of spending time and effort to study and understand it you paint the entire majority community with the communal and right wing insinuations. Missionary and welfare work is not the sole prerogative of the church. Philanthropy and altruistic individuals existed in India much before the birth of Christ. Particularly repulsive was your coverage of the dalit conversion in Delhi. Anyone who watched it knows that it had more political overtones than just social reasons. You have proceeded to scandalize even the IDRF. Do you feel that IDRF should not help the downtrodden? Or are you suggesting that the collected funds should be handed over to you for proselytizing activities under the garb of welfare work. I was under delusion till now, but now am able to comprehend the full contours of the diabolical venture. I am not a nationalist but feel that your heart should bleed more for the country than for anything else."

Date: 11/24/02 - 1:50 AM

Name: Omkar

Email: omk19@rediffmail.com

Site:

Location: Mumbai, India.

Comments: Namaste Sushma, Excellent Work Sushma !! You seem to have put a lot of effort into it !! It provides deep insights into the real nature of Hinduism also reinforce one's faith in it !! Keep up the good work !! I wish there were more people with your kind of enthusiasm !!

Date: 11/21/02 - 10:02 PM

Name: Sunil Tulapurkar

Email: stulapurkar@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Mumbai, Bharat.

Comments: Its truly a wonderful site great effort Sushmaji! Best luck to you and your team. I am currently going through the site the information would help all of us to learn and understand. I like the trivia section I can only say after reading it that we should learn from our mistakes and I am sure your effort will make us learn those and avoid them. Jai Shree Ram.

Date: 11/19/02 - 10:50 PM

Name: Vijoy Jha

Email: vijoyjha@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Perth, Australia.

Comments: Sushma jee, I am delighted and sincerely wish you all the best for putting these Treasures together for the entire puzzled world full of material loving creatures like us. I am proud of being Hindu and of you as well who has taken a lead role using modern means similar in view to Ashoka and likewise who spread the God's word. Thanking you Vijoy Jha Perth.

Date: 11/19/02 - 7:11 AM

Name: ilaxi

Email: freesoul@kidsfreesouls.com

Site:

Location: Ahmedabad, India.

Comments: Congratulations. A great Site indeed:-) Its amazing to see the efforts put behind making of a Website like Tribute to Hinduism. Its a Faith...God is One! My Best Wishes to Sushmaji...May you always exhibit such excellence in all the things u choose to do! www.kidsfreesouls.com (visit the Culture page for Religious Themes & Parental feedback for Articles) / www.swagatgroup.net

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Date: 11/16/02 - 3:22 AM

Name: Leslie Thyagarajan

Email: babuart@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: Accidently stumbled on this superb site...It's like a mini museum! Thanks a lot....friend, Leslie-t. "Filterism" Inventor.

Date: 11/12/02 - 12:03 PM
Name: Vikrant Shah
Email: vikrantdshah@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Northern Virginia, USA.
Comments: Excellent Site. Sushamaji with lots of good information. Actually I am involved with Balgokulams running in DC area. It would be nice if we can have you for a talk or presentation here at your conviniance. Please let us know. Namaste.

Date: 11/9/02 - 3:36 PM
Name: Meeta
Email: meeta100@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: U K.
Comments: Dear Sushama, Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your email regarding the info about this site. I've been overwhelmed because i had for a long time wished and (day!)dreamt for this kind of thing so imagine my delight. I hope it will help dispel a lot of negetivity,ignorance and criticism about Sanatan Dharma , 'Hinduism' to many. All sorts of people & bigots with many of their own agendas and propagandas have bombed and misinformed with so much violence about My-Our Sanatan Dharma that i feel is very sad but as long as we have people like you and your team on our midst who will by sheer hard work love,intelligence and dedication try and give the full picture, true ideas and tuue universal meaning behind the great Dharma it will always inspire and be a role model to lot of us. NOT ALL OF US ARE DULL and DEAF and brainwashed to think grass is greener on the otherside.... With all my Love to you and your team Meetaxxxxxx.

Date: 11/7/02 - 5:18 PM

Name: christine
Email: fringe2@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: Trying to strenghten my faith in Hinduism, I can across a website about religions and women. To my dismay, they listed reasons why Hinduism was sexist and even gave a quote from the Mahabarata that troubled me greatly. I'm so happy that I stumbled on to this site. It makes me feel much better.

Date: 11/7/02 - 8:53 AM
Name: Civa
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very good new chapters. Keep up the work. Some interesting reading: http://www.mts.net/~dkost/missionary_swastika2.htm

---

Date: 11/5/02 - 8:42 PM
Name: Marlon R Jagnandan
Email: Mjagnand@student.law.du.edu
Site:
Location: Denver, Colorado USA.
Comments: With Splendor and opulence you have chopped the path of White Supremacy and crushed their ideology of "a superior Race." Not that we are superior, but that they must look on to us with equality; as with every race. Praise be onto you for your time and devotion in dispelling ignorance and establishing wisdom.

Date: 11/4/02 - 7:30 AM
Name: Kumeren Pillay
Email: Kumaren.u.pillay@sapref.com
Site:
Location: KwazuluNatal, Durban, South Africa.

Comments: I have stumbled across your site by luck, and found answers to most of the questions I have asked the elders among the community in SA. Time have lapsed but never too late to learn about the history of our Mother Country. I'm Intrigued with the information that is displayed. I wished I had the opportunity earlier, this would have made discussion I had much interesting, now that I can make reference to item is even better.

Date: 11/3/02 - 7:09 AM

Name: visitorcosmos

Email: visitorcosmos@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: israel.

Comments: amazing work i appreciate the hardwork. may you achieve greatness. a small suggestion from me is that on the quotes pages you should post links for NEXT page and PREVIOUS page. that would help in navigation through the pages. in the contents categories you could add philosophy with individual pages devoted to vedanta, samkhya, yoga e.t.c.

Date: 10/30/02 - 7:57 AM

Name: Aaron

Email:

Site:

Location: England.

Comments: Hi, I found your information on the flying machines absolutely fascinating. I can honestly say it has altered the way I think of human history. Best Wishes http://www.geocities.com/comrade_aaron

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Date: 10/28/02 - 10:04 PM

Name: Ken Dhanessar

Email: kend84@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Ontario, Canada.

Comments: Just great information i thoroughly enjoyed. I was trying to get into my own roots and i came across your website. I do hope you will keep me updated. Thank you Ken.

Date: 10/25/02 - 4:34 AM
Name: Naren
Email:
Site:
Location: Johannesburg South Africa.
Comments: One marvels at your effort to spread the Knowledge of the glory of Hinduism abound its place of revelation.This is a site that should be prescribed at all schools. I believe that Indians should show more recognition to the site than praise. Yours is a form of true sadhana.One does not have to be a rocket scientist to appreciate your effort.

Date: 10/24/02 - 12:53 AM
Name: D V Sridharan
Email: sridharandv@goodnewsindia.com
Site:
Location: Chennai, India.
Comments: dear sushma, i truly enjoyed visiting your site for the first time today. it is a rich resource and the extent of your labour --and it's love-- shows through. i have often been struck by how before other 'religions' came to india, there was no religion called 'hinduism'. therefore a study of our antinquities will truly tell 'hindus' to shed me-too labels and reclaim their true heritage. i truly wish you well. d v sridharan. publisher. GoodNewsIndia http://www.goodnewsindia.com.

Date: 10/22/02 - 5:21 PM
Name: navasundar das
Email: navasundardas@yahoo.com.au
Site:
Location:
Comments: From when i first came across your site researching for essay's at Uni (then it was on geocities) to now! It has always been a tab on my personal tool bar, love your work!!

Date: 10/21/02 - 7:56 AM

Name: Paul
Email: pauldrm209@aol.com
Site:
Location: Detriot, MI USA.
Comments: I was just looking through some web pages before class on hinduism and this one helped alot thanks. GREAT layout! *Peace*

Date: 10/16/02 - 8:47 PM
Name: gene
Email: elt107@aol.com
Site:
Location: Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
Comments: Thank you for your (obviously) extensive efforts at explaining Hinduism to those of us who are curious. I was very stimulated. Namaste.

Date: 10/16/02 - 8:32 AM
Name: Krishna
Email: kksachin@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: United Kingdom.
Comments: dear site admin, I am really very pleased seeeing this site. as the site name says, its really a tribute to hinduism. the research done for the site content is magnificient. i particularly liked the aryan invasion theory very much. How many of we indians know that aryan theory is nothing but a fake concept created by the europens?? really everyone of us should know this and try to change our thinking. krishna.

Date: 10/11/02 - 11:47 AM
Name: Geeta
Email: ek_haseena_2000@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: wow it was absolutely mind blowing your site gave me an insight i never dreamed i would achieve i do not wish to attack any other faith but is it not time we reclaimed our land we got rid of our passive stancewe have welcomed tolerated and befriended for may centuries. Let us all unite now Hindu brothers and sisters anf fight to get our land back.

Date: 10/7/02 - 3:07 PM
Name: Nitin Koli
Email: nkoli@sympatico.ca
Site:
Location: Toronto, Canada.
Comments: Thanks to this website I have begun to educate myself about Hinduism. Thank you, Sushma for putting up such an excellent website! Slowly but surely through websites like this, the light of Hinduism can once begin to shine!

Date: 10/6/02 - 2:30 PM
Name: Anon
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Hinduism for all. Lets Abolish caste.
http://www.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=15502
http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/oct/06satya.htm

Date: 10/5/02 - 8:15 AM
Name: Ajay Jat
Email: ajaydah@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: India.
Comments: We should try our level best to promote the world's oldest religion and should have more solidarity and funds to promote the same. Jai Shri Ram.

Date: 10/2/02 - 2:08 AM

Name: J. Mehta
Email: jmehta@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: London, UK.
Comments: Congratulations for a remarkable effort. I like your site and the ideals it stands for. Keep up the great work!!

Date: 9/29/02 - 6:17 PM
Name: Paul Palan
Email: paulpalan@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Singapore.
Comments: Dear Sushma. I have tried fruitlessly to get the picture of the monolith stone at Mecca but unbale to find the page. Could you help me out here. I want to show my hindu freinds what is in Mecca. Appreciate your response. By the way, it a great site and I have been visiting the site to learn more about Hinduism. With the explanation, I can now explain better to my freinds and convert my hindu freinds to practice the religion with more conviction.

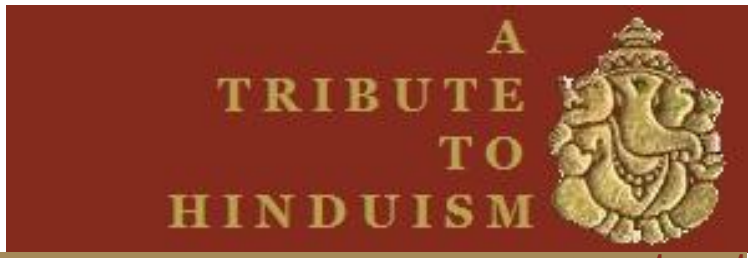
Entries: 710-661
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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002



Entries: 660-611

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 9/26/02 - 11:31 PM
Name: Krsnadasa
Email: krsnadasa_krsna@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: USA.
Comments: I have just two words for you Sushma Ji..... AMAZING SITE !!!!!! May Lord Krsna bless you with all his mercy.....I know the kind of effort you must have put in building this site... I am also confident that all serious hindus will greatly acknowledge this effort of yours.... Hare Krsna Hari Bol.....All glories to shri Prabhupada..…

Date: 9/26/02 - 11:29 PM
Name: Siti Zalinah
Email: bumble_b02@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Singapore.
Comments: This site is a great help to understanding Hinduism. Great effort! I wish you all the best.

Date: 9/26/02 - 7:03 AM
Name: Sheetal Patel
Email:
Site:

Location: Australia.

Comments: I think slowly but surely rays of sunlight are beginning to awaken the hindu spirit. If you look at things from a non imperialistic, superiority complex driven perspective the truth will eventually out. Another good site with a wealth of information that should not be ignored is: http://www.datanumeric.com/dravidian/index.html http://www.datanumeric.com/dravidian/sitemap.html.

Date: 9/26/02 - 12:44 AM

Name: B.S.V. Prasad

Email: bsvprasad@hotmail.com.

Site:

Location: Hyderabad, India.

Comments: I came to know of this site from comments to a recent article posted at Sulekha. Superb! Please keep it up! And thanks a lot.

Date: 9/25/02 - 8:05 PM

Name: Susheila Bhagat

Email: susheilabhagat@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: USA.

Comments: An excellent site and a good referral point for many local communities with a Hindu population who often are ignorant about many aspects of Hinduism. Such folks often looking for such information to address at temple or social gatherings have a good resource to draw upon. I commend your initiative and efforts in putting this together. One suggestion. In the opening page please give the Sanskrit sloka in addition to the English translation- (Asato ma sad gamaya etc.).

Date: 9/23/02 - 1:09 AM

Name: patty bonner

Email: fiarlizard2002@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: S. Georgia, U.S.A.

Comments: This site is extraordinary! I have a great deal to learn; glad to have found a place to do it! I would welcome e-mails from anyone interested in sending them, and discussing India & it's religious heritage.

Date: 9/22/02 - 6:30 AM

Name: Harsh Maharaj

Email: harsh_maharaj@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Sydney, Australia.

Comments: Hats off to your well documented site, and indeed, it is a tribute to the noble ideologies born in Bharat. It would be venerated if any information on (Creveka), an almost forgotten ideological aspect of the Veda's could also be included in this site. A search on your site for any relevance to this keyword was returned without success. Any knowledge willing to be passed onto me on the requested subject will be appreciated. Regards, Harsh.

Date: 9/21/02 - 8:36 AM

Name: Bindumadhav Jamadagni

Email: bjamadagni@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Bangalore, India

Comments: Wonderful job done. This web site will go a long way in resurgence of Hindu culture and traditions.

Date: 9/21/02 - 12:38 AM

Name: Yousuf Khan

Email: fahim_sra@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Kanpur, India

Comments: Dear Sushma, Y'r site is really great. I Appraise you, for the way of putting the ancient religion with perfect and actual theme and concepts. Really great. May Allah help you to put your effort the best possible effects. Yousuf.

Date: 9/20/02 - 8:17 PM
Name: Siva Nageswra Rao INTURI
Email: sivanageswar_inturi@yahoo.co.in
Site:
Location: Tenali, Andhrapradesh, India.
Comments: Excellent, valuable information. An insight into our own history. What is the origin, How it was interpreted by others etc.. Jai Hind.

Date: 9/19/02 – 10:23 AM
Name: Katte Sudheendra
Email: kattesudheendra@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Bangalore - India.
Comments: I find the information - about India, Indian culture, Hinduism, Essences of Hinduism, the contribution of Hinduism to the world - found in this site are most valuable. This is a must visit site for all the Indians. Katte Sudheendra.

Date: 9/19/02 – 2 :32 AM
Name: sunil
Email: sun7kumar@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: Hyderabad, India
Comments: This is a good work on Hinduism but it wud be advisable to continue to work on Indianism as well cus the history of Hinduism has always been accompanied by sufism, islam and christianity, if we get the blend of the counterparts then i think we can attract more people towards this site. Though it been a unique and better way to flourish the ethical and cultural values of Hinduism, keep it up guys.

Date: 9/18/02 – 10:35 AM
Name: Frank Cordero

Email: Darkaraphel@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Buffalo, New York, United States of America

Comments: Re - Vimanas: It is fascinating the way humans have forgotten by some collective amnesia all thing that should have been kept either by written or oral traditions. Did it happen when humans constructed the tower of Babel (either a high landing port for airships or for avoiding being covered by the waters of another flood). Is it possible that someone has gone to great length to erase all this knowledge from humans? How many ancient civilization, previous to the Adamic era, has been terminated either by war or selectively eradicated to eliminate certain stocks of human? I will like to have those visiting the site to comment on the above. Probably this is the beginning need to step out of the shadow and move toward the light.

Date: 9/18/02 - 6:39 AM

Name: Dr. M. Thiruchitrambbalam

Email: thiruchi_m@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Coimbatore - India.

Comments: I find no words to describe the work done to create this site. After the coimbatore bomb blasts (18 th FEB 1998, 200 hindus were killed by muslim extremists) I have gone through trauma and I have been learning about Hinduism. The information on this site will be useful for me to present a lecture on Holistic education to be held under ageis of Indian Society of Technical Education.

Date: 9/17/02 – 12:50 AM

Name: xavier stanford

Email: stanfox1@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: australia.

Comments: this site was awsome mate. i'm gonna visit it everyday man.

Date: 9/16/02 - 4:10 AM

Name: ashok gajria
Email: agajria@vsnl.com
Site:
Location: India.
Comments: best wishes, it is indeed a great effort. hope this concept will catch imagination of more people and further work will be done. best regards ashok gajria.

Date: 9/15/02 - 6:44 AM
Name: Paul Palan
Email: paulpalan@inavab.com
Site:
Location: Singapore.
Comments: Great site and I just seem to get enough of it. I would appreciate if you could tell me which page is the picture of the Kaabah. I remember an article about the Syrians keeping the stone for 22 years and a photgraph was taken. I have searched of it and could not remember which page did I read it. Appreciate if you could let me know via email at the above address. Regards Palan

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Date: 9/15/02 : 3:41 A M
Name: Satya Chauhan
Email: satya_chauhan@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Stockton, California, USA
Comments: Amazing but true. Wonderful job. Website of this kind was a demand of time to help Hindu and Non-Hindu people to understand what Hinduism is all about. Keep up the great work
Kudos to Sushma Ji.

Date: 9/14/02 - 1:59 AM
Name: Indrajit Ganguli
Email: ijganguli@aol.com

Site:

Location: Germany

Comments: This is one of the best website that I have ever come across. We are all thankful to you and at the same time proud of you. My best wishes. Indrajit Ganguli

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Date: 9/09/02 - 11:24 AM

Name: dew

Email: dew10drop@glide.net.in

Site:

Location: India

Comments: nodoubt abt the amount of hardwork on this site and it's good .But i would like to say ..that how abt introducing ... free emails which send every day/weekly: quote or triva or any other kind of information from hinduism .i'm sure this will really get many many out there to know abt hinduism. secondly at times sinlge page is so long or big that mind wants to venture into another different area .. and also there are some pic/s anavus is on trivia page the map of india .. maybe a link which should lead to a larger and a clear picture. i think these will make the site more assesible instead of only giving lot of infomation abt hinduism.

Date: 9/08/02 - 9:36 PM

Name: divyashakti

Email: divyashaktihind@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Boston, USA

Comments: Excellent job! Our dear country and religion are so misrepresented and maligned in the West; each of us needs to do our bit in combatting this negative brainwashing, psychological warfare of the West. Frequently our youth are not well equipped to fight such mud-slinging with valid arguments or rebuttals. **I applaud your efforts and thank you for being a 'jyoti'**. Best wishes:)

Date: 9/08/02 - 4:44 PM

Name: kalpesh bhatt

Email: kalpesh_bhatt@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: dallas, tx USA
Comments: Congratulations on a great effort. The Hindu theology is one of the most profound philsophies of human civilization. This website is an extensive resource on this ancient philosophy and culture. Wish i could contribute some way to extend it further :) All my best wishes for the continued success of this effort.

Date: 9/08/02 - 7:34 AM
Name: Shaibal Bose
Email: skbose@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Ottawa, Canada
Comments: SushamaJi, your initiative was my dream for a long time. Your noble and kind efforts will instill and augment the sense of values and culture(drawn from our Great motherland and religion) into our next generation (born and being brought up here in North America). Thanks Very Much and God Bless You. Jai Hind.

Date: 9/05/02 - 11: 08 PM
Name: Kevin Hobson
Email: khobson@netcom.ca
Site:
Location: Prince Edward Island, Canada.
Comments: Well done. A good start has been made here.

Date: 9/4/02 - 12:42 PM
Name: Venkata Ramana Aerpula
Email: vaerpula@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Chennai, India

Comments: Namaste, I am very Glad to read Contents in the Site.I am wordless to appreciate the work contributed by the People and Especially the Founder and Initiator.You are Enlighting us about Hinduism.Till recent we are Blind about Hinduism, being Hindu I couldn't explain what a Hinduism is all about others when they pose a Question?. I am very Greatful to all of you. All my doubts are cleared because of your website. Danyavad.

Date: 8/29/02 - 2:24 PM
Name: Bratati Bhattacharjee
Email:
Site:
Location: Toronto, ON, Canada
Comments: Thanks to everybody who has worked hard on this site. It's a great job!

Date: 8/29/02 - 6:58 AM
Name: prasad Katragadda .v.s.r.k
Email: prasadsayaji@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: visakhapatnam, A.P, INDIA
Comments: Namaskarams,To EVERYBODY WHO WORKED FOR THIS SITE This is the most informative site about hinduism I have ever seen .It shows the pain u have taken to give all this information there are no words for appreciation to u. thank u prasad

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Date: 8/28/02 - 2:45 PM
Name: Madhav Kacker
Email: kackermadhav@aol.com
Site:
Location: Walpole, MA. USA
Comments: This is indeed a great service to the Hindu community, a very noble cause and there could be no better time than this to awaken people to the need of knowing our religion. Fantastic. Keep it up. Right now we have started a discussion group on Upanishad within a few families and we are in a small way moving in this direction. God bless you. Dr. Kacker.

Date: 8/28/02 - 1:51 PM
Name: Vinod Kumar
Email: vk1122@aol.com
Site:
Location: Portland, Oregon, USA
Comments: Too many words are not needed. This is indeed an excellent work. Everyone must go through your website. Vinod.

Date: 8/28/02 - 11:37 AM
Name: Madhu Jhaveri
Email: mjhaveri@umassd.edu
Site:
Location: Dartmouth MA. USA
Comments: I found the site, that does justice to SANATAN DHARM after all. The site does not present a brain washed view of Hinduism. GREAT---- No words to congratulate you.

Date: 8/27/02 - 2:56 PM
Name: Mrs M Kumar
Email:
Site:
Location: Europe
Comments: Excellent site, keep up the good work.
http://www.hindunet.org/hindu_history/ancient/aryan/aryan_frawley_1.html
The above link better describes the myth of the aryans. The whole problem is global because of the false superiority attached to 'being white'...the power, the money, the control...It has even found its way into bollywood thanks to the divide and conquer mullahs. The fact is that 99.9% of Indians are brown/black to varying degrees; face it and learn to love it. And punjab is just one part of India where peoples features also show the australoid connections;face it and learn to love it. The fact that Indians are so colour conscious now shows how backward we have become. Fair and Lovely cannot work miracles...it can't hide the truth for long.

Date: 8/26/02 - 10:04 AM
Name: Maria Stela De Simone
Email: stela@ayurveda.com.vr
Site: http://www.ayurveda.com.br
Location: Brazil
Comments: Lovely site! Congratulations!

Date: 8/24/02 - 7:56 AM
Name: Paul Palan
Email: paulpalan@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Singapore
Comments: I hope that you would visit Singapore one day and give us a talk on Hinduism. You are great.

Date: 8/24/02 - 7:49 AM
Name: Jeremy Cruez
Email: jeremycruez@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Singapore
Comments: One of the most informative sites and give me an insight into what had happen historically. Also complete turn around for what I have heard and read about the Taj Mahal. I hope that we will have some Indian leaders who will want to probe the truth and bear all the facts.

Date: 8/22/02 - 2:49 PM
Name: Chankala
Email: ckghaya@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Alor Setar , Malaysia

Comments: First of all, i should thank you. your site gave me alot of info's about hinduism and it helps me alot in completing one of my assignments associated to hinduism.Thanks again.

Date: 8/22/02 - 9:25 PM
Name: Krishna Sankar
Email: ks58@aol.com
Site:
Location: Covington, Virginia. USA
Comments: A great site.Sources you have quoted seem to give great credibility yo your narrative.

Date: 8/21/02 - 1:19 AM
Name: Husain Syed
Email: m1z2@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: USA

It is very surprising that Hindo people (Hindu, Buddhist, Jains, Sikh, Muslim) themselves do not know the great contributions of Hind that deeply influenced the Western civilization. I would like to share some very interesting information about Nalinda University: Most of the people of Hind do not know that Nalinda was the first University in the world. (1) In 1986, in a library in West Haven, CT, I was reading Fodor's Travel book on India. On 'ancient Indian History' page, in one place it says, "There are no Greek scholars who became famous in the Western world, that they themselves did not came for learning in Nalinda University (in Bihar), or their teachers did not travel to Nalinda for education." "Students from all over the world used to come to Nalinda for education. Students felt proud to be the graduate from Nalinda, and not from Oxford" (2) In the same year, in Hamden Public Library, Hamden, CT, I was reading a History book on Greece, written by a Greek writer (I did not note down the name, and I do not remember now). In one page, I found a list of twelve Greek scholars (out of hundreds) who graduated from Nalinda University. Since I was reading for curiosity, and not for research, I did not even think of making a copy of the page, or note down the book reference. However I remember the following names that were among the list who graduated from Nalinda University: 1. Socrates 2. Pythagoras 3. Achilles 4. Archimedes 5. Megasthenes 6. Plato (3) We had a house tutor in our home in Dhaka, Bangladesh. At that time we were school going teens. His grand father

Comments: migrated from Patna, Bihar to Bengal during late 19th century. One day he told us that Socrates, the Greek scholar, graduated from Nalinda University. One day during summer time, he went home in Greece and brought back with him a Greek student who was 12 years old. He told us the name of this 12 years kid, but I do not remember the name now (it may be Plato or Cynics, or somebody else. Our house tutor also told us that during Turkish conquest of Bihar and Bengal in 1299AD -1300 AD, the defeated Hindo solders took shelter inside Nalinda and in all it's dormitories. Entire University was wooden and was occupying a huge area. Turkish army started cannon and mortar fire and the whole university was burned to ashes, along with all students' registry books, books of arts, science, mathematics, music, dance, philosophy, psychology and Buddhist scriptures. Very few that survived were removed to Tibet and China for safety. (4)I read the following narratives in Dhaka University Library in 1979: When Alexander's gelerals refused to advance into India, Alexander send emmesery to Emperor Chandragupta MoArya that he wanted to visit Nalinda university where so many of Greek Scholers had their education. Emperor sent a grand reception party to welcome Alexander. But there was a condition that Alexander and his men will be allowed only light wepons (like sords), and nothing else. Emperor himself pledged protection to the Greek guests. Though Alexander accepted the terms, all his generals refused for security reason. India should spend a considerable amount of money for research and revival of Nalinda University.

Date: 8/20/02 - 1:22 AM

Name: Snehal Patel

Email:

Site:

Location: On Earth

Comments: You have done a great job. Thanks for the info about So called Taj Mahal. I found your site via www.faithfreedom.org, I think every one should visit this site no matter what religion you belong to.

Date: 8/16/02 - 9:49 AM

Name: Unknown

Email:

Site:

Location: London, UK

Comments: Your website is one of the best!!!!!! It covers most of the aspects of hinduism.

Date: 8/13/02 - 7:56 PM

Name: Ed Viswanathan

Email: edvis9@hotmail.com

Site: http://www.amiahindu.com

Location: USA

Comments: Namasthe-Shrimathy Sushama---I am very much impressed by your web page. You are rendering great service to humanity through your web page describing various aspects of Hinduism. I wish you godspeed in your endeavors. May God bless you. Ed Viswanathan

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Date: 8/9/02 - 2:57 PM

Name: Alphanso

Email: alphanso@homemail.com

Site:

Location: Canada

Comments: Your web site is sure great! I have learnt so much and it seems to be no end! I will use this site for reference to all my friends. Hinduism is sure a great religion with it's rich cultural and religious heritage. I am so proud to be a follower of the world's most ancient religion in my own simple way. Sushmaji, something to think about -If your web site could cover some testimonials of people's conversion to Hinduism, it would make it even better. Sometimes I think, if only the west had more exposure to Hinduism through the media; TV, cable, movies (a challenge you may want to explore!), I am sure many would follow its ways and the world would be a better place. May all your efforts be richly rewarded! Much appreciated and God Bless you.

Date: 8/5/02 - 5:26 PM

Name: Pavithra Nair

Email:

Site:

Location:
Comments: very good

Date: 8/1/02 - 9:30 PM
Name: pranesh
Email: pranesh_84@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Malaysia
Comments: NICE I HAVE LEARNT MORE ABOUT MY RELIGION.

Date: 7/30/02 - 2:19 AM
Name: Ben Sadanand
Email: bens@xtra.co.nz
Site:
Location: New Zealand
Comments: Very informative. I liked the contents on this site.

Date: 7/29/02 - 3:11 PM
Name: john perkins
Email: john@silversitarco.fsnet.co.uk
Site:
Location: United Kingdom
Comments: Thanks for all the info. Anyone searching for hindustani classical music can find a good selection, instrumental and vocal on; www.sitar.co.uk/raglist.htm

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Date: 7/27/02 - 10:59 AM
Name: Sanjay
Email: samaharaj@sbic.co.za
Site:

Location: South Africa

Comments: I really enjoy the site and come back at least once a week. Easy as anything getting around. I have found that some links do not quite work. I am a Hindu by birth and often wonder if I say this because I need to have a faith. However, I do not believe that one should dwell on past atrocities or glories nor should these be forgotten. Hindus have no serious dogma and this can (but hopefully not) force the religion, philosophy into the dungeons of history. Hinduism needs a reawakening (directed at people like me). Maybe as technology progresses life gets faster and living more complicated, we spend less time on who we are and happily accept to be told what to do think and feel. It requires too much work for us to do this purselves. Some of your commenters have said the same. A minority in a minority can be quite overcoming (esecially) the guys outside India. Thank you for the site.

Date: 7/26/02 - 2:54 AM

Name: plaxmi nageswarao

Email: one4all_plnr@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: kakinada of Andhra Pradesh

Comments: I am very glad to take much interest in developing the activities in respect ofHinduism. God bless u in this regard to develop your activities sharply with a view to serve the people through it. When seeing the web site at first, its attracts immediately. Besides, I think it is better to shows the gods and goddess symbles (Photos) around the website. Thanking you Madam. yours Rao

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Date: 7/25/02 - 10:45 PM

Name: First

Email:

Site:

Location: Singapore

Comments: I would like to see further updates and it is a interesting site to visit. Well done!!

Date: 7/20/02 - 8:57 AM

Name: Shankar S. Bhate

Email: shankarbhate@rediffmail.com

Site:

Location: Mumbai, India

Comments: The site is simply excellent. It will definitely help to remove the wrong notions about Hinduism and the Indian Heritage, as a whole, and throw ample light on the treasures of Hinduism. Being an engineering student, I took great interest in the chapters devoted for vimanas, ganita, cosmology etc. Of course, all the sections are nice and writeen systematically, with the references. I think it is the duty of every Hindu to know the reality about his own religion. India once had a vast storehouse of knowledge, which today's western world is rediscovering. My best wishes to you for this great work.

Date: 7/16/02 - 2:21 PM

Name: Ingrun Sonnenwende

Email: thefrithstead@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Cincinnati, Ohio USA

Comments: Friend - Heilsa! Heilsa = may the deities bless you with good health. I came here to become more acquainted with the Mother religion of my own faith, Asatru... Usually, when I approach Hinduism, I am overwhelmed and leave feeling confused. Not this time! This site makes approaching Hinduism simple - though not easy. And I must say, this site is beautiful, thought-provoking, endearing! I have thoroughly enjoyed my stay and anticipate coming back for more. Many Thanks! Ingrun Sonnenwende

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Entries: 660-611

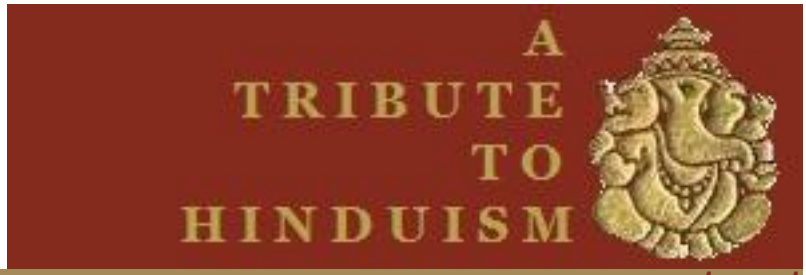
[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

home guestbook contents

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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002



Entries: 610-561

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 7/14/02 - 10:51 PM
Name: Remy Chevalier
Email: electrifyingtimes@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: USA
Comments: Very interesting flying machines pages... http://www.electrifyingtimes.com All about electric cars, and perhaps real flying cars. Perhaps there are some practical ideas on your pages. Remy C.

Date: 7/14/02 - 1:38 PM
Name: Suryakant Herlekar
Email: skantherlekar@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: Siddapur(North Kanara), Karnataka. India
Comments: It's really very informative. Gives deep look into Hinduism and it's different aspects. My search for Hindu puranas ended here. Please keep the sight updated on modern developments in our Hindu society.

Date: 7/13/02 - 8:20 AM

Name: Elodie
Email:
Site:
Location: France
Comments: Well done!It's really an excellent site!It's really very very very very excellent!!!!!I think you should do a more important art galery with pictures of gods and godnesses but it is excellent like this!Well done

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Date: 7/8/02 - 2:53 AM
Name: Harsha M
Email: mharsha1@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Bangalore, India
Comments: Its really excellent and I am myself thinking of making a website like this.I liked it very much. I have done kavya in sanskrit amd hope to complete sahitya also.I also want to study vedas and upanishads and we all should unite together to make the world know that sanskrit is greater than Greek or Latin and Indian Heritage is far more superior.We also should not just leen on our past, we have to show the same glory in this modern era also.

Date: 7/5/02 - 4:19 AM
Name: Mohan Rajasekaran
Email: reachmohanr@yahoo.com, mohan@math.com
Site:
Location: Bangalore, INDIA

Comments: Dear Sushma, I do not have words to appreciate the efforts you have put in this website. Once-in-a-while people come across such excellent websites!!. I was lucky to go through this website. A year back I was researching about the saraswathi valley civilisation, and, by chance I happened to see this site and this is one of my favourites. A zillion thanks to you for educating an ignorant Indian about his ancient roots and culture. I very sincerely request you to post some online books like Subhash Kak's "The Astronomical code of Rg Veda" and Dr. Rajaram Mohan Roy's "Vedic Physics", etc. so that the people across the world will know that our's was not a by chance culture, but a culture with utmost maturity and which is still being followed to this day. Zillion thanks again Regards Mohan http://mohan.freewebtools.com/

Date: 7/3/02 - 7:54 AM

Name: Richmund Cocal Royola

Email: si_chim_ako@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Republic of the Philippines

Comments: Extremely valuable site in matters related to ancient Indian technology(vimaanas,etc.). Please tell me how I can contact the administrator/webmaster for additional information on the subject. Thank you.

Date: 7/2/02 - 2:55 AM

Name: Vikram Kirthi Kirshnan

Email: vikram_neelkris@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: INDIA

Comments: I haven't seen anything like this before. Feeling proud of it . Keep the good work going.

Date: 6/28/02 - 9:03 AM
Name: Aditi
Email:
Site:
Location: UK
Comments: Well done. Excellent site. See also following sites to gain a wider perspective into why Hinduism has been misinterpreted. http://www.stephen-knapp.com/

Date: 6/27/02 - 8:15 AM
Name: sudha G
Email: tzmeeya@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: kakinada,andhra pradesh. India
Comments: Sushmaji!!!!!!! I dont have words to thank u.U made not only INDIANS in INDIA to realise the importance of their culture but also INDIANS all over the world.Its an immense pleasure to see the reaction of the whole world in appreciating your work.HATS OFF TO U. MAMA "MERA BHARAT MAHAN"

Date: 6/22/02 - 1:26 AM
Name: sachin dahake
Email: supersach1@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: mumbai, india
Comments: namaste sushmaji, brilliant work.may god bless you,u have done mahan karya for hindu dharma.keep it up. Sachin

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Date: 6/20/02 - 12:32 AM
Name: Vincent King

Email: rs2800@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Detroit, MI

Comments: This is an excellent site! Its very informative and is the best source for info on Hinduism. I especially like that each piece of info has a difinitive source of origin (books, the web, people, etc.). One thing you may want to add is the connection between India and Arabia. For more info on this topic, check out; http://www.hinduism.co.za/kaabaa.htm The similarities between pre-islamic arabia and India are absolutely stunning! Anyways, great job on this site!

Date: 6/19/02 - 5:01 AM

Name: Vikrant Agrawal

Email: vikrant_a@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Mumbai, India

Comments: This site has a wealth of information and I am really pleased that you have put in so much effort in gathering it. It is a brillinnt work and you have done a great service to Hindustan by puting up this site. The distortion of our culture by the European historians for their petty objectives could be understood but what was more distressing was the way our culture was demeaned by our own Leftist intellectuals even after independence. We were creating youths who felt inferior because of this distortion of history and had no national pride. Under such circumstances this site comes as a place where Indians could find out the facts about our history and past and feel proud. You have done a great service to the country. Thanks.

Date: 6/15/02 - 6:35 AM

Name: Shrien Dewani

Email: gensec@nhsf.org.uk

Site:

Location: London, UK

Comments: Namaste Sushamaji! May I congratulate you on building and maintaining an amazing website. It certainly is a brilliant source of information for Hindus worldwide. Here in the UK I am part of a national student body National Hindu Students Forum (UK) and I will definitely be recommending this site to all of our branches. If I may leave you the url of our site, which if you feel appropriate you could link to yours: http://www.nhsf.org.uk pranam Shrien

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Date: 6/14/02 - 11:27 AM
Name: John Sieveking
Email: jsieveking@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Uniontown Pa, USA
Comments: To me i like this and i think u did a wonderful job on this site

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Date: 6/13/02 - 8:06 AM
Name: Love Khandelwal
Email: love_khandelwal@yahoo.co.in
Site:
Location: Kolkata, INDIA.
Comments: Dear Sushmaji, Namaskar! Thank you very much for creating such a wonderful website on Hinduism. You have made all the Hindus all over the world proud. i am sure this website will prove useful for all who want to learn about this ancient and grand religion. I wish you all the best. Anticipating similar innovations from you in the future. with regards, Love Khandelwal.

Date: 6/12/02 - 5:54 AM
Name: John W.
Email: brgr88@yahoo.com
Site:

Location: Columbus, Ohio USA

Comments: At last, a definitive source on the internet for all things Hindu -- nay, THE definitive source! I applaud you your efforts to bring this knowledge to the world and can sincerely say that I am the better for having perused your site. Thank you very much. (P.S. - Maybe you could have a section, or at least a link - regarding Indian food? :-)

Date: 6/11/02 - 1:38 PM

Name: Elangovan Davin

Email: Elan_25@Hotmail.Com

Site:

Location: Cameron Highlands - Malaysia

Comments: Fantastic! Excellent. Thanx.

Date: 6/9/02 - 12:03 PM

Name: Padmini K Murthy

Email: pkm53@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Princeton IN, USA

Comments: This is very informative to all of us, It will be nice to have a newsletter from this website, and thank you very much.

Date: 6/8/02 - 7:57 AM

Name: Dheeraj

Email: dheerajkv@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Pune, India

Comments: Excellent site.Thanks a lot!!!

Date: 6/5/02 - 5:08 PM

Name: R. David Jones

Email: wormfood@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia - Canada

Comments: I just want to say that this site is fascinating.... I really had no idea that Hinduism and it's tenets were so complicated, thorough and advanced. It is through the understanding of other people and their religions that leads to greater relations between faiths - this site is a shining example of how to help others understand things they knew nothing about. I will freely admit, I was quite ignorant as to the philosophy and accomplishments of Hinduism. This site however, has helped open my mind and further increase my knowledge and understanding of this great and ancient religion - and all of its accomplishments. Thank you for broadening my mental horizons and allowing me the luxury of partaking in the vast body of knowledge that is Hinduism. Sincerely, Dave Jones

---

Date: 6/4/02 - 10:50 AM

Name: Dhanesvara das

Email: dhanesvara@excite.com

Site:

Location: Florida, USA

Comments: It was a pleasure to view your very thorough and beautiful website. You offer a treasure of information regarding the glory of India and her true history as the greatest civilization. I was however disappointed not to see any reference of the works of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, founder-acarya of the Hare Krishna Movement, through which he spread Vedic dharma around the entire world. His authoritative and voluminous translations of the Bhagavat Purana, Chaitanya Caritamrita, Bhagavad-gita and more, are now translated into more than 30 languages, and these offer access to and understanding of the deep spiritual knowledge of the Vedas. I hope that you will add these important books to your recommended books section.

Date: 6/3/02 - 1:19 AM

Name: Dr Vijay SinghChauhan

Email: vijayc@ranbaxy.co.in

Site:

Location: Gurgaon, India

Comments: Dear Sushmaji, Indeed a whole-hearted attempt to present the Hinduism & India in an undistorted way. May god give you long life to serve the world in years to come. I feel this sight will keep enlightening me on various subjects of interest and I am going to recommend this to many more like minded friends in India and abroad. Let Lord Ganesha and Maan Saraswati be with you all times to help pursue higher goals.

Date: 6/2/02 -10:21 PM

Name: Metropolis5000.com

Email:

Site:

Location: Adelaide,S.Australia

Comments: G'day CyberMate, hi from Down Under! Very nice website. Please visit Australia and my website! Webmaestro :) http://www.metropolis5000.com

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Date: 6/2/02 - 7:30 PM

Name: Tom Pickle,Sr.

Email: tpickle@swbell.net

Site:

Location: Little Rock, AR (USA)

Comments: This material is fascinating. Also, the writings beg the question as to from where did the knowledge to build and understand the nuclear weapons of modern India and Pakistan come?

Date: 6/1/02 - 11:43 PM

Name: Shlomo Arnon

Email: ccc@caldera.com.au

Site:

Location: Byron Bay, Australia

Comments: Dear Friends, WONDERFUL WEBSITE. Please let me know who is responsible for the creation of this website. I would like to arrange an interview for him with Jeff Rense www.rense.com Jeff is a friend of mine and he is broadcasting 3 hours daily on over 200 radio stations in the USA, about 20 million listeners, and world wide on the internet. All programs are archived and anyone can listen to them FREE over the internet. Thanks, Shlomo Arnon Byron Bay Australia

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Date: 5/24/02 - 6:23 PM

Name: Bal Ram Singh

Email: bsingh@umassd.edu

Site:

Location: UMass Dartmouth

Comments: Dear Sushama ji, What a wonderful contribution. I was so impressed by your research and presentation of the subject matter at each one of the links. It is inspirational for people in the true Indian/Hindu tradition to serve the greater society by imparting knowledge. I wish more people will join you in such efforts. My sincerest salutations to you.

Date: 5/24/02 - 10:17 AM

Name: Dr. Raju N. Sagi

Email: rsagi@netscape.net

Site:

Location: Chicago, USA.

Comments: This site represents an outstanding effort and insatiable love for ones 'Hindu roots'. In my opinion, Ms. Sushama earned a place in the small gallery of 'people who live by the Ancient code' - in so far as 'service to mankind'. I find the content and organization of that content to be excellent. This is certainly one of the very few Hindu Community Sites which every Hindu must visit just to get reacquainted with ones own roots. Please, keep up the good work and do call on the community for help when the load becomes too much for you to carry.

Date: 5/22/02 - 7:49 AM

Name: Thomas

Email: thomas@cricket-online.org

Site:

Location: Australia

Comments: Incredible! I'm doing a Hinduism project for school and rarely post on guestbooks, but this site is simply amazing. Sure belts the daylights out of those Hindunet.org 404-error-littered sites! Fantastic effort, keep it up! I found exactly what I wanted here - so concise and comprehensive yet such a large amount of information. Great work!!!

Date: 5/22/02 - 2:42 AM

Name: Dr John Dayal

Email: johndayal@mantraonline.com

Site:

Location: New Delhi, India

Comments: Dear Madam Greetings And congratulations for posting a personal site with such detailed i formation. usually, well financed Hinduva agencies have not been able to do such a job. But please accept my congratulations for the broadness of your sweep, and the decency of your language. Thank You Dr John Dayal

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Date: 5/21/02 - 10:45 AM
Name: Sheetal Gour
Email: ssgour@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: Austin, US
Comments: This is an enriching site, thank you for your effort in making this.

Date: 5/18/02 - 9:30 PM
Name: Pandut Deo Datt Sharma
Email: deosharma@hotmail.com.
Site:
Location: Australia
Comments: Congratulations !. Sushama. The site has forest of factual notes and wealth of information on Hinduism. My heart felt thanks goes to your good self for the time, effort and money spent on providing this service not only to Hindus but to our other brothers and sisters who have not fathomed the depth of Hinduism. My prayers to Almighty God to bless you and give you all powers to carry out this mammoth task that you have undertaken. My appeal to others, please give her all the support and help.

Date: 5/17/02 - 1:34 PM
Name: Narasinh Purohit
Email: narsinh@vsnl.com
Site:
Location: Mumbai,India.
Comments: I visited the web site and found it very much informative, especially so for those who are born and brought away from our rich Hindu culture. Your hardwork must be appreciated and followed up in spirit. With regards, N.Y. Purohit www.areyaarkuchlikho.com

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Date: 5/16/02 - 1:48 PM
Name: Sanjit Singh
Email: sanjitsanjit1@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: Florida, USA
Comments: I found out about the website through an e-mail. It is very nice. It contains the typical Indian Quotes and many well known sayings. The information is really good and extensive.

Date: 5/16/02 - 1:37 PM
Name: naren pandya
Email: pandya@iafrica.com
Site:
Location: johannesburg south africa
Comments: This encycopedia on Hinduism should be read by every hindu>It is inspiring and full of wealth

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Date: 5/15/02 - 7:09 PM
Name: Shivani L
Email: cheones@aol.com
Site:
Location: U.S.A.
Comments: I am 15 yrs old, and your website inspired me to appreciate my culture. I was having doubts about its validity, but now I am proud to be Hindu and Indian. I intend to teach myself Sanskrit and have begun to speak Hindi again as well! Thank you so much!

Date: 5/8/02 - 4:46 PM
Name: Neha Jain (Muller)

Email: neha4155@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: Hamburg, Germany

Comments: Nice Site. Indian culture is truly great. My German fiancee is highly impressed by India and also has studied Sanskrit. How about that!However my fiancee had a Korean freind who told me once of a legend of an Indian Hindu princess who fell in love and married a Korean prince ages ago. I hope you can do some reserch on the matter and provide some information.

Date: 5/8/02 - 2:23 PM

Name: Rashmi Agrawal

Email: a_rashmi_us@yahoo.com

Site:

Location: CA, USA

Comments: You have done an excellent job of posting so much of information on one site only. Really Hinduism is so vast, daily you get know a great thing about this religion. This will help me in teaching about Hinduism to the people who come once a week to my home to tell me about Bible. They don't know a thing about Hinduism. Appreciated!!!

Date: 5/6/02 - 7:46 AM

Name: Ravi S

Email:

Site:

Location: London

Comments: Hi Sushma, This is a great site, provides lots of factual information minus the hype that people normally bring in, and well structured and presented. Keep up the good work. Regards Ravi

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Date: 5/4/02 - 9:34 PM
Name: K.B.Sundram
Email: kbsundram@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: tamilnadu.India
Comments: This highly informative site need to be interpreted in all european,asian and middle east languages.There is no use in repeating the same truth in english only again and again.Of course it enrich the english and our dharma equally.But the need of the hour is to get the same stuff,in french,german,spanish,Portugese,russian ,persian,arabic,urdu,chinnese,korean,japanese,and other east european languages also.It should all corners of the world.then only,people in those parts of the world,will realise how our anicient culture and hoary heritage is concerned the welfare of ALL.Will somebody dedicated souls in those languages come forward to assist and guide our Madam,to embarak on similar ventures for the good of our dharma. Let the vedic message of Peace and presperity spread everwhere.May the world derive strenth and unity from this ancient land...ever in this prayer...email:kbsundram@rediffmail.com

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Date: 5/4/02 - 4:37 PM
Name: rajadurai
Email: raby55@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Canada
Comments: Thank you for all the information, If any one can e-mail the reason for ratha festivales in Hindu temmples real reason. thank you

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Date: 5/4/02 - 1:40 PM
Name: K.B.Sundram
Email: kbsundram@rediffmail.com
Site:
Location: tamilnadu.India

Comments: You have done a yeomen service to our dharma. May this spirit spread far and wide.willing to contact people interested in sanathana dharma world over..Will sushma ji , add a page on tamil-saiva nayamars and vaishnava alvahars contribution for the enrichment of our heritage. seek contact with like minded world over.pranam/vanakam to all. K.B.sundram. tamilnadu.india. email:kbsundram@rediffmail.com

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Date: 5/3/02 - 3:17 PM

Name: S.Sankar

Email: sankars_@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: India

Comments: Madam, You have done an excellent service in the cause of Hinduism. May God shower His unbounded Grace on you so that you will be able to continue your good work.

Date: 5/2/02 - 9:55 AM

Name: Vedant

Email: bornagainhindus@hotmail.com

Site:

Location: UK

Comments: Excellent. More than the entire humanity the Indians need knowing, understanding and identifying their origins. My efforts has been since the day I became a born again Hindu to make people aware of the manipulation and deliberate distortion of Hindu history by the English, and then by our own Indian historians (leftiest leaning -dittoing - Western views) accepting and expanding European views further. Our schools teach Greek and European histories but negleting our own rich civilization. Your website is enhancing my own effort in the direction and I pray you keep it up. I shall also add link in my website www.bornagainhindus.org. OM SHANTI

Date: 5/1/02 - 3:57 PM
Name: Kirti K Purohit
Email: jayahind_g@hotmail.com
Site:
Location: London, U.K.
Comments: Thank You Very Much for making aware to the whole world the richness of hinduism. You seemed to have captured some of the feelings i have towards the wealth of knowledge Bhagwat Gita has given me. I am 17 and would like everyone in this material world to read the bhagwat gita because it would enrich anyones life...thank you for giving this resouce. JayshaKRSNA

Date: 4/29/02 - 5:48 PM
Name: Nan
Email: morningdove9@earthlink.net
Site:
Location: California, USA
Comments: Thanks for your email recommending I visit your sight. It is nicely done and the decor and colors are very pleasing.

Date: 4/28/2002 - 4:46 AM
Name: Swarna Lakshmi
Email: lakshmi_ssri@yahoo.com
Site:
Location: Good work!!
Comments: Dear Mrs. Shushama, While appreciating the great effort that you have taken i would like to inform you that the word "Brahmam" or "Bramh" meaning the true eternal god himself is being spelled as "Brahman" in a few places. As you are aware, Bramh - is the eternal god, Brahma is the god of creation and Brahman is the priest class person. Kindly correct it since it is slightly misleading.

Date: 4/24/2002 - 10:39 PM
Name: Nicky
Email: brgiton617@aol.com
Site:
Location: around town
Comments: thanx alot for making this page because it will help me alot on my report for class that i have to do in the next week on hinduism.

Date: 4/22/2002 - 7:05 AM
Name: hemant khambhati
Email: hemantkhambhatia@yahoo.co.in
Site:
Location: india(ahmedabad)
Comments: i like this site first i cong. to you to make this beautifulsite i hope you always update site regularly so people cant bore ok bye

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Date: 4/15/2002 - 5:04 PM
Name: pravin thaker
Email: pndthaker@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: london, , England, U.K.
Comments: Very well done. Congratulations. God bless you. Comment on the colour choice of the page. Red fonts on purple background and purple on red does not stand out very well. It would help to hve contrasting colours. Nevertheless, good work indeed!

Date: 4/15/2002 - 9:47 AM
Name: Rishi

Email: Kailasa

Site: http:///

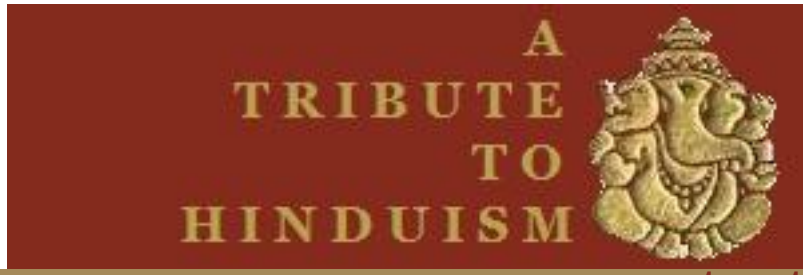
Location: Kailasa, ,

Comments: God Bless.

Entries: 610-561

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

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Entries: 560-511

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 4/14/2002 - 5:57 PM
Name: Sanil Singh
Email: sanild@yahoo.com
Site: http://none/
Location: Durban, Kwazulu Natal, South Africa
Comments: Well put together site. You might be right person to comment on an email that I will send to you - published by the Young Muslim Assoc in South Africa.

Date: 4/13/2002 - 10:10 PM
Name: Rakesh Sharma
Email: rakesh@sharma.com
Site: http://www.rakesh.sharma.com/
Location: London, , Uk
Comments: Wow, I have to say that you have put together a fantastic site. It is very informative and makes me proud to be a Hindu. Please keep up the good work.

Date: 4/12/2002 - 8:32 AM
Name: bharat nathwani

Email: bharat.nathwani@btinternet.com

Site: http:///

Location: london , england, ,

Comments: an excellent hypothesis and one which many classically trained historarians (including Indian ones !) will have trouble refuting (though they will try hard) As we go towards evidence based verification of hypothesis -- the evidence is there -- but the imperialist mindset to accept the wonderful heritage and legacy of ancient India will take many generations. After all , the imperialists colonised TO loot the world under the guise of " civilising these cultures " I hope that your paper is widely read -- knowledge is to be shared as our forefathers many millenia ago understood and did Best Wishes bn

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Date: 4/12/2002 - 12:57 AM

Name: navin doshi

Email: harilal@attbi.com

Site: http:///

Location: losangeles, california, usa

Comments: every opportunity i get i will use this site for reference-am proud to be a hindu.

Date: 4/10/2002 - 11:12 PM

Name: Ajit Rane

Email: raneajit@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: , ,

Comments: Great site. This site is a great fusion. It would be nice if some useful information from the following site is included. http://pub54.ezboard.com/bindoeuropeanreligionsandphilosophy

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Date: 4/7/2002 - 3:05 PM

Name: Ritesh Mathoera

Email: rnmathoera@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: , , The Netherlands

Comments: I like your site It makes me feel proud that I am a descendant of such great people. Ritesh

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Date: 4/3/2002 - 9:24 PM

Name: Daniela Mancinelli

Email: gere_girl1@hotmail.com

Site: http://www.geocities.com/gere_girl1.com

Location: Woodbridge, Ontario, Canada

Comments: Can anyone please tell me a symbol which represents Hinduism and an explanation for it. and can someone please outline the "path" that Hinduism follows in order to reach (achieve) salvation(enlightment)?? I am a christian, but i am doing a project on Hinduism , in my Grade 11 World Religions class. Thank U If u can please send it to me as soon as possible thank u bvery much I really appreciate it Thank u\ Daniela Mancinelli

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Date: 3/31/2002 - 2:05 PM

Name: spsharma

Email: sharmasp51@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: jodhpur.india(temp at newjersey , rajasthan, india

Comments: madam i had seen this web and found lot of information about ancients.i am also having love for ancient technology and i translated one of the ancient book to technical language of modern technical engg language. if you donot mind-"i suggestone correction in the ancient vimans .the book refered s "amaranganasutraadhar"should be " samaraanganasutraadhaara"." the informations provide lot of information about this hidden side"technical development",it is very usefull for the persons interested in the subject. please accept my congratulation and my wish to get success in your object. spsharma

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Date: 3/30/2002 - 7:03 PM

Name: Giridhari Dash

Email: giridhari@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Dallas, TX, USA

Comments: Hi Susama, Your website is GREATELY informative. Please keep it up by adding new stuffs. Thanks. Giridhari

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Date: 3/29/2002 - 3:02 AM

Name: santosh pantam

Email: pantamsantosh@rediffmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: ahmednagar, maharashtra, India

Comments: Dear Mam, I am also hindu, I like this site very much, First thank u for showing intrest in our hindu religion. It is real that hindusim is oldest, holy, religion. Mam please add some more information about india, please add photos of all statecultures. I also want to do some thing for my country. Now india is morden like usa, u, russia. I want to show world that see we are not backward people, we able to do anything leagal like usa, uk. I want to speard hindusim to all over world, because it is one and only one religion which contain all good things to human being and world. Once more time, thank u mam for this website, ur also playing main role to represent india to all world. I hope u will feel proud of that u r hin

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Date: 3/25/2002 - 9:21 AM
Name: sarang joshi
Email: sarang1_2@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: pune, maharashtra, INDIA
Comments: I am not religiously mad. but i like this religion as it gives way to develop internal power by upasna.

Date: 3/24/2002 - 7:54 PM
Name: Naveen Reddy
Email: bommanr@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: New Bedford, Massachusetts, U.S.A
Comments: This is some thing, which every human being must read and follow.now i really think its waste of being else where except in INDIA, the source of every field.and i strongly recommend our govt to put up a subject on vedas in schools.this will help thechildren to know much about their country and also help in nourishing their minds to new thoughts.

Date: 3/24/2002 - 5:56 PM
Name: Neil Scott
Email: Nialls704@aol.com
Site: http:///
Location: Penrith, Cumbria, United Kingdom

Comments: A fascinating and instructive website which, in addition to being well-researched and factual, is also very exciting in its depiction of the links between the insights of Hindu sages and those of modern Western science (or what may be termed the "implicate" technology of the East and the "explicate" technology of the West. I find it very good for me in my researches into "spirituality". Thank you.

Date: 3/23/2002 - 7:07 PM

Name: R.Menon

Email: mahadeva@hindunet.com

Site: http:///

Location: Kochi, Kerala, Bharat

Comments: You have done a great service to our great religion. Salutations to you. Instead of killing people in the name of a temple, the hindu organisations could have gone to educate the new generation about the heritage and the achievements of our forefathers. The invaders, be it muslims or europeans have destroyed our culture and have caused severe damage to our thought process. Our present educational system is not teaching the children the greatness of our ancient heritage. We should come out withsuch websites to benefit the coming generations about the knowledge of our great history.

Date: 3/20/2002 - 2:00 PM

Name: Satish Munje

Email: smunje@exothermics.com

Site: http:///

Location: Toledo, OH, USA

Comments: Prajapati vai idam agra asit Tasya vak dvitiya asit Vag vai paramam Brahma I found this (Vedic?) hyme under "Introduction to Hinduism (Under OM)". Can you give me a specific reference to this hyme? I have read this verse somewhere on internet and also in a book "Lost Years of Jesus" by Elizabeth Prophet, but no specific reference given. I hope you have realized that the Gospel of St. John (either chapter 1 or 4) opens with this: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." This is an exact translation of above Sanskrit verse. Keep up the good work.

Date: 3/18/2002 - 8:03 AM

Name: R V Subba rao

Email: rvsr_1957@hotmail.com;s.rao@ifw-dresden.

Site: http:///

Location: Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, India

Comments: Its a wonderful site. Great efforts. I wish people in the world one day would realise this is what Hiduism means and not the brutaliy displayed by VHP in the form of retaliation shown in the state of Gujarat recently. The real values of a great culture will be and should be alive..If there are misconceptions they should be removed. Truth alone would survive and there is no reason to be unduly protective of a failing logic. The values did survive and would survive. SATYMEVA JAYATE!! Asatoma Sadgamaya With regards and heartfull of appreciations.. Subba rao.

Date: 3/15/2002 - 11:26 AM

Name: Andrea Paredes von Roth

Email: andrea8@vtr.net

Site: http://www.andreabenki.com/

Location: santiago, Chile, Chile

Comments: The Vimanas are going to came back very soon ...to close this age..the Kali Yuga Age. Kalki will came back and the enemy will be destroyed for ever... Sieg Heil! Andrea Paredes von Roth

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Date: 3/15/2002 - 8:23 AM

Name: P. DEIVAMUTHU

Email: saravana@bol.net.in

Site: http:///

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Comments: HINDU VOICE, A English Monthly, to be published shortly invites contribution from authors.

Date: 3/13/2002 - 3:31 PM

Name: Vir Gupta

Email: arsv2000@cs.com

Site: http:///

Location: Springfield, Illinois, USA

Comments: You should also include the following universities destroyed by Muslims: Valabhi (Gujarat state)was destroyed around 750 A.D. Vajrasana (Bodh Gaya), Dharamchakra at Sarnath (Near Varanasi), Trikatuka, Jetvana (nearShravasti which is about 30 miles from Gorakhpur). Here is what Mahmud Bakhtiar wrote when he destroyed a temple near Vikramshila Univ.: In the middle of the city there was a temple larger and firmer than the rest, which can neither be described nor painted. If any should wish to construct a building equal to this, he would not be able to do it without expending an 100,000 red dinars, and it would occupy 200 years, even though the most experienced and able workmen were employed. The Sultan

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Date: 3/13/2002 - 9:40 AM

Name: Pragasen Moodley

Email: prego.qmg@ananzi.co.za

Site: http:///

Location: Randburg, Gauteng, South Africa

Comments: This in an amazing site to visit. I learn a great deal about my culture and heritage from this site. I feel that this site will be very beneficial to my kids in the future.

Date: 3/13/2002 - 6:58 AM

Name: Kochath Pradeep Dharmarajan

Email: kochath@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Gandhidham, Kachchh, Gujarat State, Indi, Gujarat, India

Comments: I am extremely grateful to you, for providing such huge, realistic and ancient information regarding hinduism. I regularly debate with the christian missionaries who preach negative points of Hinduism. Now I have all the information to guide allthe misguided christians of the world and spread universal brotherhood. I have a friend who is a christain pastor and my collegue. He is a moderate christian and accepts all information with pleasure but I am HAVING an daunting task debating against many of the christians here... thank you for your kind help...keep up this site. A TELEVISION SERIES, CAN BE MADE, AND SHOWN IN CHANNELS LIKE DISCOVERY, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, CNN, BCC, AL ZAZEERA SO THAT THE MIGHT OF HINDUISM IS SPREAD ALL OVE

Date: 3/12/2002 - 6:30 PM

Name: Sunil Chohan

Email: schohan@attbi.com

Site: http:///

Location: MINNEAPOLIS,USA, Minnesota, USA

Comments: Delightful & informative reading.

Date: 3/8/2002 - 5:53 AM

Name: Theeban .ra

Email: reanof83@yahoo.com

Site: http://../

Location: kuala lumpur, ., Suvarnabumi (Malaysia)

Comments: Wow!u HAVE DONE A GREAT JOB!WELL DONE! YOU MUST HAD SPEND A LOT OF TIME OF MAKING THIS WEB PAGE AND IM TELLING YOU ,IT IS REALLY WORTH IT!i LOVE THIS SITE.EVEN THOUGH I'VE NOT FINISH READING IT BUT IM SURE IT WILL GIVE ME MORE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING ABOUT MY RELIGION.tHANKS TO YOU!IM PROUD TO BE A HINDU. GOD BLESS YOU!!!!!!!!

Date: 3/4/2002 - 5:01 AM

Name: TV Murali

Email: afsco@emirates.net.ae

Site: http:///

Location: Dubai, , United Arab Emirates

Comments: The the subjects in this site are very well researched and you have done a creditable job which will help in dispelling many misconceptions about India and Hinduism. Please accept my compliments. Regards, Murali

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Date: 3/3/2002 - 11:55 AM

Name: Vidyaratha Kissoon

Email: vidyak1@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Georgetown, , Guyana

Comments: Namaskar - many blessings on Sushma Londhe for your elcellent resource. Does anyone have any reference to views on Vaid Prakash's Kalki Autar, or AH Vidyarthi's Prophet Muhammed in Hindu Scriptures? Thanks

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Date: 3/3/2002 - 3:46 AM

Name: Shreekant Godkhindi

Email: drgodkhindi@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Pune, Maharashtra, India

Comments: very good efforts. I very much appreciate the efforts that have been put in this research work. It is marvelous work required to be done since long. I congratulate you and wish you all the success in all your future projects.

Date: 2/27/2002 - 12:00 AM

Name: Prithvi Raj

Email: prithvirajm@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Comments: I is a great effort and the best i liked about is the presentation. The description is done without unnecessary pompous words. Some of my suggestions are -it does not contain information about the origin of the major gods and goddess namely the trimurthy and their consorts. many people dont know abt it or there are many people with many misconceptions. it would surely help if you could incorporate that in the site with accurate research. i shall try and give my inputs myself whenever possible if it can help.

Date: 2/25/2002 - 11:58 PM

Name: Jiwan Hira

Email: jiwanhira@hetnet.nl

Site: http:///

Location: Dordrecht, , The Netherlands

Comments: Thank you for this web site. It makes me even more proud to be a Hindu. Bharat Mata ki Jay !!! Sanatan Dharma Ki Jay !!!

Date: 2/25/2002 - 11:46 AM
Name: Franky Brockway
Email: Ganeshalady@aol.com
Site: http:///
Location: Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA
Comments: Great site.I am interested in learning all I can about Hinduism and this site is a wealth of information.Thank you and keep up the good work. Franky Brockway

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Date: 2/25/2002 - 2:31 AM
Name: Srinivasan Gopal
Email: srinivasan_gopal@hotmail.com
Site: http://-/
Location: New Delhi, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India
Comments: It was by chance that I came to know about your site. I hope that this site will help in understanding Hinduism in the right context amongst all. Wish you all the best.

Date: 2/23/2002 - 5:17 AM
Name: Madan M Mathrani
Email: math35@aol.com
Site: http://http://hometown.aol.com/math35/myhomepag
Location: , California, USA

Comments: You have done a very good job. You have a wealth of information. However, you give no dates, or hardly any, to show that Hinduism is indeed the most ancient religion, even though you have a section named Hinduism the ancient religion, and another section called contributioin of Hinduism to the world (or words to this affect). This is a defficiecy. Since ideas flow from more ancient to the less ancient, you must give dates and prove that Hinduism is indeed the most ancient to claim its contribution to other religions and cultures. So, you must give dates for some major event about Hinduism. It is common for other civilizations to claim more and more ancient origin to claim their contribution to the world, since ideas flow f

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Date: 2/22/2002 - 2:50 PM

Name: Sanchit

Email: Khatavkar

Site: http://esanchit.tripod.com/

Location: Auburn, AL, USA

Comments: GREAT work ! Hats off !! I just had an overview of this site which was amazing. I'm planning to read it in my leisure time. It is very good for guys like me , who are hindus but have half knowledge of our religion, who are here in US. Keep it up ! A Billion thanks for the effort !

Date: 2/22/2002 - 12:21 PM

Name: Tyler Gareau

Email: pitdroid234@aol.com

Site: http://placesarefun.cool/

Location: Flushing, Michigan, U.S.A

Comments: This is a really cool sight! I like it.

Date: 2/14/2002 - 5:15 AM

Name: Dr Ajit Halder

Email: ajit.halder@freezone.co.uk

Site: http:///

Location: Manchester,England, ,

Comments: Congratulations for your excellent discussion on the richness of Sanskrit language and as a devabhasa. I wonder if you could add your comments on the suitability of Sanskrit as a computer programming (as a HLL) language. Sankrit is precise, with minimum ambiguity and Panini's work establishes that Sanskrit has attributes to serve as a generative grammar. I shall apprecite it if you could send me an email message. Regards. Ajit Halder

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Date: 2/13/2002 - 1:27 PM

Name: Vaibhav Naik

Email: vvn16@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: San Rafael, Marin, USA

Comments: Excellent approach, I especially liked the pdf formatted documents. very good work keep it up.

Date: 2/12/2002 - 12:38 PM

Name: Sarma

Email: v.sarma@worldonline.de

Site: http://www.angelfire.com/sd/sarma

Location: presently Dresden, , Germany

Comments: wonderful work. Keep it up. It is a vast ocean of knowledge. I hope to read each and every section on this site.

Date: 2/11/2002 - 7:15 PM

Name: Helena

Email: saylobet@yahoo.co.uk

Site: http://http://HistoryandMystery.homestead.com/I

Location: , , New Zealand

Comments: Beautiful enlightening site Susharma, I have put a link to your site on mine...Peace to You..traveller of the starry ways..NZ

Date: 2/11/2002 - 12:47 PM

Name: holly

Email: robert.henbury@virgin.net

Site: http:///

Location: Ingatestone, Essex, England

Comments: i was wondering about hinduism in england and for white people can i become a hindu if i am white ? and i live near chelmsford in essex abnd was wondering where is my nearest temple where i can learn ?

Date: 2/11/2002 - 3:24 AM

Name: Neeraja Rao

Email: neeraja.bhaskaran@philips.com;neeraja.b@

Site: http:///

Location: Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Comments: Ganesha happens to be my favourite God and I loved the picture that explained the significance of each part of his body. The material is organised really well and Indian history never looked like so much of fun and value to me in school. Am waiting to see the updated page on Tamil origin soon.

Date: 2/10/2002 - 7:48 PM

Name: Caitline,13

Email: cold_cherry_coke@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: sacramento, california, U.S.A

Comments: My name is Caitline and I'd like to know more about Hinduism. My mum and dad are both Christians and won't let me near the books about it or the temples. I really have no way except the net to learn anything. If someone could give could tell me the basic info about it I'd be thrilled. Thanx

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Date: 2/8/2002 - 4:52 PM

Name: Ram

Email: ram_k5@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Boston, MA, U.S.A

Comments: Hi In United States all the televison channel broadcasting and always described big things about the egypt and european civilization. They don't know about our Indian Culture,Civilization and history. We are the best and we need to prove our history and achivement to the world. The only way to do is, preparing a television programme and broadcasting in U.S. television channel. This web site is the best and base for developing such programmes. Using the information in this web site we can produce such a great programme to prove our hinduism and its greatness. Thanking you all the people those who involved in developing the web site. thanks ram.

Date: 2/8/2002 - 10:20 AM

Name: Karthik Narayanan Venkatesh

Email: kaatss@hotmail.com

Site: http://www.angelfire.com/scifi/kaatss

Location: Santa Clara, CA, USA

Comments: This web site is tooooooooo good. I would like to call this as "TREASURE CHEST" of hinduism. Children ought to visit this site and read about hinduism. Jai Bharat Mata

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Date: 2/7/2002 - 2:00 PM

Name: Panigrahi

Email: panigrahiguduru@hotmail.com

Site: http://www.dpo.uab.edu/~guduru

Location: Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Comments: Hi Your site is valuable source for knowing the ancient Hinduism.Please provide any color pictures taken in dwaraka explorations.Also any pictures which can give the exact structure of the forts or temples in dwaraka.I am grateful to you for the pictures about dwaraka. Thanks Pani.

Date: 2/7/2002 - 9:37 AM

Name: olaf van cleef

Email: ovc@vancleef.org

Site: http://le-petit-bouquet.com/archives2/livre/398

Location: Paris, , France

Comments: ...nice ant very quiet site..and so confortable for my hearth. love of Olaf

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Date: 2/6/2002 - 12:54 PM

Name: Shrutkeerti Khurana

Email: shrutkeerti@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Bangalore, karnataka, India

Comments: Great stuff - learnt quite some stuff which i previously didn't know. Will surely go thru the whole thing later.

Date: 2/5/2002 - 6:12 AM

Name: Praful Jani

Email: mebillgates@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Tustin, CA, USA

Comments: I have bookmarked this excellent site to come back again and again. You also may check out the Hindu philosophy of "Vasudhev Kutumbakam" whole world as a pariwar with sites like http://www.swadhyaya.org and http://www.dadaji.net. During Jan.2002,Pope in response to terrorism threat had invited all religions from other countries. Didi, daughter of Pandurang Shastri,was only one invited to represent Hindu faith and India. You may visit local chapter which meets every Sunday, 1030 to 1130am. Your work is remarkable. My hats off to You.

Date: 2/2/2002 - 6:12 AM

Name: naidhruva

Email: naidhruva@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: cuddapah, andhra pradesh, india

Comments: The web is so fine . The Indian heritage and holly things are fine. And this will be fine if we have the news how to get rid of killings of kashmiri pandits every day at kashmir .

Date: 1/29/2002 - 12:46 PM

Name: Prakash Narayana Swamy

Email: prakash_nswamy@yahoo.co.uk

Site: http:///

Location: Lyons, , France

Comments: First of all let me congratulate you for your wonderful idea of a web page encompassing various aspects of Indian history that have hitherto been completely excluded from our European-era texts, whether they were the books we studied at school or the literature that has selectively been recorded in books and encyclopaedias. That trend of glorifying and exaggerating anything concerning European history and civilization while minimising and even denying the enormous influence of other parts of the world is being continued today, as can be witnessed by reading any of the regular "international" journals on the market - TIME, Newsweek, etc. You have a better chance in these "august" journals of closely following such and su

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Date: 1/26/2002 - 11:12 PM

Name: Vinny

Email: melankoly@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: London, , England

Comments: William Shakespeare once wrote... "Above all, to thy own self be true" You have made us aware of the tools we always had to fulfill that goal...

Date: 1/26/2002 - 11:06 PM

Name: Vinny

Email: melankoly@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: London, , England

Comments: Finally... someone with the dedication, intellect and the tenacity to put in to print what alot of people have been saying for a very long time... I have no more words other than 'Thank You'...

Entries: 560-511

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

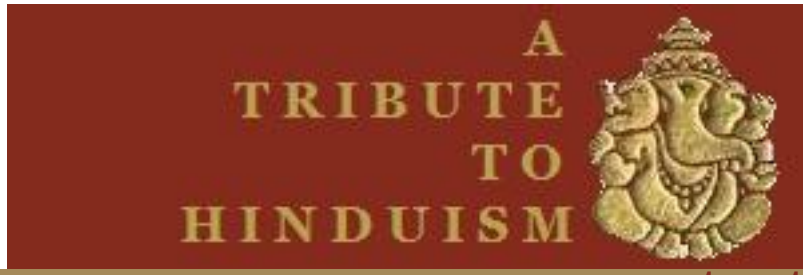
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h o m e g u e s t b o o k c o n t e n t s

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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002



Entries: 510-461

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 1/25/2002 - 2:10 AM

Name: Mohan Kumar

Email: mohan26@hotmail.com

Site: http://www.visionsleep.com/

Location: Katy, Texas, USA

Comments: Your site is commendable effort to put up a brave face on Hinduism.Sometimes back ,there was discussion on Hinduism in the columns of Times of India as to what is Hinduism and the answer was it's a composite culture.I hope your site inspires Hindus to have one voice." Ekta mein bal hai," needs to be put into action.Living in USA,the prevalent feeling,"Akela chana bhar nahin phor sakta" dawns upon you.

Date: 1/23/2002 - 5:29 PM

Name: Barry J Smith

Email: barryjsmith@hotmail,com

Site: http:///

Location: Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Comments: I have book-market your web site and returned to it again and again. I have regularly travelled in India and SE Asia for 28 years and the ever constant discoveries I make about the culture and civilizations of these regions has enriched my life immensely. Your web-site is a valuable asset to the understanding of the richness and depth of the cultures of this region and the immensity, (and little understood in the West), the greatness and the significance of the Hindu culture of the Indian sub-continent, and the extent of it's global influence.

Date: 1/22/2002 - 6:29 PM

Name: pravin thaker

Email: pndthaker@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: london, , Engl,United Kingdom

Comments: Excellent web site. I congratulate you for the effort that you are putting in this site. It is vital that this kind of information plus a lo more is made available to our children. My best wishes to you in your endeavours to enlighten all of us. Nodoubt I will be a regular visitor to this site.

Date: 1/22/2002 - 2:16 PM

Name: Divyabh Mishra

Email: divyabhm@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Bangalore, Karnataka, INDIA

Comments: I had a discussion with one of my Muslim friends about the position of women in Hinduism and I couldn't provide him concrete answers until I ran across your website. The detail in whihc the information is presented is very impressive. Please keep up the good work.

Date: 1/21/2002 - 7:51 PM

Name: Shilpi

Email: Shilpi99@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: , , United States

Comments: This is a beautifully made web site. It has great information and links. I have really enjoyed going through it and learning more about Hinduism.

Date: 1/18/2002 - 3:47 PM

Name: Rajagopal

Email: rajagopals@excite.com

Site: http:///

Location: KeegoHarbor, MI, USA

Comments: It is a great pleasure to see more organised site dedicated to our Sanathna Dharma. I have a dream of bring together all website related to Hindusim and make it available to our kids and others.. Your efforts will be of great tribute to our Motherland and our values..

Date: 1/17/2002 - 5:56 AM

Name: Raghunath

Email: raghunatha75@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Hamburg, , Germany

Comments: Dear Sir, Thank you very kindly for recommending this web-site to me. It is absolutely brilliant ! A great non-sectarian inspiration for those who thirst for truth. Thank you Thank you Thank you

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Date: 1/17/2002 - 2:32 AM

Name: Dr. Yuvraj Sambhy
Email: yuvrajsambhy@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: Gurgaon, Haryana, India
Comments: At the age of 57 i learnt a lot on Hinduism through this site that i did not care during my younger age. I am a Hindu with scientific orientation who does not believe very much in existence of God as such but daily enchant five mantra's religiously, morning and night, and believe that gives me peace and rhythm. Hopefully, this site will inspire younger generation and expose them to Hinduism.

Date: 1/17/2002 - 1:42 AM
Name: Ajit Murur
Email: ajitmurur@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: Mumbai, , India
Comments: Good Site

Date: 1/15/2002 - 6:49 PM
Name: Subhash Paradkar
Email: ceo@sitarinc.com
Site: http://www.sitarinc.com/
Location: Annandale, Virginia, USA
Comments: This is site great for educating young generation about our heritage. May want to link to tourism sites in India.

Date: 1/15/2002 - 6:51 AM
Name: Ravi
Email: rharsoor@ameritech.net

Site: http:///

Location: Chicago, IL, USA

Comments: Thrilled to see a fairly comprhensive website about Hindus. With very best wishes, Ravi

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Date: 1/14/2002 - 12:09 PM

Name: A'isha Bauer

Email: tcbauerco@aol.com

Site: http://tcbauerco.com/

Location: Chicago, IL, USA

Comments: What a relief to find clear, rational and conclusive educational facts backed by science on the heritage of India. You have done, marvellously well what several others have desperately tried to do so in the past. With one stroke of your creative genius - the image of India is changed forever. She stands Tall and Proud again.. despite the numerous problems that plague her. You give Indians Hope by cementing their faith in their glorious Past. Bravo !!

Date: 1/14/2002 - 10:42 AM

Name: Benjamin Root

Email: benroot@radar.nrl.navy.mil

Site: http://www.benjaminroot.com/

Location: Washington, D.C., USA

Comments: An attractive and informative website. I like websites that provide lots of content AND lots of pictures! I was led into the Hindu religion through philosophy but am becoming increasingly interested in all aspects of the religion. Please keep up your enthusiasm.

Date: 1/14/2002 - 9:30 AM

Name: VIKRAM LELE

Email: praviur@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Manama, Bahrain, Bahrain

Comments: " Aprateem" is the expression that is needed for you work.The effort desereves a salute.I have been in the area of JAMBU DWEEPE-BHARAT KHANDE-that is from Turkey Iraq border to Hindukush and i can tell you the real story of our badluck andenglish manupulation of history if i can be of any help.Because we should get the correct picture with referance from our ancient scriptures. VIKRAM LELE

Date: 1/13/2002 - 4:41 PM

Name: Bhavesh MEHTA

Email: mbhavesh@yahoo.com

Site: http://n/A

Location: Heverlee, Flamish brabant, Belgium

Comments: I must congratulate you for the valuable work that you are doing.It gave me lot of information and awareness about our religion.And i am thankful to you to provide lot of references for my papers.I wish you very best dear sister.

Date: 1/13/2002 - 2:11 PM

Name: Jai Mukerji

Email: jaideep@sprint.ca

Site: http://www3.telus.net/himalayas/

Location: Vancouver, B.C, Canada

Comments: Excellent and comprehensive site. Fills a void for hindus worldwide. Keep up the good work.

Date: 1/10/2002 - 10:07 PM

Name: Abhijit

Email: thetoastedbread@mailmetoday.com

Site: http:///

Location: Mumbai, ,

Comments: Fantastic website. In this age of nasty missionaries, spread the love of Hinduism. Long live our culture. May the Vedic civilisation prosper and bring fruits.

Date: 1/10/2002 - 5:18 PM

Name: Prakash Lal

Email: plalg@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Sydney, NSW, Australia

Comments: Keep it up. Excellent work! I have to really admire the contents. I just can't stop reading your articles. There were lot of unkowns I had regarding Hinduism which were answered by your site. I am really proud to be a Hindu. I believe Hinduism is a complex religion to understand because its mission is always "Sat" (truth). We all know it is difficult to define Sat (truth,justice,correct). Regards... Prakash

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Date: 1/10/2002 - 12:44 PM

Name: drush

Email: what@myemail.nil

Site: http:///

Location: , , bharatavarshe bharatakhande

Comments: very good site. request you to split up pages more manageable sizes. also remove pointless graphics. please add more links, especially scholoarly ones. thanks. keep up the good work.

Date: 1/10/2002 - 9:38 AM

Name: Gokul Patel

Email: gokulp1@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: charlotte, north carolina, USA

Comments: Very informative website and thorough/detail presentation of its content. Please let me know if I can be of any help in your future developments. I would love to be associated with such things that promotes our culture and heritage. There are many of us out there who wants to be aware of such things and are curious about things that are presented in this website. But they don't have any resources or means to satisfy their needs. This website can serve their needs in a nice fashion.

Date: 1/9/2002 - 10:20 PM

Name: Bharath

Email: jannubharath@yahoo.com

Site: http://www.geocities.com/jannubharath

Location: Mumbai / Hyd, maharastra/ ap, INDIA

Comments: Very Good Site, more compliments for the beautiful presentation .. please let me know, if i can make any contribution to this site ... in anu form .. thanks

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Date: 1/8/2002 - 3:04 PM

Name: vir gupta

Email: arsv2000@cs.com

Site: http:///

Location: springfield, Illinois, USA

Comments: Please include following christian attrocities in your write up. In Kandy, Sri Lanka, Portugese fed infant Buddhist children to crocodiles. They were snatched from their mothers (source: How the Swans Came to the Lake: by Rick Field, Sambhala Publication). Also the same source says that Hindus were lowered into wells contaminated with beef till they accept christianity. Christians Missionaries hold maximum amount of land in Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Vietnam, and India. The land was taken by foreign rulers from Buddhist temples in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka and from Hindus in India. (Source: Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire by Thich Nhat Hanh) Christian missionaries are active in NE India. Baptists are scaring Hind

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Date: 1/8/2002 - 2:53 PM

Name: vir gupta

Email: arsv2000@cs.com

Site: http:///

Location: springfield, Illinois, USA

Comments: Please remove Taxila from the list of places destroyed by Muslims. Taxila was destroyed by White Huns in 499 A.D. But you should add Vikramshila, Odantapura, and Jagddala as the universities destroyed by Mohammed Bakhtiar Khilji around 1200 A.D. Heis the same who ordered the destruction of Nalanda University.

Date: 1/7/2002 - 2:35 PM

Name: Brijesh

Email: brijeshcp@yahoo.com

Site: http://www.poorakkali.com/

Location: kannur, kerala, india

Comments: Om Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bavanthu... Pranams..Brijesh

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Date: 1/7/2002 - 9:41 AM

Name: Satish

Email: satish1408@hotmail.com

Site: http://none/

Location: Lucknow, Utter Pradesh, India

Comments: I appriciate the pains taken to create awareness about Hindu and Hindustan. Here are my comments, but nevertheless, they are for constructive purpose. If any further explaination of my remarks is asked for (though e-mail), I shall be just feel proud of myself of having the honour. Here are my bulleted comments: - 1. The term "hindu" needs to be explained very clearly and profoundly.Let us not forget that the term was coined after 325 B.C. to refer communities living in a given geographical location. How can religoin got incarporated, what happened to Ancient Bhagwats,what is panchayatan or panchtantra religion and a lot more need to be explained. 2.For cronological purpose marksist scholers like Dr. D.D. Kosambi, Rom

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Date: 1/6/2002 - 11:15 PM

Name: Girish S.Nayak

Email: svtmangalore%20at%20yahoo.com

Site: http://www.svtmangalore.org/

Location: Mangalore, Karnataka, India.

Comments: Hi, Content provided in this site is really great, lets hope that this information will clear at least some miths and wrong perceptions about Hinduisam. I would like to know if there are any onlites that provide full information about atrocities commited on hindues by muslims and christians. I would also like to know if there are any sites that gives historic proof of existence of temple in the place of Mosque or a church (I know lots of hindue temples are demolished to constructchurchs in Goa) Jai Shree Ram , Jai Hindu Rashtra Girish

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Date: 1/6/2002 - 10:36 AM

Name: Mohit

Email: mohitzboy@rediffmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Thane, Maharashtra, India

Comments: Just Great!!! Conntinue this great endevour! This is the need of the hour.Not many people today know of Hinduism.Can't blame them.Such efforts would help change this scenario. All the Best!!!

Date: 1/6/2002 - 6:45 AM

Name: Pramod Prasun

Email: pprasun@hotmail.com

Site: http://prasun.freeservers.com/

Location: Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, INDIA

Comments: This is really a great site, I liked the contents.. but the fact remains.. this site has taken a lot of efforts to be precise... Great work. I would love to contribute anything I get first thing to this site. I really wondered .. why we are this way .. when we where much better in the past. Lets hope some day . we will be better than we were in the whole history of INDIA.

Date: 1/6/2002 - 3:59 AM

Name: Chetak

Email: chetak74@hotmail.com

Site: http://www.geocities.com/chetak74%20%20www.geocitie

Location: Mangalore, Karnataka, Mera Bharat Mahan

Comments: Hi Thats a cool site that you have maintained and a service rendered to modern society. Its sad to know that many of our own people know very less about the history and culture of the holy motherland. While many a visiting foreign traveller wouldknow much more. Its like the paradox of grass is greener on the other side. The Americans, The Europeans Japanese throng our cities and sites while we like fools go to other countries forgetting the richness of our own past. The Past is like an window to the futute and each one of us has to shoulder some responsibility if the oldest religion among mankind is to maintain its unique position. Vande Mataram!! Jai Hind!! Chetak.

Date: 1/4/2002 - 1:11 AM
Name: Abhijeet
Email: abhijeet.v@mailcity.com
Site: http:///
Location: Bhopal, M.P., India
Comments: as i dont use my rediff account generally so i was bit unlucky to came to know about this site...as a string follower of hinduism its a great resource to find every minute details about it...great work....

Date: 1/2/2002 - 3:43 AM
Name: Shyam Dhody
Email: samiee01@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia
Comments: It is just wonderful. Congratulations!!! Good luck.

Date: 1/1/2002 - 12:05 PM
Name: Sujan Gautam
Email: sujan_badguy@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: , , Nepal
Comments: I congratulate you for your endeavour to create this site. I havent had the chance to browse it but it looks good.

Date: 1/1/2002 - 3:59 AM
Name: Vivek Iyer

Email: vk_iyer@yahoo.com

Site: http://vivekiyer.8m.com/

Location: Vasco-da-gama, Goa, India

Comments: I've been liviing in Goa for the last 13 years.During my stay here i have observed a Kneen interest about Hinduism by many foreigners.Therefore i feel that it is the duty of all Hindus to enlighten them more about our religion.I appeal to everyone reading this to forward this web address of Sushama to evevry foreigner they know.

Date: 1/1/2002 - 3:59 AM

Name: Sudhanva Dabke

Email: sudhanva_dabke@rediffmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: mumbai, maharashtra, india

Comments: This is such a lovely site and i think all the Hindus in this world must visit this site.This is the only way where Hindus all over the world can have a global platform

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Date: 12/31/2001 - 3:19 PM

Name: avijit das patnaik

Email: avijit_das_patnaik@rediffmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: jamshedpur, jharkhand, India

Comments: nothing much, proud to be an Indian, proud to be a Hindu....always... ask not what your country does for you, ask what you have done so far for your country for which god had sent you here!

Date: 12/31/2001 - 5:19 AM

Name: Ratnakar

Email: ratna_69@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India

Comments: An Excellent web site.I would like to be a part of ur web site by contributing articles,poems etc.Also can i start a Quiz column on various aspects of Hinduism.It has always been my dream to do so.

Date: 12/30/2001 - 6:35 AM

Name: Dick Gagel

Email: gageld@aol.com

Site: http:///

Location: Aberdeen, Scotland, UK

Comments: Pleasantly surprised to see such a nice presentation of Hinduism. I am interested as I lived and worked in my late teens in Mumbai & now have Hindu in-laws thru my son in law. Will revert to your site to update my awareness of your customs etc.

Date: 12/30/2001 - 2:27 AM

Name: Jatin Joshi

Email: jatin_joshi@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Rourkela, Orissa, India

Comments: Sushama ji, many congratulation for developing such an informative web page. Despite being a Hindu, I now realise that I didn't know even a fraction about the religion. Though I feel that religion is a personal affair, but I find this web page very much eye-opening. Keep up the good work and best wishes for the future.

Date: 12/28/2001 - 10:09 PM

Name: anuradha deshpande

Email: asdeshpa@aol.com

Site: http:///

Location: Westborough, MA,

Comments: A wondeful site, a great resource when my children need something other than "because Mom says so...!!" Thank you for all your effort.

Date: 12/28/2001 - 5:54 AM

Name: Rajesh K. Jalota

Email: r_jalota@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Emerald, Queensland, Australia

Comments: One of very good sites created for Hinduism. Keep it up Sushma!!

Date: 12/28/2001 - 12:52 AM

Name: Abhay Sapru

Email: abhaysapru@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: , ,

Comments: Good Show, Sushama ji! Long live Sanatan Hindu Dharm!

Date: 12/27/2001 - 9:20 PM

Name: B. Sharma

Email: gtmassive74@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Long Island, New York, USA

Comments: Great compilation of facts. I am very inspired by the contents of your site. Keep up the good work.

Date: 12/27/2001 - 2:15 PM
Name: Greg Law
Email: AllDharma@hotmail.com
Site: http://alldharma.com/
Location: Roanoke, VA, USA
Comments: I am looking forward to spending more time on your site to learn more about the very beautiful Hindu tradition. At first glance I find it very charming.

Date: 12/24/2001 - 8:56 PM
Name: NITIN JOSHI
Email: nitjoshi1@rediffmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: NASHIK, Maharashtra, INDIA
Comments: Its great to see the site about hindusim. good work and you are appriciate for this work. Keep it up. and Best wishes

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Date: 12/24/2001 - 12:54 AM
Name: swatantra kumar jain
Email: kumaraugustay@rediffmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: delhi, DELHI, india
Comments: ur site is intresting .not seen much.i wll see it later. THANKS.

Date: 12/23/2001 - 3:23 AM
Name: satheesan
Email: satheesanmuttil@hotmail.com

Site: http://-/

Location: Kannur, Kerala, India

Comments: Excellent work and anyone will appreciate your efforts. wish you all the best and try to include more articles.

Date: 12/21/2001 - 9:55 PM

Name: Nihar Singh

Email: nihar_singh786@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: college station, Texas, U.S.A

Comments: Dear Mrs. Sushma, Your effort is laudable. However I would like to point out that the term "hinduism" itself is a misnomer coined by the arabs to refer to people on the other side of the river sindhu. We true to our tolerant nature have accepted it. The sanatana dharma is the vedic dharma. While you have dedicated this site to the demi-god ganesha perhaps you should also mention about the bhagawad gita and who god really is. Why dont you check out these sites to educate yourself a bit more about hinduism. www.iskcon.org www.stephen-knapp.com

---

Date: 12/21/2001 - 9:04 PM

Name: Vaman Rao

Email: V-Rao@wiu.edu

Site: http:///

Location: Macomb, Illinois, USA

Comments: Dear Sushamaji: It is a wonderful effort, and I am sure it will educate lots of people. Especially those that are still overpowered by the colonial mindset, perhaps, will start thinking about how depraved thay have become by parroting the old cliches and distorted versions of their glorious antiquity and wisdom. I do hope this site is publicised as much as possible, and those who visit it at least once will take it as a source for all that needed to be known about Sanatan Dharma. I would be honored to contribute my mite in terms of scholarly contributions to the site in the days to come. Vaman Rao Professor of Economics Western Illinois University

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Date: 12/20/2001 - 10:04 AM
Name: Bhupendra Patel
Email: bhupen@peoplepc.com
Site: http:///
Location: Canton, Michigan, USA
Comments: Very informative site. Thanks for your effort.

Date: 12/20/2001 - 8:06 AM
Name: Ranjit Varma
Email: arya_putra@rediffmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: Kochi, Keralam, India
Comments: Namaste Sushmaji. After going through your life-history I pretty much feel that all of us Indians have come far in life when they come to think of our heritage and civilization. Believe me, I got interested in my civilization after viewing a French movie in a French channel which shows how the French value anybody who has a great civilization to boast of . The story was about a French couple adopting a boy from South America of Inca descent. Their own son who is biologically their own at first dislikes the adopted boy, but once when he is taught (which is done by his teachers, relatives and the like) how civilized the Incas were, all his dislike vanishes into thin air!! This is not to say that we should start thinking th

Entries: 510-461

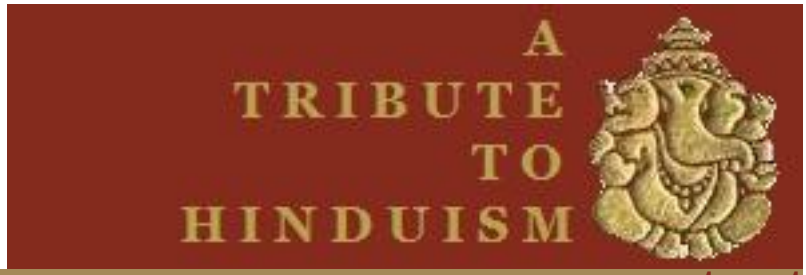
[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

h o m e g u e s t b o o k c o n t e n t s

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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002



Entries: 460-411

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 12/19/2001 - 7:01 AM
Name: Sham N Kashyap
Email: sham_nk@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: Mysore, Karnataka, India
Comments: Very good website indeed. What about the authentication of the texts presented? I wanted to download sanskrith speaking tutorials and I ended up here. Would you suggest me some sites?

Date: 12/18/2001 - 1:34 PM
Name: Kamlesh
Email: vyaskm@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: Santa clara, CA, USA
Comments: Excellant work done. Keep it up.

Date: 12/10/2001 - 12:14 PM
Name: kalpana
Email: kapan_1960@yahoo.com
Site: http:///

Location: Monmouth Junction, NJ, USA

Comments: Site is quite inspiring, specially to youth generation. I enjoyed.

Date: 12/9/2001 - 1:47 PM

Name: Ganesh

Email: Ste4206995@aol.com

Site: http:///

Location: Eden Prairie, MN, United States

Comments: This is a wonderful page to Hinduism, keep it up

Date: 12/8/2001 - 9:51 AM

Name: T.P.Mishra

Email: tpmishra@indiatimes.com

Site: http://www.gs-systems.webhop.net/

Location: Princeton JCT, NJ, usa

Comments: The site is inspiring for the readers & also it keeps the serious reader to read more & more. The power of the Sanatana Dharma is so great that it will keep up intact every truth Congrats for your efforts

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Date: 12/6/2001 - 3:42 AM

Name: Vishwajit Bhide

Email: vishbhide@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Comments: Excellant work done. Please let me know, if you need any help in trms of Subject Text or photos or pictures. I feel this sight should be continuously enriched. Best Luck !

Date: 12/6/2001 - 2:06 AM
Name: swapnil bhagwat
Email: swapnil_dreams@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: mumbai, maharashtra, india
Comments: hi sushama, i am really glad to see the very informative site on net abt hinduism. I was searching for the material on hinduism from many days. And my search ends up at ur site. I will surely be coming to ur site whenever i wil need any information... One think i will like to tell u is...the design of the site is not that impulsive. Now as u have very informative material u can concentrate on design of the site also...which can give beter break thru t ur site... Pls....don't mind.....it was a genuine suggetion from my side...::::::::: :::::::

Date: 12/5/2001 - 2:07 PM
Name: Dr AMIT GARG
Email: amitgarg4@lycos.com
Site: http:///
Location: Garden City, Michigan, USA
Comments: Good Work! Very Thoughtfully displayed! Perhaps you may consider adding some other features!

Date: 11/30/2001 - 4:25 PM
Name: harin parikh
Email: hjp2707@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: garland, texas 75040, usa
Comments: excellent collection of the religion and will be very proud to tell and refer this site not only to my other indian friends but also to my other friends who wants to learn about Hinduism

---

Date: 11/26/2001 - 10:23 AM
Name: Chetan Upadhyaya
Email: satyafoundation@sify.com
Site: http://www.satyafoundation.org/
Location: Varanasi, U.P., India
Comments: The site is too good. Keep up the spirits. -Chetan

Date: 11/24/2001 - 9:50 PM
Name: Ajay kannan
Email: aj_mj2000@yahoo.com
Site: http://www.geocities.com/cv_specimens
Location: Madras, Tamil Nadu, Hindustan
Comments: a very good site and very well layed out too.. i'm very glad i have come accross this site. i'm actually studying in australia now and i think this site will keep me busy and peaceful for somethime..thank you. JAIHIND ajay

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Date: 11/22/2001 - 8:12 AM
Name: Devesh Mathur
Email: devesh_mathur@hotmail.com
Site: http://members.dencity.com/Devesh/deveshmathur.
Location: New Delhi, Delhi, India
Comments: Dear Ms. Sushma, It is really a wonderful site. Indian culture is so rich that it has no limits. What really saddened me that most of the visitors are NRIs. The people within the country need to be knowing about such sites. Anyway thanx for sending me the invitation. I'll surely come again and again to see this site. Regards, Devesh Mathur

---

Date: 11/21/2001 - 10:18 AM

Name: amita sirohi

Email: asirohi1@hotmail.com

Site: http://www.geocities.com/amitasirohi

Location: Ch'town, , Canada

Comments: Dear Sushma ji, I am very glad to visit your site.I was happy to read the material on it... I wil be visiting again to read more on your site. Some beautiful things about India & Hinduism is on your site which I used to search on the net often. Its a very good work & compilation of very good information for people like me who have active interest in Hinduism & Ancient India & its marvellous History of which the world in not aware of. And the internet is a perfect medium to educate the worldabout our richness. Thanks Amita

---

Date: 11/19/2001 - 5:06 PM

Name: Sandip Prashar

Email: sandipprashar@aol.com

Site: http://www.geocities.com/sanju123ca

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Comments: Excellent collection of material, Keep it up!

Date: 11/18/2001 - 7:19 PM

Name: MADHUKANT THAKRAR

Email: cobra_int@ntlworld.com

Site: http:///

Location: Leicester, , UK

Comments: Keep up the good work. I will write again when I have had chnce lo study the site throughly.

Date: 11/16/2001 - 11:54 PM
Name: rb sanghi
Email: rbsanghi@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: berkeleyvale, nsw, australia
Comments: enlightening reading. why do you need to quote western writers and philosophers to give authenticity to your inferences about profoundness of hinduism and history of india ?

Date: 11/12/2001 - 11:52 PM
Name: Sharath
Email: shg8d6@mizzou.edu
Site: http://web.missouri.edu/~shg8d6
Location: Columbia, Missouri, US
Comments: a beautifully presented, comprehensive, factually excellent website!!!...a required online resource for anyone who wants to get acquainted with Hinduism.

Date: 11/12/2001 - 3:44 PM
Name: Madhu Sampath
Email: vizag_boys@yahoo.com
Site: http://www.geocities.com/vizag_boys
Location: Buffalo, NY, USA
Comments: Its very facinating site on web i guess, great job, keep it up. I really liked the article n information on Dwaraka.

Date: 11/10/2001 - 5:52 PM
Name: Nilesh
Email: nilesh2115@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: London, , United Kingdom

Comments: This is just absolutely fantastic and informative web site. It is a must for any Hindu (or non-Hindu) that wish to learn more about the Hindu history and culture. Keep up the good work.

Date: 11/6/2001 - 5:31 AM

Name: krishna Rayalu

Email: krishnasvr@hotmail.com,krishnasvr@satyam

Site: http:///

Location: Hyderabad, andhra paradesh, India

Comments: this is a great effort to document hinduism and its ancinent aspets long live this effort

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Date: 11/2/2001 - 2:34 PM

Name: Raja Prashanta Kumar

Email: rajapkumar@lycos.com

Site: http:///

Location: Detroit, Michigan, India

Comments: This is the greatest work on the net, I have seen till today. You have done a great job. May Lord Ganesha be always be with you. Regards, Raja Kumar

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Date: 10/29/2001 - 6:03 PM

Name: Vedant

Email: bornagainhindus@hotmail.com

Site: http://www.bornagainhindus.org/

Location: London, , United Kingdom

Comments: Keep up the good work. Spread the knowledge of Hinduism - Vedic Hinduism - in the form of message of love and peace. I have dreamt of a concept of 'born again hindus' from my own experience of life. I was born in a poor Brahmin family but had lived most of my adulthood as a socialist (pink communist)and an athiest - a non-believer. After my 13 years stay in India I have returned to England a year ago. The last five year of my Indian life and one single visit to Shri Aurobindo Ashram in Vadodara and a miracle happened for me and there I was - A Born Again Hindu... My website is still under construction... Jai Shree Krishna Jai Gurudev Vedant

---

Date: 10/29/2001 - 2:46 AM

Name: Vijay Vaidya

Email: vdv_15@yahoo.com

Site: http://--/

Location: Mumbai, -, India

Comments: Good work... keep it up.. check out the site " http://www.stephen-knapp.com " amazing..... it tell how the whole world was the follower of Sanatana Dhrama

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Date: 10/25/2001 - 1:20 AM

Name: Rajiv Kumar Srivastava

Email: Rajiv.K.Srivastava@eds.com

Site: http://www.geocities.com/rajiv_srivastava

Location: Sydney, NSW, Australia

Comments: Its Excellent.

Date: 10/16/2001 - 9:47 PM

Name: Anand Shankaran

Email: anand_shankaran@hp.com

Site: http:///

Location: Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Comments: An eye opener and magnificent presentation of Hinduism and India. Should be read by everyone - Indian or otherwise. Congratulations and best wishes for you continued efforts to unveil the TRUTH.

Date: 10/16/2001 - 12:19 PM

Name: Elangkumaran

Email: elangkumaran@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Bangalore, , India

Comments: A great tibute to Hinduism. Long live your noble service.

Date: 10/16/2001 - 10:59 AM

Name: Sridhar Rao Patibandla

Email: sridharprao@rediffmail.com

Site: http://www.hindunet.org/

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Comments: An excellent site.Very informative. Its very well compiled and executed. Only a few such sites are available describing the glory and greatness of Hindusim(The ancient religion of the universe). Hindus or followers of Hinduism (as most of the Indians in abroad are IT professionals)should contribute much in developing these kind of sites. My sincere gratitude to those people who are behind the development of this site.

Date: 10/15/2001 - 11:16 AM

Name: Nandini Pandya

Email: nandini_pandya@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: , Connecticut, USA

Comments: Dear Ms Londhe I stumbled upon your site while researching Tagore's influence on the Unitarian movement. I have spent only a few minutes on your site and feel overwhelmed by the breadth and depth of information you have collected. I believe my formal study of Hinduism is about to begin! I am a freelance software professional and have developed many database-linked web sites. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance in any way in managing, maintaining, enhancing this web site. It would be an honor and a privelege to be associated with this endeavor. Thank you! -- Nandini

---

Date: 10/10/2001 - 2:18 PM

Name: Maite

Email: maite18@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: , , USA

Comments: Dear Sushama, Your site is beautifully adorned--like a cyber-temple. I lost myself in facination reading your diverse collection of quotes on Hinduism. Thank you for inviting me to visit and for your shining efforts here. I look forward to revisiting your tribute to Hinduism again and again.

Date: 10/10/2001 - 1:16 PM

Name: Kalli

Email: DreemGurl@yahoo.co.uk

Site: http:///

Location: Birmingham, , UK

Comments: I found this site very insiteful, and packed with useful information, as a new convertee to Hinduism.

Date: 10/10/2001 - 12:54 AM

Name: Dr. CSGK.Setty

Email: gopala72us@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: , ,

Comments: Dear Sir/Madam, It seems so impersonalto write and not hearing your response or knowing about you personally. How to rectify this. You may respond to my E-mail Regards and best wishes, Dr. Setty

---

Date: 10/10/2001 - 12:50 AM

Name: Dr. C. S. G. K. Setty

Email: gopala72us@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: , ,

Comments: Dear Sir/Madam, It was with a sense of gratitude that I have read every bit of your glorious website which brings out the true India in all its splendour. It is the mother of civilizations and the mother of all that is worthy of mankind and you have done a wonderful job beautifully accomplished. May Our Mother Bhavani bless you and inspire you to continue all your endeavours in enlightening one and all. With best regrds

---

Date: 10/7/2001 - 2:22 AM

Name: Govinda Yelagalawadi

Email: SamskritaBharati@Coolindian.com

Site: http://www.samskrita-bharati.org/

Location: San Jose, CA 95130, USA

Comments: Namaste. A great site on Hinduism. Well-designed and lots of good articles. The articles here have been well-researched and written in a manner that would prove interesting to youngsters and adults alike. I am the volunteer co-ordinator of Samskrita Bharati (USA), an organization dedicated to popularize Spoken Samskritam, the basis for all that is Hindu. I would appreciate it if you could give a link to Samskrita Bharati on your site. Govinda

---

Date: 10/5/2001 - 6:47 AM

Name: Nilima Chitnis

Email: nilimachitnis@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, INDIA

Comments: Dear Sush After quite some time I was going through your webpage. The layout is beautiful. The added chapters are well compiled shows deep study. Like the ones before I am glad you took the efforts Proud of you sis. Keep up the good work Niloo

---

Date: 9/29/2001 - 8:55 PM

Name: Prakash Mani

Email: mprakash@ua.edu

Site: http:///

Location: Tuscaloosa, AL, USA

Comments: Really awesome site !!! I am really amazed at the content and visuals drawn from such a wide range of topics on Hinduism. Congrats for such a magnificient effort. Prakash

---

Date: 9/29/2001 - 12:26 PM

Name: Snehal Shirodkar

Email: snehashrins@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Mumbai,, Maharashatra,, India

Comments: Thanks Sushma! You have done a great job. I am instantly responding you only after just visiting your site. I now feel somewhat comfortable deep in my mind and soul that at least there is an effort to make understand the world about HINDUISM.

Date: 9/28/2001 - 9:53 AM

Name: Dr N M Mannari

Email: n45@btinternet.com

Site: http:///

Location: Cardiff, South Wales, United Kingdom

Comments: I am visiting not for the first time. An excellent source of reference to any Indian questions. I congratulate and thank Sushma for producing such a beautiful site.

Date: 9/24/2001 - 4:20 AM

Name: Manish Bhavin Patel

Email: aaryaputra@yahoo.com

Site: http://aaryaputra.topcities.com/

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, INDIA

Comments: Excellent! A Noble Effort. We, the Aarya People, have to re-write the History Books. How can these so-called Westerners claim to even Understand this Great Culture, when all their views are biased. One has to BE a Sanaatana to know the Sanaatana Dharma. We were, for 1000 years, under Foreign Rule. We were (and still are by Our so-called secular government) opressed, and forcefully "influenced" by these foreign invaders who claimed their ways as "superior". What is past is past. Like Swaami Vivekaananda said- "Arise, Awake, and Stop Not till the Goad is Reached", let Us all, together, re-establish Our Great Heritage. We were, are, and always will be, tolerant and receptive people. But it does not

---

Date: 9/18/2001 - 6:00 AM
Name: vinayak baldi
Email: indianheartbreakkid@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: jalgaon, maharashtra, INDIA
Comments: THESE SITE IS JUST MIND BOLWING ONE JUST LIKE THE BELOW PHRASE "If i would be the part of ur body i will like 2 be ur eye drop"assu",which start from ur eye and end on ur lips".

Date: 9/14/2001 - 1:51 AM
Name: Komal Jain
Email: komaljain1@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: Ambala City, Haryana, India
Comments: Great Site. keep up the good work. Would like to see more articles on Vedas and other great literature on Hinduism.

Date: 9/5/2001 - 7:36 AM
Name: kausikan
Email: kannan_kaushik@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: chennai, Tamilnadu, india
Comments: A Great Job !!!

Date: 8/31/2001 - 11:10 PM
Name: Durga Prasad Vasana
Email: vasana80@hotmail.com,vasana81@yahoo.com.
Site: http://in.geocities.com/vasana81
Location: Singapore, Singapore, Singapore

Comments: Dear sushmaji, I have no words to express my gratitude for inviting me to your site. Excellent. Very informative and well displayed. Please let me know if i can be of any help to you.

Date: 8/30/2001 - 3:21 PM

Name: Darshanand

Email: dramdass@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: New York, , USA

Comments: Dear Sushma, This is great stuff. Keep up the good work. Very informative. Darshanand

---

Date: 8/29/2001 - 11:48 AM

Name: Jalaj Parmar

Email: TygerXG2@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: New York, New York, USA

Comments: Hi, i'm a 16 year old very much intereted in my ancestry and my great great religion, i always am thinking, that many things hinduism says is true, as i go along with my everyday life. I was once depressed and was hospitalized i wanted to kill my self, i wanted to get out of the hostpital quick so every nite i use to say the gayatri mantra 21 times. It helped. and i want to thank you for making a site with such knowledge. I thank the god and i thank u :) .

Date: 8/26/2001 - 7:25 AM

Name: Vikas Bist

Email: vikasbist@indya.com

Site: http:///

Location: Chandigarh, Chandigarh, India

Comments: A great website. Impressive.

Date: 8/25/2001 - 6:06 AM

Name: Vijay

Email: vijay@annetsite.com

Site: http:///

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Comments: This is an excellent site for the thirst people like me. I really appreciate the efforst you have taken and the dedication of your work to make it successful. It helps me in lot ways. I am very religious and extremely Adhyatmic person. My bestwishes, With Warm Regards Vijay PS: Kindly inform me if any new book or any other holy materil for reading introduced on the site (if possible). Thanx in advance

---

Date: 8/24/2001 - 12:25 PM

Name: vijayan

Email: vj812@hotmail.com

Site: http://-/

Location: singapore, pasir ris...singapore, singapore

Comments: sushama...thanks for your time & efforts to put this web page... particularly to overseas hindus who may have lost touch with their own great civilisation...where they came from...i have not been through this page yet, still i can't help sending this email...hindu heritage, alive and timeless.

Date: 8/21/2001 - 2:53 PM

Name: Kishore S Gatty

Email: rahulkgatty@rediffmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: mumbai, maharashtra, Bharat

Comments: Dear sushmaji, I have no words to express my gratitude for inviting me to your site. I was lucky to get yours invitation. You have really done a good service and may god bless you.I will visit and make it point to visit as regularly as possible. till then bye and take care yours sincerely kishore s gatty

---

Date: 8/21/2001 - 12:28 PM

Name: Meenakshi

Email: mesiv@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Fremont, CA, US

Comments: Excellent. Very informative and well displayed. Please let me know if i can be of any help to you.

Date: 8/19/2001 - 8:43 PM

Name: Vikas Shah

Email: vshah@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: , ,

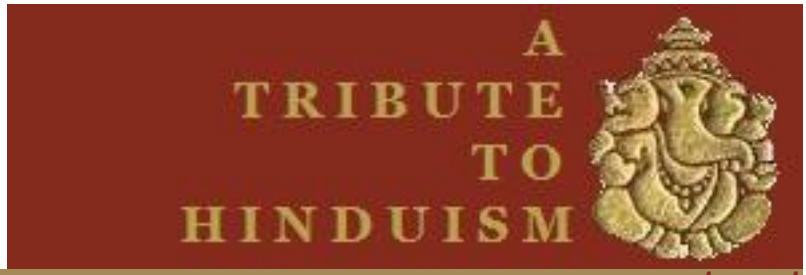
Comments: I would like to thank you, to congratulate, for your valuable , priceless service to hinduism. Every indian should be proud to be an Hindu. Jai Hind!

Entries: 460-411

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

home guestbook contents

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Entries: 410-361

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 8/6/2001 - 12:04 AM
Name: Savannah
Email: savie_anna@chickmail.com
Site: http://-/
Location: Busselton, Western Australia, Australia
Comments: This site was very helpful to me!! thankyou to the makers

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Date: 7/27/2001 - 8:30 PM
Name: Andrew Jensen
Email: odins_quest@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: Agana Heights, Guam, U.S.A.
Comments: I found your site while researching ancient societies for a book I am writing on Kennewick Man, a 9,300 year old non-Native American found on the bank of the Columbia River in Washington, U.S.A. I am trying to determine where he might have come from. Is it possible that he is Ancient Indian? I don't know. To judge by skeletal features, he is almost certainly Indian or fully Caucasian. You might want to look into it. Great site!

Date: 7/24/2001 - 11:43 AM

Name: Agis Marinis

Email: dodecatheon@mac.com

Site: http://homepage.mac.com/dodecatheon

Location: Athens, , Greece

Comments: Thank you very much for inviting me to see your new site. I am very impressed; there is not any doubt that it is the best religious site in the whole net! I'd like to invite you to join our «traditional polytheistic religiosity» ring in yahoo, religion, spirituality . I really feel your site would be a true asset to our community. Visit my site also, you will find the Sacred Oral tradition of Greek Spirituality! Agis

---

Date: 7/23/2001 - 3:33 PM

Name: vihet

Email: vichet@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: fresno, ca, usa

Comments: I just recently visited your website, after a quick glance i am impressed by your articles in regard to Cambodia. The one thing that stand out the most is the term that you used to describe the region east of India. It is Southeast Asia, it is notIndo-China. The Chinese have no influence in the region, but until recently; a mere fraction of a second when compare to the history of cambodia. I agreed that cambodia is strongly infulence by India. No, we are not historically influence by Chinaand definitely not Vietnam. Vietnam is nothing but a loose group of Chinese minority. Present day North vietnam is occupying the Champa "State" while South vietnam is occupying Southern Cambodia. This fact make me very bitter. Wasn&#

Date: 7/22/2001 - 3:32 PM

Name: Vinod Joshi

Email: vjoshi@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Comments: What a super job. It is exciting site, full of knowledge and our heritage. Please keep up the good work.

Date: 7/18/2001 - 1:09 AM

Name: Bala

Email: vishbala@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Chennai, , India

Comments: Very good work. Please keep updating with new materials. You have combined art with content to give a pleasing appearance. My best wishes

---

Date: 7/16/2001 - 9:24 PM

Name: Ken Jones

Email: kcjones@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: , , USA

Comments: Sushma, Superb site, inspirational info. "Hindu", a label given to us by "those who looked at our culture in primordial awe". Nowhere in our scriptures is the word Hindu mentioned. Rightly, we are the upholders of the SanatanaDharma, "eternal way of life". The wisdom of the "drishtas", the seers of immortal truths will forever keep the individual, independent souls free of conditioning, free of dogmas and free of limitations. Tat twam asi; -you are that!

Date: 7/16/2001 - 6:11 AM

Name: Kavita Manikam

Email: veeta_leo@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Kuala Lumpur, Federal Teritory, Malaysia

Comments: I am a Malaysian Indian,I visited this site to find more about the amazing city of Lord Krishna 'Dwaraka' after watching a movie on its discovery and I hope to visit 'Dwaraka' one day to witness the City of Glory of Krishna withmy own eyes.

Date: 7/14/2001 - 8:35 PM

Name: vernen naicker

Email: vernen54@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: born in south africa now in perth, western australia, australia

Comments: good to read and learn please add pictures .keep the hindu culture alive

---

Date: 7/10/2001 - 12:43 PM

Name: Pooja

Email: desicutie00@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Syosset, NY, USA

Comments: Dear Ms. SUSHMA, I am very pround Indian American tenager living in America. I believe your site will help this getneration and future generations, learn about who they are and what out ancestors have gone through. Unlike others relgions there are no YOUTH GROUPS for youn HINDUS to go to. So they have no one to guide them. Good luck with your site. Hari Om, Pooja

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Date: 7/9/2001 - 8:34 AM

Name: Brindha

Email: blueberri15@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: , , Singapore

Comments: I recently took part in a Hinduism quiz and was recomended this site to derive my materials from. I have found it both interesting and informative. As a teenager who didn't know much about my religion.. i am glad to say that atributetohinduism.com has served to enlighten me in several aspects and i must say thank you and congratulations to the person who put this website together. PLease do continue with your excellent efforts in presenting hinduism in a truthful,positive and yet unbiased light.

Date: 7/8/2001 - 9:04 AM

Name: Vinod Lodhia

Email: lodhiavinod@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Comments: Dear Sushmaji, Congretulations ! atributetohinduism.com is a great site providing introduction to the world's oldest religion. I will visit your site again and again to learn more. As someone has wrote earlier, you have earned great 'punya' by providing this resorces. Thank you and best regards, Vinod Lodhia

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Date: 7/7/2001 - 11:02 AM

Name: Madhu Sampathi

Email: madhu74@angelfire.com

Site: http:///

Location: Edison, NJ, USA

Comments: One of the few sites which is dedicated to tell world the most wonderful and scared religion inthis world. Sushma keep it up n best of luck for your effort.

Date: 7/2/2001 - 5:17 PM

Name: cynthia willard
Email: ckwillard@provide.net
Site: http:///
Location: , michigan, usa
Comments: I am interested in learning all that I can about hinduism. Thank you for giving me a good start.

Date: 6/28/2001 - 3:08 PM
Name: Namchand
Email: namchand@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: Kuwait, Kuwait, Kuwait
Comments: Dear Sushama, You've earned a great deal of Punya by serving a noble cause. Can I suggest to include information for the younger minds in the age group of 5 to 12 as they will be the torch-bearers of the Sanatana Dharma in the future.It was a rewarding experience to visit the site. And I promise this will only be the first of the many that's going to be.

Date: 6/28/2001 - 6:48 AM
Name: Michael
Email: hanumandas@web.de
Site: http://www.mothermeera.com/
Location: Thalheim, , Germany
Comments: Very informative and excellent site. I will come back to it again and again. for all lovers of India and religion in general.

Date: 6/19/2001 - 9:46 PM
Name: Ashish
Email: Ashd@another.com

Site: http:///

Location: Mumbai, , India

Comments: Excellent efforts. Keep it up

Date: 6/19/2001 - 8:49 AM

Name: Sudhir Dayal

Email: dondayal@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Leicester, , England

Comments: This is an EXCELLENT site. Very good. Keep it up. As a student reading physics with Astrophysics, this is truly enlightening. Thank you.

Date: 6/15/2001 - 3:53 PM

Name: Rana Pratap

Email: ranapratap@hinduweb.org

Site: http://www.hinduweb.org/home/general_sites/vand

Location: Everywhere, Nowhere, Somewhere

Comments: Excellent work. This site makes me very proud to be a Hindu. And Mr. Venkataswaran, Hindus did record their history and religion as meticulously as the Chinese. We don't have any records of such acts though because the Islamic invaders burned and destroyed all of our libraries, universities, and books. The Chinese still have theirs because China was never attacked by the Muslim invaders.

Date: 6/11/2001 - 4:26 AM

Name: Vasu Devan

Email: venus66@singnet.com.sg

Site: http://web.singnet.com.sg/~venus66

Location: Singapore, sg, Singapore

Comments: Hi, It is really interesting to know about my religion. good of it. I feel it is not a religion, it is just a best way of life. The Art of Living. Natural Living. Thank you for your efforts to let others know about it.

Date: 6/5/2001 - 9:24 PM

Name: A. P. Venkateswaran

Email: jpeck1@houston.rr.com

Site: http:///

Location: New Delhi, , India

Comments: Thank you for putting together the information which you have done, so painstakingly. Unlike the Chinse who have through the ages recorded everything meticulously, certainly atleast from the time of Confucius, Indiand have been lackadaisical in thisregard. Your effort will go some way to correct this dismal picture, so that our children and their children in turn can get some idea of India's glorious past and balance it against our dismal present!

Date: 6/3/2001 - 10:18 AM

Name: Shiva K.

Email: m_shivak@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Novi, Michigan, USA

Comments: The information is well compiled and presented. A very good site for people interested in finding more about our ancient past.

Date: 5/29/2001 - 1:07 AM

Name: VIJAYAN NAIR

Email: vijayan19@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: KUWAIT, KUWAIT, KUWAIT

Comments: I am very much delighted to visit the sight. It is really excellent.

Date: 5/25/2001 - 9:11 AM

Name: Kalasapudi Srinivasa Rao

Email: rao@lij.edu

Site: http:///

Location: New York, NY, USA

Comments: This is an excellent site. Very impressed. I have a collection of a few slides with slokas etc., that may fit your science section. If you wish I can send them to you. sincerely, Srinivasa rao ********** Srinivasa K. Rao Ph.D. Senior Research Scientist, Vascular Institute, LIJ Medical Center, North Shore - Long Island Jewish Health System, Assistant Professor, Albert Einstein College of Medicine New Hyde Park, NY, 11040, USA. Phone: 718 470 7060. Fax: 718 343 3429. email: rao@lij.edu

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Date: 5/21/2001 - 6:27 PM

Name: Lakshman Bhakta

Email: winwin60@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Manjeshwar, Kerala, India

Comments: A very good site. It has a lot of information regarding hinduism. Keep it up.

Date: 5/21/2001 - 9:03 AM

Name: Peter John Makkinen

Email: peterjm@hotmail.com

Site: http://www.makkinenindustries.com/

Location: Maroochydore, Queensland, Australia

Comments: Phat site dude. It's very informative. Rock on Chief!!

Date: 5/20/2001 - 10:07 AM

Name: Shoaib Nasir

Email: shoaib@telusplanet.net

Site: http:///

Location: , ,

Comments: A great site! It's great that at least somebody is trying to revive Bharati past, especially at a time when credit for Hindu contribution is being assigned to other people who could not even claim civilization when Bharat was at the peak of its glory. Great work!

Date: 5/18/2001 - 2:19 AM

Name: Santosh Goud

Email: goud_santosh@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: , , Singapore

Comments: It's a wonderful effort to support our great and ancient religion "Hinduism",with views and articles as a support from great personalities. I suggest you to add a seperate page to know how hindu's are progressing and maintained our religion from all over the world country wise.It would also be better if have description and address of each temple in each and every country. This i personally feel inspires each and every hindu,India and abroad.

Date: 5/17/2001 - 6:28 AM

Name: R.Narayana Swamy

Email: rnsmns@vsnl.com

Site: http:///

Location: Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Comments: A great effort. Hindus have been maligned just because they are very tolerant being evtremely civilized. Hope the facts presented through this effort will make others realize the greatness of India and its religion.

Date: 5/16/2001 - 3:08 AM
Name: Shonan Talpade
Email: flighted_2000@yahoo.com
Site: http://www.geocities.com/flighted_2000/vishnu_i
Location: MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA
Comments: It wont be long now,when once again we shall see the rule of our vedic culture worldwide.EXCELLENT SITE!!!!!!BRAVO

Date: 5/14/2001 - 7:34 AM
Name: Rajeev G.Mavinkurve
Email: rajeevgm@ieee.org
Site: http://www.rajeevgm.com/
Location: , , India (Currently based in Singapore
Comments: Best wishes to your good work.

Date: 5/12/2001 - 1:04 AM
Name: Dharmaksetra
Email: Radhakrishna108@yahoo.com
Site: http://www.geocities.com/radhakrishna108
Location: , ,

Comments: Haribol! The greatest and oldest religion in existence is this sanatana dharma! More and more the world needs to learn the glories of Lord Krishna. So many people have insulted and distorted facts about Hinduism to portray their religion as better. But, Vedic sanatana dharma is above mundane sectarianism. The darkness of ignorance is cleared away with the light of Bhagavata. Jai Sri Krishna!

Date: 5/9/2001 - 5:44 PM

Name: Dr Arvind J Madhani

Email: madhani@indiatimes.com

Site: http:///

Location: VERNON HILLS, IL, usa

Comments: Dr. Arvind J Madhani SATCHITATMAN SAYS ALL RELIGIONS ARE MIXTURE OF SAND & SUGAR. SPIRITUAL SCIENCE IS TRUE SCIENCE For a fistful of dollars, Christians & Moslems want bloodshed and use Jesus & Allah for their vested interests. For non-JCI-Judea means your money, Christian means your soul and Islam means your neck. Father forgive them, but be vigilant of them, as they know not what they are destroying. These people should practice their voodoo in the privacy of their own hallucinations. Why destroy ancient eternal religion? Hinduism is a scientific religion and spiritual science. Why destroy this inheritance to humanity? The Hindus are defensive and less knowledgeable about spirituality when followers of Judea Christi

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Date: 5/9/2001 - 4:39 PM

Name: rakesh sharma

Email: sharma__r@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: sunnyvale, ca, us

Comments: very informative and an real eye-opener. may Lord Ganesh give success in maintaining this site.

Date: 5/7/2001 - 1:43 AM

Name: shiv kumar

Email: shiv.kumar@fluor.com

Site: http:///

Location: New Delhi, Delhi, India

Comments: It is really nice to didicated people like you developing these sites just to recaptulate the Old Indian Cultural heritage. May God ganesha help in achieving what ever you wish to in coming future . It was nice and enjoyed browsing this site.

Date: 5/6/2001 - 10:45 PM

Name: Ross Marshall

Email: pluto@frazmtn.com

Site: http://www.weirdvideos.com/preface.html

Location: Frazier Park, Ca, USA

Comments: This is the only way to read the Puranic Histories, as to my knowledge. It was asked, what is the Puranic name for China? Here are my correlations to OLD ANCIENT GEOGRAPHY, in light of Sumerology. Hundu China?I have a hindu geography I wrote, note yet typed - will go in my web site book: Check out these correlations: From Central Mythical Meru (A doublet location for Su-mer(u) and Mt. Meru) NORTHWEST: Varaha/Vahara = W. Europe Krauncha-dvipa = S. As. Minor, Lycia, Cilicia Kuvera-dvipa = Syria Chandra = British Isl's WEST Ketumala = Med. Sea and Coasts Plaksa = Pelasgia, As.Minor, greece Aparagodana = All of N. Africa SOUTHWEST

Date: 5/6/2001 - 10:17 PM

Name: Rishi Ross Marshall

Email: pluto@frazmtn.com

Site: http://www.weirdvideos.com/preface.html

Location: Frazier Park, Ca, USA

Comments: Excellent Web Site! I will surly add you vimana materials to my new book as ref's by my web site. I also sell videos of weird subjects. Am working on an Ancient Technology tape, but I do have an old one THE SUPER SCIENCES OF ATLANTIS. Would like to correspond with other 'liberal' hindus who don't mind a liberal christian researcher. See me at: http://www.weirdvideos.com My "PAPER" is at: weirdvideos.com/preface.html THE KEYS TO ANCIENT HISTORY: AStudy of Genesis-Chapter-10. ROSS MARSHALL

Date: 5/2/2001 - 4:06 PM

Name: Simi

Email: Simi0301@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Houston, TX, USA

Comments: ...the most inspirational, informative, and interesting website I've come across about hinduism. Thanks! *Smile*

Date: 4/26/2001 - 11:54 PM

Name: Sivabalan

Email: sivabalan@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Comments: I must say, that you have made a "impressive" layout and i love the left border, impressive work with i think is a "saree" material. the contents is good too and very informative. Keep up with the great work. Could you alsoinclude some "symbols" and stuff. cheers Siva.

Date: 4/25/2001 - 7:47 AM

Name: Hamish

Email: hamish1986@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: , , China

Comments: This is a fnatastic, informative and enlightening site, which also manages not to be an eye-sore like many other sites that dedicate themselves to caste, but are poorly presented. But perhaps you could divide certain section and make them more accessible, instead of having the user scroll through the whole length of the site.

Date: 4/25/2001 - 6:12 AM

Name: Bhargav

Email: bhargav@db123.net

Site: http:///

Location: Hyderabad, AP, India

Comments: A great site with lots of painstaking research! I loved the page on conversions. Very very informative.

Date: 4/22/2001 - 1:00 PM

Name: Arvind Godbole

Email: arvindgodbole@rediffmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Los Angeles, , USA

Comments: A gret site on Hinduism - I have marked it in my daily visits - I am a memebr of website "hinduunity" which I visit each day and so I will visit your site - It has very good articles - Keep it up

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Date: 4/15/2001 - 1:41 AM

Name: Rajeev Anantaram

Email: rxast@pitt.edu

Site: http:///

Location: Pittsburgh, PA, U.S.A

Comments: Thank you for your very informative article on India's contribution to the cultural development of China and hence the far east. I always knew of such serious influences, but this is the fist time I have seen it documented so forcefully and systematically. The ready references help the reader understand that the scholarship involved is indeed serious. Congratulations on a great job! Please direct any similar postings directly to mey email address as discussed above. Best, Rajeev Anantaram.

Date: 4/11/2001 - 8:22 PM

Name: Usha Bailey

Email: ushaforshanti@mediaone.net

Site: http:///

Location: , New Hampshire, USA

Comments: Namaste, and thank you for a wonderful site to visit. The more I can learn about our wonderful religion, the better. Not too many Hindu people in NH. But the ones who are here, are friendly and welcoming! Usha

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Date: 4/10/2001 - 5:23 PM

Name: Mr. HG Kestel

Email: Anveshaka@aol.com

Site: http:///

Location: D-Rheinbach, NRW, Germany

Comments: Eine sehr gelungene Seite zu einem wichtigen Thema. Vielleicht kann mir auf diesem Wege jemand helfen, ob es deutschprachige Literatur zu diesem Thema gibt? Mit besten Wünschen Namaskar

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Date: 4/9/2001 - 10:15 PM

Name: Della Maharaj

Email: Dhah923516@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: N. Miami, Florida, USA

Comments: Absolutely fantastic site. I have printed it and will make copies and send for people without computers in the islands. People need to be exposed to more of this type of education. But it is not something the average person will be inclined to read due to diverse cultural and religious backgroungs. However, if one person per year is expoxsd to it, that is great because a cup is filled one drop at a time. Regards Della

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Date: 4/7/2001 - 10:42 AM

Name: Vijay

Email: boringme@aol.com

Site: http:///

Location: LONDON, , UK

Comments: Well done - an impressive site - so much to information available. Keep it up.

Date: 4/2/2001 - 10:56 PM

Name: Surendra Kumar Yamdagni

Email: surendra@yamdagni.com

Site: http:///

Location: Bangkok,, Bangkok, THAILAND

Comments: It is a wonderful effort to let people know about Hinduism. Your site has excellent material and I wish to assure you that your efforts are well rewarded. Hopefully by Internet, young Indians will learn more about their own roots and stop aping (blindly) Western System. I firmly believe that being MODERN is to assimilate all good things feom West, but proudly and unashamedly retaining our rich cultural and religious heritage. S. K. Yamdagni

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Date: 3/31/2001 - 6:38 AM

Name: Indrakant M. Patel

Email: konil@attcanada.ca

Site: http:///

Location: markham, ontario, At present Canada

Comments: Wonderful! Your site is fantastic!! I am thakful to Rana Pratap site which has introduced me your site. I have gone through many, but yours is one of the wonderful,beutiful, precise and full opf knowledge. Thank you very much for providing this.

Date: 3/28/2001 - 4:07 AM

Name: jayram joshi

Email: jayramj@satyam.net.in

Site: http:///

Location: nagpur, maharashtra, india

Comments: Namaskar The site is really impressive and makes a very interesting reading. I think such sites would help to strengthen age long traditions and the values of Hinduism. I would be eagerly waiting for any new additions to the site Jai Hind Jay Shriram Jayram

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Entries: 410-361

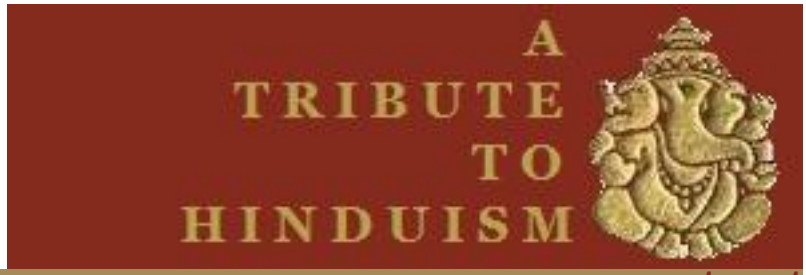
[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

home guestbook contents

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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002



Entries: 360-311

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 3/23/2001 - 12:49 AM

Name: p.v.pullamraju

Email: pullam@rediffmail.com

Site: http://under%20construction/

Location: bhimavaram, andhra pradesh, india

Comments: As i am a sanskrit research scholar i am very happy to say that the future of sanskrit sciences is having high potential. I am doing some digital work in sanskrit, bijapallavam (the algebra in sanskrit). If any live projects with fundingsfrom any sanskrit chairs through out the world can contact me.

Date: 3/15/2001 - 6:59 PM

Name: Krishan Kumar Sharma

Email: SHARMAHomoeopath@aol.com

Site: http:///

Location: CREWE, CHESHIRE, UK

Comments: WHAT an inspirational site.I discovered the site accidently.lovely quotational mantra from Vedas

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Date: 3/14/2001 - 1:30 PM

Name: Laurent

Email: babadas@babadas.org

Site: http://www.babadas.org/

Location: Flagstaff, Arizona, USA

Comments: Dear Ones, This is one of the best sites I have ever visited period. As far as hinduism, it is a great resource. Meher Baba said that 100,000 years ago there were kings in India. I am interested in the ancient past of India, especially sincegeologic evidence exists that the subcontinent of India was once a free floating continent that colided with southern Asia, and formed the Himalayas. Also, I have written a version of Ramayana at http://www.babadas.org/Ramayana.html and would love feedback from anyone who has a few moments to read this poem. It is only about 50 pages and covers the entire life of Lord Rama. Jai Ram! Laurent

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Date: 3/12/2001 - 6:33 AM

Name: Avinash

Email: awinasz@wanadoo.nl

Site: http:///

Location: Breda, , Netherland

Comments: Today I dicovered your superb website. It is a treasure of superb articles. I wil read all of them.You have done a great service to Hinduism. In this country we get only false and negative information about Hinduism. I hope a lot or people (hindus and non-hindus) will get profit from your web site. Thank you very much. Kotishah dhanyavaad.

Date: 3/11/2001 - 10:36 AM

Name: Nagendra S. Rao

Email: nsrao@attglobal.net

Site: http:///

Location: New York, NY, USA

Comments: Very painstakingly compiled and extremely useful. Keep up your efforts. If I can assist in any small way, I would be honored. Nagendra

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Date: 3/11/2001 - 4:51 AM

Name: Rita Putatunda

Email: ritawrites@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Pune, Maharashtra, India

Comments: A really wonderful and informative web site. I shall be visiting again and again. Can I know the latest about Byet Dwaraka. I am a freelance writer writing a piece on it. Rita

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Date: 3/9/2001 - 3:15 PM

Name: the dark knight 2k

Email: chem_2k@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: manchester, , england

Comments: even i am a hindu this site has helped me a great deal in understanding about hinduism.

Date: 3/7/2001 - 2:06 PM

Name: Alice

Email: wonderwoomaaan@breathe.com

Site: http:///

Location: , , wales, uk

Comments: what an absolute gem of a website. It was nice to finally find a site that explained Hinduism in lay terms. Thank you!

Date: 3/4/2001 - 9:44 PM
Name: Rajoo
Email: gunwanti@hotmail.com
Site: http://www.homestead.com/gunwanti
Location: Canada, ,
Comments: Great website. A great deal of effort appears to have been put into this site. Thank you.

Date: 3/4/2001 - 8:59 PM
Name: H.Rames
Email: rames@dficonsulting.com
Site: http://go.to/rames
Location: Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan, Malaysia
Comments: I really like this sote of your's..keep up the good work....I also have a site about Hindu..which has gallery made in Flash 5.0..don't missed it.. Best Regards, H.Rames

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Date: 3/4/2001 - 7:29 PM
Name: Rajoo
Email: gunwanti@hotmail.com
Site: http://http://www.homestead.com/gunwanti
Location: Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada
Comments: Great website. Keep up the good work.

Date: 2/26/2001 - 1:00 AM
Name: pararajasingam vaithilingam
Email: yogacharya@hotmail.com
Site: http:///

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Comments: Its very good.I got lot of new information regarding Hinduism.we are conducting meditation and explanation of veda,upanishad classes and our traditions here to the younger generation Your site very useful for us.may Lord shiva bless you.=para=

Date: 2/24/2001 - 8:48 AM

Name: Ashok Menon

Email: vinga@tm.net.my

Site: http:///

Location: Petaling Jaya, , Malaysia

Comments: This is a wonderful site, and provides more history on the influence of India on Asia in days bygone, than any other source I've seen. Its credible as the sources of the information are also chronicled. An extremely useful reference, perhapsironically to Indians themselves, many of whom are hopelessly mired in Eurocentric world-views that blatantly discount India's contributions to the world.

Date: 2/21/2001 - 4:28 PM

Name: shree Prakash Jashbhai Patel

Email: jckrsn@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Dallas, TX, USA

Comments: sushamaaji, namaskaar! Your site from the very begining has been par excellence, now it has added one more GEM! Thanks for creating/attaching PDF formats of each pages. It comes handy when I wish to read thru pages without keeping phone line connected. And what a wonderful change in appearance! You sure know how to make reading more pleasing & attractive. GOD BLESS BE ALWAYS WITH YOU! dhanyawaad!

Date: 2/19/2001 - 7:03 AM

Name: Prasad

Email: prasad.shetty@visto.com

Site: http:///

Location: Kalyan, Maharashtra, India

Comments: I was introduced to you mind boggling site through the article which appeared in www.rediff.com. And I must thank you for That. The influence of materialistic Western Society is starting to be so much on India that a site like this should actually be an eye opener. I want to thank you for showing me the greatness of Bharat and Hinduism. Please keep up the good work. I hope every Human Being atleast goes once through this wonderful site and we might have a better world. No need to convert fromtheir religion but absorb the goodness of our religion.

Date: 2/18/2001 - 6:20 AM

Name: navasundar das

Email: v108@iprimus.com.au

Site: http:///

Location: brisbane, queensland, australia

Comments: i've been with you since you first started back on geocities, and i thought it was brilliant then. Now i can only say that you are a light in the ocean of sincere endeavour. I humbily submit my pranams

---

Date: 2/17/2001 - 7:33 AM

Name: jaswant

Email: sonij@smollan.co.za

Site: http:///

Location: johannesburg, gauteng, south africa

Comments: great site - keep up the good work

Date: 2/17/2001 - 1:41 AM

Name: Sada Sathianandan

Email: sadagoban@hotmail.com

Site: http://n/a

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Comments: Wonderful site. I asked you a few questions over the e-mail and you gave me excellent answers. Keep up the good work. The new look looks nice. Keep up the good work.

Date: 2/15/2001 - 2:58 PM

Name: Dr. Subhash C. Sharma

Email: ansoli@idirect.com

Site: http://www.geocities.com/lamberdar/_caste.html

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Comments: The article "Vedic vocations were not related to heredity (birth)" (http://www.geocities.com/lamberdar/_caste.html) describes various vocations during Vedic times. It indicates that, contrary to the general belief, the ancient people engaged themselves in many (more than the major four) types of social activities. Best regards, Subhash Sharma

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Date: 2/9/2001 - 3:14 AM

Name: ranganath narapuram

Email: ranga.n@mailcity.com

Site: http:///

Location: memphis, tennessee, indian in usa

Comments: dear sushamaji, i would like to express my appreciation for the work u did in putting up a wonderful website like this and keep it up.may GOD create many more people like u.hinduism needs people like u who are web savvy and know how to present it in the correct light and show to the world the greatness of the world's most ancient religion. though i am younger than u, GOD BLESS YOU.

Date: 2/6/2001 - 12:28 PM

Name: Raja Sharma

Email: rsharma9@ford.com

Site: http:///

Location: Troy, Michigan, USA

Comments: Dear Sushamaji, As I have said before, your website is one of the best sources for Hinduism. You have done a superb job in not only collecting the information but also in analyzing it very well also. Your new design is more user friendly and appealing than ever. I thank you for all the work you are doing and wish you continued success in propagating principles of Hinduism and the greatness of India. I found two errors in one of your articles. I would like to bring them to your kind attention. If your website had been an ordinary one, I would not have bothered. But since yours is one of the best sites, I thought I should do this for you. 1. Under "Women in Hinduism", you indicate that Gargi was the wife of Yaagnyavalkya. T

Date: 2/5/2001 - 1:10 PM

Name: Deepak Nagaraj

Email: dnagaraj@cs.wright.edu

Site: http:///

Location: fairborn, ohio, USA

Comments: Its been 25 years from my birth,I have been part of this religion. But never i have been effected and impressed so much, after i have gone through ur website. I really feel proud of being a hindu and I now spend more time to know more about it ,to follow it. and spread it which is more important. i am thankful to all my forefathers and people who have helped to preserve this precious gem for our younger generation and its our responsiblity to hold on to it and spread it to the whole world the fragrance of this beautiful flower. I would like to thank you for ur thankless job from deep of my heart. thankyou Deepak Nagaraj

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Date: 2/2/2001 - 9:34 PM

Name: Vasant

Email: antiparagon@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Irvine, CA, USA

Comments: Wow. I recommend this site to everyone I know. I especially loved the section showing the connection between Hinduism and SouthEast Asia. I am glad that you're focusing on the connections WE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAVE through SPIRITUALITY!

Date: 2/2/2001 - 9:33 PM

Name: Ed Viswanathan

Email: arvind-4@msn.com

Site: http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/18799040

Location: , ,

Comments: Namasthe Dear--Sushama Londhe---Thanks for writing to me---I am impressed by your web page. I wish you godspeed in all your endeavors. I salute you. You are doing a great service not only to Hindus, but for every one who is in search of truth. I am an engineer and author of the book AM I A HINDU? If any one wish to have FREE EDUCATIONAL FLOW Charts about Hindu culture please write to me. Ed Viswanathan arvind-4@msn.com Thanks

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Date: 2/2/2001 - 9:29 PM

Name: Ed Viswanathan

Email: arvind-4@msn.com

Site: http://http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1

Location: , ,

Comments: Namasthe Dear--Sushama Londhe---Thanks for writing to me---I am impressed by your web page. I wish you godspeed in all your endeavors. I salute you. You are doing a great service not only to Hindus, but for every one who is in search of truth. I address Hinduism by the name HINDU CULTURE since Hinduism is the TRUE CULTURE OF INDIA. There are two great CULTURES in the world today. They are HINDUISM and JUDAISM. All organized religions like ISLAM, CHRISTIANITY came JUDAISM. All eastern religions like Buddhism, Sikhism and to some extent Jainism originated from Hinduism. I am an electrical engineer and author of an international best seller on Hinduism by name AM I A HINDU?ISBN 1-879904-06-3 HALO BOOKS, USA and RUPA PRESS in India

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Date: 2/2/2001 - 11:40 AM

Name: Dr. Sarasvati Mohan

Email: samskrt@aol.com

Site: http://www.samskrtam.org/

Location: San Jose, CA, USA

Comments: Superb job done. Keep up the good work.

Date: 2/2/2001 - 8:13 AM

Name: Ramesh Chhagan

Email: ramesh.chhagan@iscor.com

Site: http:///

Location: Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa

Comments: A truly magnificent achievement that will make a significant contribution towards enlightening the world (both Hindus and non-Hindus alike) on the glory of Hinduism. May God grant you the strength to perservere in this noble venture.

Date: 2/1/2001 - 1:42 PM

Name: Anand Yadav

Email: akyadav@illinoisalumni.org

Site: http:///

Location: Bonaire, Georgia, USA

Comments: This is another link in the long chain called Hinduism but actually the 'Sanatan Dharm' that is about us all. Keep up the good work. I enjoy reading, others may be doing likewise, we need it.

Date: 2/1/2001 - 12:21 PM

Name: Abinaya Gopalan

Email: abigopal@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: New Rochelle, NY, USA

Comments: Thank you for a very nice and informative web site! I will visit again!

Date: 2/1/2001 - 11:34 AM

Name: Hira Suri

Email: hirasuri@us.ibm.com

Site: http:///

Location: Danbury, CT, USA

Comments: I know how proud I am to be a Hindu. The older I get the more Hindu I want to become. Only lately have I gotten into Yoga and Ayurveda and it has made me sad that I never knew about these areas when I was in India. Strangely, my adventures into Yogamake me come across more Westerners than Indians. My only hope is that India will act up on some of the wisdom that you site here. Indians don't walk the talk and hence give a very conflicting message to our kids who is torn between two cultures.

Date: 2/1/2001 - 3:34 AM

Name: Girish S.Nayak

Email: svtmangalore@yahoo.com

Site: http://www.svtmangalore.org/

Location: Mangalore, Karnataka, India

Comments: Congratulations on very good design and contents.

Date: 1/31/2001 - 9:36 PM

Name: Shrinivas Tilak

Email: tilak@canada.com

Site: http:///

Location: Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Comments: I must thank Shri Murlidhar for his post to the IndicTraditions list which brought me to your site. I just had quick look at it for now and I must say I was very deeply impressed by the wealth of information therein and the beautiful layout. I intend to visit it often. Thanks, S.Tilak

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Date: 1/29/2001 - 12:29 AM

Name: A.Murugan

Email: 2MurugaKU@eev.elin.co.at

Site: http:///

Location: Penang, Penang, Malaysia

Comments: Om Ganapatheya Namahe!!What a wonderful site, very informative, descriptive and encouraging.Keep up this wonderful work of yours so that the nectar of Hinduism can be passed on to the children of the new generation for the future of Hinduism. Let us not just be Born as a Hindu,let us Live as one and also die as a Hindu.By the Grace of God, May all of us realise our inner selves and merge with HIM. Sai Ram.

Date: 1/25/2001 - 6:41 PM
Name: Anshu
Email: koobsoorat@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: Seattle, WA,
Comments: Fantastic! Please provide me with more information!

Date: 1/23/2001 - 3:43 AM
Name: kiran kumar
Email: kiran_kumarb@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: , ,
Comments: What a great site. Thanks to all those who worked for this wondreful website. Can you guys give more details regarding submerged Dwaraka. Is still the search going on?

Date: 1/22/2001 - 1:48 PM
Name: Pramod T. Naik
Email: naikklbg@vsnl.net
Site: http:///
Location: kumta, Karnataka, India
Comments: This website is very excellent, informative with a bundle of facts, excepts from concerned people and is a good source of images and very userfriendly. I got lot of information about my DHARMA which is not available elsewhere. Please add somemore fact about the inventions in science, astromoy and maths done by our POORVAJAS

Date: 1/18/2001 - 3:59 PM
Name: nick

Email: nick_sap@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: , ,
Comments: This is the site that has helped me gain back my confidence in my own religion - thank you so much for developing such a wonderful site. I can never thank you enough!

Date: 1/15/2001 - 3:50 PM
Name: Dhaval Patel
Email: dmx0628@bellatlantic.net
Site: http:///
Location: Dumont, NJ, USA
Comments: This is an excellent site, Probabably the best on Hinduism I have ever seen. The sheer amount of history and facts that you have hear make it a tremendous information resource for Hindus and non-Hindu's alike.

Date: 1/12/2001 - 1:50 PM
Name: vishnu
Email: vsomsagar@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: palo alto, california, usa
Comments: Thank you for putting together this site.

Date: 1/12/2001 - 2:53 AM
Name: Jeyakumar Nadeson
Email: njkumar@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: , Selangor, Malaysia

Comments: One of the best sites to visit, let alone understand the culture, religion, worship etc for all Hindus all over the world. I am going to enjoy every moment whenever I am in this site. Thanks for all the info I need to strenghten my quest for knowledge on Hinduism

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Date: 1/11/2001 - 4:44 PM
Name: Jayesh A Patel
Email: jayeshapatel@yahoo.co.uk
Site: http:///
Location: London, , UK
Comments: Fantastic! A Gem Excellent site. Just found it and will study it time willing. Jai Ram

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Date: 1/9/2001 - 2:56 AM
Name: sumithra sanjeevi
Email: sumi8177@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: puchong, kuala lumpur, malaysia
Comments: well,very proud to visit in a very beautiful webside....

Date: 1/8/2001 - 6:10 PM
Name: meera
Email: tweetypie100@aol.com
Site: http:///
Location: , ,
Comments: How far is it accurate to describe Hinduism as a way of life????

Date: 1/8/2001 - 5:48 PM
Name: Sandeep P Jain
Email: spj117@psu.edu
Site: http:///
Location: Devon, PA, USA
Comments: Hi, Happy New Year. Your site is awesome and its very informative. I use it often to borwse and know more about our ancient,wonderful culture and religion. Great Work. Good Luck for your future endeavors.

Date: 1/8/2001 - 5:38 PM
Name: anonymous
Email: anonymous@hotmail.com
Site: http://www.anonymous.com/
Location: Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A
Comments: This is an awesome site!!. You have taken a lot of pains and spent much time developing it. HATS OFF!!!!!!

Date: 1/8/2001 - 4:01 PM
Name: Gorkeyraju
Email: gorkeyraju@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: London (now working), Coimbatore, Tamil nadu, India
Comments: I missed this greatest language, while I were in india. If time permits, I will learn Sanskrit and Carnatic Music. I have added this website to my favorites. I will add more comments once, I throughly went through it. Do you have any website, which will give me a basics to learn sanskrit? regards/Gorkeyraju.ba

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Date: 1/6/2001 - 8:16 AM

Name: Pinakin

Email: pinakin_k@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: London, , UK

Comments: This site is informative and excellently presented. The greatest enemy of Sanathan Dharma and humanity as a whole is ignorance. You have clearly endeavoured to change this. I will link this site with mine no doubt. Keep up the good work my friend. May God bless you!

Date: 1/5/2001 - 1:48 AM

Name: Semanti Sinha Ray

Email: sinha_ray@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Comments: Great reading. I haven't gone through it completely yet but I was wondering if there is any material on the concept of Love & Devotion in Hinduism

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Date: 1/2/2001 - 9:31 AM

Name: Aarti Lakhanpal

Email: RaniH1ndustani@aol.com

Site: http:///

Location: London, , UK

Comments: Jai Hind!

Date: 12/29/2000 - 11:33 PM

Name: Shilpa

Email: sal18@cornell.edu

Site: http:///

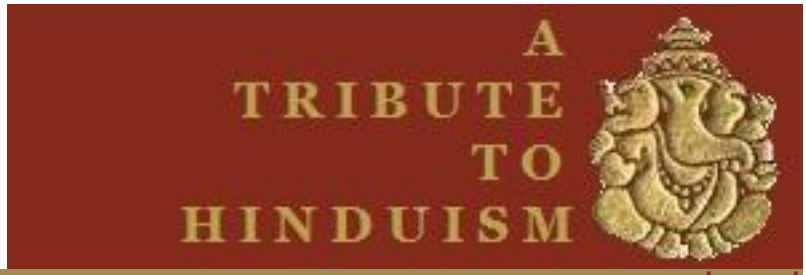
Location: , ,

Comments: I enjoyed searching through your site very much. It is apparent that a lot of time and effort has been put into this. Good work. Best wishes for a happy new year.

Entries: 360-311

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

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Entries: 310-261

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 12/29/2000 - 2:16 PM
Name: shobak
Email: shobak@ksu.edu
Site: http://www.cis.ksu.edu/~shobak
Location: Irinjalakuda, kerala, india
Comments: splenid work!.lets spread the word of hinduism around.

Date: 12/28/2000 - 11:51 AM
Name: Minesh Mody
Email: hinamody@home.com
Site: http:///
Location: Okemos, Michigan, USA
Comments: Very nice site Do you have a meaning (in english) of Amba mata arti "Jai adya shakti" that you can e-mail. We are making a book of prayers and arti for our hindu temple for kids and we would like to include all popular prayerswith the meaning in english so kids can understand. Thanks.

Date: 12/28/2000 - 10:12 AM
Name: Ram Kompella

Email: ramcom@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: silver spring, MD, USA
Comments: Thanks for hosting historic site on Hinduism. Can you please include findings of Dwaraka archeology works ? Best wishes

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Date: 12/26/2000 - 7:06 PM
Name: ITIR BEGEN
Email: begen@ug.bcc.bilkent.edu.tr
Site: http:///
Location: ANKARA, , TURKEY
Comments: thanks a lot! you cannot imagine the help you have done for me ý'm a college student studying English lit. and one of my compare contrast essays which worths 50% of my grade is about hindu women over time and this was the best source after looking for it for 3 days thanks! :)

Date: 12/24/2000 - 11:20 AM
Name: girish ganguli
Email: girishganguli@yahoo.com
Site: http://ganguli.homepage.com/
Location: bangalore, karnataka, india
Comments: A real tribute to Bharatha Bhoomi

Date: 12/17/2000 - 7:24 PM
Name: Amar Singh
Email: Singhish@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: New York, Ny, USA

Comments: Great Site. Lets make sure we continue to maintain this.

Date: 12/16/2000 - 12:36 AM
Name: Ashish Malani
Email: malani_ashish@ucwv.edu
Site: http://www.geocities.com/malaniash
Location: Charleston, WV, USA
Comments: It's a great site. I have not seen a complete site like this on Hinduism before.

Date: 12/14/2000 - 4:47 PM
Name: Ezra Ezekiel
Email: ab1004@iname.com
Site: http:///
Location: London, , England
Comments: (part 3 - final) Did you know there is a strong ancient Jewish tradition that patriarch Abraham founded a college to study the ways of God and how to live a good life and that he sent scholars to the East to spread these teachings. It is possible that the similarity between names in Hindu and Jewish tradition arose in this way. By the way, Sarah was Abraham's neice, daughter of his brother who died prematurely. Best wishes

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Date: 12/14/2000 - 4:46 PM
Name: Ezra Ezekiel
Email: ab1004@iname.com
Site: http:///
Location: London, , England

Comments: (part 2) I will mention a few of the things Jews and Hindus have in common and why we should be proud of our heritage. We both believe in a Supreme Being but emphasise how to live a good life in this world. We are tolerant of religions of other people and do not try to forcibly convert them to our beliefs. We have strong attachments to our ancestral homelands. Independence and freedom for Israel and India followed the end of WW2 after suffering centuries of invasions and occupation. Our diasporas are spread across the world. In the countries we have lived in we have been law-abiding citizens, playing an active part in all walks of society, business, medicine, science, law, politics, etc.

Date: 12/14/2000 - 4:44 PM

Name: Ezra Ezekiel

Email: ab1004@iname.com

Site: http:///

Location: London, , England

Comments: Very informative site, keep up the good work. Would be useful if you include a chronology on Hindu history. I am a Jew and my family fled a difficult life in Bagdhad Iraq to live in Calcutta where they stayed for two generations. They left India in the 1950s to emigrate to Israel, United States and Great Britian. My parents told me many times of the peaceful and pleasant life they had in India and how Indians and Jews lived in harmony side by side. Here in London we have excellent relations with Indians. I have also visted India myself many times on vacation and for business. I will mention a few of the things Jews and Hindus have in common and why we should be proud of our heritage. We both believe in a Supreme Being but emphasise ho

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Date: 12/14/2000 - 5:24 AM

Name: Dolve Bolzoni

Email: bolzoni@spbo.unibo.it

Site: http:///

Location: Bologna, , Italy

Comments: It is a very interesting site! Dolve Bolzoni

Date: 12/10/2000 - 6:53 PM
Name: Vikas Shah
Email: shahvi@rediffmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: , ,
Comments: May Lord Krishna bless you for your nice website. That is my humble prayer to Him.

Date: 12/8/2000 - 4:12 PM
Name: Gauri Mhaskar
Email: gaurigirish@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.
Comments: Simply marvellous!!! I can't tell you how happy I am to have discovered this website. Cheers to the team for a splendid job! Please keep up the good work.

Date: 12/5/2000 - 1:17 PM
Name: Rohit Viswanath
Email: advaitinrohit@rediffmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
Comments: A Fantastic Monumental Task. Keep it up!!!

Date: 12/5/2000 - 1:01 PM

Name: Anastsasia Socobasin

Email: whipun_122@hotmail.com

Site: http://don't%20got%20one/

Location: Princeton, Maine, U.S.A

Comments: I think your website is very intersting. I found this wabsite, because i have a report to do on Hinduism that my history teacher gave us well i got to get going on my report!!!! bye Anastasia Socobasin

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Date: 12/1/2000 - 6:49 PM

Name: Manav

Email: tantiatopi1@excite.com

Site: http:///

Location: , , USA

Comments: A beautiful and impressively informative site! Hopefully it will make Hindus as well as non-Hindus more knowledgable about the great Sanatana Dharmic tradition. Please keep up the good work.

Date: 12/1/2000 - 12:38 AM

Name: Narendra Kumar

Email: mtc_com@usa.net

Site: http://nstechnique.com/

Location: Mumbai, Maharastra, india

Comments: Fist of all,thanks to site creater,who created such wonderful website.I didn't seen such type of web site regarding culture. Really you are great.....If you want any advertisment to give on my site send me mail... Bye Narendra

---

Date: 11/30/2000 - 11:50 PM

Name: Aravind

Email: somasushma@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: , , Bharata

Comments: Thank you for notifying us of your web site. It is very heartening to see the Hindus getting aware of their culture and religion. This is needed to counter the newest waves of dissipation confronting the hindus in their millenial struggle against monotheistic brutality.

Date: 11/27/2000 - 10:58 AM

Name: Bhanu Prasad

Email: bhanupvsr@yahoo.com

Site: http://www.gsw.edu/~bhanu

Location: Americus, GA, USA (Indian citizen)

Comments: Your web site is really fentastic, with lot of useful information. Your information, particulary on "Conversion" issue is very imporatnt for every Hindu. Please reply back with your information... Bhanu Prasad

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Date: 11/25/2000 - 2:13 PM

Name: Tarun Bhargava

Email: bhargavasta@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Comments: Absolutely stupendous site ! Keep up the great work and let the world get a view of what Hinduism really is.

Date: 11/25/2000 - 10:20 AM

Name: Ch. Viswanatha Sastry

Email: srimata@vsnl.net

Site: http:///

Location: Chennai, Tamilnadu, India

Comments: Excellent. Very useful and well organised site for the great Hindu religion. We, all Hindus, are grateful to you for the efforts you are putting in. regards

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Date: 11/22/2000 - 4:32 PM
Name: Deepak Nagaraj
Email: dnagaraj@cs.wright.edu
Site: http:///
Location: fairborn, ohio, U.S.A
Comments: hello, i feel really proud that i belong to this religon, I would like to thankyou for this thankless job ..... Keep the good work deepak

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Date: 11/21/2000 - 5:57 PM
Name: Rahul Bandyopadhyay
Email: rahul_b@ureach.com
Site: http:///
Location: Columbia, MD, USA
Comments: The most informative and complete website on hinduism on the net. God bless you!

Date: 11/20/2000 - 4:04 AM
Name: ARUN SANKAR M
Email: ee97222@ee.iitm.ernet.in
Site: http:///
Location: CHENNAI, TN, INDIA
Comments: Excellent work done. I'll try visiting the site whenever I get time.A lot of interesting material and covers really wide range. Keep up the good work.

Date: 11/19/2000 - 4:41 PM

Name: mamta

Email: mamta.c@mailexcite.com

Site: http:///

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Comments: Just wanted to congratulate you on a most excellent and informative site. I have just recently started delving into ancient religions and how they tie in together and I must say this has to be one of the best. Congratulations... Mamta

---

Date: 11/16/2000 - 7:55 PM

Name: MR

Email: mr_m_k@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: , , India

Comments: It is very heartburning to see Hindu Gods on toilet seats. Visit this link and chk www.sittinprettydesign.com. Let me know what do you think and what you can do

---

Date: 11/15/2000 - 1:23 PM

Name: Navoneil Bhattacharyya

Email: navoneil@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Calcutta, West Bengal, India

Comments: Thank you for this site. The eternal treasure that is Hinduism has found a worthy vessel in this praiseworthy endeavour. My thanks to each and every one who has contributed to this.

Date: 11/15/2000 - 10:55 AM

Name: N Rakesh
Email: nrrakesh@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: , ,
Comments: A very informative site with an insight on a wide range of topics. It has been an eye opener. I would certainly recommend this site to all of those who seek the roots of our religion as well as nation. I thank all of those connected to the development of this site.

Date: 11/15/2000 - 8:50 AM
Name: Prabir Roy
Email: prabirroy@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: , , USA
Comments: This is absolutely great. Very well done and hope this will continue and expand and cover many more subjects in detail. One suggestion...is it possible to start a weekly coloumn written by different worldwide scholars who respect Hinduism? A regular column will add interest and new thoughts to your site. Thank You Prabir Roy

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Date: 11/15/2000 - 8:18 AM
Name: Arvind Satyanarayan
Email: arvind92@yahoo.com
Site: http://www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Pond/2
Location: Manama, Saar, Bahrain
Comments: Extremely interseting. This is the first site I've come accross on Hinduism

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Date: 11/14/2000 - 10:38 PM

Name: abhijit bhide
Email: abhijitbhide@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: , , India
Comments: I had to stop reading in between to write my comments on this site. Without exagaration this has been the most informative reading i have had on this subject. I wish to thank you and congratulate you for a job very well done! keep up the good work.

Date: 11/14/2000 - 11:53 AM
Name: stewart
Email: stui3@aol.com
Site: http:///
Location: la, ca, us
Comments: i am looking for information about hinduisum for homework but i cant find any information any where. Please send me some information about the basis of your belifs. Thanks Stewart

---

Date: 11/14/2000 - 9:47 AM
Name: AK
Email: voldemort@indya.com
Site: http:///
Location: , ,
Comments: Great Site.. well done. Let this be a tribute to your efforts.

Date: 11/14/2000 - 9:37 AM
Name: Srinivas
Email: srinivaspuni@usa.net
Site: http:///

Location: Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Comments: I am at loss for words to describe how happy i feel about this site.Simply out of the world,i would say. Now that you have done the hard work its time ,i think that marketing should be given the utmost importance.I feel very depressed that youngpeople in India are so poor in the knowledege of our history and mythology (one answers that satyabhama is the wife of arjuna!!).Please make this site as popular as it can be Thanks

---

Date: 11/14/2000 - 7:16 AM

Name: Atul Vaishampayan

Email: coolatul@india.com

Site: http://coolatul.homepage.com/

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Comments: This is a wonderful site and such endeavours should be welcomed by all Hindus. It is very sad to notice the young generation moving away from the religion. Such sites should help in bringing them nearer to our religion, which I feel is not a religion but a way of life.

Date: 11/14/2000 - 5:50 AM

Name: Pankaj Talwar

Email: ptalwar@connectcapital.com

Site: http://connectcapital.com/

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Comments: This site simply superb....all it needs now is marketing so that it reaches a lot of people across borders....the Conversion category is very well researched and tabulated. I will try my best to pass this website to certain people I know who would be interested in it.....Keep up the good work

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Date: 11/14/2000 - 2:07 AM

Name: raghu
Email: raghu_k_n@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: Bangalore, Karnataka, India
Comments: This is a informative site but I would suggest some more stuff like guiding people to the sources of vedas and upanishads.

Date: 11/14/2000 - 1:33 AM
Name: Rajani Kanth. Balaraman
Email: Rajanikanth.b@in.bosch.com
Site: http:///
Location: Bangalore, Karnataka, India
Comments: Great piece of work!! I'm really awed by the way U ppl have represented the whole thing. Keep up the good work!!

Date: 11/13/2000 - 7:02 PM
Name: Jayendra Ganguli
Email: jsganguli@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: Troy, Michigan, India
Comments: Just Breathtaking! Too good!

Date: 11/13/2000 - 2:52 PM
Name: Prashanth Magadi
Email: pmagadi@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: Canton, Michigan, USA
Comments: Great work!

Date: 11/13/2000 - 1:57 PM
Name: Asoksivaraman
Email: devagiri@batelco.com.bh
Site: http:///
Location: Manama, -, State of Baharain
Comments: I'm confused! shall I read 'em all and say something? or say something and read it later? Just lemme say this much. T H I S I S A M A Z I N G ! great piece of work! thanks so much for such a wealth of info.

Date: 11/13/2000 - 12:54 PM
Name: Saurabh Palkar
Email: spalkar@yahoo.com
Site: http:///
Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
Comments: I would like to thank the creators of this site much like everybody. Also I would like to pledge my support to this site and this effort which I sincerely appreciate. If there is anything that I can do please feel free to contact my at my e-mail address. thanks Saurabh Palkar

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Date: 11/13/2000 - 12:49 PM
Name: Nagaraju
Email: nag@rice.edu
Site: http:///
Location: coimbatore, TamilNadu, India
Comments: Great work.Let me know if I can help in any way.

Date: 11/13/2000 - 11:52 AM
Name: Gowrishankar
Email: ghosakere@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: , ,
Comments: Amazing work. I urge the authors to put in atleast a page of information about themselves. All of us who visit this site would like to know the people behind this highly informative site.

Date: 11/13/2000 - 11:50 AM
Name: RamaKrishna Stanam
Email: rkrishna_stanam@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: Pompano Beach, Florida, USA
Comments: Great information about Hinduism.Every proud Hindu should visit this site to get first hand information about their history,religion and culture. Wish you all the success.

Date: 11/13/2000 - 9:18 AM
Name: Govind
Email: amitrajesh@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: New York, NY, USA
Comments: This is most definitely a stupendous labor of love. I would like some information about the author(s) to be posted on the site for the benefit of the reader.

Date: 11/13/2000 - 6:01 AM
Name: manoj
Email: mvmanaj@email.com

Site: http:///

Location: dubai, UAE,

Comments: Made interesting, informative thanks manoj

Date: 11/13/2000 - 4:25 AM

Name: anuj

Email: agarwalanuj@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Delhi, Delhi, India

Comments: I found the site very informative and the information is authentic. I am particularly impressed about the depiction on findings of old Dwarka. We in India need to spend more and pay more attention on reclaiming our lost glory. Our epics are true narrations of the great civilizations and the wars that made and unmade them. Your effort putting this all is welcome and also of Rajeev Srinivasan who is propogating the site. Anuj

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Date: 11/9/2000 - 2:51 PM

Name: Anant Ambhaikar

Email: anant666@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Sunnyvale, CA, USA

Comments: "Heenam Nashayati iti Hindu" Your site hails the true nature of Hinduism, that Knowledge is the supreme truth and truth is the supreme knowledge. It makes me aware of my traditions and glorious past. Thank you for your wonderful effort.

Date: 11/7/2000 - 4:31 PM

Name: Pritesh Manilal

Email: pitu@teleweb.pt

Site: http://paginas.teleweb.pt/~bola

Location: Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal

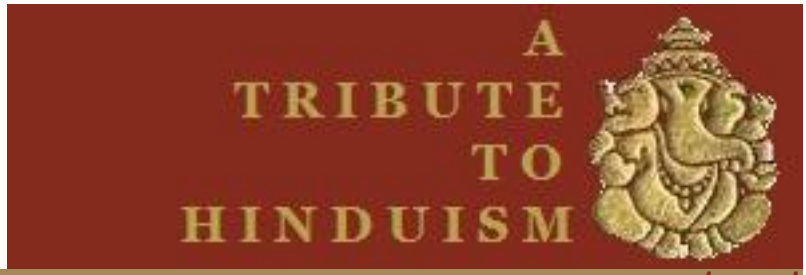
Comments: Está mesmo espectacular!! Muitos parabéns ao autor do site! Se não for pedir muito, é possível haver um lingua Portuguesa? lol Cumprimentos pra todos, Pritesh

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Entries: 310-261

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

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Entries: 260-211

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 11/7/2000 - 1:23 PM

Name: Rana Pratap

Email: ranapratap@hinduweb.org

Site: http:///

Location: , , USA

Comments: A very nice, informative, and invigorating website. You are doing a great service to Sanatana Dharma, and all Hindus in the world are appreciative. May the Gods and Goddesses bless you and your work. Please keep it up!

Date: 10/31/2000 - 3:18 PM

Name: Ashvin Amin

Email: ashvinamin@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Dallas, Texas, USA

Comments: Very informative site. A tribute to Hinduism was not only informative but also very enlightening, makes me feel so proud being born a Hindu that I can hold my head high up and say, "Jai Hind!".

Date: 10/30/2000 - 9:41 AM

Name: vivek viswanathan

Email: vivek.viswanathan@usa.net

Site: http:///

Location: new york city, new york, usa

Comments: I am one of the Indian youth, proud to be an Indian and proud to be a Hindu, but mostly ignorant about its traditions and philosophies. Your writings have taught me a lot about Hinduism, got me interested in learning Sanskrit, and exposed me to a host of great books - you've played a big part in kicking off my exploration of my Hindu heritage. I will always be grateful for the great start you have provided.

Date: 10/30/2000 - 2:03 AM

Name: Rohit Tambe

Email: rohit_tambe@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: , ,

Comments: This is a very good site.

Date: 10/29/2000 - 5:17 PM

Name: S BALASUBRAMANIAN

Email: balusund@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: MADURAI, TAMIL NADU, INDIA

Comments: It is simply great.

Date: 10/29/2000 - 12:19 PM

Name: anil tiwari

Email: aktiwari@flash.net

Site: http:///

Location: newport beach, ca, usa

Comments: thank you for creating such a well written and much needed website. anil

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Date: 10/29/2000 - 1:23 AM

Name: Ashok Chowgule

Email: ashokvc@vsnl.com

Site: http:///

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Comments: Truly a great site. With the wealth of information it can well be a one-stop source of information on the essence of Hinduism.

Date: 10/27/2000 - 9:01 PM

Name: Anjani Kumar

Email: akolukula@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Union, NJ, USA

Comments: I came across this site thru an article in Rediff and found out that this has a lot of interesting information on Hinduism.

Date: 10/27/2000 - 6:15 PM

Name: Chaithanya Dharmavaram

Email: Chadog312@aol.com

Site: http:///

Location: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Comments: "Love ever, Hurt Never"

Date: 10/26/2000 - 12:43 PM

Name: Ajay Bains

Email: ajay.bains.l0de@statefarm.com

Site: http:///

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Comments: I had recently visited your site on the auspicious occassion of Deepawali. I must say that the site is an eye opener in understanding the rich culture of Hinduism. Its a great site not only for all Indians but also for the whole world. Thanks for great source of information. Regards Ajay Bains

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Date: 10/25/2000 - 2:45 PM

Name: Prashanth Vishwanath

Email: anuyantra@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Boston, Massachusetts,

Comments: Great site.....lots of info...recommended it to a collegue from Britain and he says that he is learning a lot from the site. Thank you for putting together a site like this.

Date: 10/25/2000 - 12:31 PM

Name: K.S. Venkatraman

Email: venkat.venkatraman@marriott.com

Site: http:///

Location: Bethesda, Maryland, USA

Comments: Thank you for providing a beacon for all of us who form the "Hindu" diaspora. I emphasize the term "Hindu" because there is no clear concept of an "Indian dispora". I have known Indian students of the Islam faith, whoassociated more with students from other Islamic countries, during my schooling days at Clemson. I find that neither comfortable not offensive...I merely stated that as a point to my preference to the term "Hindu" dispora. Please make this site RICH in its intended content (Hindu faith) and not a hideout for opinions and literature that maligns other faiths. p.s. I have often wondered why we address our homeland as "Hindustan" and not Bharat. Bharat Mat

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Date: 10/25/2000 - 7:25 AM

Name: Gururaj Deshpande

Email: deshpandeg@rediffmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: Chennai, Tamilnadu, India

Comments: Excellent Information on Hinduism. Great work. Keep it up. Long live Hindustan !!

Date: 10/24/2000 - 11:20 PM

Name: Lyndee

Email: graphicgrrl@aol.com

Site: http:///

Location: , Indiana, USA

Comments: NAMASTE!! I just wanted to thank the creater of this site. I was raised methodist (Christianity), and was fortunate enough to befriend a beautiful person who's parents were born and raised in India. Throughout life I never really felt the spiritual connection to Christianity or any western religions, for that matter. When I was exposed to Hinduism I finally felt complete. I was judged more by my white counterparts, then my loving and exceptionally warm Hindu family. I have become complete. And finally, thank you, thank you, thank you, for your segment on women. So often, westerners (Christians), see very little, if any difference between culture and religion. And feel that all Hindus and Indians for that

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Date: 10/14/2000 - 2:06 PM

Name: Dhananjay

Email: DAN_BHIDE@hotmail.com

Site: http:///

Location: SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, USA

Comments: ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE SITE ! Amount of work that must have gone in to putting this ssite together is well appreciated by your readers. If you come out with a book (revision each year) of the entire site's contents, that will be very useful to many. A section to teach kids about Hinduism (or links targeted at kids) will be veru useful. This can become an e-commerce site that can make available Hindu books, cassets, CDs, etc. available to the readers. Congratulations again for the great work!

Date: 10/13/2000 - 9:19 AM

Name: surya prakash sharma

Email: ridhi88@yahoo.com

Site: http://http://

Location: nasik.india, maharastra, india

Comments: this is the web site,i am using frequently,because it feeds me the most liking subjects of mine.i also liked the articles in viman very much,and i want to contribute that.for last 38 years i worked in aeronautical field,i had gone through the book "vaimanik shastra"of sage bharadwaj and transalated it in technical language,the book is yet to be published. i wish you to ever be prosporous and working with increased capacity.

Date: 10/11/2000 - 6:30 PM

Name: kiran thakrar

Email: kiran.thakrar@ukgateway.net

Site: http://www.kiranthakrar.co.uk/

Location: london, , uk

Comments: great...I cann't express my feelings ....great website....great...a real hard work ..and Thank you for making us proud,with true information which is hard to find even with all todays kathakars,ashrams,dharma gurus from various sampradays.

Date: 10/11/2000 - 1:04 PM

Name: Perumal Jayaprakash

Email: perumaj@nenlifesci.com

Site: http:///

Location: Boston, MA, USA

Comments: Great Job!!! in bringing such information about the greatest Religion. I understood more about Hinduism that before. I will forward this to other folks. Keep up the good work Jai

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Date: 10/3/2000 - 3:17 PM

Name: Girish S.Nayak

Email: girish@svtmangalore.org

Site: http://www.svtmangalore.org/

Location: Mangalore, Karnataka, India

Comments: You have got splended collections of facts. Nice work. I will include a link to your site in my home page Jai Shree Ram

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Date: 10/1/2000 - 7:10 PM

Name: sivakumar selvam

Email: vivek_kanan@mailcity.com

Site: http:///

Location: Holmdel, NewJersey, USA

Comments: The following is the mail posted by me to my friends. Have a look at and let me know your idea. Thanks. Hi Friends, I got a mail from you, which are interesting (reg. Afkanistan human rights) and solemnly appreciate you for caring humans. I have a question here. If some of the Indians are caring for some one else, why do they do not see how Indians are suffering. In Our country there are lot of problems. Do you know why we become slaves to whites? Because of our innocence. How we become innocence? Because, majority of the Indians are refused to get proper education. We are refused to grow more. Why majorities of Indians were ignored? You think and try to understand your self. I am sorry to say the past lif

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Date: 9/25/2000 - 11:32 AM

Name: V.T.Chandiran

Email: chand36@pd.jaring.my

Site: http://http://www.jaring.my

Location: Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia

Comments: This is my third attempt to poat a replt. I hope that I succeed. I am very new to internet.I help to run a library ay Marathandavar Temple, Maran and the clerk there gave me your www number. I tried reading today but did not succeed. I hope to do again tomorrow. I print an annual calendar for HINDUS in general in Tamil & English. I would like to post it on the intenet soon (15. 12. 00) If you would like a copy I would be happy to send one by snailmail. It also applies to all those who visit your webpage. I would consider an honour if you had a copy of my calendar in your home or working place. Kindly inform me. Thanks for all that you are doing for HINDUISM. SARVEH JANO SUKINO BHAVANTHU. Chandiran (retired teacher)

Date: 9/18/2000 - 12:11 PM

Name: Rajashekhar Sharma

Email: rsharma9@ford.com

Site: http:///

Location: Troy, MI, USA

Comments: I am truly impressed with the mass of information this site has collected. You have done stupendous job in displaying all this. My grateful congratulations in this regard. I have a comment on one of your articles. Under "Indologists", you make the following comment on Frederich Max Mueller: "Another renowned pioneer Indologist was F.Max Muller (1823-1900) He is best known for his series Sacred Books of the East. In 1876, Muller wrote to a friend, "India is much riper for Christianity than Rome or Greece were at the time of Saint Paul." Max Muller wrote: "This edition of mine and the translation of the Veda will hereafter tell to a great extent... the fate of India, and on the growth of million

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Date: 9/17/2000 - 10:48 PM

Name: Shilpa

Email: ---@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: , ,

Comments: What a wonderful site! Clearly you have devoted a lot of time and effort to the history and beauty of Hinduism. I thank you for your valour, grace, and the poetry in your heart. You must be a saint! Bless you. Jai Hind!

Date: 9/8/2000 - 4:57 PM

Name: Himanshu

Email: Himanshu_58601@Yahoo.com

Site: http://http://my.treeway.com/HINDUTVA/

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, Hindustan

Comments: Jai Hindustan, I think Hindustan should become an all Hindu country. There aren't many Hindu countries in the world, Hindustan is the biggest and there are so many chirstians, muslims and sikhs living here. We should protect our nation from these minority groups, they are destroying our land and people they cause terrorism and separation. Hindustan Zindabad

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Date: 9/6/2000 - 6:20 PM

Name: Arthur Gregory

Email: lgregory@discover.net

Site: http:///

Location: Redlands, California, USA

Comments: Well I want to deeply congratulate you on your site and the amount of work and study that went into it! I found your site through a Yahoo Hindu message board on a topic which I posted called India's ancient flying machines and your site was recommended by one of the readers! Once again congratulations!

Date: 9/4/2000 - 7:33 PM

Name: Viswanathan Kapaleeswaran

Email: kapaleev@yahoo.com

Site: http://uk.geocities.com/kapaleev/index.html

Location: Madras, India /Brisbane, Australia, , India/Australi

Comments: This is one of the best sites I have come across, that deals with Hinduism. It is not offensive to anyone and at the same time can captivate the audience -- of any origin. The sense of harmony is there, and I sincerely hope that it will be maintained. Very good work. Congratulations.

Date: 9/4/2000 - 5:36 PM

Name: Sutapas Bhattacharya

Email: SutapasBhattacharya@tinyworld.co.uk

Site: http:///

Location: London, , UK

Comments: You may like to see the review of my book "The Oneness/Otherness Mystery: The Synthesis of Science and Mysticism" (Motilal Banarsidass, 1999) on the Scientific and Medical Network website (www.scimednet.org - look under Recent Reviews/Religion and philosphy). I have identified the physical correlate of cit/Pure Consciousness or the Atman/Godhead and gone on to show how the entire Western scientific picture can be integrated into the Sanatana Dharma (interpreted as the underlying core picture of Indian yogic mysticism) which can also accommodate consciousness, the mind, creativity and insight, paranormal phenomena, mind-body interactions, karmic phenomena and quantum paradoxes. The Alister Hardy Cent

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Date: 9/2/2000 - 3:59 PM

Name: Webmaster, websiteofindia.com

Email: NA

Site: http://www.websiteofindia.com/

Location: , ,

Comments: Nice work. Came as a pleasant surprize while browsing through a lot of Indian sites. This site will soon find a permanent place at the Recommendations at www.websiteofindia.com. Keep it up.

Date: 9/1/2000 - 11:38 PM

Name: Rajesh Ravindranth

Email: rajesh_us_99@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: Edison, NJ, USA

Comments: Your site is one of the best site about Hinduism .May GOD help you in spreading the great principles of our wonderful culture and religion .

Date: 8/30/2000 - 8:26 PM

Name: Prasad

Email: balagokulam4us@yahoo.com

Site: http://www.hinduweb.org/

Location: LA, ,

Comments: Wonderful website. Informative for people of all ages. Would like to get in touch with you for projects (for children and teenagers) on Hindu Dharma. Thank you. Prasad

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Date: 8/30/2000 - 8:23 PM

Name: Devi Prasad Ivaturi

Email: divaturi@cisco.com

Site: http:///

Location: San Jose, CA, USA

Comments: Namaskar, Very enlightening collection of information! I have one suggestion, while I can think of more. Please include a link on Hindu spiritualism and philosophy. Basically stress on the crux of Krama Yoga as preached by Lord Krishna through holy Bhagavadgita - it basically tells us to practice Karma with full devotion (SHRADDHA) and diligence but keep complete detachment from its results!! The western religions, which are based on materialism to a larger extent are now focussing on this aspect. I have watched some Christian channels and found to my surprise that they are stressing on "leaving the results to GOD" and "detachment"!! Actually, the amount of maturity one can fi

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Date: 8/30/2000 - 4:02 PM
Name: Hiri
Email: hiriya@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: Sunnyvale, CA,USA,
Comments: Really good site,pretty informative.

Date: 8/30/2000 - 3:55 PM
Name: Pradeep Achan
Email: ppachan@hotmail.com
Site: http:///
Location: Castro Valley, CA, USA,
Comments: I liked your site. Please notify me of any updates. God bless you.

Date: 8/30/2000 - 6:54 AM
Name: Suresh
Email: K.
Site: http://jain/
Location: Brighton, MA, USA

Comments: Sasneh Namashkar: Great site, tremendous effort, an outstanding reference guide, extremely well presented, etc. IF YOU NEED ANY VOLUNTEERS, I WOULD BE GLAD TO OFFER MY SERVICES. Regards, Suresh

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Date: 8/29/2000 - 8:39 AM

Name: Dr S Balakrishna

Email: balaks@aol.com

Site: http://www.geocities.com/vijayabalak/stars/naks

Location: Hampton, Va, USA

Comments: I was very impressed by this site. I am recommending it to my friends and relatives here. I have done some work on astronmical identity of 'ashtavimsha nakshathra' in the web site referred above. The article is called" NAMES OF STARS FROM PERIOD OF VEDAS". YOu may consider it for linking in your "Links"

Date: 8/29/2000 - 2:14 AM

Name: Venkatesh Murthy

Email: vvmurthy@yahoo.com

Site: http:///

Location: San Ramon, California, USA

Comments: It is one of the best web sites on Hindu Dharma, I have come across. I'm one of the coordinators of Bala-Gokulam for children in USA. This material will help me a lot in teaching our culture to children here. I would like to get in touch with you regarding some projects. Thanks Venkatesh Murthy

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Date: 8/27/2000 - 9:28 PM

Name: Srinath Rao

Email: srinathrao@healthscribe.com

Site: http:///

Location: Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Comments: This site helps discover altogether new world, for the modern world. It is very informative and speaks of the world's greatest cultrure, simply great, Cheers, Jai Hind.

Date: 8/27/2000 - 6:11 PM

Name: Hariharan Sivadasa

Email: shivadass@yahoo.com

Site: http://www.cul.com/sivaloka

Location: Orlando, Florida, USA

Comments: An excellent site! Your efforts will bear much fruit. Dhanyavad.

Date: 8/27/2000 - 1:33 PM

Name: Ajit

Email: AL76ersfan@go.com

Site: http:///

Location: , Pennsylvania, USA

Comments: This site is as informative as it is aesthetically pleasing! The new updates are terrific. Good job.

Date: 08/23/00 12:13:54

Name: LARRON JAIPRERSAD

Email: jaipersad@tuckerenergy.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: very impressive

Date: 08/22/00 04:47:40
Name: Pinaki Chakrabarti
Email: ppchaks@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: It is sad that the world tries to look for new philosopies and spiritualism to uplift themselves. What they need is a faith that sprung from nature and matured thousands of years before thought itself setelled. It is one of the most refreshing web-sites I have visited.

Date: 08/21/00 21:41:53
Name: Kevin Negandhi
Email: KNegandhi@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: This is a wonderful site... It is inspiring and uplifting for the mind and the soul... Thank you for continuing to keep the faith alive and carry it out to the next generation via the internet.... Jai Shree Krishna!

Date: 08/15/00 21:25:26
Name: Kim Shields
Email: *kshields@hsc.unt.edu
Site:
Location:
Comments: Amazing site! Very infomrative, well-designed, great images, great quotes...I loved it! Thanks!

Date: 08/14/00 10:42:28
Name: neelam

Email: kneelala@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: A tribute to Hinduism was not only informative but also very enlightening, makes me feel so proud being born a Hindu that I can hold my head high up and say,"Jai Hind!".

Date: 08/14/00 05:08:54
Name: Smidas
Email: smidas@mailcity.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Keep up the good work.

Date: 08/14/00 02:07:36
Name: ajitha
Email: ajitharao@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: very good attempt and good comprehensive approach. i found evtg i wanted here.

Date: 08/12/00 06:33:51
Name: K. K. Prabhu
Email: calcuttarampyari@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: All missionaries are bad - christian, muslim or hindu... without exception. However, when I read ur site it seems like Hinduism is all hunky dory and without problems. In the section on missionaries, it would be in the service of truth if you simply added a line that the single most important reason for the success of missionaries of Islam and Christianity (and Sikhism) is the oppressive caste structure which is just about as old as Hinduism. If you don't state such an obvious fact then the very legitimacy of the site is under question. We can cry ourselves hoarse about it and allow the votaries of Hindutva to murder a few more missionaries but the problem ain't going to go away till you address caste head on.

Date: 08/09/00 16:41:21
Name: hari Sud
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Good work Add pictures to illustrate your point

Date: 08/04/00 17:49:22
Name: Abhijit Gadgil
Email: abhig@vsnl.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Splendid Work I have not gone through it entirely! But the work you've done is inspiring!!!!!! Will write more after I scan thr' it completely!!

Date: 08/03/00 13:33:01
Name: Dr Asoke Chatterjee
Email: ace330@aol.com

Site:

Location:

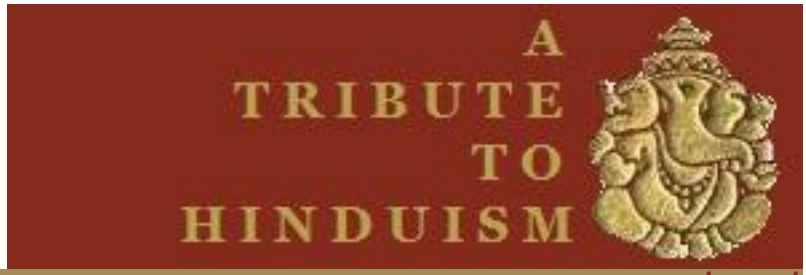
Comments: Wonderful Site ! Thank you very very much ! We will plan to use this site actively for Hindu mandir activities May Bhagwan bless you all Dr Asoke Chatterjee

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Entries: 260-211

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

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Entries: 210-161

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 08/03/00 01:46:37
Name: Sagar Vaishampayan
Email: sagu@epatra.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Excellent Page on Hindutva!

Date: 07/31/00 13:46:55
Name: Gustav
Email: boompje@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Hi, I'm looking for clear images of Garuda, preferrably Indonesian style, I have been searching all day now and only got some images of statues, can anyone help me please!

Date: 07/31/00 06:29:14
Name: salma
Email: gujaratigal@hotmail.com
Site:

Location:

Comments: i loved your site...very knowledgeable! They say there is no difference in the kuran and the geeta. but my only wish is that hindus and muslims will stop this war. they dont know what there forfathers want. what gandhiji wants. gandhi ji wanted us to be together. lets keep it that way. Ther are many religions in india (bharat) hindus,muslims,jains,buddhists,cristians,sikhs. lets put others aside ...but lets not forget that the hindus and muslims are and were and will be brothers and sisters. its only that some people dont see that, because there eyes are covered in maya and greed. just think of what india and pakistan could be like if they were together. Mandirs and masjids...is the home of every hindu and muslim and its going to be a time when we will gie up this war. thank you for a wonderful site!

Date: 07/31/00 06:06:00

Name: heena

Email: gujaratigal@bollywoodz.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: i really liked this site...and i loved the beautiful images! thank you!

Date: 07/29/00 12:49:02

Name: kumar

Email: sshankar@optusnet.com.au

Site:

Location:

Comments: good work thank you.

Date: 07/26/00 09:27:27

Name: veena

Email: veena333@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: its really very intresting to me and great to read all that about hiduism its great thank u to gave here all for my knowledge veeeena

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Date: 07/16/00 03:16:18
Name: Dr.M.S.Srinivasan
Email: srinivasan@kmr.ne
Site:
Location:
Comments: Excellent work of high educative value. This service meets a need when many Hindus do not have direct access to the original classics and are starved in the matter information on Hindu religion and its place in the world. I wish all Hindus read these mate ials for their own benefit.

Date: 07/06/00 16:31:03
Name: Jaykrishna Melepat Nair
Email: jaykrishna@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Informative site

Date: 07/03/00 21:24:15
Name: C. Chatterjee
Email: CChatterj@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Great site! Keep up the good work.

Date: 06/30/00 15:39:27
Name: narendra surani
Email: narensurani@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: brilliant site..keep up the good work..god bless..jai hind

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Date: 06/28/00 11:01:22
Name: Sudhir Joshi
Email: joshis2884@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: GREAT WORK , SIMPLY EXCELLENT , INFORMATIVE SITE. GOODLUCK !!! GO AHEAD.

Date: 06/27/00 21:28:42
Name: Ashwin Vaidya
Email: ashora@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Excellent work!. We need more and more people like you. I would also like to send u a mail..with some stuff...for your site.. regards Ashwin

---

Date: 06/22/00 21:31:54
Name: dennis persad

Email: dennispersad@hotmil.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Your program, contains information that is very infomative for the welfare of all. Keep up the good work.

Date: 06/22/00 15:16:36
Name: Jesse Caleb
Email: tattoo@hotbot.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very informative site.

Date: 06/22/00 06:18:45
Name: David C. McLeod
Email: dcmc2@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: A beautifully well done site. The deep love and conviction of this ancient religion comes shining through.

Date: 06/22/00 05:38:12
Name: Ashok Gautam
Email: gautam@netcom.ca
Site:
Location:
Comments: thank you for your effort .I am a proud Hindu. Do you have any interest in R.S.S.?Please let me know.

Date: 06/19/00 04:44:11

Name: Raghavendra S. Mupparthy

Email: muppar@superior.eng.ohio-state.edu

Site:

Location:

Comments: well, first of all please accept my gratitude for making such a wonderful informative site. Few incidents in the history really bug me, but may be hinduism will show me the right path to cope with this bad incidents and help us all to work for the greater glory of our country, The position it deserves. I was also going through the some information on Great Pyramids of Egypt, one which baffles me just like the Scientific advances of our culture. I truly believe that there was some link between Egypt and Ind a during this period and i hope that someday that will be uncovered without any bias.

Date: 06/17/00 19:35:23

Name: Maniyam

Email: maniyam@dacafe.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Congratulations - You have made a fantastic site for all the benefit of many! I (like others) look forward to many more pages in your excellent website. I will add a link at my (humble) website too! Thank you!

Date: 06/16/00 16:10:20

Name: Sudhir Khanolkar

Email: sudhirp@mcmail.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Well done. Tremendous efforts. Very well organized and well informative site. keep it up. All Bhartiyas should visit this site. Many of us don't know what heritage we have got. Congratulations again. Mr. sudhir khanolkar. FRCS

Date: 06/13/00 15:33:36
Name: chitralekha
Email: blissf@vsnl.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Made interesting, informative & enjoyable reading. I have learnt a lot about Hinduism by visitng this site. You could add info about Gurus, prayers & modern information to make youngsters more intersted about the religion.

Date: 06/08/00 22:16:21
Name: Rodney Lingham
Email: GURUVAYU506@xtra.co.nz
Site:
Location:
Comments: And excellent Site with a great knowledge of information about India and her glorious past! This page is one of very few that recognises so many acheivments of the ancient Hindus following traditional lines!

Date: 06/08/00 03:18:18
Name: Neil MacGregor Campbell
Email: neilcampbell@pagan72.freeserve.co.uk
Site:
Location:

Comments: A great variety of sources and a broad scope of writers. It seems like a gold mine of info on Hinduism in which there must be something for everyone. A lot of time and effort must have been spent here and site visitors such as myself appreciate the effo t.

Date: 06/06/00 15:01:19
Name: Atanu Dey
Email: atanu@are.berkeley.edu
Site:
Location:
Comments: This is a site that would take days to fully explore. It is marvelous and excellent. It is the result of dedication and devotion. Best regards and please keep up the good work. Atanu

---

Date: 05/30/00 01:49:23
Name: Dan W.
Email: tjtrackguy@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: This site is the capital of Hinduism sites. It's got everything a non-Hindu needs to understand.

Date: 05/29/00 10:05:07
Name: Fred Parente
Email: astral1935@my-deja.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: This is a great intro to holy Hihduism, and will do much to eradicate the misconceptions that have been circulated by those of expansionist attitudes. To learn more about true spirituality that Hinduism represents; Read "Autobiography of a Yogi" by Paramahansa Yogananda.

Date: 05/25/00 22:33:19

Name: Rohit Gupta

Email: rohit@guptaz.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: This is really a great site. Hope you keep it up. All Hindus should be proud of true devotees such as yourself.

Date: 05/23/00 19:25:20

Name: cecelia autar

Email: cecelia_autar@micusa.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: CONGRATULATIONS!!!!!!!! YOU HAVE INDEED DONE A WONDERFUL JOB. I HAVE LEARNED A LOT FROM YOUR SITE.

Date: 05/21/00 03:48:58

Name: vijay kumar

Email: vksm@satyam.net.in

Site:

Location:

Comments: It is a real tribute to Hinduism and every Hindu should feel proud of being Hindu

---

Date: 05/16/00 00:51:02
Name: Navasundar das
Email: nava@optusnet.com.au
Site:
Location:
Comments: excellent, excellent, excellent

Date: 05/12/00 05:04:37
Name: Vevek Kapur
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Excellent page, keep up the good work! Namaste! Drop a line on my guestbook of my old site for suggestions, people. Thank you!

Date: 05/11/00 20:19:17
Name: BalaKrishna Murthy Ramaraju
Email: krishnamurthyramaraju@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: A wonderful and an enlightening,informative site of high educative value. Dr.BalaKrishna Murthy Ramaraju 26-5 Briarwood Lane Marlborough, MA01752 (508)229-2028

Date: 05/06/00 10:28:49
Name: Rithvik S Vinekar
Email: rvinekar@rediffmail.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: GREAT SITE !! I have recommended all my friends to this site as the ultimate site on this topic. Thanks!!!

Date: 05/05/00 05:55:20

Name: james d. jenkins

Email: randjincorp@aol.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: very interesting i am a master mason and i see alot of things with in the hindu religion that i can relate with, especially during the time inwhich i am practising my masonary rituals, thank you for u're time if u can give me any information on how masona y and the masonic way cross path there please let me know....., thank you jim

---

Date: 05/02/00 05:12:52

Name: Harish

Email:

Site:

Location:

Comments: Very well written material about the true meaning of Hinduism...Congratulations!!!

Date: 04/28/00 12:54:15

Name: Dharamvir Singh Benawra

Email: dbenawra@home.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Keep up the good work.

Date: 04/27/00 19:11:39
Name: K P Ghoshal
Email: kpg@cal2.vsnl.net.in
Site:
Location:
Comments: Your attempt is excellent and praiseworthy.Let it be spread everywhere.

Date: 04/24/00 11:16:40
Name: Venilal Vaghela
Email: VVag905729@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Congratulations and thank you for enlightening surfers with wisdom of hindutwa.

Date: 04/23/00 20:05:28
Name: Alexis
Email: quarterpint01@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: I am doing a research project on Hinduism and I came across your site. It is wonderful! Thank you for putting this wealth of information on the Internet.

Date: 04/23/00 18:50:27
Name: sudheer
Email: ramchandra@lineone.net
Site:
Location:
Comments: Dear Sushama, words fail to describe the beauty of your site. It is immese.One feels nothing but happy. By creating this site you have done a great service to Hinduism. It should be seen by as many people as possible -both hindus and christians and inwordly looking religion like Islam. Sudheer

---

Date: 04/22/00 23:52:02
Name: Sujana Kumar
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Excellent Keep it up. Add comments on varnasrama dharma also.

Date: 04/22/00 01:45:07
Name: Dr.N.M.S.Mannari
Email: hrisikesh@lineone.net
Site:
Location:
Comments: Under `Aryan'it is worth mentioning `Vedic Physics' by Dr. Raja Ram Mohan Roy which is an excellent book. This book proves that Indus Civilisation was Vedic civilisation indeed.It shows Aryan Invasion Theory is an invention by western scholars.

Date: 04/12/00 20:52:25
Name: Hira Suri

Email: HiraSuri@us.ibm.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very informative site. I enjoyed the content. Some how the bias is only to give what is good in Hinduism. If Hinduism is that great why is India in such a mess? We can't live in the past alone. Majority of Indians are Hindus but the country is so corrupt nd so environmentally polluted. How about some action plans for India to revive its past glory. It looks like Indians are trying to copy the West. We who have left the country are more Hindus that the Hindus in India.

Date: 04/12/00 17:39:53
Name: Kishore
Email: kthekhalli@ems.att.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: You have done a good job in exposing the christian missionaries. My blood boils when I read about these conversions.

Date: 04/12/00 00:03:50
Name: chris
Email: gauriben@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Enjoyed the site. Plan to visit again when I have more time. I have a question? Are there any Hindu writings that discuss depression? Is it viewed as weakness or mental illness?

Date: 04/11/00 06:10:09
Name: Graham Scott

Email: gscott@emirates.net.ae
Site:
Location:
Comments:

Date: 04/10/00 15:05:43
Name: Vishal RashmiKant Kanji
Email: vishalkanji@ip.pt
Site:
Location:
Comments: Congratulations for your site! I'm from Lisbon, Portugal though my grandparents were born in Bhanvad, District of Jamnagar, Saurashtra, Gujarat. As I'm interested in obtaining information about hinduism your site is very useful for the purpose, in spite of not being in portuguese. One more time I congratulate you on behalf of my dad and myself.If you have any information about interesting sites about Hinduism and India, I would appreciate if you sent me some information about it.Also if you have contacts of Indians over the worl . Thankyou, Vishal

---

Date: 04/10/00 14:24:46
Name: Bhavik
Email: Bhavik3@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: Hi Susama, I really liked your home page. You know what?, I was looking doing essay on Dewali, but couldn't find any information on that topic, then I looked your home page and found information on Hinduism. It was really great, so I would be able to change y topic to Hinduism. Can you please try to put information about indian festival and what are they means What is a Dewali?, and so on. Your home page is going to help me a lot if my instuctor allow me to write essay on hinduism. Thanx for that and don't f rget to write me e-mail if you put info. about the festivals in india. Thanx, take care Bye Bhavik

---

Date: 04/10/00 07:38:28

Name: HARISH RANGA

Email: harishranga_99@yahoo.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Great site to educate all HINDUS what they really missed to know about their own religion. My sincere thanks for all who put their efforts in constructing this site. Hindu trully, Harish Ranga

---

Date: 04/08/00 20:14:56

Name: Subhash Kak

Email: subhashkak@usa.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: This is a magnificent site, one of the best resources on the Web on India. Sushama Londhe deserves the gratitude of all who love India for putting this site together. -Subhash Kak

---

Date: 04/07/00 17:17:13

Name: PRAKASH

Email:

Site:

Location:

Comments: WONDERFUL AND HIGHLY APPRECIABLE RESEARCH WORK. THIS IS GIVING A BORDER PERSPECTIVE OF OUR RELIGION WHICH HAS BEEN MISINTERPRETED AND MISQUOTED BY EUROPEAN HISTORIANS SUCH AS MACDONALD, MARSHALL PENKAS ETC WHO HAVE CHANGED THE BASIC IDEA OR OUR PAST HIS ORY, RELIGION AND CULTURE FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR OWN COLONIAL ADVANTAGE. ITS AMUST FOR YOUNGER GENERATIONSTO LEARN OUR PAST AND JUDGE THE SUPERIORITY OF OUR TRADITIONS INSTEAD OF BLINDLY COPYING THE WEST. KEEP IT UP REGARDS PRAKASH

Entries: 210-161

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

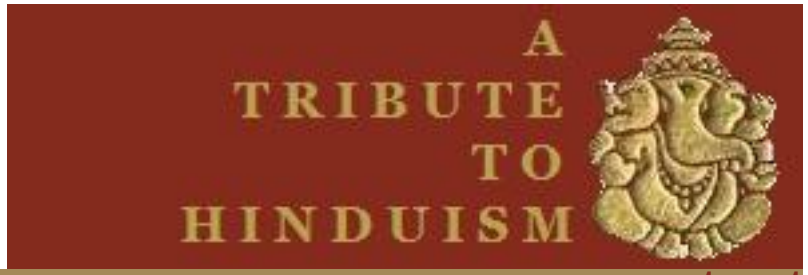
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home guestbook contents

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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002



Entries: 160-111

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 04/03/00 20:59:12
Name: Jagannadha raju Datla
Email: jrdatla@usa.net
Site:
Location:
Comments: hai : your site is very beautiful and has lot of informative stuff. Keep your sprit up and include the history and culture of India more in detail. good luck. Jr Datla

---

Date: 04/03/00 18:34:19
Name: Rajesh
Email: yellarks13@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Good content

Date: 04/03/00 16:38:07
Name: gopinatha pai
Email: gopinathapai@hotmail.com
Site:

Location:

Comments: Dear madam, I appreciate and congratulate you for this yeoman service to humanity since practice of Hinduism truly can only bring peace and prosperity in this world.May God bless you. gopinatha pai(retired.DistrictRegistrar of Trissur,Kerala)Chicago. usa.

Date: 04/03/00 03:39:26

Name: T.KANNAN

Email: SUSAMVIKAN@HOTMAIL.COM

Site:

Location:

Comments: DEAR SIRS/MADAM VERY INTERESTING AND IVOKING SITES. THIS WILL SURELY AWAKEN THE DORMANT HINDUS TO REALISE THEIR OWN PRIDE. WITHOUT HINDUS INDIA CANNOT EXIST. REGARDS T.KANNAN

Date: 03/30/00 08:53:49

Name: Gérard Heuschen

Email: geha@support.nl

Site:

Location:

Comments: Blessings to you! To every-body and -soul in communion with the universal evidences. Thank you for the light and the dark you offer and share. Still on one side of life, we feel the evidence of the other side. Gérard

---

Date: 03/18/00 16:27:25

Name: Ali kalil

Email: ali982hba@hotmail.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: I from U.A.E

Date: 03/18/00 15:16:45
Name:
Email: SURYA_KANISHKA@YAHOO.COM
Site:
Location:
Comments: IT WAS JUST SPLENDED,NO OTHER CAN DESCRIBE IT. I WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH YOU. WITH BEST REGARDS SURYA KANISHKA

Date: 03/18/00 00:51:05
Name: Ram
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: That's milk for Lord Ganesh!

Date: 03/17/00 09:36:42
Name: Sudharsan
Email: SSudhar@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Tremendous work. If everyone in India got a chance to read your site, a transformation will happen in the political stream. Especially in Tamil Nadu where it can dash the claims & propoganda of the Dravidan hooligans.

Date: 03/16/00 03:21:44
Name: Rosy
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Great site...

Date: 03/13/00 00:10:08
Name: Tejaswi mellachervu
Email: saradhi@doctor.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: this site is just what us Hindus need. we need to be told the facts so that we can support ourselves when opposed by other religions. thank you

---

Date: 03/11/00 04:47:19
Name: D. Anub Kumar
Email: anub_k@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: I have no words to express my happyness. That much I am excited and in the pinnacle of my exictement. May God bless you more to do this kind of sacrifice to our religion further. This cannot be called as a work. This is sacrifice your are doing. With LUV Anub

---

Date: 03/09/00 00:02:48
Name: snowy
Email:
Site:

Location:
Comments: :)

Date: 03/06/00 22:05:43
Name: Rahul
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: This webpage is great to stay connected and become more cultured in Hinduism!!!!!!!!! Good Job and keep up the good work!

Date: 03/04/00 14:14:28
Name: Scribble
Email: do not have one
Site:
Location:
Comments: This site is very good I used it to do my Hinduism project thankyou for putting in all the hard work!

Date: 03/03/00 19:16:34
Name: ashu
Email: amishra79@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: bahut hee acchha site hai!!! simply great , i came to know more than i had ever known of!!! keep it up!! yu represent our counrty's heritage , did a great job

---

Date: 02/26/00 12:34:08
Name: Ram Narayanan
Email: ramn@adelphia.ne
Site:
Location:
Comments: It's inspiring!

Date: 02/25/00 08:51:53
Name: sanjay yermalkar
Email: sanjayy@mypad.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Simply Excellent!! The collection and the presentation of the material deserve a big cheers! keep it up. Thanks Sanjay

---

Date: 02/24/00 20:03:40
Name: Vasuvaj
Email: vasuvaj@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Uttamam asti.Shubhaashayaah! [It's good. Best wishes!] Vasuvaj

---

Date: 02/24/00 12:07:06
Name: N Ranganathan
Email: rnambakam@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: I have seen only the first page. I have decided to read each of the detailed articles every time I have a few minutes leisure. But even before I read further, I find the page most interesting. I agree with all that the author finds bad about the myths spread about Hinduism, India. However, since, by definition and in practice, we are more objective and large-hearted than our detractors, I suggest that we talk about the goodness of Hinduism rath r than harp on less than charitable acts of others. Keep up the good work.

Date: 02/23/00 01:11:07

Name: Laura

Email: laura071584@yahoo.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Wow! Great Site, I am doing a school project and need primary sources in research, well done! I encourag you to make it even larger and keep updating it! Excellent job, I cannot believe how great this site is-- best I've seen on Hinduism and India yet! Co grats!

Date: 02/19/00 07:44:13

Name: kala m k

Email: kmkveeren@hotmail.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: i have not fully viewed every segment in this site but whatever i have seen it is great! thanks for a job well done, Hindus in every corner of the earth wd be utterly grateful to u. i will comment more after i have read every segment.

Date: 02/19/00 02:20:47

Name: Ben

Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: An excellent source of information on Hinduism. Rich in content and the web page design. Hope you keep expanding it. Thanks you. Came across another good site which your readers might want to check out. The URL is... http://www.geocities.com/athens/troy/3 78

Date: 02/18/00 06:06:27
Name: Kathirasan
Email: rudra@singnet.com.sg
Site:
Location:
Comments: One of the best Hindu websites I've visited. It uproots all misconceptions about Hinduism and its great heritage. And truly it is a tribute. A tribute to the great lineage of Acharyas who walked this earth to unite the human race. My hearty congratula ions to the author of this website.

Date: 02/16/00 18:37:55
Name: ganapati
Email: ganapati@club-internet.fr
Site:
Location:
Comments: I have well received your post and have visited your site. Thank you. You have a very remarkable web site, very comprehensive on the topic. I would be pleaded if you may visite my own site dedicated to Ganesh/Ganapati in French http://perso.club-internet.fr/ganapati in English http://perso.club-internet.fr/ganapati/indexe.html If you agree, we exchange links. Best regards Ganapati

---

Date: 02/16/00 16:43:51
Name: Han Solo
Email: lightin__75@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: I found your page to be very interesting please send me more info.

Date: 02/16/00 12:11:44
Name: Vidyaratha Kissoon
Email: vidyak1@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Namaste. Well done again. Please keep the site updated.

Date: 02/12/00 18:43:53
Name: Hariharan Sivadasa
Email: shivadass@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: I love the site! Please keep up the good work! aum sivaya namaha!

Date: 02/10/00 23:54:19
Name: Dipiya Dilawari
Email: dipcool@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: Excellent Site. But I'll recommend if you will have some information on women in Sanatam Dharam. Non Hindus think that women in Hindu culture have no rights. I want to show them the high esteem of women in our culture. Dipiya

---

Date: 02/09/00 09:56:58
Name: Connie
Email: connieg@primus.com.au
Site:
Location:
Comments: Fantastic!!!!!

Date: 02/09/00 01:45:17
Name: Nisha Karia
Email: nishakaria@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Many Many congratulations. Your web-page is fantastic and the dedication and effort you have put into constructing it is evident. I will certainly recommend your page to enthusiastic friends and anyone who I feel needs an accurate account of Hindu Dharma. Keep up the good work, you are an inspiration to the Hindu youth of today, particularly to those of us who live in Britain!!

Date: 02/07/00 04:01:23
Name: Neha Patel
Email: abcd@cornell.edu
Site:
Location:
Comments: Congratulations....this site is great. especially for ABCD's who have no clue what is going on.

Date: 02/07/00 03:14:07
Name: rachel
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: What an awesome website!! I'm doing a project for my history class and I found your site to be most helpful!! Thank you very much!!

Date: 02/04/00 01:03:41
Name:
Email: Queen_of_the_World@msn.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Thank you (as always) for your complete, and beautifully written information about Hinduism. I enjoy your web site very much.

Date: 02/03/00 18:40:32
Name: Dr S Balakrishna
Email: balaks@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: I am impressed by this site. It is good to see that self respect of our identity is atleast expressed in this format.

Date: 01/24/00 23:15:07
Name: kris

Email: kris108@netusa1.net
Site:
Location:
Comments: Here is a wonderful web-site that you may want to add to your links: http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Cyprus/5212/ Your web-site is truly awesome.

Date: 01/22/00 15:04:56
Name: PATEL
Email: patel81@collegeclub.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: good website, keep up the good work

Date: 01/19/00 21:54:31
Name: Seelam Baburao
Email: seelambaburao@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Hi.. I like this site very much. I think more research is required, at the History section. Please give more information how our great leader tried to save our Hindu culture from other culture. I will give insperiation to the young generation, so that they can also take a part to save our culture in future. Thanking You Seelam Baburao

---

Date: 01/18/00 14:19:53
Name: Madhuri
Email: madhuri567@india.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: Great site! I'm creating one of my own about India and Hinduism. I'd really appreciate it if you could email me and give me some tips on how to get it up and running. Keep up the good work!

Date: 01/18/00 07:40:51
Name: Vikesh Ramesh Madunchand
Email: madunchandv@eng.und.ac.za
Site:
Location:
Comments:

Date: 01/18/00 00:57:40
Name: panchita
Email: panchita@gurlmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: This is a really great site. I'm doing a project on hinduism, and this site has been very helpful

---

Date: 01/17/00 10:27:09
Name: Vasant Subramanyan Sharma
Email: vssharma@uci.edu
Site:
Location:
Comments: Wow. i am truly impressed with this webpage.It informs not only the layman seeking to learn more wbout Hindu culture/philosophy/history/etc., but also the more educated Hindu who needs to brush up on his foundations. We need more pages like this, and we need more people who are willing to put in their time and effort into keeping our rich religion alive and flourishing; many thanks on behalf of the Hindu community!!!

Date: 01/14/00 03:04:10

Name: Charles Elerick

Email: c_elerick@yahoo.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: I like your work very much. As a neo-hindu and follower of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, I appreciate your broad and inclusive approach. Personally, since I think that Sri Aurobindo set much of the ongoing agenda for Hinduism in the 20th (now 21st) entury, I hope that you will incorporate more material on his work and a link to the <..miraura..> site.

Date: 01/12/00 05:23:26

Name: Rajeev Srinivasan

Email: rajeev@rediffmail.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: This is a veritable encyclopaedia of Hinduism! I take my hat off to Sushama for the incredible amount of research, scanning, and web-building she has done. I will return to this site periodically when I need references on issues related to Hinduism. Rajeev Srinivasan, columnist, Rediff on the Net

---

Date: 01/10/00 06:08:14

Name: arjun roy

Email: dajollybengali@aol.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: this is not only a great hinduism site, compared to some of the other top sites on hinduism, but is also one of the best non-commercial site I have visited in a while. Your work here is not only informative but also interesting, a combination rarely seen in most web sites today...so keep this site going cause i'll certainly be coming back to it alot...

Date: 01/08/00 07:11:09

Name: Rahul Mishra

Email: rs_mishra@hotmail.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Thanks.. Nice informative site.. Will go through it within next week for any suggestions etc. Some sites for the readers.. India's contribution to mathematics..excellent site with gif files as evidence. http://india.coolatlanta.com/GreatPages/sudheer The Tajmahal is Tejomahalay http://www.hindunet.org/hindu_history/modern/taj_oak.html Kutub Minar: Its Origins http://www.hindunet.org/hindu_history/modern/kutub_oak.html

---

Date: 01/07/00 21:42:19

Name: AUTAR

Email: AMATTOO@ASRR.ARSUSDA.GOV

Site:

Location:

Comments: Congratulations for a nice, informative site! What a service you are doing to the community - you are into GOOD karma! May Lord Shiva bless you! (P.S. You may want to go through the text to check for typos and for any sentence that may connote inaccurate meaning. This is a suggestion not a criticism, please.)

Date: 01/06/00 14:46:40
Name: Shana Mattoo
Email: mattoo@climate.gsfc.nasa.gov
Site:
Location:
Comments: Thanks for a wonderful site. Great job and a great resource for all of us and younger generations.

Date: 01/06/00 07:40:47
Name: Sunil Bali
Email: sunil_bali@123india.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Excellent. Please continue to do the Great and Good Work. Best Wishes and regards.

Date: 01/04/00 17:25:30
Name: Chetan Gandhi
Email: chetangandhi@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Real nice page. I'd like to suggest that you include a section on Hindu social service or sewa. Since, Dhanam is an intrinsic part of our dharma and practiced by modern hindus as well. But we often neglect to take credit for our own social work. Regards, Chetan

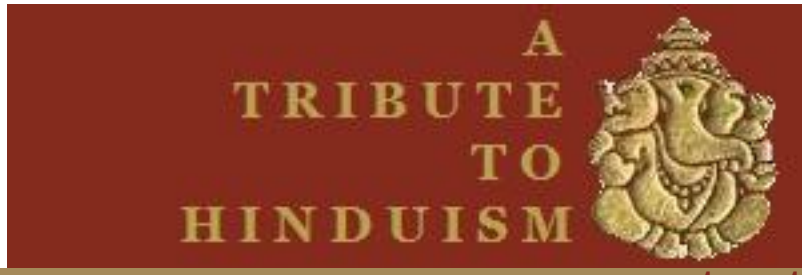
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Entries: 160-111
[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002



Entries: 110-61

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 01/04/00 14:45:12
Name: Dr.Ninad.Anand.Tulpule.
Email: tulpule@pn3.vsnl.net.in
Site:
Location:
Comments: Dear Sushma, Your have embarked upon an Excellent Venture true to the spirit of: Krinwanto Vishwaryam i quote the Views of Annie Besant: "After a study of some forty years and more,I find none so perfect,none so scientific,none so philosophical and none so spiritual as the Great religion by the name of Hinduism.The more you know it,the more you love it and the more you try to understand it, the more deeply you will value it. Make no mistake,without Hinduism India has no future...Her History,her literature,her art,her monuments all have Hinduism written across them. And if Hindus do not maintain Hinduism,who shall save it? If India's own children do not cling to her Faith ,who shall guard it?... India alone can save India and India and Hinduism are One." May the God Almighty extend choicest of His Blessings to you and we all. OM-TAT-SAT

Date: 01/04/00 07:49:26
Name: venkat nimmagadda
Email: vsn@mediaone.net
Site:
Location:

Comments: thank you for an excellent site. I learned a lot and will continue to learn from this site. Keep up the good work. venkat

---

Date: 01/03/00 21:42:27
Name: Upen Shah
Email: umore@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Please describe " Hinduism "!! I don't know why people use this word at all. Vedic DHarma is the right word instead. Please refer to Vedas, Upanishads and Sutras or any other ancient Shastras. Upen Shah

---

Date: 01/03/00 00:48:28
Name: Kim Hester
Email: kim_hester@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Thank you for your informative and inspiring web site.

Date: 01/03/00 00:14:41
Name: Jiten Bardwaj
Email: jiten_bardwaj@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very beautiful and inspiring site. I have already sent an email about related matters. The pretty little pictures of paintings that accompnay text could perhaps have a little note about the subject. Looking forward to hearing from you about the email in conversational Sanskrit.

Date: 12/30/99 18:04:01
Name: Nibir Dhar
Email: ndhar@erols.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: A web site that represents the ultimate truth, devotion and love. The person of the century, Einstein who was the follower of Mahatma Gandhi, the runners up for the person of the century, once said, "Generations to come, will scarce believe that such a on (Gandhi) as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth". Gandhi himself got his strength from the truth of religion. Sushama, you are making history with this web site and I greatly admire you. Love

---

Date: 12/30/99 00:31:36
Name: Anil Kumar.P.R
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: It is an extraordinary web site.

Date: 12/29/99 19:53:07
Name: Tim Sinnett
Email: mydharma@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: Namaste. You have put together a truly impressive website. I have spent quite a bit of time on the material and I have barely scratched the surface. As a devotee of Sanatana Dharma myself, I found your site to be a precious gem. May this site serve as a g eat ocean, from which the winds of the Sanatana Dharma may blow deep in to the heart's and mind's of the world. Om shanti.

Date: 12/29/99 12:45:52
Name: Vidyaratha Kissoon
Email: vidyak1@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Namaste! An excellent site.

Date: 12/29/99 12:43:00
Name: Vidyaratha Kissoon
Email: vidyak1@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Namaste! An excellent site.

Date: 12/29/99 12:38:11
Name: Randy le Jeune
Email: randy_lejeune@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: This is really an excellent site! Thanks for sharing your wealth of information about Sanatana Dharma with us.

Date: 12/24/99 17:00:00
Name: Nagarajah
Email: nagarajahn@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: God bless u.You are doing a great service to Sanathana Dharma.Please dont stop n I will let my friends in Malaysia know bout your site.I really enjoyed this.Inform me of any new updates.TQ.

Date: 12/24/99 05:51:00
Name: lisa gopalan
Email: lisagopal@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: This is a wonderful site, and I am going to spend many hours persuing it! Thank you so much for this! lisa gopalan

---

Date: 12/19/99 03:57:24
Name: Doug Couch
Email: doug@ompage.net
Site:
Location:
Comments: This is one of the best sites I have seen on Hinduism. Thanks for all the great work. It will be very helpful for those who seeking an education on the subject. God Bless, Doug Couch

---

Date: 12/18/99 15:08:07
Name: Errol V Johnson

Email: jagroop@cwjamaica.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very interesting and informative. A real tribute to Hinduism

---

Date: 12/16/99 19:01:20
Name: Dr. Sanjay Navelkar
Email: navelkar@vsnl.com.
Site:
Location:
Comments: Sushma, I have still not browsed thro' all the articles on your site. The few that I have are excellent. This is really a great effort! Keep it up!

Date: 12/16/99 06:40:57
Name: Sumer Singh Chauhan
Email: tiggerism@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Truly an amazing website. I'm really impressed. You also have a lot of beautiful images along your texts, I was wondering where you got them because we are lacking any place here where we can get such images. I'm going to tell my friends about this websit . Really, its a job well done.

Date: 12/14/99 07:02:06
Name: Kogee
Email: Biggie143@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: Namaste This is a very informative site lotsa cool stuff in it.The index is organized well.I enjoyed browsing thru this page.Keep up the Good Work. Please drop by to my little creation when you're free. Hari Om

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Date: 12/14/99 01:22:34
Name:
Email: saltillo_mandir@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Is so nice your pages.

Date: 12/13/99 23:44:25
Name: Satyanarayana Iruku
Email: siruku@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: ENDARO MAHANUBHAVULU ANDARIKI VANDANAMULU. Congratulations. I couldn't go through the entire site throughly but it is an excellent collection of information. Please add the sanskrit verse "Tamasoma jyotirgmaya". I will visit the site as frequently as possible to read interesting articles. I will pread this site to all my friends. Add common Shanti mantrams as quotes. 1. SWASTI PRAJABYA PARIPALAYANTAM NYAYENA MARGENA MAHIM MAHISHA GOH BRAHAMANASYA SUBHAM BHAVATU LOKA SAMASTA SUKHINO BHAVANTU. MEANING: O GOD - GIVE THE RULER OF THE LAND GOOD IDEAS AND MAKE HIM TO FOLLOW THE PATH OF TRUTH. LET THE PIOUS ANIMAL - COW AND PIOUS HUMAN - BRAHMIN (COW IS NOT SELFISH AND A TRUE BRAHMIN IS NOT SELFISH)LIVE HAPPILY. LET ALL THE LIVING ORGANISMS IN ALL LOKAS HAVE A PIECEFUL LIFE. SARVE JANA SUKHINO BHAVANTU OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTHI SATYANARAYANA IRUKU

Date: 12/13/99 21:28:57
Name: ANKUR BORA
Email: INDIANBOY60@HOTMAIL.COM
Site:
Location:
Comments: GREAT SITE FOR ALL HINDUS....KEEP IT UP

Date: 12/11/99 15:08:41
Name: Bipin Patel
Email: bipin.p@virgin.net
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very impressive really. Many must visit this site as I feel it is very well researched and informative. Keep up the good work.

Date: 11/24/99 13:48:19
Name: Monica Bithal
Email: mbithal@uk.oracle.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Extremely enlightenling... a delight to view.

Date: 11/23/99 06:08:03
Name: ravi
Email:
Site:

Location:
Comments: Awesome site!!

Date: 11/23/99 01:14:32
Name: H.S.Rawat
Email: Ramjas7777@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Hi Sus, Great job, keep it up. Congrats.

Date: 11/16/99 21:11:02
Name: Swami Siddhananda
Email: s-siddha@att.ne
Site:
Location:
Comments: This is really a tribute to Hinduism. Woderful work. Congratulations! When I get some nice articles I will forward it to you.

Date: 11/16/99 20:49:19
Name: Sarah
Email: aasarah@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: a lot of great information I am glad I stopped by

Date: 11/15/99 06:21:55

Name: Puneet Chhabra
Email: Puneet_Chhabra@figroup.co.uk
Site:
Location:
Comments: You have beautifully compiled the information about Hindusim.Keep it up

---

Date: 11/12/99 16:06:16
Name: Suresh Vyas
Email: panchajanya@geocities.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Congratulations Sushma, for making such a great site. This is a great service to the Hindus and friends of the Hindus. The subject and purpose of the site is same as my site Panchajanya. You have mentioned vimanas. You may also mention that the theory of relativity of Albert Einstein was also known in ancient Vedic times. Srimad Bhagavatam has a story of King Revat who went to another planet and waited there a bit. In that bit of time, more than a millenium passed away on the Earth. You may choose background color of the pages a bright one. I like light yellow because Krishna's pitambar is yellow. Blue is gloomy and sad for many people. You know the phrase - Hospital blues. Jai Sri Krishna! -sv

---

Date: 11/11/99 21:41:58
Name: satyahit das
Email: chaitanya@home.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Just stored your site. haven't read it yet but am reading your article on vedic cuklture eveidenced in South America. I think they also shared the reincarnation belief in common. Thank you

---

Date: 11/11/99 19:01:35
Name: Haris Agha
Email: ISAPAKI@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Great job guy. I was doin a research porject and found the basic info from ur site only..... once again, good job

---

Date: 11/11/99 15:32:57
Name: Anand Krishna Yadav
Email: yadava@mail.fvsu.edu
Site:
Location:
Comments: Your efforts are greatly appreciated for a long awaited site to provide much needed information on our culture. Keep up the good work.

Date: 11/11/99 05:18:07
Name: =)
Email: =)@=)
Site:
Location:
Comments: hindus kick ass

Date: 11/10/99 02:13:56
Name: Revati
Email: nkrevati@yahoo.com
Site:

Location:

Comments: Sushma, This is the first site I visited on this subject and I feel it is excellently done.Would visit it soon again.Thanks

---

Date: 11/07/99 03:34:08

Name: vrindavan

Email: vedic@vedica.net

Site:

Location:

Comments: Just briefly glanced at the website, but plan to look at it fully later. I also plan to add a link from my site to this one. Namaste

---

Date: 11/06/99 01:16:36

Name: Susan Sandoval

Email: s_sandoval@hotmail.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: What a lovely, inspiring and peaceful visit! I found your page when checking my brother's email (BobHogg@uswest.net). He passed away August 31, and I am monitoring his messages. Thank you so much for being available to all of us.

Date: 11/05/99 04:59:18

Name: Wu Chung Fai

Email: wcfkrsna@yahoo.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Very good information. A must visit site for younger generations for education and information. Thanks Comparison Shopping

---

Date: 10/31/99 05:57:03
Name: Srividhya Vaidyanathan
Email: srividhya_v@usa.net
Site:
Location:
Comments: Sushama... that was just wonderful. a real dedicated work indeed. My your tribe increase.I too am an ardent student of Hinduism.... Shall visit your site regularly

---

Date: 10/28/99 06:32:24
Name: Soulsflyt
Email: Soulsflyt@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Lovely site, I am learning a lot about Hinduism. I also added it to me favorites. Thanks

---

Date: 10/28/99 01:54:56
Name: Shilpa
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Wow. What a spectacular site! You have truly spent a lot of time and effort on this. You should be very proud of this site. It takes a truly amazing person to do something like this, based simply on sheer interest. Keep up the good work!

Date: 10/27/99 05:44:58

Name: M.K. Vasudevan
Email: mkvasu@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Seems like good place for reference on Hinduism. Could not spend much time now. Plan to come back and spend more time.

Date: 10/23/99 12:14:44
Name: Vinod Sharma
Email: Vksharma@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very good information. A must visit site for younger generations for education and information. Thanks

---

Date: 10/22/99 19:19:30
Name: Arun Gupta
Email: arunabha@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: A very commendable work ... I appreciate the effort undertaken for such detailed and precise analysis. We need to have more of this kind of meaningful approach for retaining Hinduism and not such rash actions like burning somebody or stripping some body. e need to speak out against the misinterpretation about our religion by the illeterate snob Western Media. Let this be the beginning of such protest ... Jai Hind ...

Date: 10/15/99 17:33:22
Name: mythri Pinnamaneni

Email: mythrineni@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: hi, this is my first time c\visiting your website. I attend texas a&m university and we have a hindu students council here that holds geeta sessions once every two weeks. I am trying to learn more about bhagvat geeta and was wondering if you could post an thing about the geeta itself and what each chapter describes or explains. also i was wondering if you could find anything in the geeta that talks about marriage and issues that deal with such a topic. please either e-mail me or post it on the web. also th re are many quotes in the book The Art Of Man Making that might be of some interest to you.

Date: 10/12/99 09:37:55
Name: Irene and Anouk
Email: flower882@hotmail.com%20or%20flowerpower443@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments:

Date: 10/05/99 23:28:32
Name: Oceanlyt
Email: Oceanlyt@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Thank you so much for this site, not only is it informative but also very nicely done.

Date: 10/03/99 15:03:13
Name: Mahendra N Parekh

Email: mtulsa@webtv.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Namaste, Great site, please keep up your good work. I am in Tulsa Oklahoma please contact me if you need any help in your good work, ready to help anytime. We have a organisation LORD KRISHNA SOCIETY and I am secratary. Need me for anything E-MAIL ME. Thanks and Namaste again.

Date: 10/01/99 10:49:10
Name: Ramakant Saxena
Email: rk@tpoly.physik.uni-freiburg.de
Site:
Location:
Comments: Excellent site ! I will visit it again.

Date: 09/27/99 23:35:48
Name: Amit Raikar
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Wow ! that is really the best webpage I have visited. The content of the pages is really out of the world. I really appreciate your commitment for our religion. You have must have really worked very hard for this. I really salute u for your work ! Garv se kaho hum hindu hain ! Jai hind ! I too have a small page on Hinduism, which just provides links to useful sites related to Hinduism. Your site will surely be on the top of the list ... - Amit.

Date: 09/19/99 18:43:10
Name: Vivekananda Centre London

Email: hindu@btinternet.com

Site:

Location:

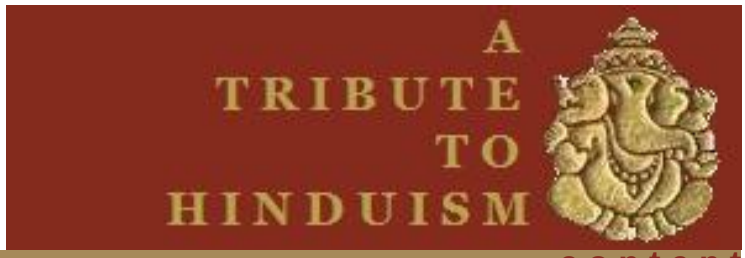
Comments: Dear Sir/Madam You may like to visit and link to our site devoted to Hinduism for Schools in England. It is perhaps the most popular site in this country for schools learning Hinduism it is at http://www.btinternet.com/~vivekananda/schools.htm You may join our mail list called Sri Ramakrishna list Vivekananda Centre London hindu@btinternet.com thanks

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Entries: 110-61

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

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Entries: 60-11

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 09/17/99 09:49:23
Name: Vishal Sant
Email: vishal_sant@indiatimes.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: I liked your web page about hinduism. As a Hindu I am proud of my religion, but at the same time I also beleive in tolerance towards other religions. It was interesting to know that Aryabhatta discovered the value of pie many years before the Europeans.

Date: 09/15/99 16:05:28
Name: Mohnish S.D. Mathura
Email: msdmathura@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Excellent, I Cannot say more, keep on bringing, evidence that makes not only the Hindus, but also mankind proud to have such a huge living civilization in this world. Hari Aum! _/|_ Mohnish Sharma The Netherlands, Europe

---

Date: 09/13/99 15:48:42
Name: Badri Veera
Email: rugveera@provide.net
Site:

Location:

Comments: Keep up the good work!! Glad to know somebody cares about India!

Date: 09/13/99 13:30:14

Name: Sriram B

Email: shriram_bala@hotmail.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: There certainly has been a grave injustice done to India, with regard to the interpretations of its history. While we have always been accustomed to accept the view of the west to be accurate one, we seldom questioned their motives. The Aryan Invasion Thoery is an example of systamatic devaluation of the importance of what is probably the greatest civilazation of all. This has had a shattering effect in terms of national pride and esteem.Sadly we Hindus still continue to hold on to t e vicious theory. It is needless to say that only Hindus can correct the wrongs and redeem the past glory.It is going to be a tough ask, considering how the communists and the pseudo-secularists would want to have their own way, in preventing anything coming to light that ould enhance India's pride and which would foster a sense of unity among the Hindus.

Date: 09/07/99 21:12:25

Name: Ramsaran Bissessar

Email: rambiss@tstt.net.tt

Site:

Location:

Comments: Congratulations on your website. Your information has been invaluable to me.

Date: 09/07/99 01:24:35

Name: Tenzhi the Ti Hsien

Email: tenzhithetihsien@hotmail.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: A very informative page, I am amazed at how much my basic ideas about god mirror many of the hinduistic thoughts.

Date: 09/03/99 13:15:57
Name: Rani
Email: Queen_of_the_World@msn.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: I have found a land of treasures! I shall return again and again to sift through its shining jewels. Thank you!

Date: 09/02/99 20:19:54
Name: Dharmendra Mishra
Email: dmishra@cmsenergy.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Saadar Pranaam! Magnificient Site on Hinduism.

Date: 09/02/99 16:47:21
Name: Ravi Patil
Email: rpatil@lsumc.edu
Site:
Location:
Comments: Awesome site! I'd appreciate if you include me in a list of people who are informed of updates.

Date: 09/02/99 03:44:08
Name: Anil Baheti
Email: abaheti@wipsys.soft.net
Site:

Location:

Comments: Too Good. Deserves a big round of aplouse. Need UR permission to provied a link for this page from mine which is under construction.

Date: 08/28/99 05:53:31

Name: Subhash

Email: jeal69@aol.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: I am truly greatful for you to provide us with such great facts and possibilities regarding our history and our culture as well as our relegion. I am one of the people whose family for unknown reason converted to christianity, yet many of my relatives are still Hindus. I am proud to be a HINDU.Proud to be Indian. But I am not as concerned as you are regarding the conversion in India. Our relegion and culture survived many of horrible acts by many barbarians such as the Mughul and British. I am confident th t it will go on as long as there is life on earth. Once again i was really happy to read about the AIT was false. Even as a young boy I had trouble beleivng that theory. I am not an activist. But I will defend Hinduism with my life, if i have to. Jai HIND

Date: 08/22/99 14:37:41

Name: Robert Pandeya

Email: rpandeya@hotmail.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Right on the spot! Great site. Keep up the good work. Thanks!

Date: 08/18/99 18:38:59

Name: Swami Sacchidananda

Email: chinlon@telinco.co.uk

Site:

Location:

Comments: I am glad to go through your website. Thank you very much for giving all the information. Your web is not only informative but also educative. Wish you all the best. Swami Sacchidananda

---

Date: 08/18/99 13:04:03
Name: petersackman
Email: petersackman
Site:
Location:
Comments: I'am not sure if my letter has reached your guestbook. Please let me now if it hasn't.

Date: 08/18/99 12:58:49
Name: petersackman
Email: petersackman@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: I'am a freelance television documentary director from the Netherlands. At the moment I'am doing the first research for a documentary I like to make on the changing perspectives off Indian people on Hinduism (and Sadhus) due to the changes that are taking lace in India. The 'background idea' of the documentary is that due to the 'civil revolution' the Indian middle class has grown tremendously. The big question is if this, together with the spreading of the media and education, leeds to a different perspec ive of Indian people on their religion ? And what is the impact/role of young, western tourist in this all ? To do more research I plan to go to Delhi, Rishikesh, Uttarkand, Pushkar, Dwarka, Bombay and Goa early authem this year. I hereby like to get in c ntact with people who can inform me about this subject, who can inform me about the changes that are taking place within the culture and brotherhood of Sadhus, who can inform me about the changes and the increase of (Indian and Western) religious tourism o places like Gangotri, Badrinath and Kedarnath, to the Kumbha Melas, who can inform me about the increase of western Sadhus and the impact of young western tourist on the Sadhu culture and community. Also I like to get in contact with Indian journalist, ociologist etc who are well informed on this subject and who are working and living in Delhi and/or Bombay. I like to thank all at forehand who can help me any further.

Date: 08/14/99 21:42:38
Name: gene D. Matlock
Email: genmatl@gte.net
Site:
Location:
Comments: the Jewish bible says that Abraham and Sarai went to the Middle East to escape a terrible flood that had taken place in their original homeland, at approximately the time that Dwarka sank under the sea. I think it significant that Sarai was the half sist r of Abraham and that Saraisvati was the half sister of Brahm. Sarai had a handmaiden named Hagar. Ghaggar was a rributary of the river Saraisvati. It would not surprise me if the tombs of Abraham and Sarai at Hebron, Israel are also those of Brahm and Saraisvati. There are even those who think that Jerusalem's Temple mount could be the resting place of Krishna. There is no doubt. The Yadavas founded ancient Israel. The real name of the Jews, Yahuda, seems to suggest this. See the article at www.viewpoint.com. It would be good if Israel and India could realize that they are related. Both are under the threat of the Moslems. An alliance would benefit both nations.

Date: 08/13/99 18:48:53
Name: Gadiyar Nagesh Rao
Email: Nagesh@tesco.net
Site:
Location:
Comments: This is clearly the best site I have ever visited. Congragulations. Me and my family have gained a lot of fascinating information. It has restored my pride in Hinduism. Keep it up, and let me know of any updates. Thank you once again.

Date: 08/12/99 16:47:58
Name: Deva K.
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Great site!! I was unable to proceed further in many of the link sites listed. Thank you and keep up the good work.

Date: 07/31/99 23:05:39
Name: Ellen Lamb
Email: jjyotsna2@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Fantastic!

Date: 07/28/99 19:19:57
Name: Uma
Email: uamk@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Thank you for teaching me more about my religion. I'm going to ensure that my family reads this site. Long live Sanatan Dharma!

Date: 07/26/99 01:51:13
Name: Sundeep Sharma
Email: s800045@altavista.net
Site:
Location:
Comments: Thanks for this wonderful site! SS http://www.geocities.com/capitolhill/parliament/6804

Date: 07/25/99 00:15:27
Name: Megha
Email: m_egha@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: Hi! This site is absolutely marvellous.....i can't believe how much time i've spent in it! Every section is so well written...and all the research done is very obvious...thank u for spending so much time. There's hardly any sites like this on the web... so i was really happy to see this. Keep up the good work! And thank u once again for telling me so much stuff about my culture that i didn't know. I have always been proud to be an Indian...and this page increased that feeling...i wish all people would be proud of India rather than speaking against it at every opportunity given.

Date: 07/23/99 00:01:18
Name: Dr. Chandrakant B. Moghe
Email: cbmoghe@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Excellent research. keep up the good work.

Date: 07/19/99 02:37:28
Name: Naresh Tolani
Email: satishinc@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Outstanding work and deserves supreme appreciation by people like me who were unaware of this truth.How I wish that all this was thought in our schools back home in India.

Date: 07/13/99 16:43:30
Name: Jihad Kamal SAlah
Email: cee_build_supreme@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Salaam, I was just witnessing your page on Sanskrit and I am very interested in the ancient Indian language. Is there anywhere where I can learn it? Jihad

---

Date: 07/13/99 04:52:49
Name: Gautham Reddy
Email: reddyraja@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very informative!! i enjoyed reading such a well written and educational page as this..and it is made so proffesionally. keep up the good work!!

Date: 07/11/99 14:19:29
Name: Ajit
Email: AL76ersfan@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: You have done a terrific job on this project! There is so much information and so many wonderful pictures on this site. Keep up the good work! This truly is a tribute to Hinduism. -Ajit

---

Date: 07/11/99 05:40:50
Name: N Sharma
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very good site. Please keep up the good work. With best wishes Sharma

---

Date: 06/24/99 00:04:14
Name: Ravi Khanna
Email: rkhanna@home.com
Site:
Location:

Comments: An excellent site for information on Hinduism and specifically about Dwarka. I cannot understand that only an investment of $450,000 is needed for the Dwarka museum and this is not available. Keep up the good work.

Date: 06/22/99 13:37:32

Name: Sitaram

Email: sitaram@aol.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: I am in Brooklyn NY USA, male, age 50, and have a great interest in Hinduism and Interfaith Dialogues. This site is of interest to Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs too (and open-minded Christians). I have created a 400 page website: www.geocities.com/athens/atlant s/3425. Please visit if you share such interests. Thank you!

Date: 06/15/99 21:32:42

Name: Biren Bhatt

Email: bbhatt@yahoo.com

Site:

Location:

Comments: Thank you so much for this marvelous site.Abhar. As a teenager of Bharatiya descent growing up here in the United States this site definitley helps me to keep in touch with my own culture and religion. I have recommended this site to my friends and family This is the best site I have seen. We must uphold our culture and make it popular here in the west and also get rid of the misconceptions about Hinduism. Keep up the good work. Long Line Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and India. Jai Hind

---

Date: 05/30/99 06:52:14

Name: John Manetta

Email: jmanveda@raindrop.gr

Site:

Location:

Comments: Simple,nice and informative

Date: 05/27/99 19:12:02
Name: Chaman Gupta
Email: gupta40@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Excellent work!

Date: 05/26/99 08:31:01
Name: Santosh MISKIN
Email: santosh.miskin@praxi.it
Site:
Location:
Comments: Namaskar. This is definitely the best site on pertaining to Hinduim / Hindutva. Its scores extremely high on aesthetics & content. I see a dearth of Hindu / Hindutva sites. I think we need to make our presence felt over the web massively. Keep up the good work !!! Pranam.

Date: 05/24/99 05:00:22
Name: S Subramanian
Email: manisubra@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very good job, keep it up! Jai Hind!

Date: 05/20/99 23:50:42
Name:
Email:
Site:
Location:

Comments: For some short interesting articles on Hindu philosophy, check out the mentioned site. Thanks.

Date: 05/17/99 01:57:33
Name: Kim Matthews
Email: LiteMotif@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Thank you for your lovely site. Through my practice of Transcendental Meditation, I find myself increasingly drawn to Hinduism. Your site is a great resource.

Date: 05/15/99 03:31:08
Name: Ed Viswanathan
Email: arvind-4@msn.com
Site: www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1879904063/u/002-9144287-3121453
Location:
Comments: Thanks for an excellent web page on HINDU CULTURE. I wish to see thousands of web pages like this so that we can ERADICATE IGNORANCE AMONG MASSES ABOUT HINDU CULTURE all over the world.

Date: 05/07/99 11:39:50
Name: Sudheendra S
Email: sudhee@iname.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Absolute Fantastic. Keep up the good work.

Date: 04/24/99 08:40:34
Name: Anurag Maheshwari

Email: anuragmaheshwari@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: A Definitive site on Hinduism.Few comments: The gullible Hindu dances at the chants of Ishwara Allah Tero Nam and Sarva Dharma Sambhava.He does not see the ultimate threat to his Survival.Mind You , kashmir was absolutely peaceful until 1989,when almost like lightening the bloody Muslims massacred 10000,made the rest 300000 to become refugees in th ir own land.Tomorrow the whole India will turn into Kashmir.

Date: 04/06/99 21:24:36
Name: Prashant Katiyar
Email: pkatiyar@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Hey! this is a great site which i'm going to tell everyone about. Our recent past was definitely painful when the Westerners $ Mughals invaded us. But our culture and heritage is so rich that our generations to come will be proud to call theselves Hindus. I only wish the world learns a lesson from our culture to live peacefully and respect all beings. Long live our culture!!!! and hats off for a great effort..

Date: 04/04/99 17:42:58
Name: Maicheal
Email: ducks21@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Awesome site! great source of information

Date: 04/02/99 10:31:29
Name: Sanjeev
Email:
Site:
Location:

Comments: Your effort in creating this site is commendable "Garv se kaho hum Hindu hai" Sanjeev

---

Date: 03/09/99 15:35:01
Name: ravi
Email: rasikarahasya@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: You wrote "Mahabharat" instead of "Mahabharata", and you wrote "Dwarka" instead of "Dvaraka". I know that modern Indians speaking Hindi & such modern languages do not pronounce the inherent short "a" vowel finally and medially. But to have proper respect for the Sanskrit language, when writing Sanskrit words in transliteration, please always incl de the inherent "a" vowel. This is not your colloquial Hindi. This is Sanskrit!

Date: 02/28/99 13:27:03
Name: s.sharma
Email: sudarshan@keran.freeserve.co.uk
Site:
Location:
Comments: excellent work. keep it up!!

Date: 02/28/99 05:51:18
Name: Ramesh Kalra
Email: madcow@juno.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very informative page. Thanks for providing all the different links.

Date: 02/19/99 21:58:55
Name: radhika

Email: r_tatineni@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: I was greatly moved by the facts about aryan invasion. I think more Indians should know this. This is our past, our culture our history and we have a right to know the truth. Our history books should be re-printed and our kids should know the facts, and not some made up stories by the British and Germans. I am proud than ever to be an Indian. Jai hind. Jai Bharat!!!

Date: 02/18/99 03:40:12
Name: n.t.narwani
Email: harihari@netvigator.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: i was born in bharat(india) after partittion and i am proud to be a hindu x incase i get birth again will request lord krishna to give birth in bharat(india) as a hindu goodluck to you all good work for hinduism

---

Date: 02/18/99 03:28:20
Name: milani
Email: milani71@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very informative!

Date: 02/14/99 23:36:12
Name: Ritika Sinha
Email: Sinhaamar@aol.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Great page! It really helps people who want to stay in touch with the Indian religion. - Ritika

Entries: 60-11

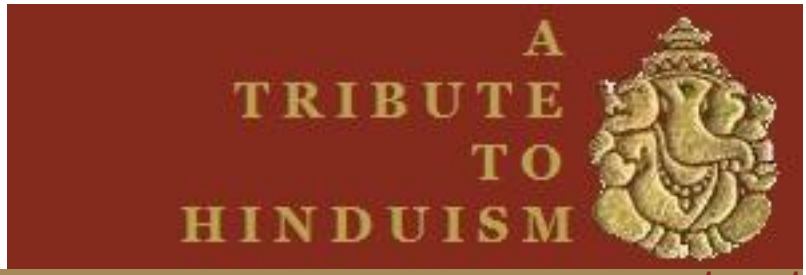
[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

home guestbook contents

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Guest Book

Updated - April 6, 2002



Entries: 10-1

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

Date: 02/11/99 22:44:03
Name: Ashok Kumar
Email: ashok@es.co.nz
Site:
Location:
Comments: Namaste. Great work! - spent hours reading. There is more to Hinduism then just the daily rituals that we are told to perform. Keep up the good work.

Date: 02/08/99 15:57:42
Name: Sheila S. Bel
Email: reddwolf@i-55.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: It is beautiful! The pictures are of course, stunning! Is that Arjuna in the chariot? I saved it for my wallpaper, I'd like to know. As soon as my mother visits, she will want to see this first! I've found a Bhajans web page for her, also. Namaste, sheila bel

---

Date: 02/06/99 11:05:20
Name: Sreejith C Nair

Email: sreejith@tm.net.my
Site:
Location:
Comments:

Date: 02/04/99 04:22:20
Name: nanjappa natarajan
Email: nanjappa_n@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: The best site I've ever come across. Keep it up.

Date: 01/27/99 14:57:58
Name: Arlene Hunter
Email: ahunter4@tampabay.rr.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: This is an excellent web site....very positive and inspiring. I will pass it on to my friends.

Date: 12/28/98 15:40:13
Name: A Reader
Email:
Site:
Location:
Comments: Let me compliment you on your tribute to Hinduism. It is a marvelous blend of intellect, art and religion. I hope you can expand this even further! 10/13/98

Date: 12/28/98 02:26:59
Name: Sagar Patel
Email: gujupride@hotmail.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Very good site! Well organized and resourceful! Your 1000th visitor

---

Date: 12/21/98 05:20:12
Name: sudheer birodkar
Email: sudheerbirodkar@yahoo.com
Site:
Location:
Comments: Saprem Namaskar, You have put up an excellent page. keep it up. Subham~astu Sudheer Birodkar

---

Date: 12/17/98 22:55:18
Name: Raghu Seshadri
Email: seshadri@cse.ucsc.edu
Site:
Location:
Comments: A grand site. Very well done. Congratulations. I suggest including links to other Sanskrit sites, Gita archive etc. A great achievement for which all Hindus should be grateful to you.

Date: 12/02/98 12:01:50
Name: J.Padmanabha
Email: j.padmanabha@mailbox.uq.edu.au

Site:

Location:

Comments: I enjoyed very much the incisive and deep observations of eminent personalities. However, I'm afraid that a large % of Indians have no idea what the basic philosophy of Sanathana Dharma is nor are they willing to explore it even for curiosity's sake. And et they would not hesitate to condemn it immediately when confronted with issues like the profusion of idols, many of them with animal links and issues like the 'caste system' etc. (may be a quiet reading of the 11th Chapter, or the stanza in the 4th open ng with 'Chathurvarnyam maya shrushtam gunakarma vibhagashaha' may remove the cobwebs of ignorance and centuries of oppertunistic misquoting). Questioning the statements or concepts of scriptures is welcomed and even encouraged by Krishna in the 4th chapt r; but first at least give it a careful read even if it is for critisizing it later! Keep up the good work and please provide periodic updates as well.

Entries: 10-1

[1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Post Entry]

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Name:

E-Mail:

Location:

Comment:

Post

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Show in alphabetical order



301. **Mary Baker Eddy** (1821-1910) founder of the **Christian Science Movement**. She published **Science and Health With a Key to the Scriptures** in 1875. She had imbibed some of the teachings of the **New England Transcendentalists** (**Ralph Waldo Emerson**, **Amos Bronson Alcott** and **Henry D. Thoreau**) who made their influence widely felt through books, magazines and newspaper articles.

"Christian Science founded in the little town of Lyn, MA in 1815 by Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy. Yet when we read in texts of **Science and Health** up to the 33rd edition there are quotations from the sacred Hindu text **The Bhagavad Gita**, **as well as allusions by Mrs. Eddy to Hindu philosophy. These were omitted in later editions, causing modern-day Christian Scientists to be unaware that their founder gleaned from Hindu philosophy."**

"There was a similarity between **Advaita Vedanta Hinduism** and Mrs. Eddy's view of God and the material world. **She makes reference to Bhagavad Gita in page 259 of the 33rd edition.** She says:

"The ancient Hindu philosophers understood something of this principle, when they said in their **Celestial Song**, according to an old prose translation:

"The wise neither grieve for the dead nor for the living. I myself never was not, nor thou nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be."



Both these quotations from the Bhagavad Gita, or Song Celestial, which contains the essence of the Vedas or the Hindu Bible, are to be found in Mrs. Eddy's 7th chapter on "Imposition and Demonstration." This whole chapter has been omitted from later editions of Science and Health. That is why many Christian scientists are not aware that their great leader Mrs. Eddy was familiar with Hindu thought, and in her bigness did not hesitate to acknowledge it in point..."

"It seems clear also that Christian Science has certain historical connections with Hinduism through Mrs. Eddy's use of the Gita, through the New England Transcendentalism, and through the very indirect influence of a certain Hindu view of **Phineas Parker Quimby** (1802- 1866)."

Yet when we read this Christian Science Bible we find that it out-Sankara Sankara with its doctrine of cosmic illusion.

Mrs. Eddy must have imbibed some of the teachings of the New England Transcendentalists who made their influence widely felt through books, magazines and newspaper articles. Bronson Alcott, who was one of them attended her services. Now most of the Transcendentalists, like Emerson, Alcott and Thoreau, were profoundly influenced by Hinduism, with its spiritual breath and tolerance and unity.

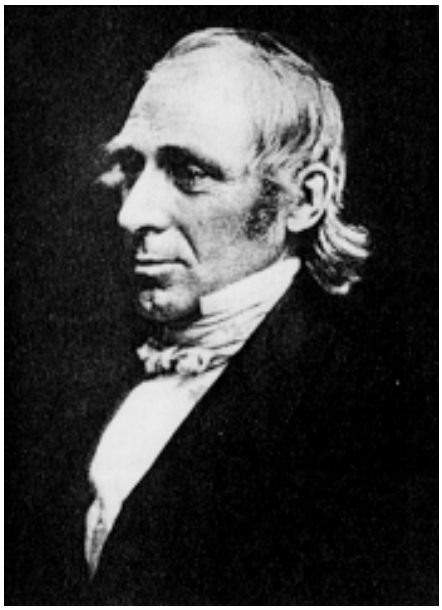
(source: **Hinduism Invades America - By Wendell Thomas** p. 230 - 233 published by The Beacon Press Inc.

New York City 1930). For more on Wendell Thomas refer to chapter **GlimpsesVI**).

302. **Emile Burnof** (1821-1907) author of **La science des religions** and **Dictionnaire classique sanscrit-français** and **Essai sur le Veda, ou Introduction a la connaisance de l'Inde** says:

The Bhagavad Gita was "probably the most beautiful book which has ever come from the hand of man."

(source: **The Fragrance of India - By Louis Revel** p. 163).



303. **Amos Bronson Alcott** (1799-1888) writer, philosopher, schoolteacher, visionary. Born in 1799 to an illiterate flax farmer in Wolcott, Connecticut, Amos Bronson Alcott was singular among the **Transcendentalists** in his unassailable optimism and the extent of his self-education. He is also the author of **Orphic Sayings**, **Tablets**, and **Concord Days**. Louisa May Alcott, portrayed him as the grandfather in her novel **Little Women**. His second daughter, **Louisa Alcott**, became a world-famous writer, and his youngest daughter, May, was a critically acclaimed artist. When **Ralph Waldo Emerson** met Amos Bronson Alcott in Boston in the late 1830's, he was so impressed with his intellect and innovative ideas that he convinced him to move to Concord and join his circle of friends.

Early in his life he was interested in the Quaker concept of "inner light" which is closer to the Hindu concept of the in-dwelling spirit in every man, the Atman or the Brahman. John T, Reid remarks: "As a young man....**he was to identify the 'inner light' with Brahma."**

The Bhagavad Gita impressed Alcott. He read it in 1846, during which he also read the writings of Carlyle, Coleridge, Goethe, Swedenborg and Behmen who were all idealists and mystics. On May 3, 1846, he wrote in his journal:

"In the evening I had an hour of quiet reading of the Oriental wisdom in the chapters of the **Bhagavad Gita**, on 'Works' and 'Performing of Works.'

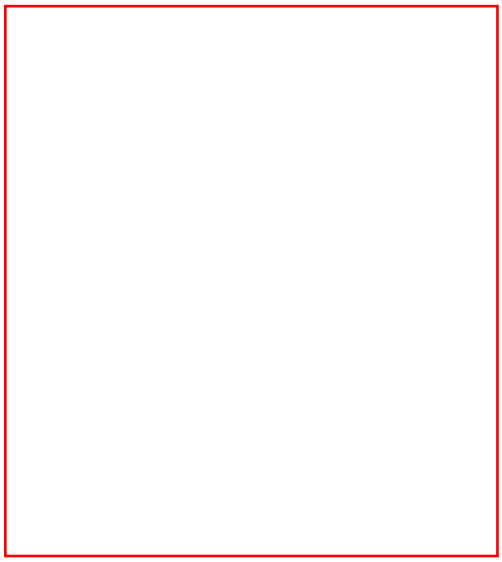
On May 10, 17, and 19 the same year, he wrote in his journal:

"I read more of the Bhagavad Gita and felt how surpassingly fine were the sentiments. These, or selections from this book should be included in a Bible for Mankind. I think them superior to any of the other Oriental scriptures, the best of all reading for wise men."

"Best of books - containing a wisdom blander and far more sane than that of the Hebrews, whether in the mind of Moses or of Him of Nazareth. Were I a preacher, I would venture sometimes to take from its texts the motto and moral of my discourse. It would be healthful and invigorating to breathe some of this mountain air into the lungs of Christendom."

Alcott, was a **strict vegetarian**. One of his interests in the Bhagavad Gita was Gita's emphasis on Satwik food and vegetarianism. This strict vegetarianism led Alcott to establish a Utopian community called Fruitlands. In '**Orphic Sayings**' Alcott talks about immortality and divinity of the soul - as in the Gita.

(source: **Hindu Scriptures and American Transcendentalists - By Umesh Patri** p. 143).



304. **Amaury de Riencourt** (1918 -) was born in Orleans, France. He received his B.A. from the Sorbonne and his M.A. from the University of Algiers. He is author of several books including **The American empire** and **The Soul of India**, he wrote:

"The boundless riches of the Hindu faith, its universal appeal, its tolerance, the profundity of Hindu philosophy and its enduring roots among the Indian people all this made India a poor soil for the sowing…"

"there can be no doubt that the **Upanishads** are based on the **most profound study and understanding of human nature ever achieved,** one with which we twentieth century Westerners, in spite of our vast present day knowledge, have not yet fully caught up."

"**The Vedas were the brilliant product of intuitive insight**, not of the logical intellect. The essence of the Upanisadic teaching, to the extent that it can be coherently summarized, lies in the thesis that the Absolute is not separate from man and nature but immanent in both. The transcendent outlook of the Vedas (an outward projection of Vedic man's unconscious) becomes an insight into the immanent nature of the Absolute: "The infinite is not beyond the finite but in the finite. Man's goal is not so much union with the Divine (as in Atman) and the Absolute or Divine (Brahman), which is the basic principle of monism. Already, we can detect in Indian Culture an emphasis on the recovery of a latent Being, rather than the striving to Become – Becoming being unreal since the process of time has no reality whatsoever. "

This spiritual and religious ethos of India is less vulnerable to scientific criticism than the Western creeds (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) because it is not connected with history - because spiritual symbolism of history has no meaning for it. Its emphasis on psychology rather than theology, on the inner man rather than on man's relations with the external universe, shields it from the corrosive impact of our modern world.

(source: **The Soul of India – by Amaury de Riencourt** p 194 and 38 - 39 and 126 - 136 and 399). **India Rediscovered - By Dr. Giriraj Shah** p. 29 Abhinav Publications New Delhi 1975).

"The East incorporates all that derived basically, from Indian culture: Hinduism, Buddhism and their extensions in the Southeast Asia. **The complementary unity-in-diversity of that vast area springs from the fact that while Indian philosophy and wisdom is the most profound,** its most perfect means of expression are to be found in Southeast Asia (Angkor, Borobudur).

"It does matter a great deal to the West whether Christ rose bodily from the dead, multiplied bread of loaves or even existed at all; it does not matter one whit to the East whether Rama, Shiva or Buddha ever existed since their importance is neither factual or historical but purely symbolic...because in the East there is **no conflict between fact and faith**, since Eastern faith (sraddha) aims basically at subjective cognition rather than the objective "believing to be true" of the Westerner. **The West has always attempted to impose dogmatically its various viewpoints because, imbued with Biblical, Catholic, Koranic sense of God-given historical mission and the conviction of having the monopoly of literal religious truth,** it felt that it was objectively in the right - regardless of the increasing conflict, within its own cultures, between the spiritual messages (often mutually contradictory) of its "revealed" religions and scientific knowledge."



Thus, the **"Eye of Shiva" that is the eye of pure consciousness in Hinduism."** **"Many Greeks fell under the spell of the Hindu or Buddhist philosophers and life-styles**. We know, for instance, that Pyrrho of Ellis, who founded the philosophic school of "pure scepticism" (Pyrrhonism) in Greece around 330 B.C. joined Alexander's expedition to India and was strongly influenced by the various saddhus he encountered and by that serene indifference to external circumstances for which **Greek philosophers yearned but almost never achieved."**

(source: **The Eye of Shiva: Eastern Mysticism and Science - By Amaury de Riencourt** p. 54-68 and 80-82).

"Out of this immense creation emerged one of the most famous and moving poems, the Bhagavad Gita, whose soaring beauty makes it one of the monuments of world literature."

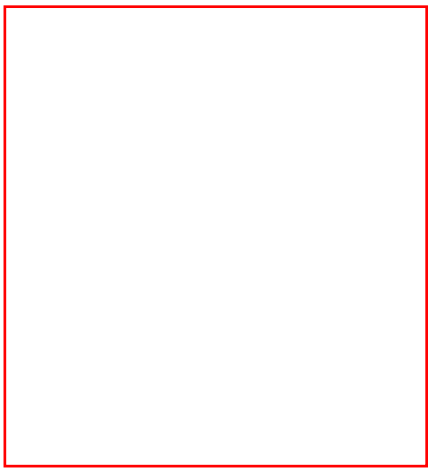
"The **Bhagavad Gita** is both supremely realistic and extremely idealistic, certainly the most acute, penetrating depiction of human nature and true morality, however remote it may seem from our own: "give thought to nothing but the act, never to its fruits, and let not thyself be seduced by inaction. "The Bhagavad Gita emphasizes all the basic contents of the Indian world-outlook with remarkable vividness. **Lord Krisna**, for example, symbolizes the principle of Divine Incarnation (avatar), the supreme spirit become flesh, pouring into the world during the evil phases of the cosmic cycle in order to check evil - but in a spirit of complete detachment and indifference. The supreme thought of the Bhagavad Gita is concerned with **tolerance**: "Whatsoever devotee seeks to worship whatsoever divine form (rupa) with fervent faith, I, verily, make that faith of his unwavering."

"**Mysticism has its place in all great religions, but never has it had such a field day as in India, where it never came into conflict with frozen dogmas or the prophetic impulse."**

"**Yoga – is Indian Civilization's finest product, the ultimate perfection reached by India's best men.** And because nothing is so difficult as to rationalize and discipline mysticism, Indian Civilization deserves full credit for having devised the best system for reaching the goal. Yoga is essentially a neutral, well-tried technique, compatible with any philosophy or religion, with Buddhism as with all forms of Vedantism. Yoga is a civilization-technique, an expansion and systematized, scientific development of the early tapas of the Arthava Veda. Yoga doctrine is at one with Vedanta, which claims that the world is not different form (ananya) and non-independent of (avyatirika) Brahman. **Becoming is the great cosmic illusion – that is the supreme expression of the Indian mind.**

The wealth of psychological insight revealed in the Upanishads and their various commentaries cannot be adequately summarized. But there can be no doubt that they are based on the most profound study and understanding of human nature ever achieved, one with which we twentieth-century Westerners, in spite of our vast present day knowledge, have not yet fully caught up.

(source: **The Soul of India - By Amaury de Riencourt** p. 39 and 50 - 51and 123-129). For more by Amaury de Riencourt refer to chapter on **GlimpsesX**).



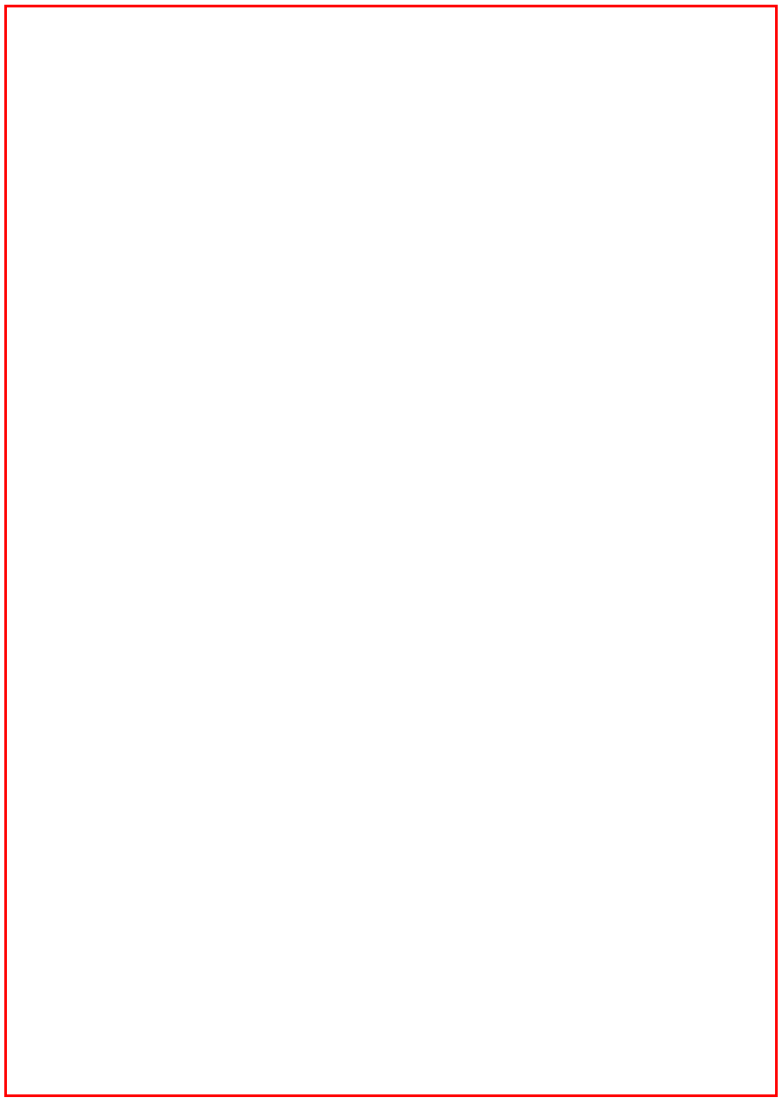
305. **Dick Teresi** (?) author and coauthor of several books about science and technology, including **The God Particle**. He is cofounder of **Omni** magazine and has written for Discover, The New York Times Magazine, and The Atlantic Monthly.

"The big bang is the biggest-budget universe ever, with mind-boggling numbers to dazzle us – a technique pioneered by fifth-century A.D. **Indian cosmologists, the first to estimate the age of the earth at more than 4 billion years.**

The cycle of creation and destruction continues forever, manifested in the **Hindu deity Shiva, Lord of the Dance,** who holds the dream that sounds the universe's creation in his right hand and the flame that, billions of years later, will destroy the universe in his left. Meanwhile Brahma is but one of untold numbers of other gods dreaming their own universes.

The 8.64 billion years that mark a full day-and-night cycle in Brahma's life is about half the modern estimate for the age of the universe. The ancient Hindus believed that each Brahma day and each Brahma night lasted a kalpa, 4.32 billion years, with 72,000 kalpas equaling a Brahma century, 311,040 billion years in all. That the Hindus could conceive of the universe in terms of billions.

The similarities between Indian and modern cosmology do not seem accidental. Perhaps ideas of creation from nothing, or alternating cycles of creation and destruction are hardwired in the human psyche. Certainly **Shiva's percussive drumbeat** suggests the sudden energetic impulse that could have propelled the big bang. And if, as some theorists have proposed, the big bang is merely the prelude to the big crunch and the universe is caught in an infinite cycle of expansion and contraction, then ancient Indian cosmology is clearly cutting edge compared to the one-directional vision of the big bang. **The infinite number of Hindu universes is currently called the many world hypothesis,** which is no less undocumentable nor unthinkable.



Shiva: Lord of the Dance

The Indians came closest to modern ideas of atomism, quantum physics, and other current theories. India developed very early, enduring atomist theories of matter. Possibly Greek atomistic thought was influenced by India, via the Persian civilization. **The Rig-Veda, is the first Indian literature to set down ideas resembling universal natural laws. Cosmic law is connected with cosmic light, with gods, and, later, specifically with Brahman."** It was the Vedic Aryans... who gave the world some of the earliest philosophical texts on the makeup of matter and the theoretical underpinnings for the chemical makeup of minerals. Sanskrit Vedas from thousands of years before Christ implied that matter could not be created, and that the universe had created itself. Reflecting this, in his **Vaiseshika** philosophy, **Kanada** (600 B. C) claimed that elements could not be destroyed. Kanada's life is somewhat a mysterious, but his name is said to mean "one who eats particle or grain" likely referring to his theory that basic particles mix together as the building blocks for all matter. Two, three, four, or more of these elements would combine, just as we conceive of atoms doing. The Greeks would not stumble on this concept for another century."

"In India, we see the beginning of theoretical speculation of the size and nature of the earth. Some one thousand years before Aristotle, the **Vedic Aryans** asserted that the earth was round and circled the sun. A translation of the **Rig Veda** goes: " In the prescribed daily prayers to the Sun we find..the Sun is at the center of the solar system. ..The student ask, "What is the nature of the entity that holds the Earth? The teacher answers, "**Rishi Vatsa holds the view that the Earth is held in space by the Sun."**

"Two thousand years **before Pythagoras**, **philosophers** in northern India had understood that gravitation held the solar system together, and that therefore the sun, the most massive object, had to be at its center." "Twenty-four centuries before Isaac Newton, the Hindu **Rig-Veda** asserted that gravitation held the universe together. The

Sanskrit speaking Aryans subscribed to the idea of a spherical earth in an era when the Greeks believed in a flat one. The Indians of the fifth century A.D. calculated the age of the earth as 4.3 billion years; scientists in 19th century England were convinced it was 100 million years."

(source: **Lost Discoveries: The Ancient Roots of Modern Science - By Dick Teresi** p. 1 - 8 and 159 and 174 -239). For more on Dick Teresi refer to chapters **Hindu_Culture**, **GlimpsesVI** and **GlimpsesVII**).



306. **Sir Yehudi Menuhin** (1915 – 1999) Born to Russian - Jewish parents who migrated to America. One of the greatest violinists of the 20th century revered an Indian Yogi as his teacher. He was famous for his affiliation with renowned Hatha yoga teacher **B K S Iyengar** and legendary sitarist **Ravi Shankar**. The more he learned about India and Yoga, the more he loved it. He was among the first in the West to espouse yoga and the principles of organic food.

He said: **"India is the primal source, the mother country."**

He acknowledged India, Yoga, Indian music and his teacher Iyengar in three books he authored - **Life Class**, **Unfinished Journey** and **Violin: Six lessons with Yehudi Menuhin**.

Yoga touched every dimension of Yehudi Menuhin's life.

He wrote about Yoga:

"Yoga made its contribution to my quest to understand consciously the mechanics of violin playing." "Yoga taught me lessons it would have taken me years to learn by other means. **Yoga was my compass."** He was a genius at peace - a peace, he said, that came from yoga.

A yoga lesson with his guru, B. K. S. Iyengar

In his book Six Lessons, he devoted an entire chapter to specific **yogasanas** he had learned. These practices, he asserted, "should form an important part of the practice routine of any aspiring or performing violinist."

“We in the Western world have grown to understand matter as imprisoned light, and light as liberated matter, yet this has had no influence on our spiritual thought. In practical terms it only led to the creation of the atom bomb. When I was a boy no one seemed to ask where the energies come from. Land, oil, coal, air seemed inexhaustible. Now we are realizing how our very life depends upon restoring not only our balance with nature, but also the balance within ourselves. We are depleting our reserves of spirit, health, courage and faith at an alarming rate. **The quiet practice of yoga is, in its humble yet effective way, an antidote.”**

(source: **Hinduism Today** - July/August/September 2003 p. 40-41).

"The practice of yoga induces a primary sense of measure and proportion. Reduced to our own body, our first instrument, we learn to play it, drawing from it maximum resonance and harmony."

(source: **Yoga and the Bhagavad Gita - By Tom McArthur** p. 12-14).

"Yoga" means "union." Its goal is union with the infinite, a goal which can be reached by any number of routes; but just as there is one ending, so there is one beginning, the asanas of Hatha Yoga, which are the precondition of every advance. It would be possible to make yoga a life's occupation, giving up more and more of one's time to its refinement. For me yoga is primarily a yardstick to inner peace. **In my life yoga is an aid to well-being, permitting me to do more and to do better."**

"That India should offer me at once a homeland and a new-found land with lasting power to astonish seemed only right, for it is precisely the reconciling of contradictions within an all-accepting unity that is the country's genius and its abiding appeal to me. **India, I feel, has softened my Talmudical adjudications between right and wrong, upheld innocent acceptance of the lovely things of life, given me much that was new yet welcome, understandable, waiting to experienced."**

He wrote about **Indian music**:

"Despite predisposition in India's favor, I have to acknowledge that Indian music took me by surprise. I knew neither its nature nor its richness, but here, if anywhere, **I found vindication of my conviction that India was the original source."**

"Its purpose is to unite one's soul and discipline one's body, to make one sensitive to the infinite within one, to unite one's breath of space, one's vibrations with the vibrations of the cosmos."

(source: **Unfinished Journey - By Yehudi Menuhin** p. 250 - 268). For more on Yehudi Menuhin, refer to chapters **Hindu Music** and **Yoga and Hindu Philosophy**).

307. **Sir William Wilson Hunter** (1840-1900) He was educated at Glasgow University (B.A. s86o), Paris and Bonn, acquiring a knowledge of Sanscrit, and passing first in the final examination for the Indian Civil Service in 1862. Author of **A Brief History of the Indian Peoples** and editor of **Imperial Gazetteer of India**.

He says **"The Astronomy of the Hindus has formed the subject of excessive admiration."**

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 332 - 348).

"The various theories of creation, arrangement and development were each elaborated, and the views of the **modern physiologists at the present day are a return with new light to the evolution theory of Kapila, whose Sankhya system is the oldest of the Darsanas."**

(source: unknown).

"The Hindus attained a very high proficiency in arithmetic and algebra independently of any foreign influence." The romance of the composition of **Lilavati** - the standard Hindu text book on Arithmetic by Bhaskaracharya - is very interesting and charming. It deals not only with the basic elements of the science of arithmetic but also with questions of interest, of barter, of permutations and combinations, and of mensuration. Bhaskaracharya knew the law of gravitation. The **Surya Siddhanta** is based on a system of trigonometry. Professor Wallace says: "In fact it is founded on a geometrical theorem, which was not known to the geometricians of Europe before the time of Vieta, about two hundred years ago. And it employs the sine of arcs, a thing unknown to the Greeks." The 47th proposition of Book I of Euclid, which is ascribed to **Pythagoras was known long ago to the Hindus and must have been learnt from them by Pythagoras."**

(source: **Indian Culture and the Modern Age - By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri** Annamalai University. 1956 p. 67).

He observed:

"The grammar of **Panini** stands supreme among the grammars of the world, alike for its precision of statement, and for its thorough analysis of the roots of the language and of the formative principles of words. By employing an algebraic terminology it attains a sharp succinctness unrivalled in brevity, but at times enigmatical. **It arranges, in logical harmony, the whole phenomena which the Sanskrit language presents, and stands forth as one of the most splendid achievements of human invention and industry.** So elaborate is the structure, that doubts have arisen whether its complex rules of formation and phonetic change, its polysyllabic derivatives, its ten

conjugations with their multiform aorists and long array of tenses, could ever have been the spoken language of a people."

(source: **The Indian Empire - By Sir William Wilson Hunter** p. 142).

308. **Tom McArthur** (?) author of **Yoga and the Bhagavad Gita** has observed:

"If all the forms of Christianity from voodoo in Haiti to Christian Science in Boston were penned up – and had for centuries been penned up – in one peninsula, however large, then the results would be much the same as the Hinduism we see today. Vishnu and Shiva are no more at odds than Calvin and the Papacy; the Hare Krishna movement and the Ramakrishna Mission are no further apart than the Pentecostalists and the Jesuits."

"Hinduism is India's response to what the German philosopher of religion Rudolf Otto has called 'the numinous', **that mystery all around us that fascinates and inspires awe.** The universe into which we are born –thrust, thrown, whatever, weak and dependent as kittens – is only ever partly explicable, often hostile, and always awesome, whether we want to feel the awe or not.

Hinduism demonstrates the interplay of seven factors over at least 3,000 years. Natural disasters are a constant in the collective Indian experience, part of the Wheel of Rebirth. Mountains, rivers, cities, and shrines have all been turned into focuses of supernatural powers; they are the bindus or 'points' where the gods meet us or this world touches the Other.

Hinduism combines in its **gigantic tapestry** the threads of both fantasy and logic, where some centuries ago the Western world severed the two fairly thoroughly. In the West, rationality and fantasy live uneasily together in divided minds; in India at large, the division was never even attempted, at least not until the coming of European education."

There are no Egyptian pharaohs now, but when Cleopatra lived there were **yogis,** and there are yogis still. The Greek philosophers and the Roman legions are no more, the Arab-Muslim expansion has come and gone, and the European maritime empires on which the sun wasn't supposed to set have all been dismantled. Some kind of yoga was there when all that was happening, and many kinds of yoga are here now - some even being considered for use abroad starships. That is continuity and it is worth a little thought. **Yoga is embedded in the literature of the Hindus as well as in their age old practices, and that literature is in turn one of the richest seams of recorded language anywhere on the planet. The sheer volume of stories, treatises, and commentaries challenges the imagination. "**

(source: **Yoga and the Bhagavad Gita - By Tom McArthur** p. 1 - 14). For more on Tom McArthur refer to chapter **Yoga and Hindu Philosophy**).



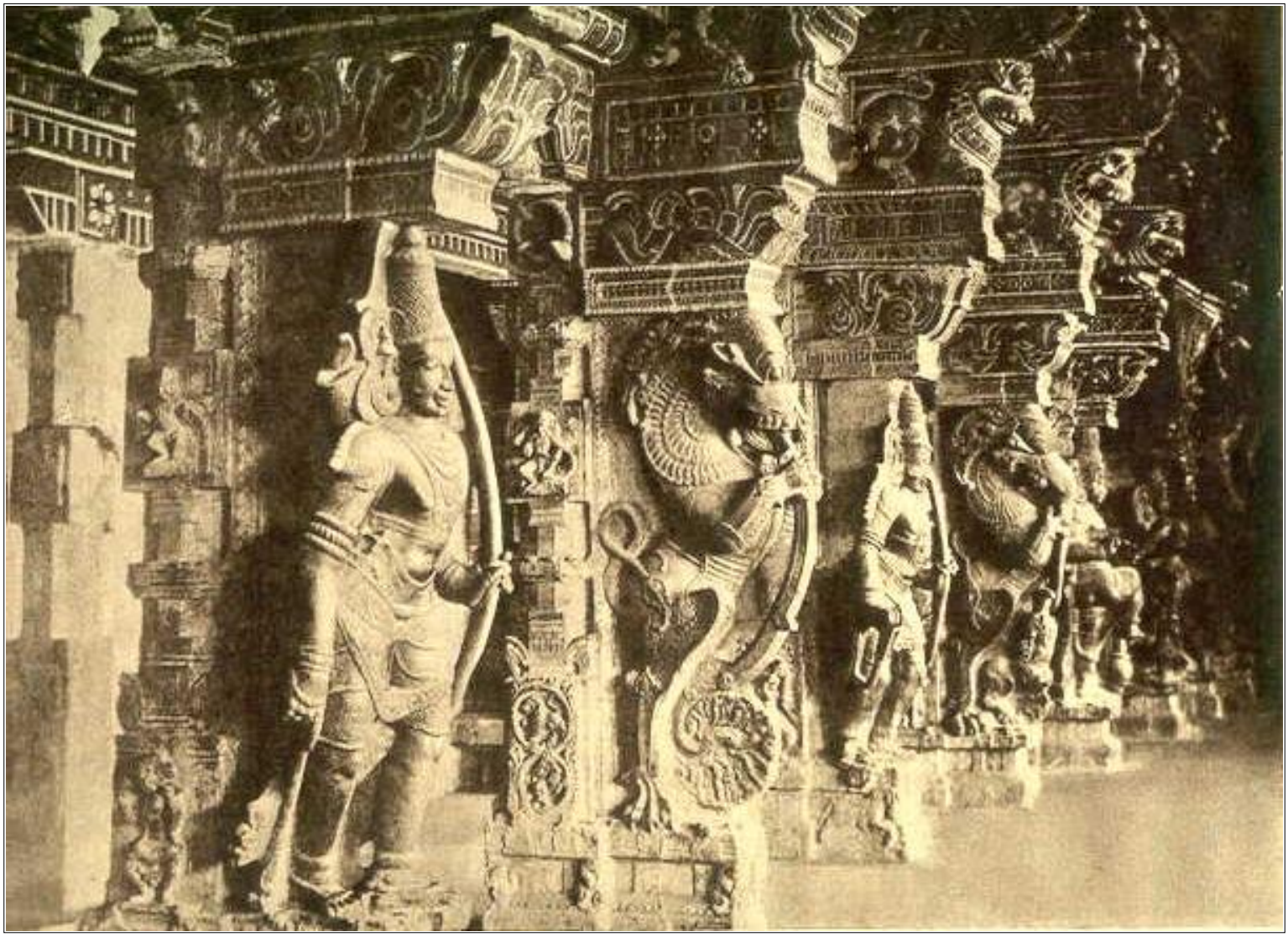
309. **Frithjof Schuon** (1907-1998) was born in 1907 in Basle, Switzerland, of German parents. He was a philosopher, poet and artist author of **Language of the Self. Many of his ideas are taken from Vedanta**.

Schuon often expressed a deep appreciation for Advaita-Vedanta and characterized his perspective as that of the Sanatana Dharma, the "eternal religion."

Schuon considers **yoga as a spiritual exercise** which results "not from a human willing, but from the nature of things," thus applying to the substance of the soul principles that are quasi-geometrical in their objectivity.

"The **Vedanta** appears among explicit doctrines as one of the most direct formulations possible of that which makes the very essence of our spiritual reality. (...) The *Vedanta* of Shankara, which is here more particularly being considered, is divine and immemorial in its origin and by no means the creation of Shankara, who was only its great and providential enunciator. (...) According to the **Vedanta** the contemplative must become absolutely 'Himself'; according to other perspectives, such as that of the Semitic religions, man must become absolutely 'Other' than himself --or than the 'I'-- and from the point of view of pure truth this is exactly the same thing."

(source: **Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts - By Frithjof Schuon** chapter 2 and **Dharma, India and World Order - By Chaturvedi Badrinath** p. 261).



The great temple in South India

"Because of its vast complexity, Hinduism is inherently perplexing and its philosophies inherently paradoxical; indeed, this is part of their strength. They won't tamely co-operate and fit; they tease the mind and force it to go further. "

(source: **Yoga and the Bhagavad Gita - By Tom McArthur** p. 38-42).



310. **Madame Helena Petrova Blavatsky** (1831- 1891) HPB, as she was known, was a cultured and widely traveled woman. Brilliant, fiery and witty; able to attract the attention of the highest minds, she was in the frequent company of scientists, philosophers and scholars in many fields. She wrote many books-Isis Unveiled, The Voice of Silence and Key to Theosophy. But her magnum opus, **The Secret Doctrine**, published in 1885, is her most profound book-a bible of Theosophy.

She traveled to India and entered Tibet via Kashmir and Ladakh. In the 19th century, imperialism had reached its height. Western nations were so convinced of the superiority of the white races that they had no compunction about exploiting their colonies. In this environment, Mme. Blavatsky taught the first principle of occultism-the brotherhood of all humanity, the unity of all races.

With its strong resemblances to Eastern mysticism and spirituality, Theosophy has an intertwining relationship with Hinduism-especially the Upanishads and Advaita Vedanta-and also Buddhism. The establishment of the Theosophical Society in 1875 in New York proved to be a precursor and harbinger of Hinduism in the West.

Mahatma Gandhi reports further that the two Theosophists who introduced him to the **Bhagavad Gita** also took him on one occasion to the Blavatsky Lodge and introduced him to Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant.

Theosophy was Woven From and Into the Fabric of Sanatana Dharma

The small 19th century Theosophical movement impacted Hinduism in diverse ways, from India's independence from the British to the widespread acceptance of Hindu thinking in the West. The Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita translations of Swami Prabhavananda with Theosophist Christopher Isherwood were singularly successful in clearly conveying Hindu thought to the West. Leadbeater's books on occult sciences, such as chakras and auras, reinforced Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms. Aldous Huxley's book, Doors of Perception, promoted mystical experience and also psychedelic drugs, leading directly to the explosion of interest in the East in the 60s. **The Secret Doctrine is saturated with Hinduism and Sanskrit terminology, and the bulk of this was copied from Wilson's Vishnu Purana**

(source: **Theosophy - By Archana Dongre - Hinduismtoday.com -** June 1995).

311. **Karl Jaspers** (1883-1969) the famous Austrian existentialist philosopher

Regarding Shankara's commentary, once told Professor K. Satchidananda Murthy that, **'there is no metaphysics superior to that of Shankara.'**

(source: http://www.vedanta-newyork.org/articles/vedanta_influence_2.htm).

312. **Paul Thieme** (1905 -) German Indologist University of Tuebingen has observed:

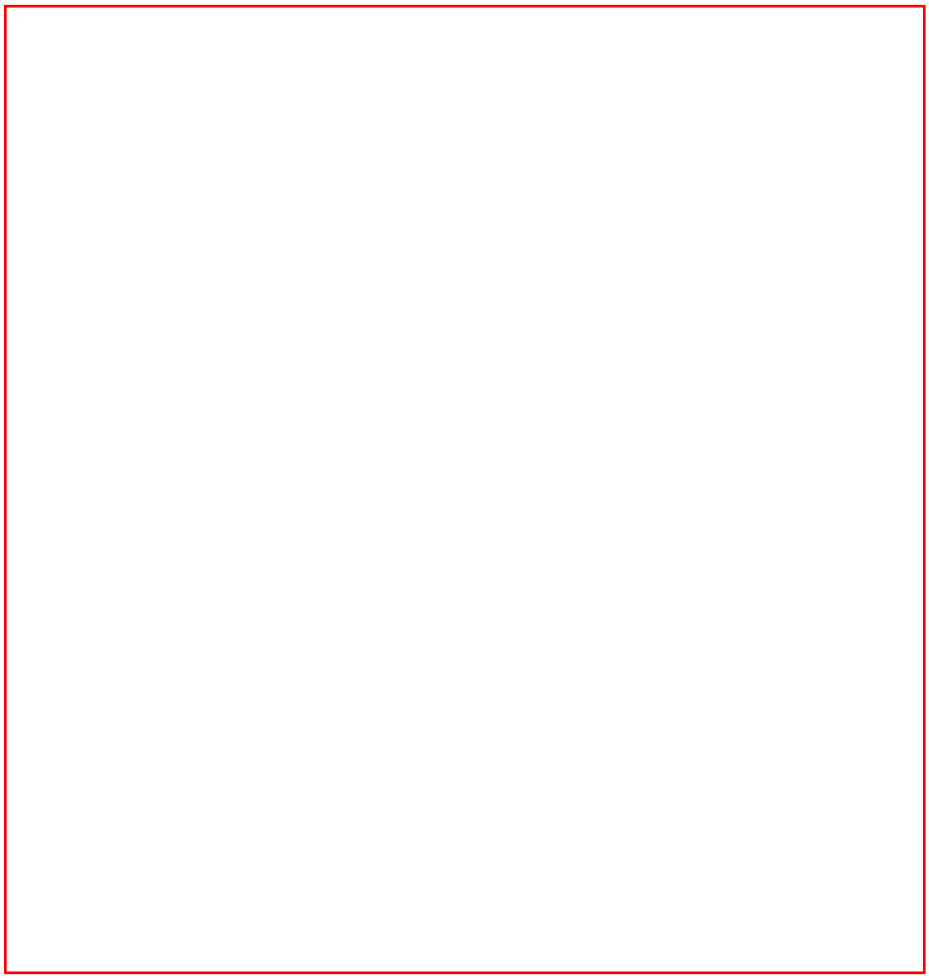
"**Vedas are noble documents** not only of value and pride to India, but to the entire humanity because in them we see man attempting to lift himself above the earthly writing of epics."

(source: **India Rediscovered - By Giriraj Shah** p. 39).

313. **Kewal Motwani** (1899 -) author of several books including **Manu Dharma S'satra: A sociological and historical study**

"Environmental, biological, ethnological, psychological and spiritual forces have gone into the making of an Indian culture of amazing virility and continuity."

"One idea runs through all the modes of thought and segments of social reality, and that is the Vision of the One, while India's history is a continuous attempt to make this Vision a living reality in the life of every man, woman and child. This enduring quest and its realization have imparted to Indian culture a continuity, universality, humanity, and spirituality that have placed it beyond the challenge of time. This Vision emphasized **integration, synthesis, dharma, gathering up of the many into the one, in every phase of life of the individual, the group and the nation."**



"Science was woven into philosophical thought - The study and cultivation of exact sciences in India was a part of search for truth and reality. From Vedic times onwards, investigations into the realm of the spiritual included those of the physical. The whole of the philosophical literature is replete with and based on some of the tenets of science as we understand it today. **It has been an unmitigated calamity for India that it were the philologists, both eastern and western, who became the first interpreters to her ancient Sanskrit literature. India's Sanskrit literature came to be interpreted in an apologetic tone and from the standpoint of the western achievements. Some of the sublimities of the Hindu thought, far ahead of the prevailing times, were considered as oddities belonging to primitive past. The great Orientalists were philologists, not philosophers."**

"India was called the Bharat Varsha, the "country that embraces all in one bond," and she was selected to become the embodiment of that immutable, eternal, law of the universe, Santana Dharma - dharma is that which "holds together" - which makes the universes run in their orbits. It was this principle of dharma, synthesis, balance, harmonious relationship between various forces and factors, between various individuals and groups, that came to be the corner-stone of her civilization." "India has been known as the **moksha-bhumi** and karma-bhoomi, the Land of Liberty, spiritual and temporal, gained through service of fellowmen. India was not thought of as a bhoga-bhumi, a pleasure-resort for a single life-time allowed to the mortals. India is the only country in the world where civilization has revolved round this fundamental spiritual nucleus, where the greatest concentration of intellect has centered round the basic human problem of existence..."

"From the ancient past to the present day, this spiritual quest of the One has received India's continued homage. There have been alternating periods of quiet and intense philosophical activity, but the search has continued. The lights have flickered, but never faded, so that even today, attempts are made to penetrate the esoteric sublimity of India's sacred teachings."

"In India, religion became scientific and philosophical; science received religious sanction and philosophic support, and philosophy became religious, with a practical bearing on the problems of daily life. Here lies the secret of India's uniqueness and greatness. India saw Reality as a whole; there was no partition walls in the world of the One. With this universality, humanity and sublime idealism India offered a challenge to time."

(source: **India: A synthesis of cultures – By Kewal Motwani** p. 9 - 46 and 71- 75).

314. **Sir William Wedderburn Bart** (1838 - 1918) He left for India in 1860 and began official duty at Dharwar as an Assistant Collector. He was appointed Acting Judicial Commissioner in Sind and Judge of the Sadar Court in 1874. In 1882 he became the District and Sessions Judge of Poona. At the time of his retirement in 1887, he was the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay. As a Liberal, William. Wedderburn believed in the principle of self-government.

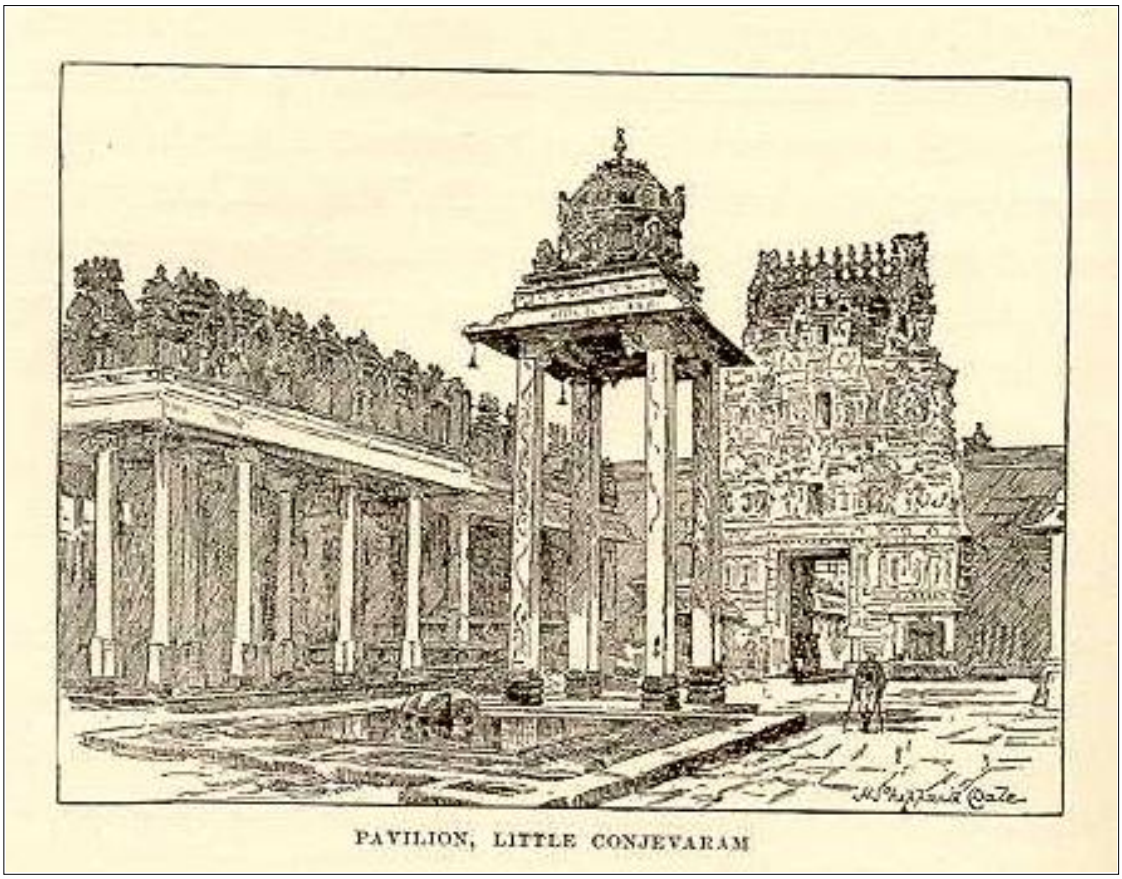
"The Indian village has thus for centuries remained a bulwark against political disorder, and the home of the simple domestic and social virtues. No wonder, therefore, that **philosophers and historians have always dwelt lovingly on this ancient institution** which is the natural social unit and the best type of rural life: self-contained, industrious, peace-loving, conservative in the best sense of the word...I think you will agree with me that there is much that is both picturesque and attractive in this glimpse of social and domestic life in an Indian village. It is a harmless and happy form of human existence. Moreover, it is not without good practical outcome."

(source: **Hindu Swaraj or Indian Home Rule - By M. K. Gandhi** p.110).

315. **Robert Earnest Hume** (1877-1948) Christian missionary. He says in his book **The Thirteen Principal Upanishads**

"The earnestness of the search for truth in one of the delightful and commendable features of the **Upanishads**

(source: **The Thirteen Principal Upanishads - By R. E. Hume** p. 36 and http://www.vedanta-newyork.org/articles/vedanta_influence_2.htm).


PAVILION, LITTLE CONJEVARAM

316. **G. Le Bon** (?) commenting on **Hindu philosophers:**

"Their philosophical daring remains unequalled to this day; indeed, one has to admit that, 2,000 years ago, **India had begun pondering on the great issues which have been raised in the West only in within the last century,** and that, in doing so, it did not shrink from the most drastic solution."

(source: **The World of Ancient India - By G. Le Bon** p. 100).

317. **James Young** (1782-1848) officer, Bengal Horse Artillery, and twice sheriff of Calcutta Secretary, Savon Mechanics Institutes

"Those races (the Indian viewed from a moral aspect) are perhaps the most remarkable people in the world. They breathe an atmosphere of moral purity, which cannot but excite admiration, and this is especially the case with the

pioneer classes, who, notwithstanding the privations of their humble, lot, appear to be happy and contented. Domestic felicity appears to be the rule among the Natives, and this is the more strange when the customs of marriage are taken into account, parents arranging all such matters. Many Indian households afford examples of the married state in its highest degree of perfection.

This may be due to the **teachings of the Shastras...."**

(source: **Hindu Swaraj or Indian Home Rule - By M. K. Gandhi** p. 108 - 1-09).

318. **Abraham Kaplan** (1918 -) American professor of philosophy, has commented that the **Upanishads** are:

"remarkable in literary quality as well as in content."

(source: **The New World of Philosophy - By Abraham Kaplan** New York: Vintage Books, 1961 p. 203).



319. **Anant Sadashiv Altekar** (?) author of several books including **Education in Ancient India** and **Sources of Hindu dharma in its socio-religious aspects**, wrote:

"Hindu religion, philosophy and social structure are nothing but the records of a glorious and instructive struggle of the human mind to free itself from limitations that become meaning less in the course of time, and to attain to more and more glorious heights that are revealed by man's ever expanding vision. **There is no doubt that Hinduism will become once more a great world force, the moment this consciousness becomes a part and parcel of the modern Hindu mind and begins to mold and influence its activities in the different spheres of life."**

(source: **Hinduism: A Static Structure or a Dynamic force? - By A S Altekar** p. 425).

320. **Cyril Edwin Mitchinson Joad** (1891-1953) British philosopher, author, teacher, and radio personality. He was one of Britain's most colorful and controversial intellectual figures of the 1940s. He became head of the department of philosophy at Birbeck College, Univ. of London, in 1930. As a rationalist, he was a successful lecturer and writer. Author of several books including **Guide to Philosophy** and **The Story of Indian Civilization**.

"Hinduism developed from the very first a wide tolerance, Hindus do not proselytize, they do not lay exclusive claims to salvation, and they do not believe that God will be pleased by wholesome slaughter of those of his creatures whose beliefs are mistaken. As a result, Hinduism has been less degraded than the most religions by the anomaly of creed wars."

The civilization of the East are very old; their roots stretch back into the past to a time when Europe was still a cockpit of fighting savages."

(source: **India Rediscovered - By Dr. Giriraj Shah** p. 23 -24 Abhinav Publications New Delhi 1975 and **Counter Attacks From the East - By C E M Joad** p. 23-24 Hindu Kitabs Ltd. Bombay1933).

Regarding the **Upanishads**, he observed:

"The thought of the Upanishads is bold and free, and their general conclusion is that mystical experience is the pathway to reality."

He made the following observation regarding **Hindu philosophy**:

"Perhaps the most outstanding achievement of Indian civilization is Indian philosophy, or rather Indian philosophy and Indian religion. Indian philosophy is quite unlike that of any other people; it is distinguished by three characteristics.

The first is continuity. Indian thinkers have been enquiring into the nature and meaning of the universe more or less continuously for a period of some three thousand years.

The second is unanimity. Broadly speaking, all Indian thinkers have concurred in holding that the universe in its real nature is in an important sense a unity, and that this unity is spiritual. Now that universe, as it appears, is certainly not a unity but a heterogeneous diversity. It contains, that is to say – it apparently is – a collection of an enormous number of people and things. Hence, there must be a distinction between the universe as it really is and the universe as it appears, a distinction which may be expressed by saying that the universe is a reality which manifests itself in diversity, just as the leit motify or underlying theme of a piece of music manifest itself in the diversity of individual notes which all express the same musical idea. Now, it is broadly true that all Indian thinkers have concurred in making this distinction.

Thirdly, and here we come to the link between philosophy and religion – Indian philosophy has never been confined to the activity of the intellect. Formally, no doubt, it is a search for truth; but philosophy in India does more than search for truth; it also seeks and prescribes a way of life. In fact, in the last resort it is a way of life, a way of life as well as a way of believing. This practical effect of Indian philosophy follows inevitably from the doctrines of Indian philosophers.



Arthanari Shiva

For the Westerner, a religion is a body of doctrine consisting of certain affirmations about the nature of the universe and about God, the creator of the universe, divinely revealed to the mind of the believer, and therefore, absolutely and eternally true. From the assurance that the doctrines of any particular religion are absolutely and eternally true, it follows that the doctrines of any other religion, is so far as they differ from them, cannot be true. Hence, the persecution and intolerance which have so continuously accompanied the practice of religion in the West are in a large part the offspring of the persecutors' conviction of the absolute truth of the beliefs in the interests of which he has persecuted, and of the wickedness of the contrary beliefs which he has sought to stamp out. Now in Indian philosophy, while teaching that reality is spiritual and is one, was not prepared to make a detailed and dogmatic specification of the nature of "the One". In the absence of detailed and dogmatic specification, men were at liberty to conceive it very much as they pleased. **Thus, the doctrines of Hinduism were never reduced to a set of formal creeds and Hindu religion has always been willing to receive new experiences and to incorporate new knowledge. "**

"Indian history has been distinguished throughout by a tendency towards toleration. Other peoples' faith have been preserved, other people's customs respected; and not only preserved and respected, but assimilated. **Such toleration is a very rare thing in the history of mankind, as rare as it is invaluable.** Throughout the whole course of Indian history, the characteristic Indian endeavor has been to look for the common element in apparently different things, the single reality that underlies the apparently many appearances. It is interesting then, to note this same insistence upon unity, the same endeavor to unite many into one as exhibited by the very early lawgivers and administrators of India. At the very beginning of Indian history, we find men trying to reconcile the conflicting ideas held by different people with regard to the right way of living together in society and the right way of conceiving God." **"Whatever the reason, it is a fact that India's special gift to mankind** has been the ability and willingness of Indians to effect a synthesis of many different elements both of thoughts and peoples, to create in

short, unity out of diversity." **"They are cosmopolitan in outlook, tolerant in behavior, and open minded in thought."**

(source: **The Story of Indian Civilization - By C. E. M. Joad** p. 5 - 26 and 45).

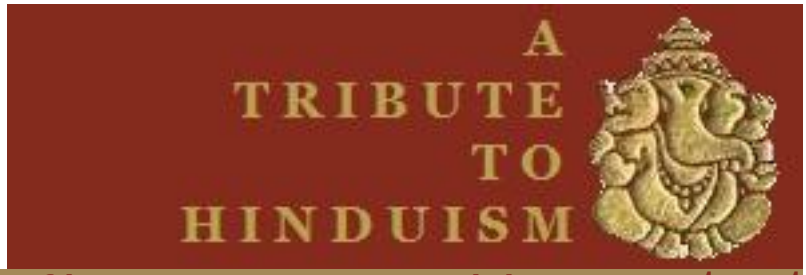
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From the beginning of her history, India has adored and idealized, not soldiers and statesmen, not men of science and leaders of industry, not even poets and philosophers, who influence the world by their deeds or by their words, but those rarer and more chastened spirits, whose greatness lies in what they are and not in what they do; men who have stamped infinity on the thought and life of the country. To a world given over to the pursuit of power and pleasure, wealth and glory, they declared the reality of the unseen world and the call of the spiritual life. This ideal had dominated the Indian religious landscape for over forty centuries. Hinduism has thus had a long and continuous evolution and in the process has influenced all other major world religions.

India, which is, in a sense, representation of the Asiatic consciousness, has never been isolated from the Western continent in spite of geographical, linguistic, and racial barriers. A large part of the world received its religious education from India. In spite of continuous struggle with superstition and theological baggage, India has held fast for centuries to the ideals of the spirit. Its influence or, at any rate, connection with Western thought, though not constant and continuous, has been quite significant. Commenting on the teachings of Christian missionaries as Plotinus, Clement, Gregory, Augustine and the like, Dean Inge observes: "They are the ancient religion of the Brahmins masquerading in the clothes borrowed from the Jewish, Gnostic, Manichaen and Neo-Platonic allegories. That is why Mahatma Gandhi told Romain Rolland in Switzerland on his way back to India from the Round Table Conference (1911) that Christianity is an echo of the Indian religion and Islam is the re-echo of that echo."

Jules Michelet (1789-1874) French writer, the greatest historian of the romantic school, affirms this: " Follow the migration of mankind from East to West along the sun's course and along the track of the world's magnetic currents; observe its long voyage from Asia to Europe, from India to France.....At its starting point in India, the birthplace of races and religions, the womb of the world...."

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The Bhagavad Gita, Buddhism and Christianity
Buddha and Jesus
The Vedas, Mithraism and Christianity
Articles

1. **Christmas' Hindu Roots - By D. Parsuram Maharaj**
2. **Buddhism in Christianity**
3. **Vedic Links to Judaism**



Introduction

Dr. Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975) the great British historian. His massive research was published in 12 volumes between 1934 and 1961 as `A Study of History'. Toynbee was a major interpreter of human civilization in the 20th century. He has said:

" India is not only the heir of her own religious traditions; she is also the residuary legatee of the Ancient Mediterranean World's religious traditions." "Religion cuts far deeper, and, at the religious level, India has not been a recipient; **she has been a giver.** About half the total number of the living higher religions are of Indian origin." he said.

(source: **One World and India - By Arnold Toynbee** p. 42- 59).

Volney, Constantin Francois de Chasseboeuf, comte de 1757-1820) historian and philosopher and French scholar. His principal work, **Les Ruines; ou, Méditation sur les révolutions des empires** (1791), which popularized religious skepticism, was influential not only in France but also in England and the United States; it went through many translations and editions and stimulated much controversy.



Volney of France was perhaps the first to propound in the 18th century that **"Jesus was a solar myth derived from Krishna' of Hindu mythology."** Buddhism existed at least four hundred years before Christianity. Another French theologian, **Ernest Havet**, did the same in his study of primitive Christianity published in 1884. A

He was followed by **Ernest Renan**, the famous Catholic theologian from France, who pointed out **Buddhist parallels in the parables of Jesus** in his **Life of Jesus** published in 1863.

Max Muller noted "startling coincidences between Buddhism and Christianity in his **India - What It Can Teach Us** published from England.

A stronger case along the same lines was made by **Rudolf Seydel**, Professor in the University of Leipzig (Germany), whose first book, **The Gospel of Jesus in relation to the Buddha Legend**, published in 1882, was followed by a more elaborate one, **The Buddha Legend and the Life of Jesus**, published in 1897. Finally, **J. M. Robertson**, a British scholar and a Member of Parliament, revived the Volney thesis in 1900 by stating in his **Christianity and Mythology** that **"the Christ-Myth is merely a form of the Krishna-Myth.**

(source: **Jesus Christ: An Artifice for Aggression - By Sita Ram Goel** p. 53).

In the past, the West and India were immediate neighbors. Before the Islamic civilization came between the two, the empire, which was first Persian, then Greek and later Roman,

stretched from the Mediterranean to the Indus. The commercial ties between India and Europe were more direct than they have ever been over the last ten centuries. Indian monks and their disciples lived and taught for several hundred years in the Middle East and founded large monasteries, the traces of which can be seen mainly in Antioch and Alexandria. In the 4th A.D. Saint Jeremy fulminated against the fake prophets from India. **But his protest came to late, for the men from India had already left their mark on the Mediterranean mind in search of holiness.**

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** (**'Le Genie de l'Inde'**) p.189-)

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The Bhagavad Gita, Buddhism and Christianity



The Bhagavad Gita doctrine of l*okasmgraha* (good of humanity) and of Divine Incarnation influenced the Mahayana or the Northern school of Buddhism. The Buddhist scholar Taranath who wrote the history of Buddhism mentions that the teacher of Nagarjuna, who is regarded as the chief originator of the Mahayana school of Buddhism, was Rahulabhadra who **"was much indebted to sage Krishna and still more to Ganesha…..This quasi-historical notice, reduced to its less allegorical expression means that Mahayanism is much indebted to the Bhagavadgita and more even to Shaivism."**

(source: **Dr. Kern's Manual of Buddhism**).

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has said: " Buddhism which arose in India was an attempt to achieve a purer Hinduism. It may be called a reform within Hinduism. The formative years of Buddhism were spent in the Hindu religious environment. It shares in a large measure the basic pre suppositons of Hinduism. **It is a product of the Hindu religious ethos**."

(source: **Religion and Culture - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 29).

The origin of Christianity is due also to Buddhist influence. The teachings of the Buddha got woven into Greek, Egyptian and Hebraic theology, giving rise to the new Christian religion. Renan sensed this when he wrote in his Life of Christ that 'there was something Buddhist' in the Word of Christ. **Flavius Joseph observed that the Pharisees of Alexandria had taken from the Indians the belief in resurrection of the dead.** Though this idea was alien to the Hebrew dogma, it gradually got absorbed into it, which probably explains the resurrection of Jesus Christ. At a more mundane level, Christians who venerate relics, ring bells and burn incense are unwittingly imitating Indian rituals that were established many centuries before Christianity. Ironically in the 19th century, some Christian missionaries expressed their indignation at Indian pagans ringing Christian bells and burning Christian incense when in point of fact it was the Christians who were imitating the Indians.

These influences from India may come as a surprise to many Christians. Yet they were often discussed in the early 19th century when Europe discovered the Vedas and the Upanishads in translation. European philosophers, especially **Soren Kierkegaard,** were amazed by the evangelical tone of these holy books from India. More recently, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Biblical manuscripts, some archaeologists who specialize in

religion have spoken once again of an Indian connection between Buddhist monks and the Essenian community which lived next to Jerusalem.

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** ('Le Genie de l'Inde') p.189-195).

The Hindus venerate Christ as an Incarnation, and they see that his essential message is that of the Sanatana Dharma (the Eternal Religion). The special ethical and religious ideas contained in the teachings of Christ have no antecedents in the religious traditions in which he was born. Non-resistance to evil, love of enemies, monasticism, love of death, the assertion of man's innate perfection (kingdom of heaven is within you), universalism are principles not to be found in the religion into which he was born.



John the Baptist, who belonged to the monastic sect of the Essenes, was a Buddhist. **Dr. Moffatt**, in his book, **Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,** vol. v, p.410, remarks, "Buddhist tendencies helped to shape some of the Essenic characteristics." King Ashoka of India (third century B.C.) sent Buddhist missionaries to different parts of the world, from Siberia to Ceylon, from China to Egypt, and for two centuries before the advent of Christ, the Buddhist missionaries preached the ethics of Buddha is Syria, Palestine and Alexandria. The Christian historian, **Mahaffi,** declared that the Buddhist missionaries were forerunners of Christ. " Philosophers like **Schelling** and **Schopenhauer**, and Christian thinkers like **Dean Mansel and D. Millman** admit that the sect of the Essenes arose through the influence of the Buddhist missionaries who came from India.

(source: **Complete works of Swami Abhedananda**, vol.2, p.120).

Professor Friedrich Heiler (1892-1967) German scholar of religion, writing during and after the First World War, in an important article on 'Christian and Non-Christian Religions' writes: " The doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation as well as the Virgin Birth, belief in the Divine Sacrifice of love, the conception of irresistible Grace and justification by faith alone, prayer prompted by the grace of God, petition for forgiveness of sins, all-embracing love towards every creature, heroic love of enemies, belief in everlasting life, in the judgment and the restoration of the world - there is not a single central doctrine of Christianity which does not have an array of striking parallels in the various non-Christian faiths." (Hibbert Journal, January 1954)

(source: **Religion and Culture - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 67).



A European version of the Buddha story; Barlaam and Josaphat

(Josaphat sees a blind man, a cripple and a dying man. from Barlaam and Josaphat - Augsburg, 1477
source: East-West Passage: the travel of ideas, arts and inventions between Asia and the Western world
- By Michael Edwardes).

Many incidents in Christ's life as well as the organization of the Catholic Church and its rituals suggest their Buddhistic and Hindu origin. The Gospel stories of the immaculate conception of a virgin mother, the miraculous birth, the story of slaughter of the infants by Herod, and the chief events of Christ's life seem like repetitions of what happened in the lives of Krishna and of Buddha. The idea of Incarnation is purely and Indian idea. It was not known among the Jews. The star over Buddha's birthplace and the prophecy of the old monk Asita are repeated in the Gospel story of Simeon. The temptation of Buddha by Mara, the evil spirit, the twelve disciples, with the beloved disciple Ananda, and the many miracles recall the stories in Christ's life.

Under cover of the legend of **Barlaam and Josaphet,** Buddha has found a place among Catholic saints and has his saint-day in the calendar of the Greek and Roman churches. The story is a Christianized version of one of the legends of Buddha, as even the name Josaphat would seem to show. This is said to be a corruption of the original Joasaph, which is again corrupted from the middle Persian **Budasif (Budsaif=Bodhisattva).**

The rosary, the veneration of relics, asceticism, baptism, confession, etc. are also of Indian origin. The name Josaphet is **Bodhisattva** in the corrupt form. The story of the Buddha's life underwent an extraordinary transmutation as it moved west and became what is one of the most widespread legends ever told -- the story of Barlaam and Josaphat. More than sixty translations, versions, or paraphrases have been identified. It

was altered to fit the religious climate of each language and culture. As it moved westward, the story was adopted and adapted by Manicheans in central Asia, and then it became Christianized. In its new version, Barlaam was a Christian monk who had converted Josaphat (the name was a linguistic development from the word Bodhisattva -- one capable of Buddhahood). It may be that Georgian Christians in the Caucasus were the first to give the story a Christian cast, in the sixth or seventh century.

There are innumerable similarities between Hindu-Buddhist practices and doctrines and those of Christianity.

The Russian author, **Nicholas Notovitch** translated in 1894 a biography of Christ found in Nepal in a Buddhist monastery which said that Christ went there during the thirteen years of his life of which there is no record in the Gospel. Notovitch author of a book, **The Unknown Life of Christ,** asserting that during his long period of obscurity Jesus had stayed with Brahman and Buddhist monks, who had initiated him into Indian religions. The book was first published in French and edited, abridged, and translated into English by Violet Crispe in 1895. This study was based on the materials Notovitch had collected during his travels in India and Tibet, particularly on the records of Saint Issa discovered by him at the monastery Himis. Inevitably the book excited fierce controversy and reproach from some theologians. Max Muller disputed Notovitch's assertions and questioned the authenticity of the latter's evidence. Despite this, Notovitch reaffirmed his views when the English version was published. The German scholar **Faber-Kaiser's** more recent book entitled **Jesus died in Kashmir'** also supports Ahmadiya sect in Islam that Jesus did not die on the Cross, but came to India and died near Rozabal not far from Srinagar in Kashmir.
(**http://www.tombofjesus.com/AcharaS.htm#Yuz**)



French historian **Alain Danielou** had noticed as early as 1950 that "a great number of events which surround the birth of Christ - as it is related in the Gospels - strangely remind us of Buddhists and Krishnaites legends".



Danielou quotes as examples the structure of the Christian Church, which resembles that of the Buddhist Chaitya; the rigorous asceticism of certain early Christian sects, which reminds one of the asceticism of Jain and Buddhist saints; the veneration of relics, the usage of holy water, which is an Indian practice, or the word 'Amen', which comes from the Hindu 'OM'.

There are some indication that Christ came to India for spiritual initiation and borrowed from Buddhism for his teachings. According to **Alain Danielou**, who wrote the **Histoire de l'Inde,**

"Many sects which developed in the first century before Christ in Palestine, had a strong

Hindu and Buddhist influence and a great number of legends surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, are strangely similar to Buddhist and Krishnaites stories. He adds that the structures of the church resembles those of Chaitya Buddhism and that the early Christian asceticism seems to have been inspired by Jainism."

(source: **Rewriting Indian History** - **By Francois Gautier** pg 9-10)



Belgium's historian Konraad Elst also remarks "that many early Christian saints, such as **Hippolytus** of Rome, possessed an intimate knowledge of Brahmanism." Elst even quotes the famous **Saint Augustin** who wrote:

"We never cease to look towards India, where many things are proposed to our admiration".

Unfortunately, remarks American **David Frawley**, "from the second century onwards, Christian leaders decided to break away from the Hindu influence and show that Christianity only started with the birth of Christ". Hence, many later saints began branding Brahmins as "heretics" and **Saint Gregory** set a future trend by publicly destroying the "pagan" idols of the Hindus.

It is unknown as to how Christianity arrived in India during the first century. If Christianity could reach India during the first century and find a sanctuary why could not Indian religions, especially Buddhism which was equally proselytizing reach western Asia and the Greco-Roman world and find a footing there? The road surely must have been open both ways.



Lamas at a prayer meeting

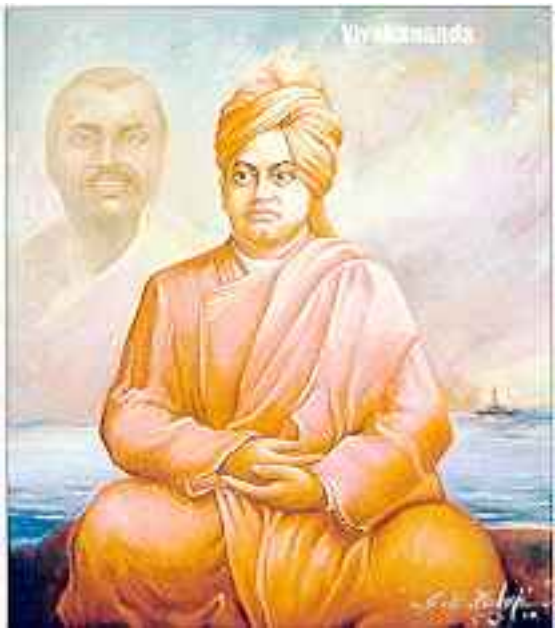
In 1842, two French missionary travelers to Tibet, **Hue and Gibet,** were shocked at the close resemblances between Catholic and Lamaistic rituals. They wrote, "The crozier, the exorcism, the censer with the five chains, the blessings which the lamas impart by extending the right head over the heads of the faithful, the rosary, the celibacy of the clergy, their separation from the world, the worship of saints, the fasts, processions, litanies, holy water – these are the points of contact the Buddhists have with us."

(source: **The Legacy of India - edited By G T Garratt** Oxford At The Clarendon Press).

Indeed, **Lamaistic Buddhism,** which did not follow the serene metaphysical teaching of the Buddha closely, represented demons and torments of hell as lurid as those of mediaeval Christianity. Even in the most Judaic of the epistles in the New Testament the phrase **"the wheel of birth"** occurs, which **Schopenhauer** ascribed to Indian influence.

In an interview in Detroit in 1894, **Vivekananda** said, "Our religion is older than most religions and the Christian creeds came directly from the Hindoo religion. It is one of the great offshoots. The Catholic religion also takes all its forms from us, the confessional, the belief in saints and so on, and a Catholic priest who saw this absolute similarity and recognized the truth of the origin of the Catholic religion was dethroned from his position because he dared to publish a volume explaining all that he observed and was convinced of" (Swami's reference was no doubt to **Bishop Brigandet's Life of Buddha**) (From **Vivekananda, New Discoveries by Marie Louise Burke,** 2nd ed, p 208). For more refer

to **Resurrection of the Dead In the Nag Hammadi Codices & Its Relationship to the Buddhist Doctrine of 'Rebirth**).



Great Indian sages, such as Sri Aurobindo or Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the founder of the Art of Living, which is practiced in more than 80 countries, have often remarked that the stories recounting how Jesus came to India to be initiated, are probably true. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar notes, for instance, that Jesus sometimes wore an orange robe, the Hindu symbol of renunciation in the world, which was not a usual practice in Judaism. "In the same way", he continues, "the worshipping of the Virgin Mary in Catholicism is probably borrowed from the Hindu cult of Devi." **Bells too, which cannot be found today in synagogues, the surviving form of Judaism, are used in church and we all know their importance in Buddhism and Hinduism for thousands of years.** There are many other similarities between Hinduism and Christianity: incense, sacred bread (prasadam), the different altars around churches (which recall the manifold deities in their niches inside Hindu temples); reciting the rosary (japamala), the Christian Trinity (the ancient Santana Dharma: Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh), Christian processions, the sign of the cross (Anganyasa), and so on.

The Catholic Church, however, developed with dualistic principles of God in heaven and creation below which have created an insoluble conflict between faith and reason. The conflict has reached its ultimate acuity in our day of scientific development. Hindus believe that the non-dualistic teachings of Christ have not been generally understood in the West.

Christianity's Hindu Heritage

Commenting on the teachings of Christian missionaries as Plotinus, Clement, Gregory, Augustine and the like, **Dean Inge** observes: "They are the ancient religion of the Brahmins masquerading in the clothes borrowed from the Jewish, Gnostic,Manichaen and Neo-Platonic allegories. That is why **Mahatma Gandhi told Romain Rolland** in Switzerland on his way back to India from the Round Table Conference (1911) that **Christianity is an echo of the Indian religion and Islam is the re-echo of that echo."**

(source: **India in Primitive Christianity - Arthur Lillie**).

Objective and open-minded scholars long ago conceded that Christianity is at heart a revamped form of Judaism. In the process of its development as something distinct from its mother religion, it became hybridized with so much pagan influence that it ultimately alienated its original Jewish base and became predominantly Gentile. The source of this pagan influence is varied and vague in the minds of most advanced Bible critics, but it may owe more to Hinduism than most people suspect.




The average person does not connect India with the ancient Middle East, *but the existence of some trade between these two regions is documented, even in the Bible.* Note the reference to spikenard in the Song of Solomon (1:12; 4:13-14) and in the Gospels (Mark 14:3; John 12:3). This is an aromatic oil-producing plant (*Nardostachys jatamansi*) that the Arabs call *sunbul hindi* and obtained in trade with India. It is axiomatic that influence follows trade, and the vibrant culture of India could not help but impact on anyone exposed to it. The influence on Judaism came for the most part indirectly, however, via the Persians and the Chaldeans, who dealt with India on a more direct basis. (Indeed, the Aryans, who invaded and trans- formed India over 1500 years before Christ, were of the same people who brought ancient Persia to its greatest glory. Persia's name today--Iran--is a corruption of *Aryan*.) The ancient Judeans absorbed much of this secondhand influence during the Babylonian captivity of the sixth century B. C., and during the inter testamental period, when Alexandria became the crossroads of the world, intellectuals both Jew and Gentile were exposed to a variety of ideas, some of which originated on the Indian Subcontinent.

From Pythagoras, who believed in the transmigration of souls, apparently because of his contacts with religious teachers from the east. Pindar, who believed in metempsychosis, Plato, who could not have been ignorant of Karma, through Klaxons, the Indian sage, who accompanied Alexander, Apollonius of Tyana, who came to Taxila to study under the Brahmins, Clement of Alexandria, the early Christian teachers of the second century A.D., who refers to Buddhists and Brahmins in his work and Plotimus, who went to Persia to meet the Brahmins, the Contacts between India and Greek thinkers seem to have been continuous.

According to **Klaus K. Klaustmaier,** in his book **A Survey of Hinduism** pg 18-19



"The kings of Magadha and Malwa exchanged ambassadors with Greece. A Maurya ruler invited one of the Greek Sophists to join his court, and one of the greatest of the Indo-Greek kings became famous as the dialogue partner of the great Buddhist sage Nagasena, while in the opposite direction, Buddhist missionaries are known to have settled in Alexandria, and other cities in the Ancient West. It is evident then, that Indian thought was present in the fashionable intellectual circuit of ancient Athens, and there is every reason to suppose that Indian religious and philosophical ideas exercised some influence on early and classical Greek philosophy. Both Greeks and Romans habitually tried to understand the religions of India by trying to fit them as far as possible into Greco-Roman categories. Deities in particular were spoken of, not in Indian but in Greek terms and called by Greek names. Thus Shiva, was identified as "Dionysos," Krsna (or perhaps Indra) as "Heracles." The great Indian epics were compared to those of Homer. Doctrinally, the Indian concept of transmigration had its counterpart in the metempsychosis taught by

Pythagoras and Plato; nor was Indian asceticism altogether foreign to a people who remembered Diogenes and his followers."

Parallels have also been found between the Biblical account of the creation of man by God in his own image and the creation of woman out of man (Genesis I :27) and the statements in the Hindu scriptures in the Hindu scriptures that God became man and created woman (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad(1:3 and 1:4) and Brahma as God divided himself into svayambhu Manu (man) and Satarupi (Woman the Bhagavata purana). There is a further parallel between the temptation of Adam and Eve, Who ate of the apple (Genesis III) and the references to two birds "beautiful of wing, inseparable friends, dwelling together in the same tree (the universe) of whom one (the individual being) eats the fruit of action, while the other (universal being) looks on and Svetesvatara Upanishad(4:6). The Indian scriptures, far from being in conflict with Western thought, seem very often to contain the same or parallel ideas as in Biblical literature. The ascent of man in the Books of Enoch is said to match a similar account in the Kausitaki Upanishad and even the concepts of the kingdom of God and the son of man have been discovered in the Rig Veda.

The precise pattern of influence was neither observed nor documented, but it can be inferred from the numerous uncanny similarities in concept and expression, not all of which can be coincidental. Let us examine the telltale evidence (none of which, it may be added, depends upon any apocryphal account of the alleged "lost years" of Jesus in India).



The Brahmin caste of the Hindus are said to be "twice-born" and have a ritual in which they are "born in the spirit." Could this be the ultimate source of the Christian "born again" concept (John 3:3)?

The deification of Christ is a phenomenon often attributed to the apotheosis of emperors and heroes in the Greco-Roman world. These, however, were cases of men becoming gods. In the Jesus story, the Divinity takes human form, god becoming man. This is a familiar occurrence in Hinduism and in other theologies of the region. Indeed, one obstacle to the spread of Christianity in India, which was attempted as early as the first century, was the frustrating tendency of the Hindus to understand Jesus as the latest avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu.

It is in the doctrine of the **Trinity** that the Hindu influence may be most clearly felt. Unknown to most Christians, Hinduism has a Trinity (or Trimurti) too: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, who have the appellations the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer (and Regenerator). This corresponds to the Christian Trinity in which God created the heavens and the earth, Jesus saves, and the Holy Spirit is referred to as a regenerator (Titus 3:5). It is interesting to note, furthermore, that the Holy Spirit is sometimes depicted as a dove, while the Hebrew language uses the same term for both "dove" and "destroyer"!



In the **Bhagavad Gita**, a story of the second person of the Hindu Trinity, (Vishnu) who took human form as Krishna. Some have considered him a model for the Christ, and it's hard to argue against that when he says things like, **"I am the beginning, the middle, and the end" (BG 10:20 vs. Rev 1:8).**

With the historical reality of Indian influence on the Middle East being an established fact, how can the Christians account for these similarities with anything less feeble than coincidence, or less bizarre than the notion of "Satanic foreknowledge and duplication," which is sometimes invoked to explain the similarities of Judeo-Christian precursors?

(source

:**http://www.infidels.org/library/magazines/tsr/1994/3/3hare94.html** - By **Stephen Van Eck**)

Christ spend his youth in India?

The celebration of the birthday of Christ might lose a little sheen if we seriously pursue the question, where did Jesus spend 18 years of his life, between the ages of 12 and 30? Both history and gospels, are completely silent about the life of Jesus before his 30th year.

A Chilean diplomat **Miguel Serrano** in his book, "**The Serpent of Paradise: The Story of an Indian Pilgrimage** (1963) has written of his rich and varied experiences among yogis and sadhus of India. He was looking for great mystics who he believed were living in the Himalayas guarding a magical science. **During his sojourn in Kashmir, Serrano came across evidence to suggest that Jesus Christ had come to India and that the tomb of Yousa-Asaf in Srinagar was in fact the tomb of Jesus.** He quotes a legend, according to which he was in Kashmir, the original name for Kashmir, Ka means "the same as" or "equal to" and shir means Syria. Manuscripts in the Sharda language, which is derived from Sanskrit, seem to bear close relationship to the biblical story. According to this Kashmir legend, Jesus came to Kashmir and studied under holy men, who taught him mysterious practices. Later the legend says, Jesus returned to the Middle East and he then began to preach among the ignorant masses of Israel the mystical truths he had learned in Kashmir. To impress and to convert them he often used the powers he had acquired through the practices of Yoga, and these were then referred to as miracles. Then in due course Jesus was crucified, but he did not die on the cross. Instead, he was removed by some Essenes brothers, restored to good health and sent back to Kashmir, where he lived with his masters until his death. There is yet another theory, which holds that the Jewish

race originated in India centuries ago and some of them came back almost by instinct in search of their roots. This theory ties in with the legend of Jesus Christ also came to live in India at the age of about 13. This legend asserts Jesus spent 17 years in India, finally returning to the country of his birth to preach the doctrine of salvation and to assert that he was the Son of God.

(source: **India Post - By Vinod Dhawan**. vol. 6 December 29, 2000. p. 44). For more refer to **Did Jesus die in Kashmir - by Abu Abraham**).

Divine Incarnations

We find mention of prophets, messengers and messiahs in the different religions of the world. In Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity we have the doctrine of Divine Incarnation. The Christian religion as organized is dualistic. The Christian have a doctrine of incarnation fitting into their theology and their partial view of history and creation. They have only one incarnation.



According to the Eternal Religion (Sanatana Dharma) taught in the Gita, there are many divine incarnations. An incarnation is a special manifestation of the Divine in history. Such manifestations take place in response to special needs of the time, in the altered circumstances of life and history. They come in times of decline of civilizations due to materialism which causes disintegration of man and society.

Krishna in the Gita makes the classic declaration about incarnation.

"O Descendant of Bharata! Whenever religion becomes tarnished and irreligion prevails, I create myself. I incarnate myself in every age for saving the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of religion. "

The birth of an incarnation, like the birth of the universe, is a mystery. In Sanatana Dharma incarnation is periodic manifestation in time of the power of the Divine. It is a mystery, but the power play of the Divine in history is a fact of experience. Krishna says in the Gita that incarnations start rolling anew the wheels of religion. Buddha also spoke of his movement as starting the wheel of religion.

Interesting Parallels between the Hindu/Buddhist temple and the Catholic Church.

Angels	Apsaras
Saints	Sants
Halos	Halos
Catacombs	Cave-temples
Cathedral floor plan	Chaitya hall floor plan

Rosary	Rosary
Orders of priests/nuns	Orders of monks/nuns (in Buddhism)
Repetition in prayer	Repetition in prayer
Symbolism of wheel	Symbolism of wheel
Tree of life	Tree of life
Use of relics	Use of relics (Buddhism)
Temptation of Jesus by Satan	Temptation of the Buddha by Mara
Circumambulation	Circumambulation

(source: **The Church and The Temple - By Subhash Kak - sulekha.com**).

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Buddha and Jesus



Alexander's invasion of India in 327. B.C. starts a closer interchange of thought between India and the West. Buddhism must have been prevalent in India for over a century before Alexander's time, and he made an effort to acquaint himself with Hindu and Buddhist thought. He succeeded in encouraging an ascetic called Kalanos to join his entourage. He himself married a princess from Bactria, and a hundred of his superior officers followed his example and took Asiatic brides.

Pyrrho is said to have taken part in Alexander's expedition to India and acquired a knowledge of Indian thought.

Pliny tells us of a certain Dionysius who was sent to India from Alexandria by Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247). Asoka, who ascended the throne of Magadha in 270.B.C., held a Council at Pataliputra, when it was resloved to send missionaries to proclaim the new teaching throughout the world. In accordance with this decision Asoka sent Buddhistic missions to the sovereigns of the West, Antiochus Theos of Syria, Ptolemy Philadelphius of Egypt, Antigonos Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexandria of Epirus. From Asoka's statements it may be inferred that his missions were favorably received in these five countries. Between 190 and 180 B.C. Demetrius extended the Bactrian Kingdom into India and conquered Sind and Kathiawar.

The Greeks who settled in India gradually became Indianized. Of the monuments which survive of the Indo-Greek dynasties is a pillar discovered at Besnagar in the extreme south of Gwalior State (140B.C.) The inscription on it in Brahmi characters says:



" This garuda column of Vasudeva (Vishnu) was erected here by Heliodorus, son of Dion, a worshipper of Vishnu, and an inhabitant of Taxila, who came as a Greek ambassador from the great King Antialcidas to Kind Kasiputra Bhagabhadra, the saviour, then reigning prosperously in the fourteenth year of his kingship."

The greatest of the Indo-Greek kings was **Menander**, who was converted to Buddhism by the Buddhist teacher Nagasena (180-160 B.C.) His conversion is recorded in the famous work **Milindapanha** (questions asked by King Milinda)

During all this period India and the West had extensive trade relations. When Alexander chose in Egypt the site for a city which was destined to perpetuate his name, the preparation for the blending of Eastern and Western cultures started. For a thousand years Alexandria continued to be a center of intellectual and commercial activity because it was the meeting-place of Jews, Syrians, and Greeks. **Milindapanha** mentions it as one of the places to which the Indians regularly resorted.



Two centuries before the Christian era, Buddhism closed in on Palestine. The Essenes, the Mandeans, and the Nazarene sects are filled with its spirits. (The Mandeans flourished in Maisan, which was the gate of entry for Indian trade and commerce with Mesopotamia. Indian tribes colonized Maisan, whose port had an Indian temple. Mandean gnosis is full of Indian ideas.)

Nearly five hundred years before Jesus, Buddha went round the Ganges valley proclaiming a way of life which would deliver men from bondage of ignorance and sin. In a hundred and fifty years after his death, tradition of his life and passing away became systematized. He was miraculously conceived and wondrously born. His father was informed by angels about it, and, according to **Lalitavistara,** the queen (Maya) was permitted to lead the life of a virgin for thirty-two months. On the day of his birth a Brahmin priest predicts his future greatness. Asita is the Buddhist Simeon. He comes through air to visit the infant Gautama. Simeon came by the apirit into the Temple. Buddha grew steadily in wisdom and stature. Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. His enlightenment was marked by thirty-two great miracles. The blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, and the lame walk freely. He set out to establish the kingdom of righteousness. He has twelve disciples. Buddha has his troubles with his disciples. Devadatta, Buddha's cousin, was the **Judas** among his followers. On the last day before his death, Buddha's body was again transfigured, and when he died a tremendous earthquake was felt throughout thee world.



Many of the parables between Buddha and Jesus are common. Buddha is a sower of the word. He feeds his five hundred brethren at once with a small cake which has been put into his begging bowl, and a good deal is left over, which is thrown away. In **Jataka** 190 we read of an eager disciple who finds no boat to take him across and so walks on the water.

Max Muller remarks that mere walking on water is not an uncommon story, and we must remember that the date of the Buddhist parable is chronologically anterior to the date of the Gospel of St. Luke. Between the language of Buddha and his disciples, and the language between Christ and his apostles, there are strange coincidences. When some of the Buddhist legends and parables sound as if taken from the New Testament, though we know that many of them existed before the beginning of the Christian era.

Richard Garbe assumes direct borrowing from Buddhism in the matter of Simeon, temptations, and the miracles of walking on the water, and loaves and fishes. **We have many parallels between Krishna and Christ.**

- A marvellous light envelops Mary when Christ is born. a similar light envelops Devaki before Krsna is born.
- There is universal gladness of nature at their birth.
- Herod inquires of the wise men, " Where is he that is born King of the Jews? "(Matthew ii 40
- Narada warns Kamsa the King that Krsna will kill him (Harivamsa ii 56)
- Herod is mocked by the wise men (Matthew, ii 16) and Kamsa is mocked by the demon that takes the place of Yasoda's infant (ibid ii 59).
- The massacre of the infants in found in both.
- Joseph came with Mary to Bethlehem to be taxed: Nanda came with Yasoda to Mathura to pay tribute.
- The flight into Egypt is similar to that into Braj.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says:



"The curious may find matter for reflection in these coincidences in the lives of Buddha and Christ. But those trained in European culture find it somewhat irksome, if not distasteful, to admit the debt of Christian religion to non-Christian sources, especially Hindu and Buddhist."

" In these cases, **Max Muller** writes, "our natural inclination would be to suppose that the Buddhist stories borrowed from our Christian sources and not vice versa. But here the conscience of the scholar comes in. Some of these stories are found in the Hinayana Budddhist Canon and date, therefore, before the Christian era." It is not unnatural to suspect that some of the prominent ideas traveled from the older to the younger system. As Christianity arose in a period of eclecticism, it is not impossible for it to have adopted the outlook and legends of the older religion, especially as the latter were accessible at the time when intercourse between India and the Roman Empire was quite common. Let us realize that Christianity was in a formative stage and Budhhism was both settled and enterprising.

Speaking of the Apocryphal gospels, such a cautious critic, as the late **Dr. Maurice Winternitz** says: " We can point to a series of borrowings from Buddhistic literature which are absolutely beyond all doubt"

(source: **Visvabharati Quarterly** Feb. 1937, p.14).



Sir Charles Eliot, a famous scholar and linguist of Oxford observed, " A number of Buddhist legends make their appearance in the Apocryphal gospels and are so obviously Indian in character that it can hardly be maintained that they were invented in Palestine or Egypt and spread thence Eastwards."

(source: **Hinduism and Buddhism - By Sir Charles Eliot** vol. iii (1921), p. 441).

" The similarity of Roman Catholic services and ceremonial to the Buddhist is difficult to explain. "When all allowance is made for similar causes and coincidences, it is hard to believe that a collection of practices such as clerical celibacy, the veneration of relics, the use of the rosary and the prominent ideas traveled from the older to the younger system.

T. W. Rhys Davids, the famous Pali scholar and author of " **Buddhist India**," wrote,

"It is not too much to say, that almost the whole of the moral teaching of the Gospels as distinct from the dogmatic teaching, will be found in Buddhist writings, several centuries older than the Gospels; that for instance, of all the moral doctrines collected together in the so-called Sermon on the Mount, all those which can be separated from the theistic dogmas there maintained are found again in the Pitakas."

"There is every reason to believe that the Pitakas [sacred books containing the legends of

Buddha] now extant in Ceylon are substantially identical with the books of the southern canon, as settled at the Council of Patna about the year 250 B.C. As no work would have been received into the Canon which were not then believer to be very old, the Pitakas may be approximately placed in the forth century B.C. and parts of them possibly reach back very nearly, if not quite to the time of Gautama (Buddha) himself.



Albert Schweitzer, who is regarded almost as a modern Christian saint, declined to accept the historicity of the traditional view of Jesus. Both A.. J. Edmonds, and Richard Garbe, have insisted on the Christian indebtedness to Buddhism.

Count Keyserling noticed a great affinity of spirit between Mahayana Buddhism and Christianity; and although he considered Mahayana Buddhism to be far superior to Christianity.

Otto Pfleiderer in his **Chrisitan Origin,** E. T. (1906), p.226, says: " These Buddhist parallels to the childhood stories of Luke are too striking to be classed as mere chance; some kind of historical connection must be postulated." **M. Labbe Huc**, Nineteenth century: " The miraculous birth of Buddha, his life and instructions, contain a great number of the moral and dogmatic truths professes in Christianity."

T. W. Doane, Nineteenth century, ...nothing now remains for the honest man to do but acknowledge the truth, which is that the history of Jesus of Nazareth, as related in the books of the New Testament is simply a copy of that of Buddha, with a mixture of mythology borrowed from other nations.



Scholars have been profoundly struck and at times perplexed by the remarkable similarities between the Gospel story and the life and teachings of the Budhha, as told in the Latitavistara, and between the Budhhist and Christian parables and miracles. Both the Buddha and Christ are miraculously conceived and wondrously born and angels rejoiced at both births. He was miraculously conceived and wondrously born. His father was informed by angels about it and the queen - mother Maya (Mary in case of Christ) was permitted to lead the life of a virgin for thirty-two months. Christ was born in the royal tribe of Judah, Buddha was born in a royal household. On the day of his birth a Brahmin (Asita) priest predicts his future greatness. **Asita is the Buddhist Simeon.** Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. Both reveal their unusual wisdom at about the same age, twelve. **Asita is the Buddhist Simeon.** Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. Both reveal their unusual wisdom at about the same age, twelve. **Asita is the Buddhist Simeon.** Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. Both reveal their unusual wisdom at about the same age, twelve.

Nothing is known of Jesus' life during the next seventeen years and there have



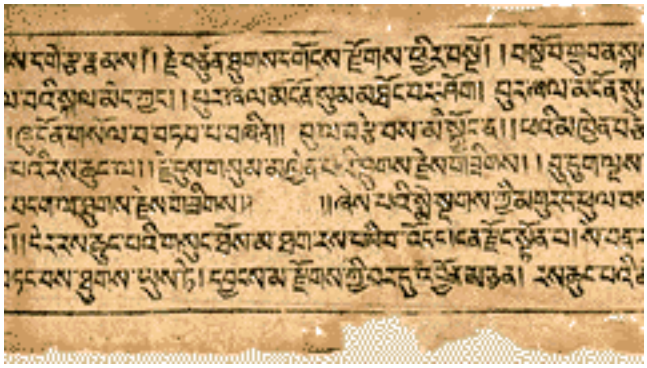
developed a variety of legends suggesting that he traveled to India, lived with the Essenes at Qumran. The Gospels, however, refute these suggestion by implication. Whether Jesus traveled abroad or not, that he chose to remain unknown after having revealed himself and his wisdom causes some surprise. As Jesus claimed to be God, it could not have been a period of preparation. In contrast, more is known of Buddha's life his childhood, youth, marriage, increasing discontent with the world, renunciation, quest of Enlightenment, and finally his attainment of the Buddhahood, followed by a long period of missionary activity until he died.

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The Vedas, Mithraism and Christianity

"These two are the Almighty of the Gods, they are noble.
They will make our people full of vigor.
May we attain you, Mitra and Varuna, wherever Heaven and the days overflow."

- Rig Veda vii.65 (Mitra and Varuna are in all hymns to the Sun as the Divine Lord and Friend)



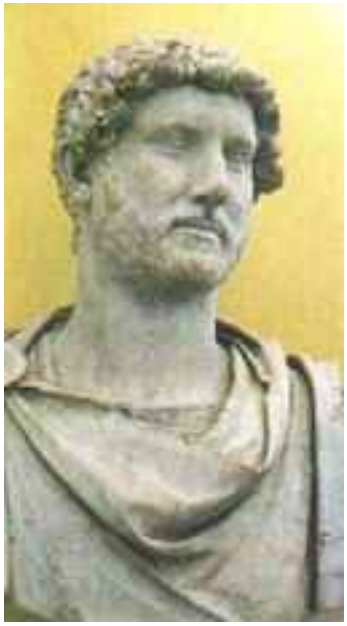
The contact between India and the West were more frequent in the period of the Roman Empire especially in the reign of Augustus, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. The Jatakas contain many references to Buddhist merchants and their adventures in distant lands. India had a reputation for high philosophy and religion in the middle of the second century A.D., for Lucian makes Demetrius, the Greek philosopher give up his property and depart for India, there to end his life among the Brahmins. **Clement of Alexandria,** who died about A.D. 220, knew the distinction between Hinduism and Buddhism. " There are, he says, some Indians who follow the precepts of Boutta,(Buddha) whom, by an excessive reverence, they have exalted into a god." Clement mentions that Pythagoras learnt from Brahmins among others.

The vast development of material prosperity in the Roman Empire had no spiritual purpose behind it. Its ultimate end seemed to be the satisfaction of selfishness, individual and corporate. The ancestral cults had ceased to hold the large part of the population in the Roman Empire. The religious-minded, for whom the Roman gods had lost their meaning and served only as occasions for civic ceremonial, sought to find spiritual solace outside the life of the society in an esoteric ideal of individual salvation. The people were attracted by the Eastern cults, which were streaming into the Empire, the cults of Isis or Mithras. Mithraism was a religion with roots in India and Iran spread into the Roman world. **Mithraism** was the first officially recognized monotheistic cult of the Roman world. By the third century Mithra had evolved in the Roman world into the sun-god, Sol Invinctus -- So far as is now known, Mithra appears as the bull-slayer only in his Roman manifestation. Mithraism was a formidable competitor of early Christianity. Renan's observation has often been quoted that if Christianity had failed, the whole of Europe would have been Mithraist.



First appears as an Aryan sun-god in **Sanskrit** (**Rig Veda**) and Persian literature circa 1400 BCE. The cult was introduced into the Roman empire in the 1st century BCE. The Mithra traditions and doctrines are collected in the Persian **Avesta** and a yasht, a special hymn of praise, is dedicated to Mithra. Mithra is the Persian name of the **Vedic Mitra**, the deity of light and truth, warring against the powers of darkness in association with **Varuna.** In India he was, in fact, regarded as the sun. In Vedic texts, the connection between Mithra and the bull, which later became the focal point of Mithraism, is perhaps more clearly found than in the **Avesta.** The cult of Mithraism appears to have come to the Roman Empire from Persia (Iran), having introduced to Rome by Cilician seamen in about 68 B.C. Mithras is a Greek form of the name of an Indo-European god, Mithra or Mitra. Mithra was conceived as the intermediary between man and the Supreme God and the redeemer of the human race. Mithraism was carried to the remotest corners of the empire. But despite these opportunites, circumstances conspired against Mithraism, and " the ultimate success, permanent and undoubted, fell to the combination of Jewish and Greek worship called Christianity."

There are however, many similarities between Christianity and Mithraism. Besides sharing faith in a divine mediator and the hope of resurrection, both taught the efficacy of prayer, sacramental union with God, and his providential presence in all the events of daily life. Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist of the Christians are analogous to certain rites of Mithraism. It was when Christianity spread into the pagan world that the idea of Jesus as a savior God emerged, emulating already existing concepts. It was only in 324, several centuries later, that the Church at the council of Nicaea, called by Emperor Constantine, formally accepted by a majority vote Jesus Christ as the Savior God. The coming of Christianity under state control was to preserve it as a religion, and was the death knell of all other sects and cults within the Roman Empire.



Had Constantine decided to retain Mithraism as the official state religion, instead of putting Christianity in its place, it would have been the latter that would have been obliterated.

"If Christianity was somehow stopped at its birth, whole world would be following Mithraism today." - Ernest Renan (1823-1892) was an important French theorist who wrote about a variety of topics. His famous essay **"What is a Nation?"** (Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?) was first delivered as a lecture at the Sorbonne in 1882.

To Constantine however, Christianity had one great advantage, it preached that repentant sinners would be forgiven their sins, provided that they were converted Christians at the time of their Passing, and Constantine had much to be forgiven for, He personally did not convert to the new religion until he was on his death bed, the reason being that only sins committed following conversion were accountable, so all sins committed by a convert, prior to conversion, didn't matter, and he could hardly have sinned too much whilst he was lying on his death bed. Mithraism could not offer the same comfort to a man like Constantine, who was regarded as being one of the worst mass-murderers of his time.

It was the birthday of Mithra, 25 December (winter solstice), that was taken by the early Christians as the birthday of Jesus. The need and urgency by the early Christians to compromise with existing traditions were further illustrated by the fact that even the Sabbath, the Jewish seventh day, Saturday, appointed a day of rest by God in the Mosaic Law and hallowed by his own resting day after the work of Creation, was abandoned in favor of the Mithraic first day, the Day of the Conquering Sun, Sunday. The worshippers of Mithra were called "Soldiers of Mithra" which is probably the origin of the term "Soldiers of Christ."



The most frequent theme of Christ as the Good Shepherd is reminiscent of a similar identification of Mithra, who was often called the Good Shepherd. And it is interesting to note that since Mithra was addressed as Dominus, Sunday must have been " the Lord's Day" long before Christian times. Concepts such as " the blood of the Lamb" or "Taurus the Bull" were similarly borrowed from Mithraism. The Last Supper (the Eucharist) was taken from Mithraism to combine with the sacred meal of Palestinian Christianity. The ceremony of eating an incarnate god's body and drinking his blood is of remote antiquity, with its origin in cannibalistic practices, and there could have been several sources for the Christian rite, but its connection with the Mithraic Eucharist is most apparent. The Mithraic Eucharist is the commemoration of Mithra's Last Supper in a cave with Sol Helios before ascending to Heaven. Some scholars believe that the Resurrection of Christ derived from the Vigil of Mithra, who after his death reappeared to watch continuously over the faithful. The Mithraic high priest's title, Pater Patrum soon became the title for the bishop of Rome, Papa or Pope.

Thus, the extent of the indebtedness of Christianity to pagan religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Mithraism) is very great indeed.

Christianity and Roman Decline

Whether the rise of Christianity with its train of bitter religious conflicts and persecutions was a contributing cause of the Roman decline or not, the two certainly coincided. During the following hundred years, Roman authority gradually weakened, Roman armies suffered defeats, and Rome was sacked. By the end of the fifth century there was nothing left of the Roman Empire in the West.

Europe lapsed into the Dark Ages for centuries. Total and devoted acceptance of the authority of the new faith, as interpreted by its priests or guardians on earth, inculcated amongst the people an attitude of surrender and they handed over the right and responsibility of thinking to others. Passive submissions suppressed scientific inquiry and academic integrity, the main characteristics of the preceding age of Alexandrian syncretism. Intellectual stagnation, religious intolerance, and racial and regional exclusiveness characterized Europe for the next thousand years.

(source: **Eastern Religions and Western Thought** - **By Dr. S Radhakrishnan**
India and World Civilization - **By D. P. Singhal**
The Bhagavad Gita: A Scripture for the Future - **By Sachindra K. Majumdar**).

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Buddhism and its relation to Hinduism - Some information

Buddha is recognized as the ninth avatar (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu. It was several hundred years before the time of Lord Buddha that his birth was predicted in Srimad-Bhagavatam. **Buddhism is an offshoot of Hinduism and is considered one of the heterodox schools of Hindu philosophy.** The teachings of Buddhism are not significantly different from those of Hinduism, but are essentially the same as the teachings of the Jnana Yoga (path of knowledge) school of Hinduism.

Following are the major views:

Buddhism and Hinduism both aim at transcending the phenomenal existence. Buddha rejected the ritualistic aspects of the Vedas, but DID NOT deny the higher teachings of the Upanishads. The Vedic rituals in Hinduism are recommended for a beginner for attaining concentration and meditation on the spiritual path. This position is very clearly conveyed in the Bhagavad Gita in the following words:

" To the knower of Truth (God), all the Vedas are of as little use as a small water-tank is during the time of a flood, when water is everywhere." (BG. 2.46)

For both Hinduism and Buddhism religion is salvation. Bodhi or enlightenment, which Buddha attained is an experience. Perfect insight (sambodhi) is the end and aim of the Buddhist eightfold path.

Both believe in theory of KARMA and REBIRTH with one major difference. Hinduism believes that the atman (individual self or spirit) transmigrates from one birth to another, Buddhism holds that nothing transmigrates from
one birth to another. In Buddhist view, karmas of one individual give birth to another, but no identity is retained between the two individuals.

Buddha declared the Self and the World are both unreal. To a Hindu, the Self is immortal

and the world is an illusive appearance. However, behind the illusive appearance of the universe lies the Ultimate Reality which is the
seed of all things and beings in the world.

Buddha advocated a monastic life for attaining nirvana, Hinduism teaches that truth can be realized by all people from all walks of life, including householders.

Buddha refused to discuss topics, such as the science of the soul, the creation of the universe and the existence of God. These are questions which occupy the center of interest in the Upanishadic literature.

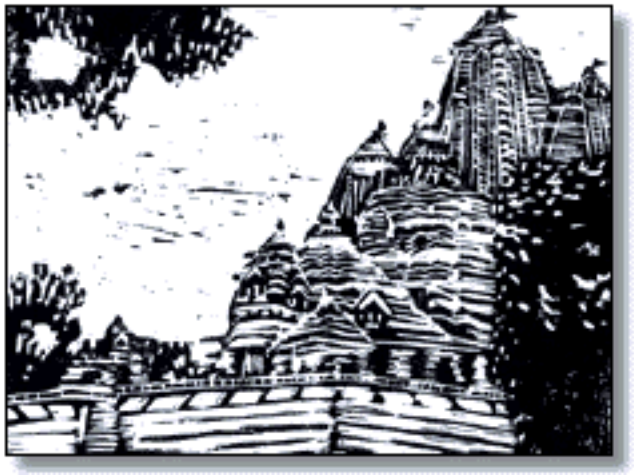
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Articles

1. **Christmas' Hindu Roots** - **By D. Parsuram Maharaj**
2. **Buddhism in Christianity**

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Christmas' Hindu Roots
D. Parsuram Maharaj (Trinidan & Tobago, West Indies)
http://www.swordoftruth.com/swordoftruth/articles/readersvoice/readersvoice3.html



Last year Christmas Trinidad & Tobago's Archbishop Pantin in his weekly column repeated what scholars have been asserting for years on the origins of Christmas. Archbishop Pantin essentially officially confirmed the celebration of Christmas was 'borrowed' from pre-Christian religions. This type of 'borrowing' was not new to Christianity that aggressively practised a process of inculturalisation in order increase its mass appeal and thereby win as many converts as possible. The practice is still employed by missionaries in Asia and even in Trinidad. What Archbishop Pantin did not develop was the celebration of the birth of the divine being was borrowed from a Hindu Deity. It is time that Hindus re-claim this celebration and its Hindu roots rather then to let continue to be hijacked by Christian mythology.

The festival that is now known as Christmas was actually a celebration for the Vedic Deity Mitra. According to "A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion" by John Dowson [1998] the Hindu Mitra was connected to the Persian Mithra which later was adopted by Rome. Mitra was a form of the sun, and in the Vedas he is generally associated with Varuna. Will Durant's "The Story of Civilisation, Volume III. Caesar and Christ" [1944] wrote "as far back as the second century the Eastern Christians celebrated the nativity on January 06th. In 354 some Western churches, including those of Rome, commemorated the birth of Christ on December 25th; it was ALREADY the central festival of Mitraism, the natalis invivti solis, or birthday of the unconquered sun".



The Christmas date of December 25 was originally the celebrated birthdate of the Roman version of Mitras. The 4th-5th century Church decided to 'borrow' that date for the sake of establishing a national holiday. The Iranian version of Mit(h)ra was called the "Light of the World" is another interesting fact to note. Mithraism explained the world in terms of two ultimate and opposing principles, one good (depicted as light) and the other evil (darkness). Human beings must choose which side they will fight for; they are trapped in the conflict between light and darkness. Mithra came to be regarded as the most powerful mediator who could help humans ward off attacks from demonic forces.

In the religions of antiquity the vast majority of the pre-modern world was syncretistic, meaning that one religion would often incorporate the myth and ritual of other cults with which it came in contact. Often the deities would simply change names. This suggests that we may be comparing Jesus (one individual) to the combined characteristics of multiple agents that are all called by the SAME NAME. Mitra--he is a mixture of Hindu Iranian, Greek, and Roman religious beliefs. Both Hindu and Iranian Mithraism predates Jesus .



Hindu thought was filtered to the West via Greek colonies which are known to have existed in India prior the time of the Buddha in the 6th century B.C.E. The Buddha actually refers to the Greeks in a discourse in the Middle Length Sayings. Alexander the Great's invasion brought Hellenism to India during the rise of the brilliant Mauryan empire (322-185 B.C.E.) in Northern India, and had significant impact on the upper class and urban segments.

After Alexander died, his empire divided into several pieces--one of which was called the Seleucid dynasty. In spite of the fact that the Seleucid and Mauryan dynasties were border-competitors, they still had a great deal of friendly interchange between them, and the first two kings of the Mauryan dynasty are referred to in Greek sources.



The peace treaty between them in 303 BCE included a marriage alliance, and Seleucus' ambassador Megasthenes lived for 10 years and travelled extensively in the Mauryan empire during the reign of the founding king Chandragupta (Sandrocottos in the Greek). Megasthenes gathered huge amounts of information about India and wrote a book (which is lost), many parts/information of which are preserved in the writings of Strabo, Arrian, and Diodorus.

One of the most famous of the kings of this dynasty was Ashoka. Although he is not mentioned in any Greek sources, he "records having sent missions from India bearing his message of the victory of the Dharma to the Greek kings Antiochus II of Syria, Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) of Egypt, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene and Alexander of Epirius."



Until his death in 232 BCE, he maintained frequent communications with the south and the west, even sending missionaries to Ceylon and to the West. Historical data and quotes shows, there was information about the religious content of proto-Hinduism transmitted to the West, and even about Buddhism. The last two centuries B.C.E saw the rise of the Parthian empire, which quickly became a barrier to cultural exchange.

There are material, significant, and pervasive similarities between Jesus Christ and other Savior-figures, and that these similarities are best explained by the hypothesis that the figure of Jesus is materially derived from or heavily influenced by these other Dying God/Savior-figures. The similarities between Jesus and the other relevant Savior-gods are material, significant, and pervasive enough to suspect a liberal borrowing. Scholars have proposed several theories to account for the obvious similarities between Christianity and the mystery religions. The birth and celebration of Christmas as a Christian festival is merely an example of one such borrowing.

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Buddhism in Christianity
http://www.hindunet.org/alt_hindu/1995_May_2/msg00015.html

A few months ago, I heard Jesus quoted "even to have an angry thought" was as punishable as actually murdering someone. This idea seemed to have a direct correlation with the Buddhist idea of "mental volition", that even our thoughts create karma. This seemingly obvious connection poses the question: what other teachings of Jesus Christ could be found mirrored in the teaching of Gautama Buddha?

There are three main types of literature on the subject: First, books that date from the end of the nineteenth century which attempt to show that there was Buddhist influence in the fertile crescent and in Greece during the years before the birth of Jesus. This speculation arose as a result of the translations of Buddhist texts into European languages that occurred during the British colonialism of India. Scholars recognized the similarity in the stories of the births and life styles of Jesus and Buddha. It was also noted that many of their teachings were parallel. In these seminal works there is much speculation about Buddhist influence in early Christianity. These books are often scholarly works that use sources such as the records of historians who were roughly contemporary with Jesus, and other texts: Biblical (Christian, Jewish), Greek and Arabic, in an attempt show an historical connection between the two religious traditions.

The second type of literature is the New Age genre books that attempt to tie the two masters together as emanations from the same cosmic divine source. In this group there is even a fairly extensive body of literature that claims that Jesus went to India and there studied from Hindu and Buddhist masters between the age of thirteen and thirty. These are referred to as the "lost years of Jesus".

The third type of literature, which could be called, "Creating a Christian-Buddhist Dialogue", seeks to compare and contrast the teachings of the two masters in an effort to

bridge the gap between cultures and make to the world a better place. This type of literature usually denies any borrowing or Buddhist influence in Christianity but does admit that certain elements within the two doctrines are similar..



Much of the early academic research that was done tended to center around the possibility of Buddhist influence in Palestine and in Greece during the two centuries prior to the birth of Christ. In India, around 270 B.C., the great king Ashoka ascended the throne, and after his conversation to Buddhism, he sent missionaries around the world to preach the word of the Lord Buddha. There are records, left by Ashoka, that indicate that "his missions were favorably received" in countries to the West. There are also records from Alexandria that indicate a steady stream of Buddhist monks and philosophers who, living in that area, which was at the crossroads of commerce and ideas, influenced the philosophical currents of the time.

There are strong similarities between Buddhist monastic teachings and Jewish ascetic sects, such as the Essenes, that were part of the spiritual environment of Palestine at the time of Christ's birth. The Essenes were a monastic order that did not marry. They lived in the desert and were very simple in their life styles. They did not believe in animal sacrifice and were vegetarians. They believed in the pre-existence of the soul and in angels as divine intermediaries or messengers from God. They were famous for their powers of endurance, simple piety and brotherly love. They were interested in magical arts and the occult sciences. John the Baptist was an Essene. His time of preparation was spent in the wilderness near the Dead Sea. Jesus was greatly influenced by his stay with John the Baptist. Many of the basic tenets found in the teachings of Jesus can be traced back to the ideas flourishing among groups such as the Essenes. Were these groups indeed influenced through several centuries of dialogue with Buddhist monks who traveled through Palestine?



Before, during, and after the death of Christ, there were Buddhist missionaries who visited Greece, Egypt and other countries in the Mediterranean area. One such visit is documented in 20 B.C. in Athens. In this account an ambassador from India was accompanied by a Buddhist philosopher who burned himself (to prove some point of impermanence?). His tomb became a famous tourist attraction and is mentioned by several historians. It has been argued that in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he alludes to this well known event when he writes that "though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing."

The fact that there was commercial trade between the Indian Subcontinent and Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt and the countries of the Fertile Crescent, for almost 2500 years before the birth of Christ is well documented. Cuneiform records dating from 2400 B.C. describe shipments of cotton cloth, spices, oil, grains, and such exotic items as peacocks from the Indus Valley region. Ideas as well as merchandise had been exchanged between the Middle East and India for centuries. Pythagoris is said to have been influenced by Oriental ideas and a Greek prince, Seleucus Nikator, shortly after the time of Alexander the Great, gave his daughter in marriage to the Indian sovereign and sent an ambassador, Megasthenes, to the court of Chandragupta, who was the grandfather of Ashoka. There were practitioners of Buddhism, living in the western parts of Askoka's empire who were from Greece and also from Palestine. This is known because one of the famous edicts of Ashoka, carved on a pillar in what is now the country of Afghanistan, is written in both in Greek and Aramaic, the languages spoken in Palestine at the time.



Stories of Buddhist origin, and some of the basic concepts of Buddhism, were known in the West prior to, during, and after the time of Jesus. The most famous Buddhist story that made its way into Christendom, is the tale of "Barlaam and Josephat," which enjoyed considerable notoriety during the Middle Ages and ultimately resulted in the canonization, in the sixteenth century, of Buddha, as a Catholic saint. In the story of Barlaam and Josephat, Josephat, which is a corrupted version of the word "Boddhisattva", was an Indian prince who was heir apparent to a throne occupied by his father, a tyrannical idolater who persecuted Christians. At Josephat's birth prophets predicted his future greatness as successor to the king, but one wise man said that the prince would achieve greatness not as a worldly king, but because he would convert to Christianity. To shelter his son, and prevent his conversion, the king kept him locked in the palace. Eventually, the young prince was allowed to leave the palace and saw a crippled man, a blind man and a senile man, and so learned of life's darker side (that life is suffering?). Josephat soon met a monk named Barlaam, who converted him to Christianity. The story continues that when Josephat went to search for Barlaam he had to suffer austerities and was tempted by the devil to give up his faith. He eventually found Barlaam and the two

lived as hermits until their deaths. Relics of these saints were worshipped in Europe and there were several churches built to Josephat in Russia, one in Vienna and in Portugal. As I said, they were canonized by the Catholic Church in the 16th century... Saint Josephat, the Boddhisattva.

Anyone who knows the story of the life of the Buddha will see the exact repetition of the tale in the story of Barlaam and Josephat: The fact that he was an Indian prince even provides the correct setting, the predictions at his birth of spiritual greatness, his early life spent locked in the castle and finally his exposure to people in pain and old age which led, in the case of the Boddhisattva, to enlightenment and in the case of Josephat to conversion. Even the austerities and temptations that they had to endure are parallel. There is no doubt that this is a Buddhist story transplanted and retold within a Christian context. The Buddhist origins of the story were obscured when the tale was retold in Europe, but earlier versions of the story exist in Arabic, which do not refer to Josephat's conversion, but which testify to the story's Buddhist roots. The fact that Saint Josephat was very popular in Europe, where his relics were worshipped, is an ironic aspect of this borrowing theory of Buddhist influence on Christianity since some scholars theorize that relic worship is a Buddhist implant into early Christianity. There are other Christian stories that have their origins in the Buddhist Jatakas Tales such as the conversion of the Roman general Placides, who was converted while hunting a beautiful deer.



There are numerous elements in Christian practices that could have originated from the many Buddhist missionaries who traveled from India spreading the teachings of the Buddha. Philosophically, Alexandria in Egypt was the center of early Christian thought. There is mention of a teacher called Ammonius Sakka, who had a great influence on the thinkers of the first century of the common era. Some scholars speculate that Ammonius Sakka could be a reversed form of "Sakya - Muni", one of the names of the Buddha, which means "the sage of the Sakya clan". (Sakya was Buddha's family name.) This philosopher-teacher who believed in reincarnation, has been called a Neo-Platonist. He was the teacher of Plotinus and Origen. Origen who was one of the early philosophers of the Christian church whose writings were later expunged at the Council of Nicea.

What are some other points of convergence between the practices of Christianity and Buddhism? There are a wealth of similarities: shaving or cutting of the hair of monastic initiates, ringing of bells, domed basilicas, shared legends, the practice of confession, relic veneration, celibacy, rosaries, monasticism, and the burning of incense. A comparison of the Sermon on the Mount with verses from the Dhammapada, yields a rich collection of interconnections and similarities. Even if some of these similarities are synchronistic in nature and are not borrowed, nonetheless, there are still many elements that have distinctive Buddhist overtones and which are not found within the predominant Jewish practices of the time. There are many stories about the life of Jesus and Buddha that are so similar that it is hard to believe that there was not some borrowing or merging of myths that occurred.



The story of the conception and birth of Christ in the Gospel of Luke has an uncanny resemblance to the birth stories of Buddha. In both cases the mother was a pure woman who had a vision and from this vision became pregnant with a extraordinary child, without the help of sexual intercourse. At their birth, each baby was surrounded by persons and events that marked them for greatness. Each was delivered outside while the mother was on a journey. Their births were



both announced by angels in the heavens. It may be hard for us creatures of the twentieth century to appreciate the role of angels, but previously, they played an important part in the scheme of things: bringing messages, making great spiritual announcement with pomp and splendor. After the birth of Buddha a hermit sage, who had heard the celebrations of the angels, was told by them with great rejoicing that "In the city of Kaplilavastu, to king Suddhodana, a son is born. This boy will sit on the throne of enlightenment and become a Buddha." In the Christian story, the angels appeared in great awe-inspiring beauty and told the shepherds that a child was born that day who is Christ the Lord. The story of the conception and birth of Christ in the Gospel of Luke has an uncanny resemblance to the birth stories of Buddha. In both cases the mother was a pure woman who had a vision and from this vision became pregnant with a extraordinary child, without the help of sexual intercourse. At their birth, each baby was surrounded by persons and events that marked them for greatness. Each was delivered outside while the mother was on a journey. Their births were both announced by angels in the heavens. It may be hard for us creatures of the twentieth century to appreciate the role of angels, but previously, they played an important part in the scheme of things: bringing messages, making great spiritual announcement with pomp and splendor.



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The Biblical accounts of the birth of Christ are somewhat different in Luke and in Matthew. In Matthew the account of the visitation by the Magi is dealt with in great detail. These Magi were astrologers from the East, where astrology had been a developed science for centuries. They represented the pinnacle of foreign scholarly achievement; and it was they, rather than the Hebrew, who were able to discern that the baby who lay in the manger in Bethlehem was a very special child. The word "Magi," is a Persian word that named a class of learned men who sought to master the occult sciences. This is the root of our word, Magic. Only later were they referred to as kings, initially they were called Holy Men. References to Magi in the Palestine of Jesus's day usually had negative connotations, but in Matthew's account, the reference is quite positive. Similarly, the infant Gautama was first adored by four divine archangels who presided over his birth in the wooded grove near Lumbini. Later, sages came to pay homage to the child and amazed

his father. In both stories there is a reference to a star that announces the birth of the great child.



There are other similarities in the lives of these two great beings. Some may say that this type of comparison is inevitable when great spiritual leaders come into the world. However, some of the events in their lives have quite a resemblance. Both Buddha and Christ were precocious youths who confounded their teachers with their gifted knowledge. Both began their spiritual quest at about the age of thirty. Both fasted and prayed in the wilderness and both were tempted by the devil while practicing these austerities. The setting of these two accounts is almost identical as are the events. Both men were fasting when tempted by the devil who tried to entice them into worldly pleasures and trick them into using the magical powers that they possessed. Both men overcame the temptation and soon left their seclusion and took up the mission of a life of teaching and traveling. Jesus's life at this time seems very much like the age-old life of an Indian mystic or holy man. He traveled from village to village and lived off the hospitality of the people of the village. There are some differences, but, nonetheless, both Buddha and Christ got into trouble with the ruling aristocracies by their deliberate blindness to social status and by taking food and refuge from courtesans and prostitutes.

Both masters told their disciples to leave behind their homes and families and to follow him. Both sent his followers out to preach their message. Both were social revolutionaries who reacted against the conservative elements of their time. Both put an end to animal sacrifice which was popular in both Hinduism and Judaism. As you can see there are great similarities in the lives of these two great beings. Both forgave evil doers, both conquered death in a metaphysical sense. The earth shook when each of them died. Their messages are also similar: they told their followers to overcome anger, to practice non-violence, to "turn the other cheek" to be pure of mind and body.



There is, as well, the school of thought that says that Jesus traveled to India during the lost years of his youth. There is a temple in the state of Kashmir that is dedicated to Saint Issa. The priests say that Jesus traveled there two thousand years ago. Many of the miracles performed by Jesus are similar to miraculous powers possessed by holy men in India. Jesus even taught his disciples to perform these miracles such as Peter walking on the water. There is a work by a Russian who lived at the end of the 19th century, Nicolas Notovitch, who claims to have seen an ancient document that told the story of Saint Issa and his return to his home in the West and his subsequent violent death. These tales are unsubstantiated and somewhat fanciful, however the priests at the Kashmiri Temple to Saint Issa are devout and completely believe in the story. There are also visionaries such as Edgar Casey who had similar visions of Jesus. Jesus did adopt a remarkably Indian-like approach to wandering, begging and preaching immediately upon beginning his public career. There is, however,

documented evidence that Buddhists traveled to the region where early Christianity was developing. It must be remembered that Christianity did not become the established religion for several hundred years and actually it was not the accepted religion of the European masses for almost a thousand years. During this period, when church theology was being formulated, there was much discussion about the true nature of the savior and many of the early ideas of the church were discarded in favor of ideas that would support the establishment of a centralized Church. These factors are a discussion for another time, but suffice it to say that many scholars have tried to prove that the Councils at Nicea expunged all references to reincarnation from the words of Jesus. He was after all, influenced by the Essenes, who did believed in transmigration of souls.

I realize that these ideas are heretical to some people. However to me, they are fascinating. That Jesus was divine, that He was God made man, I do not deny. I call Him an AVATAR, a Boddhisattva... but, I do not say that He is exclusive in this role.

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See also: Neander Hutchinson (Literature) Barlaam and Josephat

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Christianity: a naive beginning to a Buddhistic peace movement...(excerpts) The Will To Power

1888 By Nietzsche (1844-1900) the great German Philosopher, poet, classical philologist, who became one of the most provocative and influential thinkers of the 19th century. He was deeply influenced by Schopenhauer in his youth. One of the great European philosophers, **Friedrich Nietzsche's** beliefs were best expressed in his **Thus Spake Zarathustra,** in which his teachings are put into the mouth of the wandering prophet Zarathustra.

" Christianity: a naive beginning to a Buddhistic peace movement at the very seat of resentment - but reversed by Paul into a pagan mystery doctrine, which finally learns to treat with the entire state organization -wages war, condemns, tortures, swears, hates.

Paul starts from the need for a mystery felt by the broad, religiously excited masses: he seeks a sacrifice, a bloody phantasmogoria which will stand up in competition with the images of the mystery cults: God on the cross, blood-drinking, and unio mystica with the "sacrifice."

He seeks to bring the afterlife (the blissful, atoned afterlife of the individual soul) as resurrection into a casual relationship with that sacrifice (after the type of **Dionysus, Mithras, Osiris)**.

He needs to bring the concept of guilt and atonement into the foreground, not a new way of life (as Jesus himself had demonstrated and lived) but a new cult, a new faith, a faith in a miraculous transformation ("redemption" through faith).

He understood what the pagan world had the greatest need of, and from the facts of Christ's life and death made a quite arbitrary selection, giving everything a new accentuation, shifting the emphasis everywhere – he annulled primitive Christianity as a matter of principle.

The attempt to destroy priests and theologians culminated, thanks to Paul, in a new priesthood and theology - in a new ruling order and a church. The attempt to destroy the exaggerated inflation of the "person" culminated in faith in the "eternal person" (in concern for "eternal salvation"), in the most paradoxical excess of personal egoism.

This is the humor of the situation, a tragic humor: Paul re-erected on a grand scale precisely that which Christ had annulled through his way of living. At last, when the church was complete, it sanctioned even the existence of the state."

For more interesting articles:

Raising a holy rukus - CNN
http://www.cnn.com/2000/books/news/09/21/jesus.mysteries/index.html

Christ And Christianity In The Year 2000 - The Jesus Myth
By N. S. Rajaram
http://www.swordoftruth.com

Christianity - By Emma Goldman
http://au.spunk.org/library/writers/goldman/sp001501.html
First published in April 1913, in the Mother Earth journal.

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Vedic Links to Judaism
Brahma/Saraswati - Abraham/Sarah?

According to **Dr. Venu Gopalacharya** " Abraham and Sarah (Sarai) refer to the Indian version of Brahma and Saraswati. This indicates that this is an abridgement of some of the versions in the Indian Puranas .

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has informed in his book, **Pracya Mattu Paschatya Sanskriti,** that the Greeks asserted that the Jews were Indians whom the Syrians called Judea, the Sanskrit synonym of which is **Yadava** or Yaudheya, and the Indians called them Kalanis, meaning orthodox followers of the scriptures.

**

" The Jewish bible says that Abraham and Sarai went to the Middle East to escape a terrible flood that had taken place in their original homeland, at approximately the time that **Dwaraka** sank under the sea. I think it significant that Sarai was the half sister of Abraham and that Saraswati was the half sister of Brahma. Sarai had a handmaiden named Hagar. Ghaggar was a tributary of the river Saraswati. It would not surprise me if the tombs of Abraham and Sarai at Hebron, Israel are also those of Brahma and Saraswati. *There are even those who think that Jerusalem's Temple mount could be the resting place of Krishna.* There is no doubt. The **Yadavas** founded ancient Israel. The real name of the Jews, Yahuda, seems to suggest this." (refer to **www.viewpoint.com**.)

The Jews spell the name of the city of 'Yerushalayim,' of which the Sanskrit synonym is Yadu Ishalayam, which means the temple of the Lord of the Yadus (the descendents of Lord Krishna's clan.)
Star of David - the Jewish emblem consists of two interlocking triangles, one pointing up, the other down, which is a Trantic Vedic symbol or **Shri Yantra.**

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Did You Know

Got the Time?



According to Astrophysicist **Carl Sagan**, the age of the universe is somewhere around 12 billion-years-old. The Hindu tradition has a day and night of Brahma in his range, somewhere in the region of 8.4 billion years.

Dr. Sagan said, "As far as I know, India is the only ancient religious tradition on the Earth which talks about the right time scale. In the West, people have the sense that what is natural is for the universe to be a few thousand years old, and that it is billions of years is mind-reeling, and no one can understand it. The Hindu concept is very clear. Here is a great world culture which has always talked about billions of years."

"The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths.

It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond, to those of modern scientific cosmology. Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years long. Longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang. And there are much longer time scales still."

There is the deep and appealing notion that the universe is but the dream of the god who, after a Brahma years, dissolves himself into a dreamless sleep. The universe dissolves with him - until, after another Brahma century, he stirs, recomposes himself and begins again to dream the great cosmic dream.

Carl Sagan further says: " The most elegant and sublime of these is a representation of the creation of the universe at the beginning of each cosmic cycle, a motif known as the cosmic dance of Lord Shiva. The god, called in this manifestation **Nataraja, the Dance King.** In the upper right hand is a drum whose sound is the sound of creation. In the upper left hand is a tongue of flame, a reminder that the universe, now newly created, with billions of years from now will be utterly destroyed."

These profound and lovely images are, I like to imagine, a kind of premonition of modern astronomical ideas."

(source: **Cosmos - By Carl Sagan** p. 213-214).

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For more information on this topic, please refer to chapters on **Indian Culture** and **Symbolism in Hinduism**).

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

251. **Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul** (1932 -) Nobel Laureate, was born in Trinidad into a family of Indian origin is known for his penetrating analyses of alienation and exile. Writing with increasing irony and pessimism, he has often bleakly detailed the dual problems of the Third World: the oppressions of colonialism and the chaos of post-colonialism. His grandfather had emigrated there from India as an indentured servant. He is the author of several books including **Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted Peoples**, **India: A Wounded Civilization**, **Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey**, **India: A Million Mutinies Now**.

"The key Hindu concept of dharma - the right way, the sanctioned way, which all men must follow, according to their natures - is an elastic concept. At its noblest it combines self-fulfillment and truth to the self with the ideas of action as duty, action as its own spiritual reward, man as a holy vessel."

(source: **The Treasury of Hinduism - By Harischandra Lal Singh** p. 199).



Recently, he was in India to attend the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and discussed some of his controversial ideas about rewriting Indian history. **He has starkly reminded us time and again that India was ravaged and intellectually destroyed by invasions that began in about 1000 AD.**

"How do you ignore history? But the nationalist movement, independence movement ignored it. You read the Glimpses of World History by Jawaharlal Nehru, it talks about the mythical past and then it jumps the difficult period of the invasions and conquests. So you have Chinese pilgrims coming to Bihar, Nalanda and places like that. Then somehow they don't tell you what happens, why these places are in ruin.

They never tell you why Elephanta island is in ruins or why Bhubaneswar was desecrated.

You see, **I am less interested in the Taj Mahal which is a vulgar, crude building, a display of power built on blood and bones.** Everything exaggerated, everything overdone, which suggests a complete slave population. **I would like to find out what was there before the Taj Mahal.**

I'm actually more at ease with the epics, the Ramayan and the Mahabharat, and the stories from the Panchantantra. But I would like to see this past recovered and not

dodged. That foolish man Nirad Chaudhuri, who wrote one good book, then went into kind of absurd fantasy, he built a whole book around somebody who came with the invaders, Al-Beruni, who said, “the Hindus are very violent and aggressive people”. Their land is being taken away from them, they are being destroyed and enslaved and he says this. This foolish man Chaudhuri builds a book around this statement; that is the kind of absurdity we have to avoid."

(source: **How do you ignore history?** - interview - **economictimes.indiatimes.com** - January 13 ' '03).

He sees India as a vast and ancient civilization that successfully met its own challenges centuries ago. It was first disconcerted, then subjugated, and finally released by the West in a damaged condition. Islam, he claimed, had both enslaved and attempted to wipe out other cultures. He has touched upon the consequences of a series of Muslim invasions of India beginning in the 10th century--and remarked on how these invasions had "shattered" Indian (at that time almost exclusively Hindu) civilization. "There probably has been no imperialism like that of Islam and the Arabs,"

He has supported the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and the idea to build a temple at Ayodhya and expressed his sympathy for Hindu Revivalism.

"India was trampled over, fought over. You had the invasions and you had the absence of a response to them. There was an absence even of the idea of a people, of a nation defending itself. Only now are people beginning to understand that there has been a great vandalizing of India. The movement is now from below. It has to be dealt with. It is not enough to abuse these youths or use that fashionable word from Europe, 'fascism', There is a big, historical development going on in India."

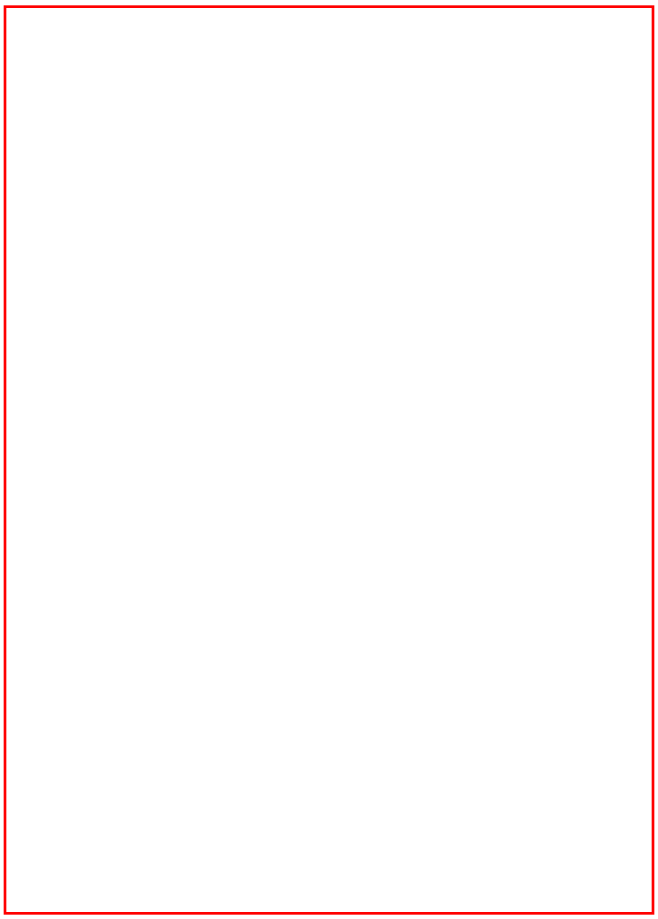
(source: **carribeanhindu.com**).

He has pointed that **India was one of the cultural basins of the world** till about 1400 AD or so, but it had declined since then.

(source: **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas - rediff.com**).

“India has been a wounded civilization because of Islamic violence: Pakistanis know this; indeed they revel in it. **It is only Indian Nehruvians like Romila Thapar who pretend that Islamic rule was benevolent.** We should face facts: Islamic rule in India was at least as catastrophic as the later Christian rule. **The Christians created massive poverty in what was a most prosperous country; the Muslims created a terrorized civilization out of what was the most creative culture that ever existed.”**

(source: **OutlookIndia.com**, 15 November 1999 and **http://www.indpride.com/vsnaipaul.html**).



Naipaul described the mosque's destruction as being part of a **"mighty creative process"** unleashed by Hindus. The people who say that there was no temple there are missing the point. Babar, you must understand, had contempt for the country he had conquered. And his building of that mosque was an act of contempt for the country. Today, it seems to me that Indians are becoming alive to their history. **Romila Thapar's book on Indian history is a Marxist attitude to history** which in substance says: there is a higher truth behind the invasions, feudalism and all that. The correct truth is the way the invaders looked at their actions. **They were conquering, they were subjugating. And they were in a country where people never understood this.**

"What is happening in India is **a new historical awakening**....**Indian intellectuals, who want to be secure in their liberal beliefs, may not understand what is going on. But every other Indian knows precisely what is happening: deep down he knows that a larger response is emerging even if at times this response appears in his eyes to be threatening."**

(source: **An Area of Awakening - Interview with V.S. Naipaul – By Dileep Padgaonkar** Times of India July 18, 1993).

He says Hindu militancy is a 'creative force'. "Dangerous or not, it's a necessary corrective to history and will continue to remain so." He feels that India was renewing herself, yet again, from her own inexhaustible stream of history and civilization, her native genius.

"Indian intellectuals have a responsibility to the state and should start a debate on the Muslim psyche," **To speak of Hindu fundamentalism, is a contradiction in terms, it does not exist. Hinduism is not this kind of religion. You know, there are no laws in Hinduism.** And there are many forces in Hinduism.... My interest in these popular movements is due to the pride they restore to their adherents in a country ravaged by five or six centuries of brutal government by Muslim invaders. These populations, in particular the peasantry, have been so crushed, that any movement provides a certain sense of pride. The leftists who claim that these wretched folk are fascists are wrong. It's absurd. I think that they are only reclaiming a little of their own identity. We can't discuss it using a Western

vocabulary."

‘‘I think every liberal person should extend a hand to that kind of movement from the bottom. One takes the longer view rather than the political view. There’s a great upheaval in India and if you’re interested in India, you must welcome it’’

"What is happening in India is a new, **historical awakening.** Gandhi used religion in a way as to marshal people for the independence cause. People who entered the independence movement did it because they felt they would earn individual merit. Only now are the people beginning to understand that there has been a great vandalising of India. **Because of the nature of the conquest and the nature of Hindu society such understanding had eluded Indians before."**

(source: **indolink.com**).

"I think when you see so many Hindu temples of the tenth century or earlier time disfigured, defaced, you know that they were not just defaced for fun: that something terrible happened. I feel that the civilization of that closed world was mortally wounded by those invasions. And I would like people, as it were, to be more reverential towards the past, to try to understand it; to preserve it; instead of living in its ruins. The Old World is destroyed. That has to be understood. **The ancient Hindu India was destroyed."**

(source: **Interview by Sadanand Menon** - The Hindu, 5 July 1998).

"The older I get, the more Hindu I become."

(source: **Hinduism Today** August 1999). For more on Naipaul, refer to chapter **Islamic Onslaught**).



252. **Glen Peter Kezwer** a physicist from Canada. He lives in Himachal Pradesh and is author of the book **Meditation, Oneness and Physics** writes:

" Spirituality is an intrinsic part of Indian culture and life. For the worshipper, this aspect of Indian culture serves as a constant reminder that behind the material forms which constitute our daily world, there is an unchanging consciousness which permeates everything.

From times immemorial India's message has been promulgated by her saints, sages, gurus and rishis and transmitted by them to those who were desirous of knowing the truth. The essence of this message is simple: **Behind the eyes of every living being on earth there shines a light. This light is one and the same in all beings. This light is immortal, blissful, eternal and indestructible. This is the light of consciousness which makes each and every one of us alive and alert and gives us the power to breathe.**

It is written in Chapter II, verse 30 of the **Srimad Bhagavad Gita** that Dayhee nityamavadhyoayam / Dayhay Sarvasya Bhaarat: The spirit which dwells within the body is eternal and indestructible. It dwells in the bodies of all, and is therefore the selfsame spirit in every living human being or creature. This spirit, which can also be called Aatmaa or Self, is the true nature of all. It is indivisible, being one and one alone, and is the unchanging reality behind the changing world which we experience every day through our senses. To know or realize this Self is the quest of every spiritual seeker throughout history, and **the means to achieve this loftiest of goals can be found in the spiritual heritage of India."**

(source: **India's Spiritual Heritage - By Glen P Kezwer**).



253. **Swami Chinmayananda** (1916-1993) founder of Chinmaya Mission. He was not satisfied with degrees in literature and law or with other worldly aspirations pursued the spiritual path in the Himalayas under the guidance of his Gurus Swami Tapovanam and Swami Sivananda.

Swami Chinmayananda was appalled by the fact that majority of Indians had no appreciation of their religious heritage, and that spiritual learning was given to only the privileged classes. From then on his only mission in life was to take religion from classes to the masses, and to "**convert Hindus to Hinduism**". He told his guru, "I feel the immense urge to go down to the plains and share the wealth of the holy scriptures with my fellow countrymen. I want to run down like a Ganga which nourishes and inspires with its refreshing waves. "If he thought the task was going to be an easy one, he was wrong for he faced stiff opposition from the orthodoxy. But he was not the man to be baffled by such obstacles, and he carried on with his goal of the democratization of religion

Has written several books including **Self-Unfoldment (The Self-Discovery Series).**

"Hinduism is not bound by any rigid text book or commandments, orders, declarations and revelations; but it is **a storehouse of scientific facts and has in it healthy impulses of a growing tradition.** The Hindu religion or Sanatana Dharma, is the way of life of perfect living and of gaining mastery over oneself. This religion reveals the secret process which brings forth an effective personality out of a shattered man of despair and disappointment."

(source: **Hinduism: The Eternal Religion - By M. D. Chaturvedi** p. 3-5). **Swami Chinmayananda - Tribuneindia.com**).

"Hinduism is the religion for our times," Unlike the other scriptures, the methodology followed by the Gita appears to be more conducive to the modern, scientific mind and the educated classes. For they don't believe in anything. They want everything to be rationally proved, intellectually defensible. And the approach of the Gita is very rational because Krishna had to address a dynamic, young, educated, intelligent man who was a born skeptic. Arjuna did not believe or understand that Krishna was an intellectual giant. It is only in the eleventh chapter that he got a glimpse - and, thereafter, his attitude changed. But till the eleventh chapter he was absolutely rational. He did not believe a word of what Krishna said. Krishna had to make him believe it by the strength of logic."

(source: **Chinmaya mission UK**).

In his book, **Vedanta: The Science of Life**, he states:

"The Gita is very intimately connected with the life of everyone of us, whether it be in the market place, at home or in the political field, Bhagavad Gita not only indicates theories of the Hindu way of life, but also reveals certain definite scheme by which every individual can work out his own self-improvement."

(source: **Hinduism: The Eternal Religion - By M. D. Chaturvedi** p. 52).



254. **Robert R. C. Zaehner** (1913-1974) British historian of religion who investigated the evolution of ethical systems and forms of mysticism, particularly in Eastern religions. The son of Swiss parents who had immigrated to England, Zaehner studied Oriental languages at the University of Oxford. Author of several books including **Hindu Scriptures**, and **Hinduism**.

It was the sublime ancient tolerance of Hinduism that he often stressed, that was the true proof of the wisdom and mature dignity of the Hindu tradition.

"In the family of religions, Hinduism is the wise old all-knowing mother. Its sacred books, the Vedas, claim, 'Truth is one, but sages call it by different names.' If only Islam, and all the rest of the monotheistic 'book' religions, had learned that lesson, all the horror of history's religious wars could have been avoided. **Which other religion has its God say, as Krishna does in the Bhagavad Gita, 'All paths lead to me.'**

"If only the Church had the sense to allow so many different and seemingly contradictory approaches to God, how much saner its history would have been!"

He also observed that all traditional poems and meditations and philosophical texts of Hinduism are "different-shaped peaks in one vast, grand, interconnected mountain chain, like the Himalayas."

(source: **Teachings of Hindu Mystics - By Andrew Harvey** p. xv - xviii).

255. **Vecente Avelino** (?) who was the Consul General for Brazil in India in 1930 belonged to the inner circle called **Tattva Shri Chaitanya**. He was a devout Vaishanava and an ardent admirer of Shri Ramakrishna. In an address at Panihati, near Calcutta, on the occasion of a religious festival organized by the Shri Gauranga Grantha Mandir to commemorate Shri Chaitanya's visit to that place, he said:

"India is the only country which has known God and if anyone wants to know God he must know India."

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisirkumar Mitra** p.207-208).



256. **Claude Arpi** (?) French dentist-turned-Tibetologist, author of **Fate of Tibet: When Big Insects Eat Small Insects** has written:

"Though I am still a French man, I adopted this country as my own long ago However, today, I am sad. When I left France for India, I came with a dream: I was going to the **land of the Vedas, of the Buddha, a continent with an eternal religion.** I thought everyone in this country was turned "inwards", seeking a higher light; I believed India would soon be able to guide the world towards a more meaningful tomorrow. Why I am sad now? I can't help feeling a terrible divide between this dream and today's reality (at least the one depicted in the English media).

I still believe in "India of the ages", but I cannot grasp why Indians themselves still refuse to acknowledge the greatness of their culture.

Is it not disheartening that historians base their judgment on press reports and not on their own scholarship? Then why do they spend three days discussing text-books when there are so many more important subjects related to history to be discussed? What about the **neglected discoveries of Poompuhar or the new sites in the Gulf of Cambay?**

It is estimated that 12 million Americans are today practicing **yoga** and that 450 yoga centers are blossoming in the US. The same tidal wave is submerging Europe. In France alone, more than one million people are practicing Buddhist meditation. **What is sad and shocking is that these historians, like many intellectuals in India, are not at all concerned by what has always made India great, they prefer to denigrate India. "**

(source: **India of old-new dreams - by Claude Arpi** - **dailypioneer.com**).

257. **Jean Michel Varenne** (?) the distinguished French Orientalist wrote in 1976:

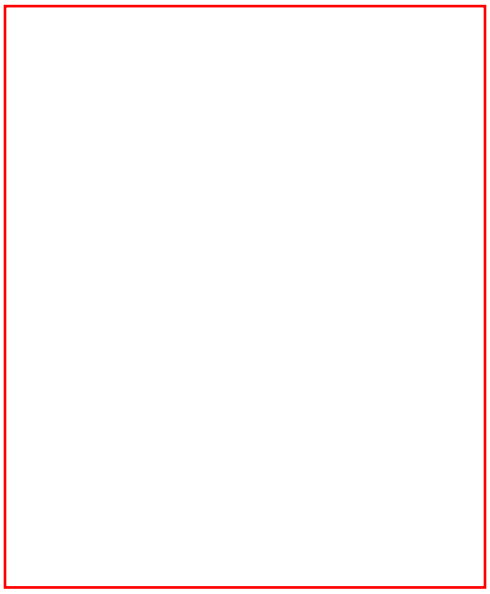
“The only remaining testimony to the prestigious civilization of ancient Egypt lies buried in archaeological remains; which meant that the inhabitants of the Nile valley, converted to Islam thirteen centuries ago, had to wait for Champollion to decipher the hieroglyphics before they could know anything of the beliefs of their distant ancestors. **Yet during all this time Hindu families continued, and still continue today, to venerate the selfsame Vishnu who is celebrated in the archaic hymns of the Rig Veda…”**

“It would be impossible to overemphasize this exceptional durability of a civilization that is extremely difficult to conceive of as mortal. And certainly the Hindus themselves would be the last to subscribe to the notion that all cultures have a limited life-span. That is the product of Western minds trained at an early age to write essays

on “The Causes of the fall of the Roman Empire,” of a Christian or a Moslem faith proud of the fact that its first believers once repudiated pagan polytheism, and therefore prone to assume that all civilizations are perishable the same way as human beings themselves. To the traditional minded Hindu, on the other hand, such revolutions are inconceivable, for him, the religion he professes has no beginning and no end; it had no founder, and it lies in no one’s power to attack or breach it. **It is the eternal norm (in Sanskrit, sanatana dharma), the universal law, the supreme religion. Being absolute, it cannot be modified in any way and remains identical to itself down through the ages.”**

Traditional India knows that nothing in the universe is chance, that everything is necessity. In the infinite multiplicity of the real it reads a reference to unity, and perceives the rule of a sovereign order even where complexity seems in danger of lapsing chaos and incoherence. The All, in itself and in each of its parts, is governed by an immutable, unbreakable law that supports the world while at the same time transcending it absolutely."

(source: **Yoga And the Hindu Tradition - By Jean Varenne** p. 1-15).



258. **Count Louis Hamon** aka **Cheiro** (1866-1936) author of several book, **Language of the Hand** and **World Predictions** published in 1926. Born in Ireland as William John Warner, Cheiro also went by the name Count Louis Hamon. He had a wide following of famous European and American clients like Mark Twain, Sarah Bernhardt, Mata Hari, Oscar Wilde, Grover Cleveland, Thomas Edison, the Prince of Wales, General Kitchener, William Gladstone, Bernard Shaw and Joseph Chamberlain.

He spoke of the Hindu race and the remarkable sciences for foretelling future, (The **Bhavishya Purana**) which the Hindus, have, as prophetic sciences:

“To consider the origin of this science, we must take our thoughts back to the earliest days of the world’s history, and further more to the consideration of a people the oldest of all, yet one that has survived, and who are today as characteristic and as full of individuality as they were when thousands of years ago the first records of history were written.

I allude to those children of the East, the **Hindus, a people whose philosophy and wisdom are every day being more and more revived.”**

“Looking back to the earliest days of the history of the known world, we find that the first linguistic records belong to the people under consideration, and date back to that

far distant cycle of time known as the Aryan civilization. Beyond history we cannot go; but the monuments and cave temples of India, according to the testimony of archaeologists, all point to a time so far beyond the scant history at our disposal, that in the examination of such matters our greatest knowledge is dwarfed into infantile nothingness – our age and era are but the swaddling clothes of the child; our manhood that of the infant in the arms of the eternity of time."

"Long before Rome or Greece or Israel was even heard of, the mountains of India point back to an age, of learning beyond, and still beyond. From the astronomical calculations that the figures in their temples represent, it has been estimated that the Hindu understood the Precession of the Equinoxes centuries before the Christian Era."

(source: **Hinduism in The Space Age - By E. Vedavyas** p. 233-235).



In a book called **You and Your Hand** by the late Count Louis Hamon, known better as Cheiro, this statement is found: "people who in their ignorance disdain the wisdom of ancient races forget that the great past of India contained secrets of life and philosophy that following civilizations could not controvert, but were forced to accept. For instance, it has been demonstrated that the ancient Hindus understood the precession of the equinoxes and made the calculation that it [a complete cycle] took place once in every 25,870 years. The observation and mathematical precision necessary to establish such a theory has been the wonder and admiration of modern astronomers. They, with their modern knowledge and up-to-date instruments, are still quarrelling among themselves as to whether the precession, the most important feature in astronomy, takes place every 25,870 years or every 24,500 years. **The majority believe that the Hindus made no mistakes, but how they arrived at such a calculation is as great a mystery as the origin of life itself."**

(source: **Antiquity of Indian Astrology**).

259. **Richard Lannoy** (1928 -) author of **The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society** has written:

"The Kailash temple at Ellora, a complete sunken Brahmanical temple carved out in the late seventh and eighth centuries A. D is over 100 feet high, the largest structure in India to survive from ancient times, larger than the Parthenon. This representation of Shiva's mountain home, Mount Kailash in the Himalaya, took more than a century to carve, and three million cubic feet of stone were removed before it was completed. **An inscription records the exclamation of the last architect on looking at his**

work: “Wonderful! O How could I ever have done it?”.

In Europe’s middle ages, the great cathedrals, including the one of Chartres, rose from the ground upwards to the sky, supported not so much by stone as by the powerful religious symbolism that drove the Christian church. In India, the craftsmen did not build, but removed the earth and stone to discover space in the service of a different religious symbolism, not one identified with any religious monolith, but instead, one to which different religious groups owed allegiance. Here Lannoy is more precise:

“A hollowed-out space in living rock is a totally different environment from a building constructed of quarried stone. The human organism responds in each case with a different kind of empathy. Buildings are fashioned in sequence by a series of uniformly repeatable elements, segment by segment, from a foundation upwards to the conjuction of walls and roof; the occupant empathizes with a visible tension between gravity and soaring tensile strength. Entering a great building is to experience an almost imperceptible tensing in the skeletal muscles in response to constructional tension. Caves, on the other hand, are scooped out by a downward plunge of the chisel from ceiling to floor in the direction of gravity; the occupant empathizes with an invisible but sensed resistance, an unrelenting presence in the rock enveloping him; sculpted images and glowing pigments on the skin of the rock well forth from the deeps. To enter an Indian cave sanctuary is to experience a relaxation of physical tension in response to the implacable weight and density of solid rock.”

(source: **Decolonizing History: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West 1492 to the Present Day - By Claude Alvares** p.72-73).



260. **Michel Danino** (1956 -) Born in 1956 at Honfleur (France) into a Jewish family recently emigrated from Morocco, from the age of fifteen Michel Danino was drawn to India, some of her great yogis, and soon to Sri Aurobindo and Mother and their view of evolution which gives a new meaning to our existence on this earth. He has been settled in Tamil Nadu for 25 years and has given many lectures in India and is author of **The Invasion That Never Was**, **The Indian Mind Then and Now** and **Kali Yuga or The Age of Confusion**. He is also the convener of the **International Forum for India's Heritage**.

He talks about Indian culture:

"The so-called “New Age” trend of the 1960s owed as much to India as to America; a number of Western universities offer excellent courses on various aspects of Indian civilization, and if you want to attend some major symposium on Indian culture or India’s ancient history, you may have to go to the U.S.A; some physicists are not shy of showing parallels between quantum mechanics and yogic science; ecologists call for a recognition of our deeper connection with Nature such as we find in the Indian view of the world; a few psychologists want to learn from Indian insights into human nature; hatha yoga has become quite popular."

He has shown the reverence with which nature is held in Hinduism.

"In fact, since the start of the Judeo-Christian tradition, the West broke away from Nature and began regarding her as so much inanimate matter to be exploited (a polite word for plunder). The contrast with the ancient Indian attitude is as stark as could be. Indian tradition regards **the earth as a goddess, Bhudevi ; her consort, Vishnu, the supreme divinity,** incarnates from age to age to relieve her of the burden of demonic forces—sometimes of humanity itself. This he does out of love for the earth, his companion. Sita means “furrow,” and she returned to the earth whence she came. Shiva too is bound to the earth through Parvati, daughter of Himavat, i.e. the Himalayas. Earth and Heaven are therefore inseparable: “Heaven is my father; my mother is this vast earth, my close kin,” says the **Rig-Veda** (I.164.33)."

(source: **bharatvani.org** and **Nature and Indian Tradition - By Michel Danino**).



"Western civilization, not even three centuries after the Industrial Revolution, is now running out of breath. It has no direction, no healthy foundations, no value left except selfishness and greed, nothing to fill one's heart with. India alone has preserved something of the deeper values that can make a man human, and the world will surely be turning to them in search of a remedy to its advanced malady."

Once India's ancientness is recognized, we can understand the strength that enabled her civilization to survive through all those ages. Whether she will survive her present phase of degradation and lead the world to a new phase is the question."

(source: **Sri Aurobindo and Indian Civilization - By Michel Danino**). For more on Michel Danino, refer to chapter on **Aryan Invasion Theory**).

261. **Jack Sarfatti** (?) Physicist of the **Physics/Consciousness Research Group** writes:

"I suspect that general relativity and quantum theory are two complimentary aspects of a deeper theory that will involve a kind of cosmic consciousness. The cosmic consciousness or the Mahat of India's **Samkhya Philosophy** is the basis of entire creation".

(source: **Science and Vedanta - By H M Ganesh Rao**).



262.**B B (Braj Basi) Lal** (1921-) On joining the Archaeological Survey in January 1946, he held charge of the Excavations Branch and participated with Sir Mortimer Wheeler in the excavations at Harappa, now in Pakistan. In 1951 he was deputed for advanced studies at the Institute of Archaeology, London. In 1961, under a UNESCO project, he conducted excavations in Nubia, Egypt, and brought to light valuable evidence relating to prehistoric and protohistoric periods of that country.

He was the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India from 1968 to 1972. He writes:

"The great civilization of the Indian subcontinent, has had its roots deep in antiquity, some seven to eight thousand years ago, and its flowering in the third millennium B.C. still lives on. In contrast, when we look round the world we are surprised by the fact that the Egyptian and Mesopotamia civilizations that flourished alongside this Indic Civilization have all disappeared, leaving hardly any trace behind. Why? The Indian psyche has indeed been pondering over this great cultural phenomenon of 'livingness', and this quest.."

" What is that ‘something’, some inherent strength? Doubtless it lies in the liberal character of the Indian civilization, which allows for cross-fertilization with other cultures, without losing its own identity. Even time **(kala)**, the great devourer, has stood testimony to the fact that the deep foundations of Indian culture could not be shaken either by internal upheavals, however great may have been their magnitude...." **" the soul of India lives on!"**

Speaking about the **River Saraswati**, he writes:

"Western linguists and historians and their, more vociferous, Indian counterparts claim that the Rigvedic Sarasvati was the Helmand of Afghanistan. The **Rigvedic Saraswati**, according to what is stated in the Rig Veda (RV. 10. 75. 5) itself lay between the Yamuna on the one hand and the Sutlej on the other. These two rivers do not exist in Afghanistan.

(source: **The Saraswati Flows on: The Continuity of Indian Culture - By B. B. Lal**. p. Chapter V p. 136).



Lal is **critical of ‘‘Western scholars and their Indian followers’’** for not accepting the unity between the Indus Valley and Vedic Civilizations.

‘‘Most likely, the authors of the Indus valley civilization were the Sanskrit-speaking Vedic Aryans,’’ Lal asserted. Lal invoked the **Rig Veda** to prove his thesis. **“To say the Vedic people were nomads is either ignorance or due to a willful twisting of facts,”** he alleged.

(source: **Times of India** 12/26/02).

He has dubbed the hypothesis of “Aryan invasion of India” a myth. He alleged that it was still accepted for reasons other than

historical.

"The theory that there was an Aryan invasion of India is completely wrong," Lal stressed in a seminar in New Delhi and alleged that political reasons were behind its being in the textbooks. "Do the proponents of this theory expect us to believe that urban Harappans, on being sent away to south India, shed overnight their urban characteristics and took to a stone age way of living?" asks Lal.

(source: **Aryan invasion a myth, argues former DG of ASI - indianexpress.com**). For more refer to chapter on **Aryan Invasion Theory**).

263. **Sir John Woodroffe** aka **Arthur Avalon** (1865-1936) the well known scholar, Advocate-General of Bengal and sometime Legal Member of the Government of India. He served with competence for eighteen years and in 1915 officiated as Chief Justice. He has said:

"Ages before Lamarck and Darwin it was held in India that man has passed through 84 lakhs (8,400,000) of birth as plants, animals, as an "inferior species of man" and then as the ancestor of the developed type existing to-day. **The theory was not, like modern doctrine of evolution, based wholly on observation and a scientific enquiry into fact but was a rather (as some other matters) an act of brilliant intuition in which observation may also have had some part**."

"Indian thought with its usual profundity and avoidance of arbitrary divisions, regards Philosophy as religious and Religion as philosophical."



The **Vedanta does not speak ill of any religion,** but assigns to each its place....I however was concerned with the religion of the "Idolatrous" "Heathen"...The point was this,...how could such a grade people have principles so excellent that the Western Religions also laid claim to them? It is clear that God has revealed Himself at all times and to all peoples according to their capacity to receive knowledge of Him. "It is Official Christianity which has been slow to recognize the merit of Indian teaching and to give credit for anything to the "Heathen." **Vedanta kindly tolerates even the most ignorant of its detractors. "**

" It is Official Christianity which has been slow to recognize the merit of Indian teaching and to give credit for anything to the "Heathen. The European man of a "religious" turn of mind is too often over-beset with sectarian notions."

Attacks on Indian culture however have led and will lead to its defense and appreciation. **Kalidasa** says:

"Jvalati chalitendhanah agnir viprakritah
pannagah phanam kurute
Prayah svam mahinmanam kshobhat pratipadyate hi janah."

"When the faggots are stirred the flame leaps. When the Snake is stirred it rears its hood. Through being stirred to action people mostly attain their proper greatness."

In writing then of Indian Culture I have in mind not any soiled or hybrid developments of the time, but **the principles of the civilization of old India, with its Dharma, Devata and Gomata - a civilization in its depths profound, on its surface a pageant of**

antique beauty - the civilization of India of the Hindus." In India there has been intellectual and spiritual freedom - the most valuable of all. The history of Europe on the contrary is marked by intolerance and abominable persecutions."

"If, as is finely said in India, Satyannasti paro dharmah - there is no religion higher than truth. As the Veda says, "Truth will conquer." (Satyam jayate).

(source: **Is India Civilized: Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p. xiv - 22).

"An examination of the Vedic thesis shows that it is in conformity with the most advanced philosophical and scientific thoughts of the West and, where this is not so, it is the scientist who will go to the Vedantist and not the Vedantist to the scientist."

(source: **Hinduism: The Eternal Religion - By M. D. Chaturvedi** p.16-17).

A judge, an educator, a Hindu scholar and translator as well as an author. During his multifaceted career, he practiced and taught law in India. Aside from his successful career in law, which lead to his appointment as Chief Justice of the high court in 1915, he had a a prolific output as a scholar of Tantra. Had it not been for him, we might still share that general prejudice regarding Tantra. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Woodroffe boldly disregarded the hostile attitude towards Tantra.

Sir John Woodroffe's achievement in the exposition of Tantrik thought cannot be over estimated. Himself a follower of Tantric cult, this great Englishman edited in a masterly way a number of Tantric texts and most of his views on them are regarded as authoritative. It is mainly through his writings - a rare combination of insight and scholarship - that the ideas of the Tantras began to enter the mind of the West in modern times.

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisirkumar Mitra p. 209).**

In his views, **Tantrism represents the full flowering of the religious spirit of India.**

(source: **Religions of Ancient India - By Louis Renou** p. 84).

Writing under the pseudonym, Arthur Avalon seemed to be an ‘An Indian Soul in a European Body? His books **challenged the dominant Western understanding of Tantra** as a primitive and demonic cult. His emphasis was on the philosophical aspects of Tantra and his conclusion that textual descriptions of rites should be read as deeply spiritual symbolism. Author of several books including **Bharata Shakti, The Serpent**

Power he has written:

"I believe that the East and particularly India possesses that which is the highest value. I wish to see this preserved for the mutual benefit of East and West. "

"...India has Panini, Patanjali's Mahbhashya, Supadma, Kalapa, the Vakyapadiya, Bhopadeva, Sangkshiptasara, Siddantakaumudi, Laghukaumudi, amongst the ancient, while the Vyakarna Kaumudi, Upakramanika of Ishwara Chandra Vidyasagara, and the ashubodha of Taranatha Vachaspati head the moderns. How is it that all these have been displaced? "

Indian tolerance is not merely a matter of temperament. It is based on the doctrine of the relativity of ordinary human knowledge and, in part, of morals and on the doctrine of Adhikara, that is the teaching that all people are not fit for the same beliefs and practices, and that what is suited to the capacity, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, of each person is that which he may and should accept, follow, and practice.

Hinduism has no word for "pessimism," a European conception, nor for optimism either. The universe according to it is a Dvandva or duality of good and evil.

(source: **Bharata Shakti: Collection of Addresses on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p. xxi-xxvi. For more information, refer to chapter on **Yoga and Hindu Philosophy**).

264. **Prof Klaus Klostermaier** (1933 -) Distinguished Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Manitoba in Canada. He is author of several books including **Hinduism: A Short Introduction**

"Hinduism has proven much more open than any other religion to new ideas, scientific thought, and social experimentation. Many concepts like **reincarnation, meditation, yoga** and others have found worldwide acceptance. It would not be surprising to find Hinduism the dominant religion of the twenty-first century. It would be a religion that doctrinally is less clear-cut than mainstream Christianity, politically less determined than Islam, ethically less heroic than Buddhism, but it would offer something to everybody.

It will appear idealistic to those who look for idealism, pragmatic to the pragmatists, spiritual to the seekers, sensual to the here-and-now generation. **Hinduism, by virtue of its lack of an ideology and its reliance on intuition, will appear to be more plausible than those religions whose doctrinal positions petrified a thousand years ago..."**

"Hinduism will spread not so much through the gurus and swamis, who attract a certain number of people looking for a new commitment and a quasi-monastic life-style, but it will spread mainly through the **work of intellectuals and writers,** who have found certain **Hindu ideas convincing** and who identify them with their personal beliefs. **A fair number of leading physicists and biologists have found parallels between modern science and Hindu ideas.** An increasing number of creative scientists will come from a Hindu background, will consciously, and unconsciously blend their scientific and their religious ideas. **All of us may be already much more Hindu than we think."**

(source: **A Survey of Hinduism - by Klaus Klostermaier** p 475-476).



265. **Swami B V Tripurari** (?) American born has spent over 30 years as a Hindu monastic, Awarded the sannyasa order in 1975, Swami Tripurari has studied under several spiritual masters in the Gaudiya lineage, notably AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. He is the founder of the **Gaudiya Vaishava Society** in 1985, author of several books, most recently **Bhagavad-Gita: Its Feeling and Philosophy.**

"For those now disenchanted with industrialization and scientific materialism as well as pseudo spirituality, India's ancient spiritual heritage provides a rich alternative. **Eastern philosophy, and the devotional heart of India's Vedanta in particular, can fill the empty shopping bag of our Western accomplishments.**"

'Whoever reads the Bhagavad Gita for the first time will be struck by the beauty and depth of this work."

"Our present environmental crisis is in essence a spiritual crisis. We need only to look back to medieval Europe and the psychic revolution that vaulted Christianity to victory over paganism to find the spirit of the environmental crisis. Inhibitions to the exploitation of nature vanished as the Church took the "spirits" out of the trees, mountains, and seas. Christianity's ghost-busting theology made it possible for man to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects. It made nature man's monopoly. This materialist paradigm has dominated the modern world for last few centuries. The current deplorable condition demands a spiritual response. A fundamental reorientation of human consciousness, accompanied by action that is born out of inner commitment, is very much needed. **One of the measures that could help a great deal to fulfill this need is to regenerate and rejuvenate basic values of Hindu culture and propagate them."**

(source: **Ancient Wisdom for Modern Ignorance - By B V Tripurari** p ix -xii and 13). For more on Swami Tripurari refer to chapter on **Nature Worship**).

266. **Madeleine Biardeau** (?) was professor of Indian Religion at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, author of several books, including **Studies in Hinduism: Vedism and Hinduism** and **India.**

She wrote about the interchange that is continually occurs in Indian philosophy and which can even be experienced by the more prosaic foreigner if he is willing to attune himself to the Indian atmosphere. She writes that, as well as being 'a personal loving God in the form of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, divinity is at the same time referred to in the Bhagavad Purana divinity and in many other texts as supremely impassive - none other than the cosmos itself.

"The God of Indian devotion - bhakti who responds to the same eternal needs of the human heart as exists anywhere else, never detaches himself wholly from the immanence of the world. He is personal and endowed with feelings only in the eyes of popular piety; to thought he reveals himself both far beyond and within at the same time; he reveals it as much as he hides it; and each man is in himself in some sort a manifestation of God."

(source: **The Music of India - By Peggy Holroyde** p. 36).

267. **Navaratna S Rajaram** (1943 -) is a mathematician, computer scientist and linguist and historian of science. He has taught in several universities in the United States. Since 1984 he has been an advisor to the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA). He has written several books including **Politics of History, Aryan Invasion Theory and the Subversion of Scholarship**

''Hindu God is not an external God who reveals himself only to a chosen prophet to be then imposed as the ultimate authority on others. God is something that anyone can know through one's own effort and seeking. Remember Krishna's words: "All creatures great and small - I am equal to all; I hate none, nor have I any favorites." The different yogas are pathways that can lead one to knowledge of God. This is similar to ancient Greek mysticism as practiced by sages like Pythagoras. **There is no dogma that an external agent enforces upon everyone in the name of One God.** Thus, the Hindu God like the Greek God is a personal God - as diverse as the individual. The multiplicity of Gods one sees in Hindu and Greek pantheons is a reflection of the multiplicity of pathways explored by sages. **It is a natural consequence of the spiritual freedom that is the right of every Hindu. "**

(source: **A Hindu View of the World: Essays In the Intellectual Kshatriya Tradition - By N S Rajaram** p. 8).



268. **Swami Dayanand Saraswati** (1824-1883) Rightly described as a human dynamo, Swami Dayananda shook the structure of established Hinduism to its foundations and infused into it new blood and fresh vigor. The founder of **Arya Samaj,** was a prophet with a difference. Dayanand is the father of both Renaissance (he brought to life world's supreme knowledge, the Vedas, with his slogan 'Back to Vedas) and Reformation. In 1849, the British annexation of Punjab, introduced the **aggressive conversion of faith of Christianity.** In time, Christianity threatened each of the coexisting religions. Christian missionaries brought with them new forms of organization and techniques of proselytism. He created a psychological revolution and gave tremendous self-confidence to Hindudom. Swamy Dayananda took the Christian and Muslim converts back into the Hindu fold by performing purification rites for them.

The British rulers sought to consolidate their rule by instilling inferiority complex among the then 90 per cent majority community. The British called Indians "most backward, barbaric, without the gift of scientific inventions and discoveries, the worst and most pitiable creatures, to whom we brought the light of learning, blessings of science and modernism"

Dayanand thundered: **'Our Vedas are the earliest books, Hinduism is the most ancient of all the religions that have survived".**

(source: **The prophet with a difference - tribuneindia.com**).

Another very important contribution of Swami Dayananda is his work, **'Satyartha Prakash'** (The Light of Truth). It contains fourteen chapters. It is a great book. It explains the true meaning of the Vedas and therefore is 'Satyartha Prakash'. And it is based solely on the Vedas.

(source: **freeindia.org**). For more on Dayananda Saraswati, refer to chapter **Unknown**

Hindu Revivalists).

269. **Peggy Holroyde** (?) British author of several books on India including **Indian Music: a vast ocean of promise** and **East comes West: a background to some Asian Faiths**, writes:

"The sparkling energy of India lies in Hinduism. Without the framework of Hindu belief India would fall apart. Without Hinduism India is not herself.

"Because Indian society has, like the Chinese, been a unitary one where science and religion have never been in conflict, there has been no basic split as has happened with our own Christian background. Our own antagonism between the two disciplines of theology and science has created chaos in our thinking and a curious dichotomy during the past two centuries. In India I found a thankful release from our restricted vision of the creation of God."

"Hinduism has remained in constant, replenished usage throughout this tremendous stretch of time, impervious to outside influence, as onward flowing as the imperturbable Ganges itself. Not even Moghul invasion and Muslim supremacy for 700 years, nor the arrival of the British, Dutch, French and Portuguese with their own civilization and standards, penetrated into the imperious core of this steadfast faith. Hindu thought took and absorbed according to its own will, folding itself inwards at the sense of approaching danger like some gigantic sea-anemone drawing up all its tentacles, only to stretch outwards and flourish when the danger was past. One continues to hope that this will remain so, **that modern Indians will realize that this is their enviable strength despite all their understandable yearnings for the material advantages of technology which they have seen give power and monopoly of advantage to the Western world. But their quality of synthesis, of intelligent absorption, may still save them from the sterility of urban life and the monotonous obsession with quantity and things, rather than with quality and life-perspective."**

(source: **The Music of India - By Peggy Holroyde** p. 44-52)..



270. **Fritjof Capra** (1939 -) Austrian-born famous theoretical high-energy physicist and ecologist and the author of **The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism**, He is co-director of the Center for Eco-Literacy in Berkeley. **Capra** who studied with Werner Heisenberg says:

"Hinduism cannot be called a philosophy, nor is it a well defined religion. It is, rather, a large and complex socio-religious organism consisting of innumerable sects, cults, and philosophical systems and involving various rituals, ceremonies and spiritual disciplines, as well as the worship of countless gods, and goddesses. **The many facets of this complex, and yet persistent and powerful spiritual tradition mirror the geographical, racial, linguistic and cultural**

complexities of India's vast subcontinent. The manifestations of Hinduism range from highly intellectual depth to the naïve ritual practices of the masses. If the majority of the Hindus are simple villagers who keep the popular religion alive in their daily worship, **Hinduism has, on the other hand, brought forth a large number of outstanding spiritual teachers to transmit its profound insights.** "

The **Upanishads** contain the essence of Hinduism's spiritual message. They have guided and inspired India's greatest minds for the last twenty-five centuries, in accordance with the advice given by their verses:

Taking as a bow the great weapon of the Upanishad,
One should put upon it an arrow sharpened by
Meditation.
Stretching it with a though directed to the essence of That,
Penetrate that Imperishable as the mark, my friend.

Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the seasons and in the birth and death of all living creatures, but is also the very essence of inorganic matter. Modern physics has thus revealed that every subatomic particle not only performs an energy dance, but also **is** an energy dance; a pulsating process of creation and destruction.

"I saw cascades of energy coming down from outer space, in which particles were destroyed and created in rhythmic pulses; I saw the atoms of the elements and those of my body participating in this cosmic dance of energy; I felt its rhythm and I heard its sound, and at that moment I knew that this was the **Dance of Shiv, the Lord of Dancers."**

"The metaphor of the cosmic dancer has found its most profound and beautiful expression in Hinduism in the image of the dancing Shiva."

"The dance of Shiva is the dancing universe, the ceaseless flow of energy going through an infinite variety of patterns that melt into one another''.

For the modern physicists, then **Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter**. As in Hindu mythology, it is a continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos; the basis of all existence and of all natural phenomenon. Hundreds of years ago, Indian artists created visual images of dancing Shivas in a beautiful series of bronzes. In our times, physicists have used the most advanced technology to portray the patterns of the cosmic dance. The bubble-chamber photographs of interacting particles, which bear testimony to the continual rhythm of creation and destruction in the universe, are visual images of the dance of Shiva equaling those of the Indian artists in beauty and profound significance. The metaphor of the cosmic dance thus unifies ancient mythology, religious art, and modern physics. It is indeed, as Coomaraswamy has said, 'poetry, but none the less science."



Lord Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter.

"The idea of a periodically expanding and contracting universe, which involves a scale of tome and space of vast proportions; has arisen not only in modern cosmology, but also in ancient Indian mythology. Experiencing the universe as an organic and rhythmically moving cosmos, the Hindus were able to develop evolutionary cosmologies which come very close to our modern scientific models. **The Hindu sages were not afraid to identify this rhythmic divine play with the evolution of the cosmos as a whole.** They pictured the universe as periodically expanding and contracting and gave the name kalpa to the unimaginable time span between the beginning and the end of one creation. **The scale of this ancient myth is indeed staggering; it has taken the human mind more than two thousand years to come up again with a similar concept."**

"..the two foundations of of twentieth-century physics - quantum theory and relativity theory - both force us to see the world very much in the way a Hindu, Buddhist...sees it."

(source: **The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism - By Fritjof Capra** p. 85 - 245 and 17).

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

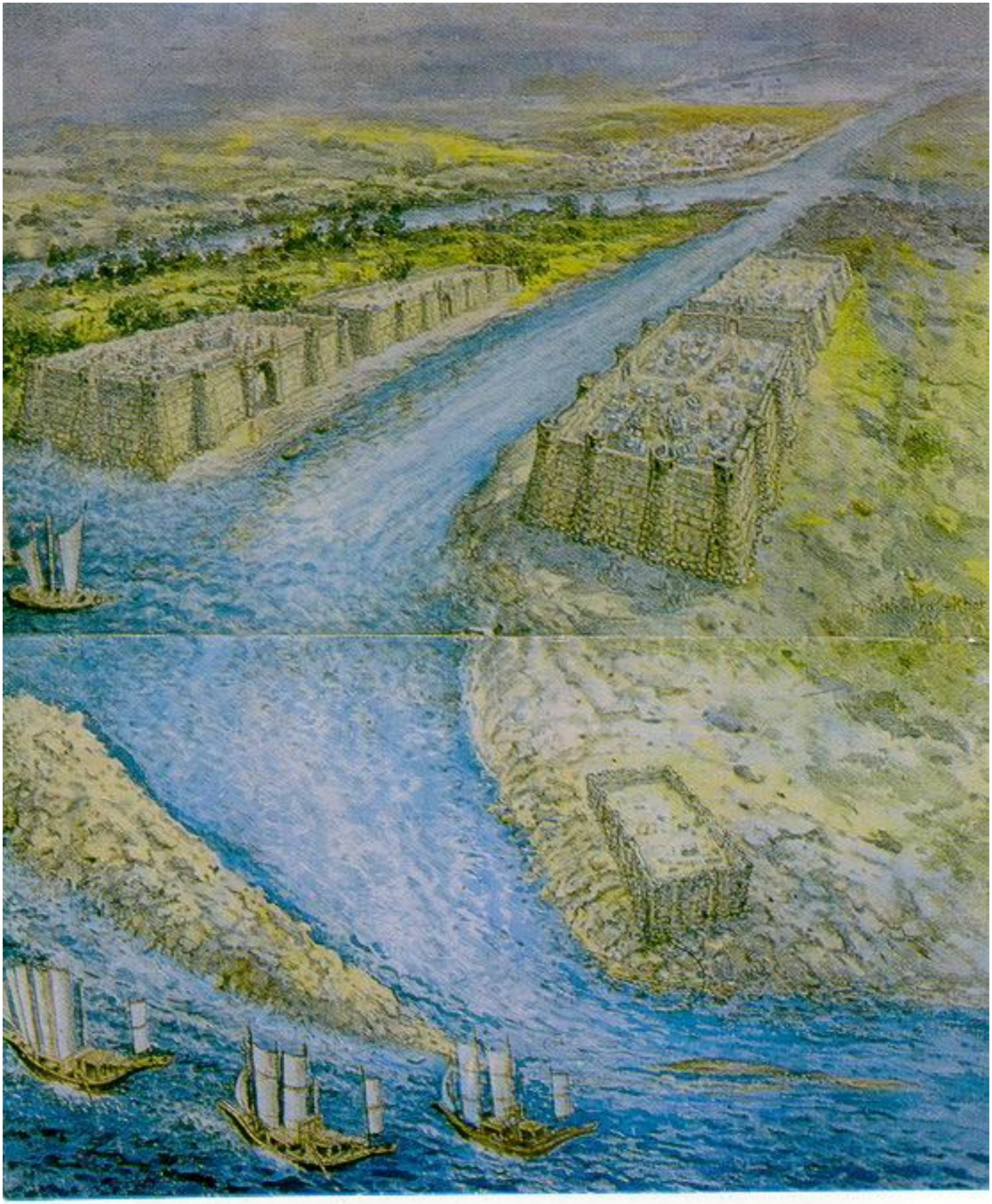


A circular bastion of submerged fort wall of Dvārakā.





A long wall plotted and photographed by diver-archaeologists.



Harbour of ancient Dvārakā.

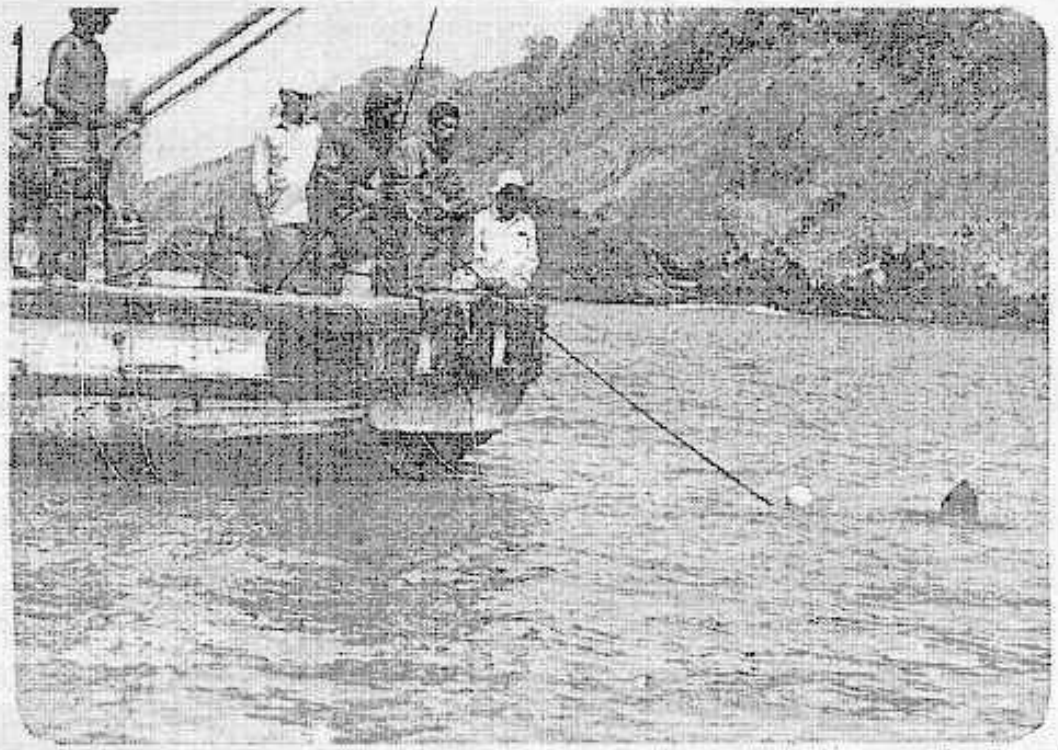


A prismatic stone anchor at buoys A-4–A-5, DWK.





Large bastion at buoy 8 in Zone 1, DWK.



Pl 27. The Marine Archaeological expedition team surveys a sunken steel-hulled ship near Grandi Island, Goa.



Pl 28. A diver archaeologist plots the excellent masonry of submerged buildings of Dwarka.



Pl 29. A diver archaeologist measures one of the three cannons in the shipwreck of Arnee Shoals in Goa waters.

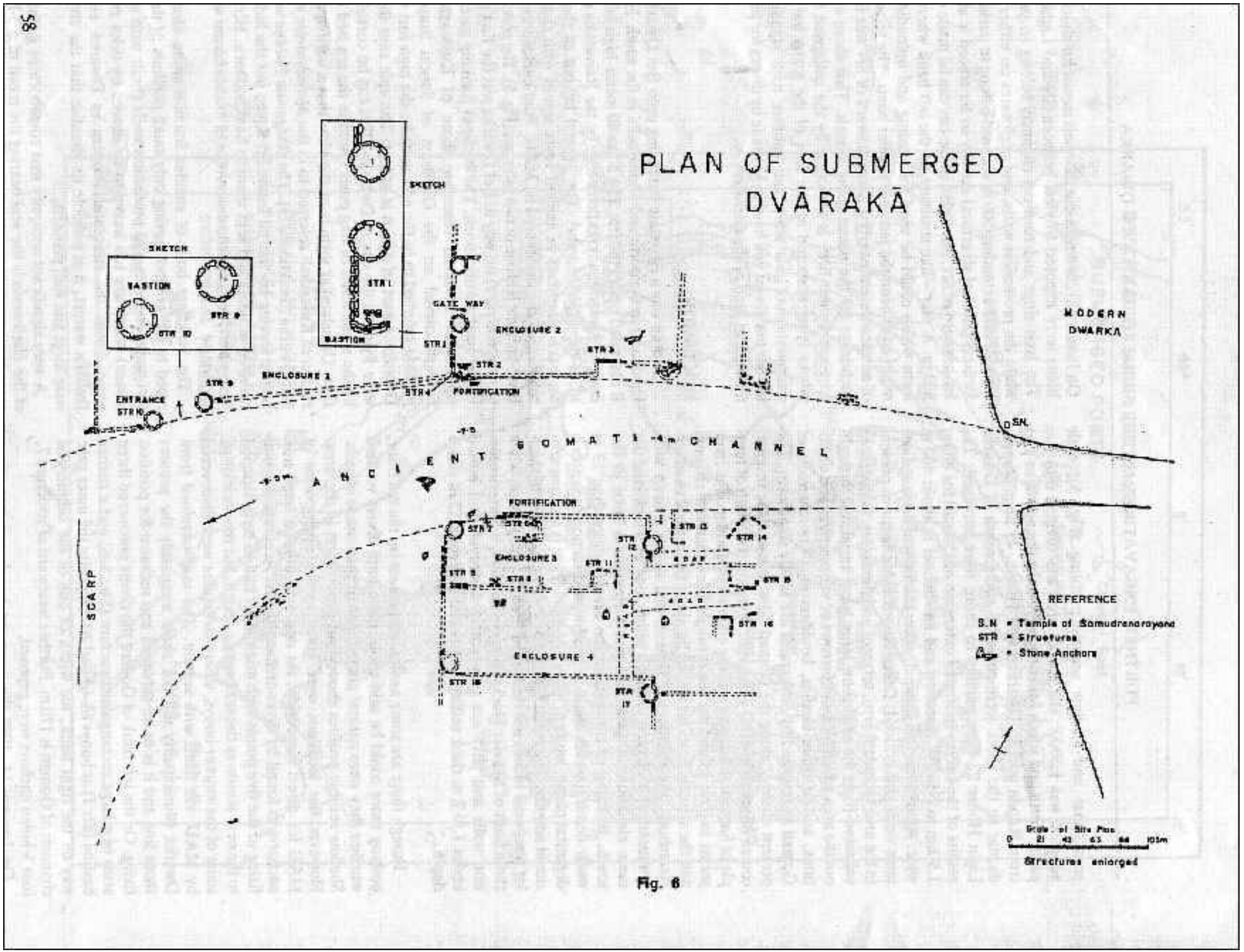
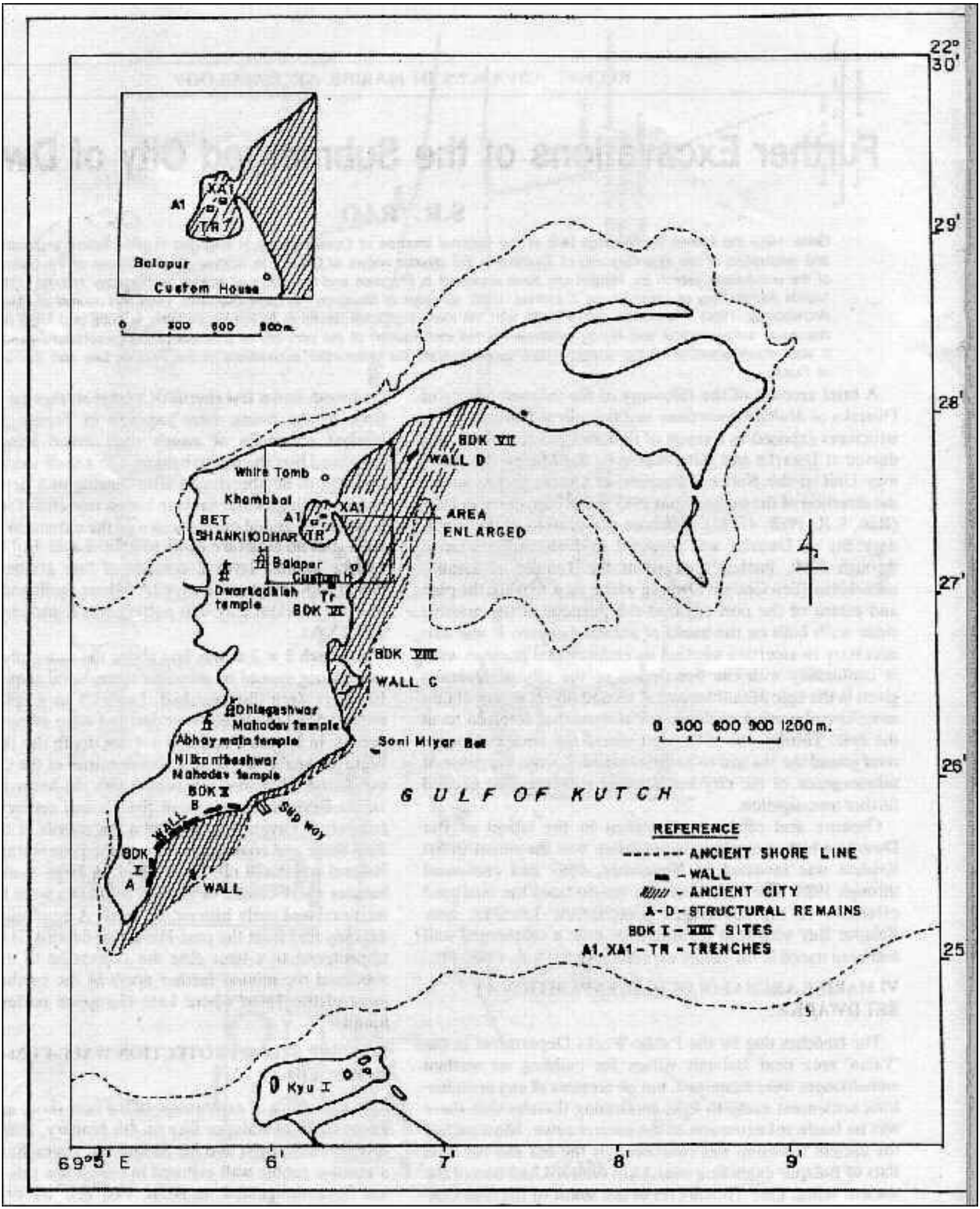
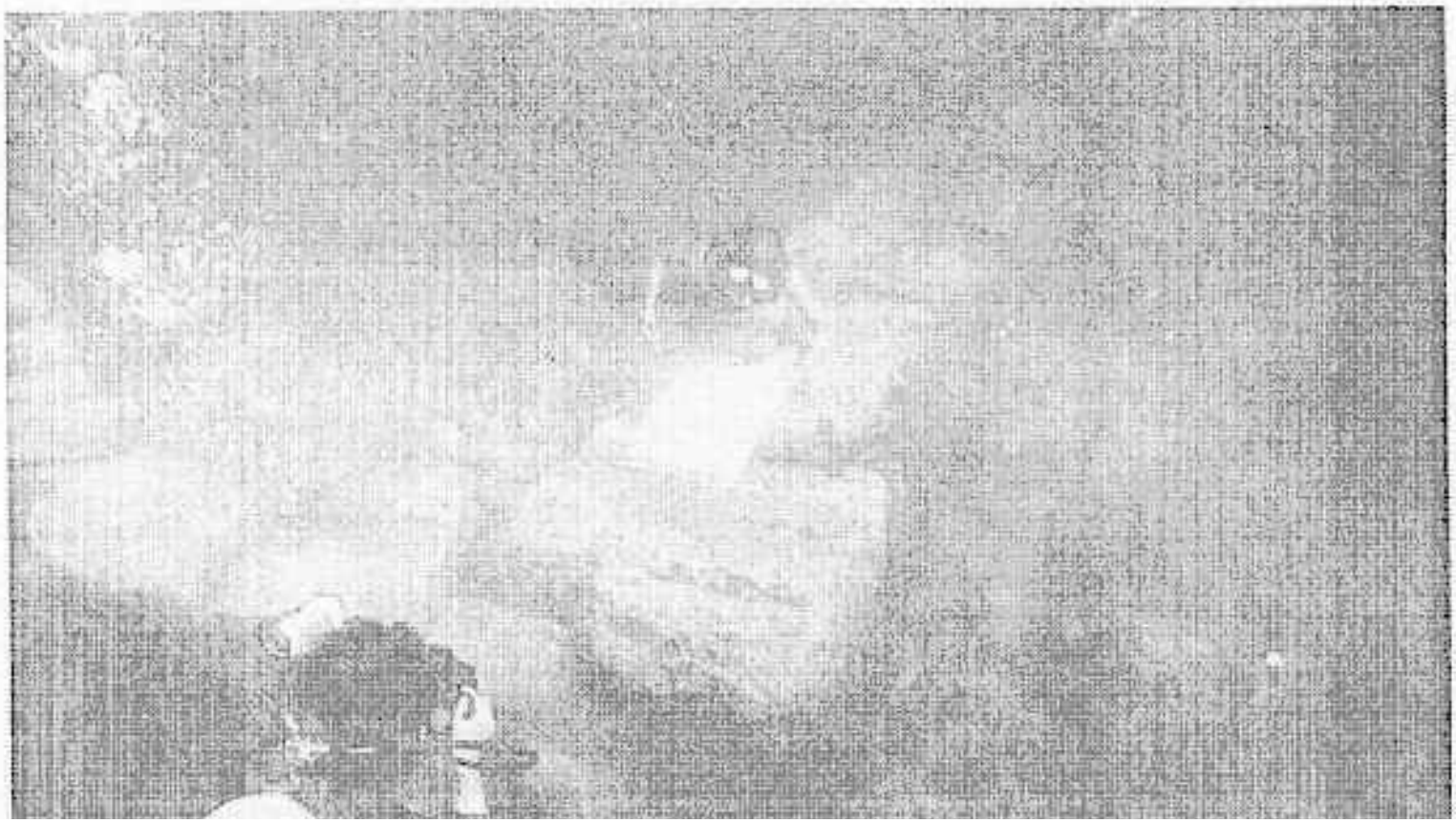

PLAN OF SUBMERGED
DVĀRAKĀ
SKETCH
BASTION
STR 9
STR 10
STR 1
GATE WAY
ENCLOSURE 2
STR 3
STR 2
STR 4
FORTIFICATION
ENCLOSURE 1
ENTRANCE
STR 6
MODERN
DWARKA
S.N.
GOMATI CHANNEL
ANCIENT
SCARP
ENCLOSURE 3
STR 11
STR 12
STR 13
STR 14
STR 15
STR 16
ENCLOSURE 4
STR 17
STR 18
REFERENCE
S.N = Temple of Samudranarayana
STR = Structures
= Stone Anchors
Structures enlarged

Fig. 6


22° 30'
29'
28'
27'
26'
25'
69°5' E
6'
7'
8'
9'
XA1
A1
TR
Balapur
Custom House
0 300 600 900m.
BDK VII
WALL D
White Tomb
Khambhat
BET SHANKHODHAR
AREA ENLARGED
Balapur Custom H.
Dwarkadhish temple
Tr
BDK VI
BDK VIII
WALL C
Dhingeshwar Mahadev temple
Abhaymata temple
Nilkantheshwar Mahadev temple
Soni Miyar Bet
0 300 600 900 1200 m.
BDK II
B
WALL
Sup way
BDK I
A
WALL
GULF OF KUTCH
REFERENCE
ANCIENT SHORE LINE
WALL
ANCIENT CITY
A-D - STRUCTURAL REMAINS
BDK I - VIII SITES
A1, XA1 - TR - TRENCHES
Kyu I



Pl 20. Dwarka: Bastion

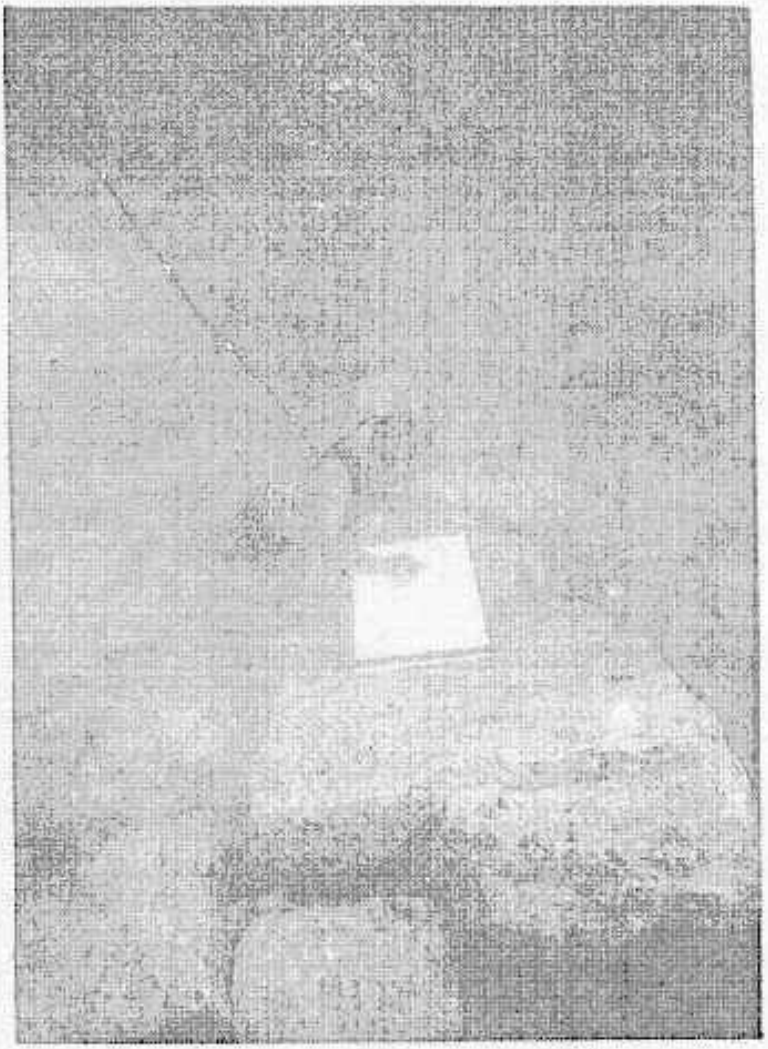




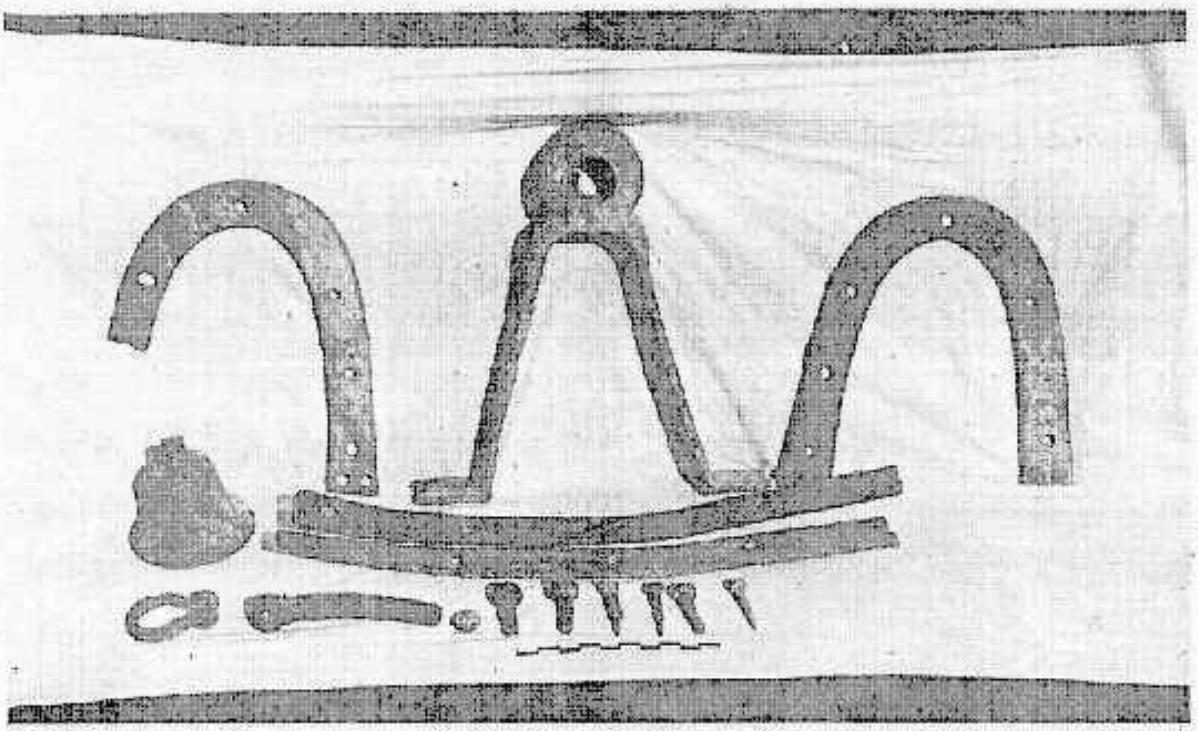
Pl 21. Dwarka: Wall



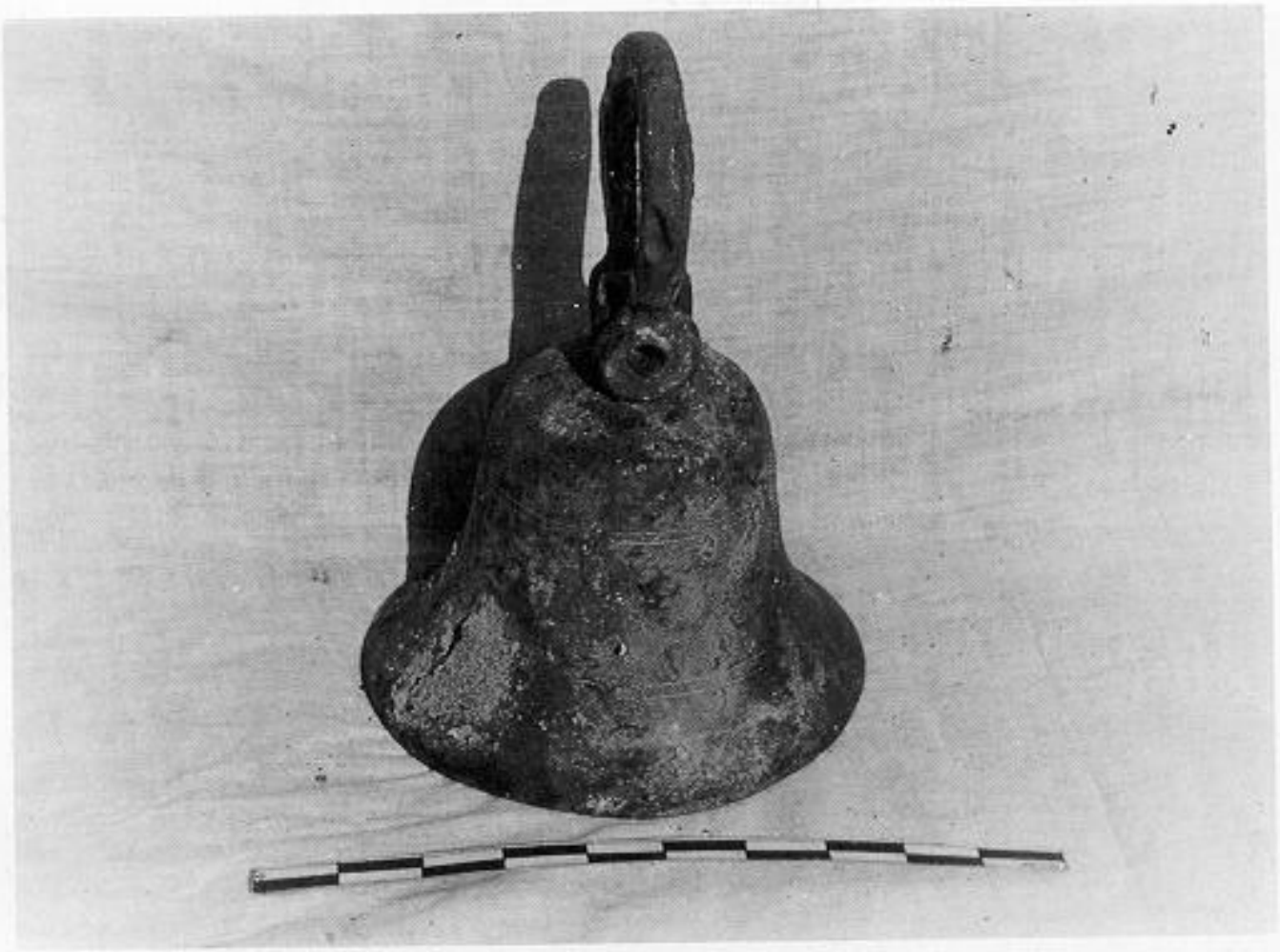
Pl 24. Crescentic and L-shaped joints in a massive bastion of ancient Dwarka city submerged in the sea.



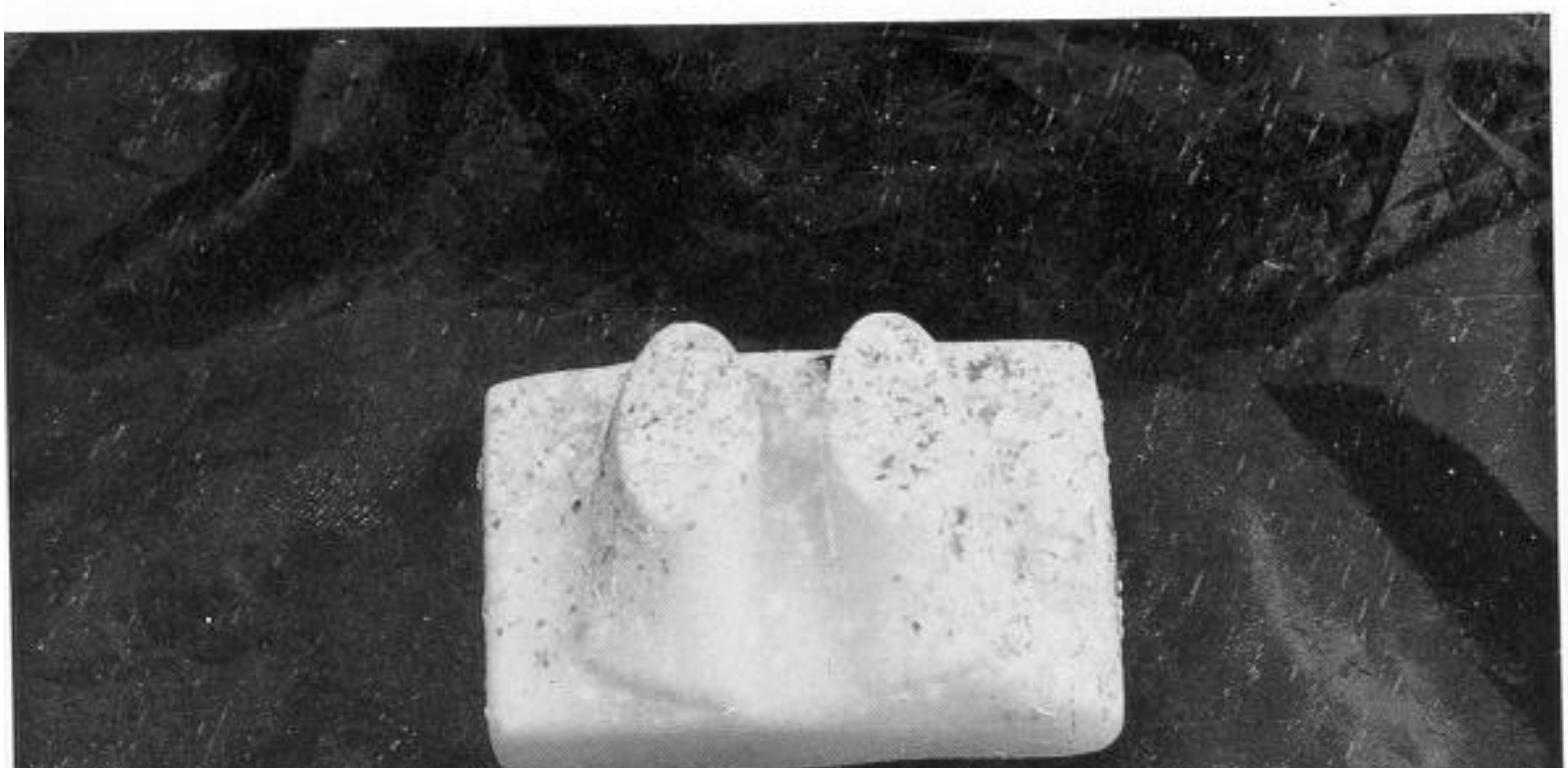
Pl 25. The Diver-archaeologist plots a massive building of Dwarka in the sea.



Pl 26. Dwarka: Brass arches, nails and copper bell – recovered from sea-bed excavation.

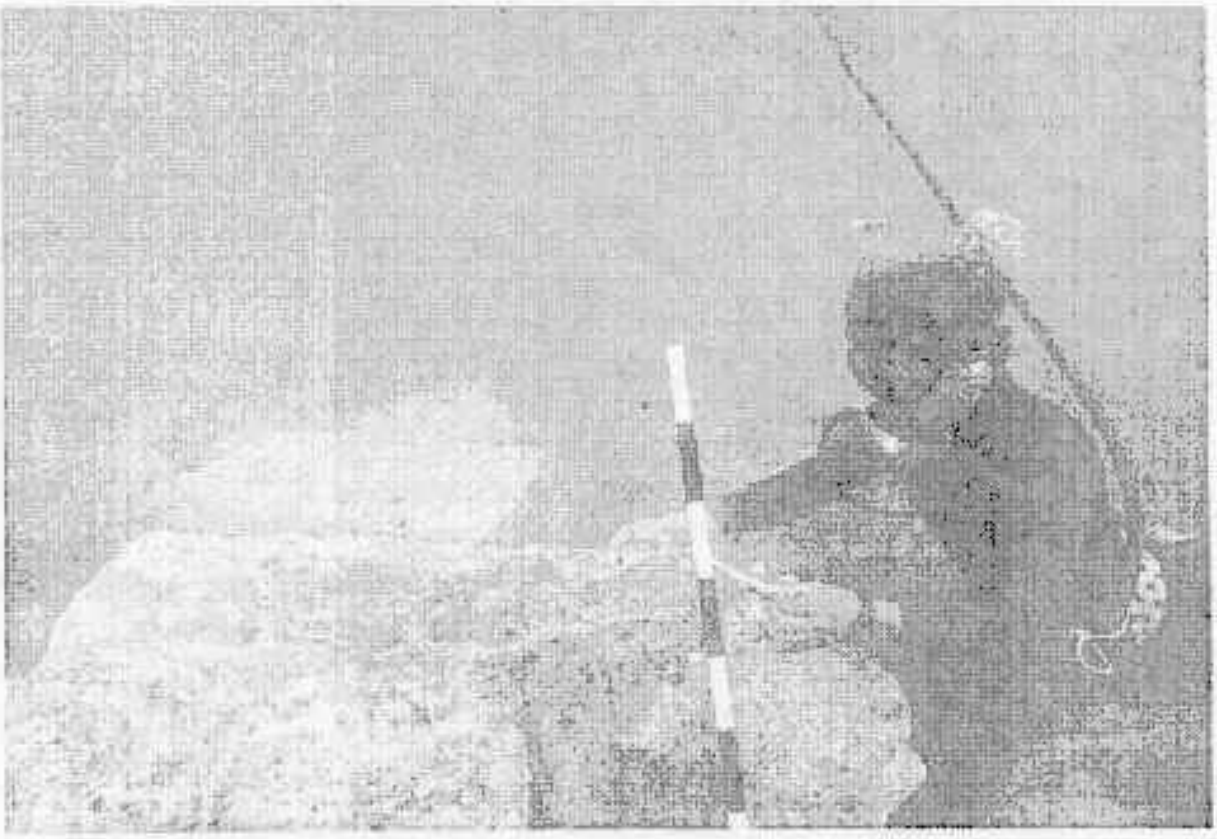


A bronze bell found in excavation near buoys 56–57, DWK.



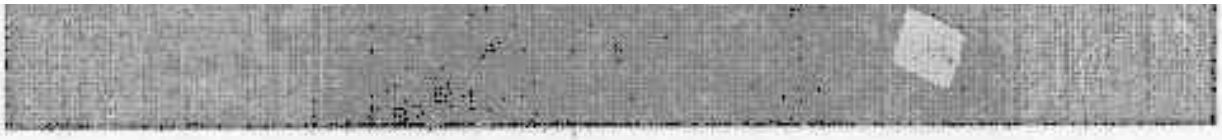


A marble statue of a deity (only feet are intact) in the trench near buoys 56–57. DWK.



Pl 22. Dwarka: Diver plots the corner of a protection wall in the sea.





Pl 23. Ms. Manavi Thakkar, diver uses Aquazepp, an underwater scooter for survey of submerged buildings of ancient Dwarka.

RAO S R

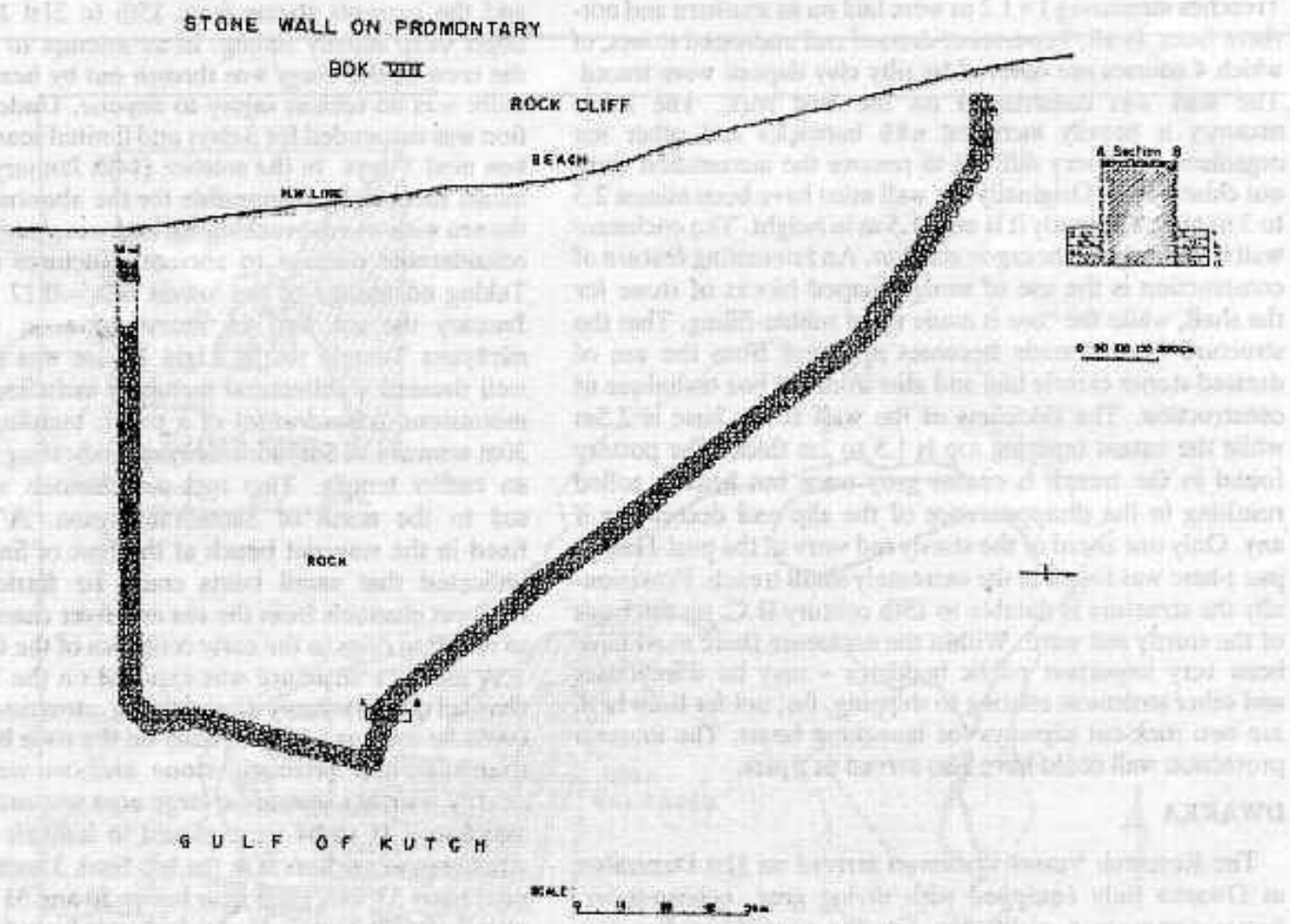
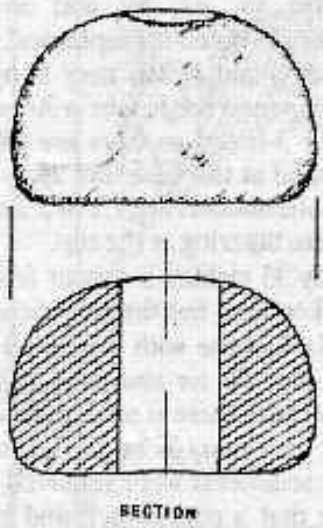
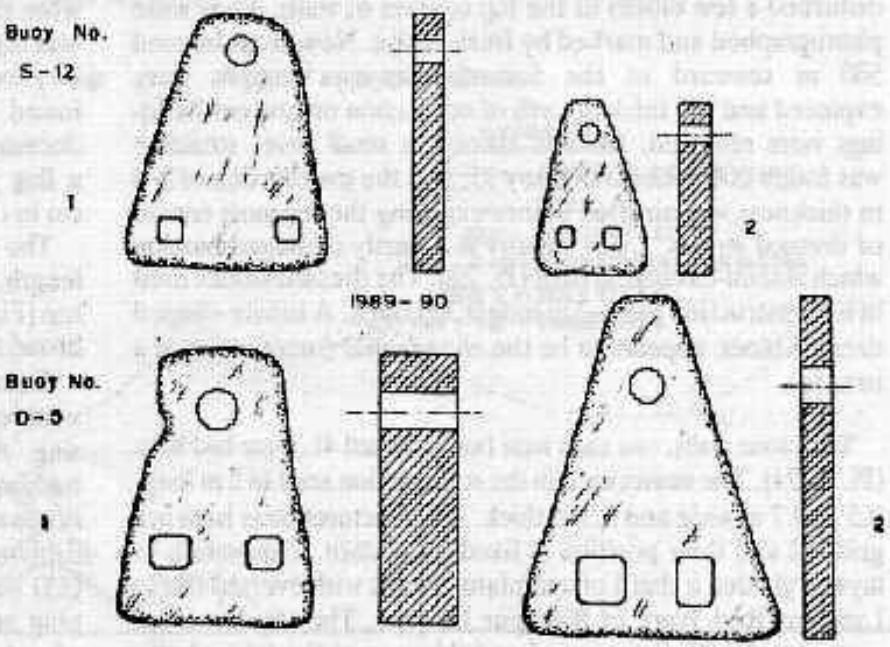


Fig. 2

STONE BASE OF FLAG POST DWARKA



STONE ANCHORS IN DWARKA WATERS.

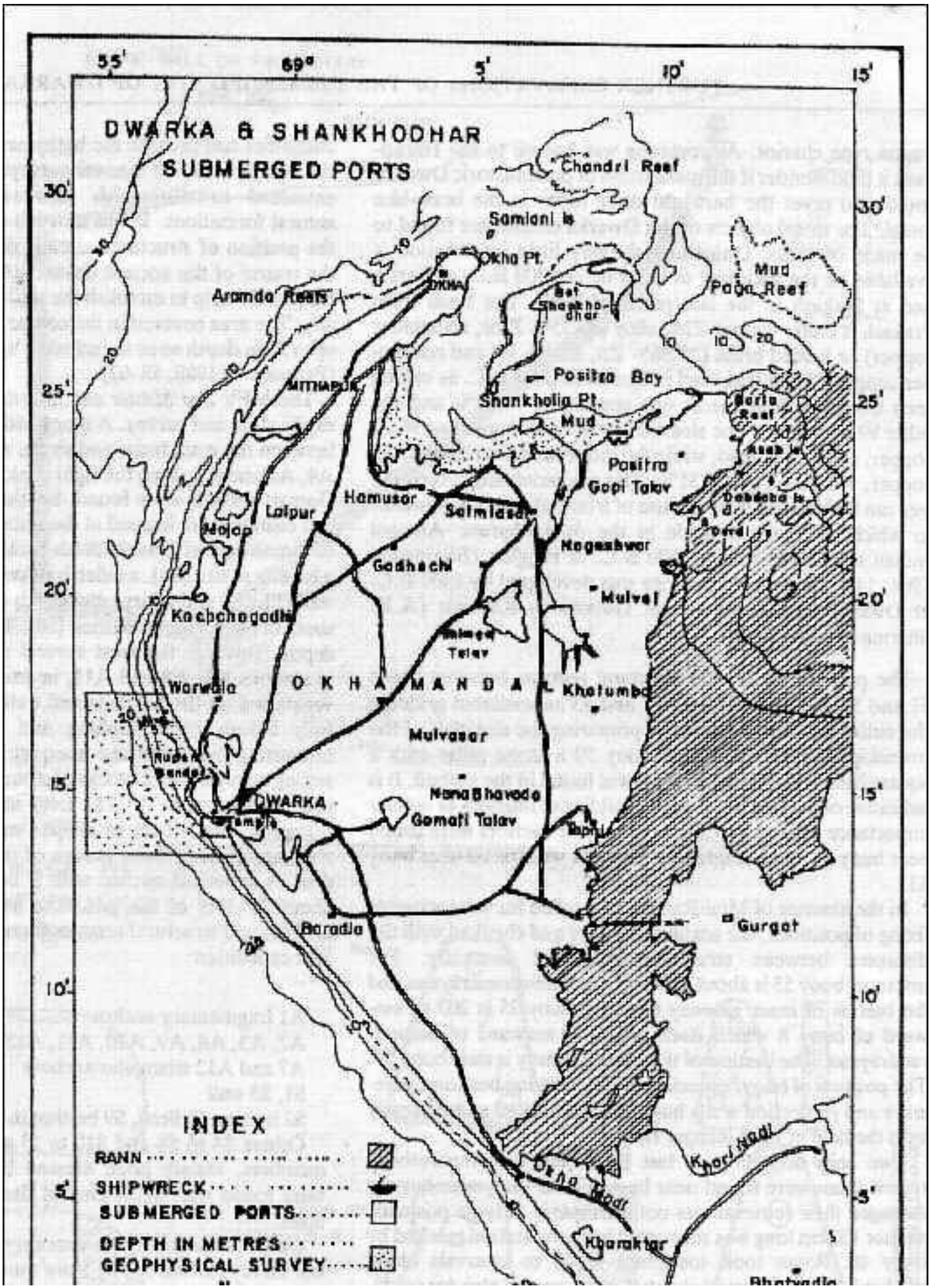




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Fig. 3

Fig. 4


DWARKA & SHANKHODHAR
SUBMERGED PORTS
55'
69°
5'
10'
15'
30'
25'
20'
15'
10'
5'
Chandri Reef
Samlani Is
Okha Pt.
OKHA
Aramda Reefs
Mud
Paga Reef
Bet Shankhodhar
Positra Bay
Shankholia Pt.
Mud
Berla Reef
Asab Is
Positra
Gopi Talav
Dabasha Is
Dwarka Is
MITHAPUR
Laipur
Hamusar
Salmiasar
Nagesheer
Mulvel
Gadhechi
Kachchagadh
Mojap
Khatumbo
Warwala
O K H A M A N D A L
Mulvasar
Rupen Bandar
DWARKA
Temple
Nana Bhavedo
Gomati Talav
Bharla
Baradia
Gurgat
Okha Nadi
Khori Nadi
Kharaktar
Bhatvadia
INDEX
RANN
SHIPWRECK
SUBMERGED PORTS
DEPTH IN METRES
GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

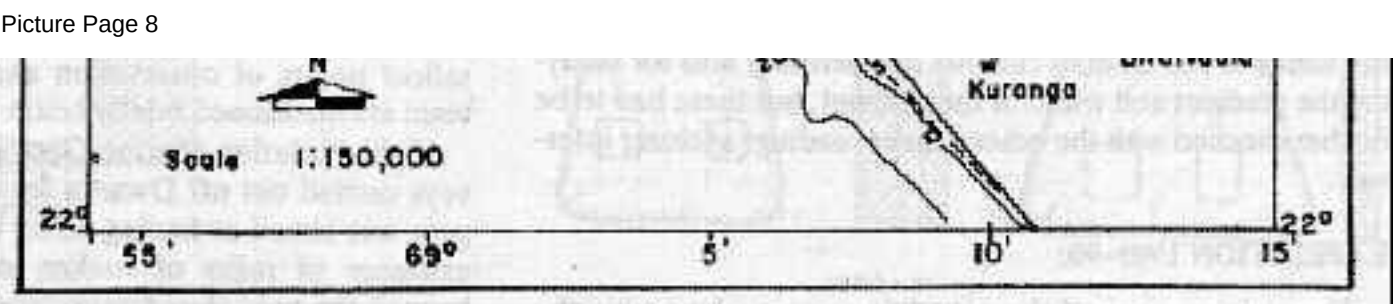
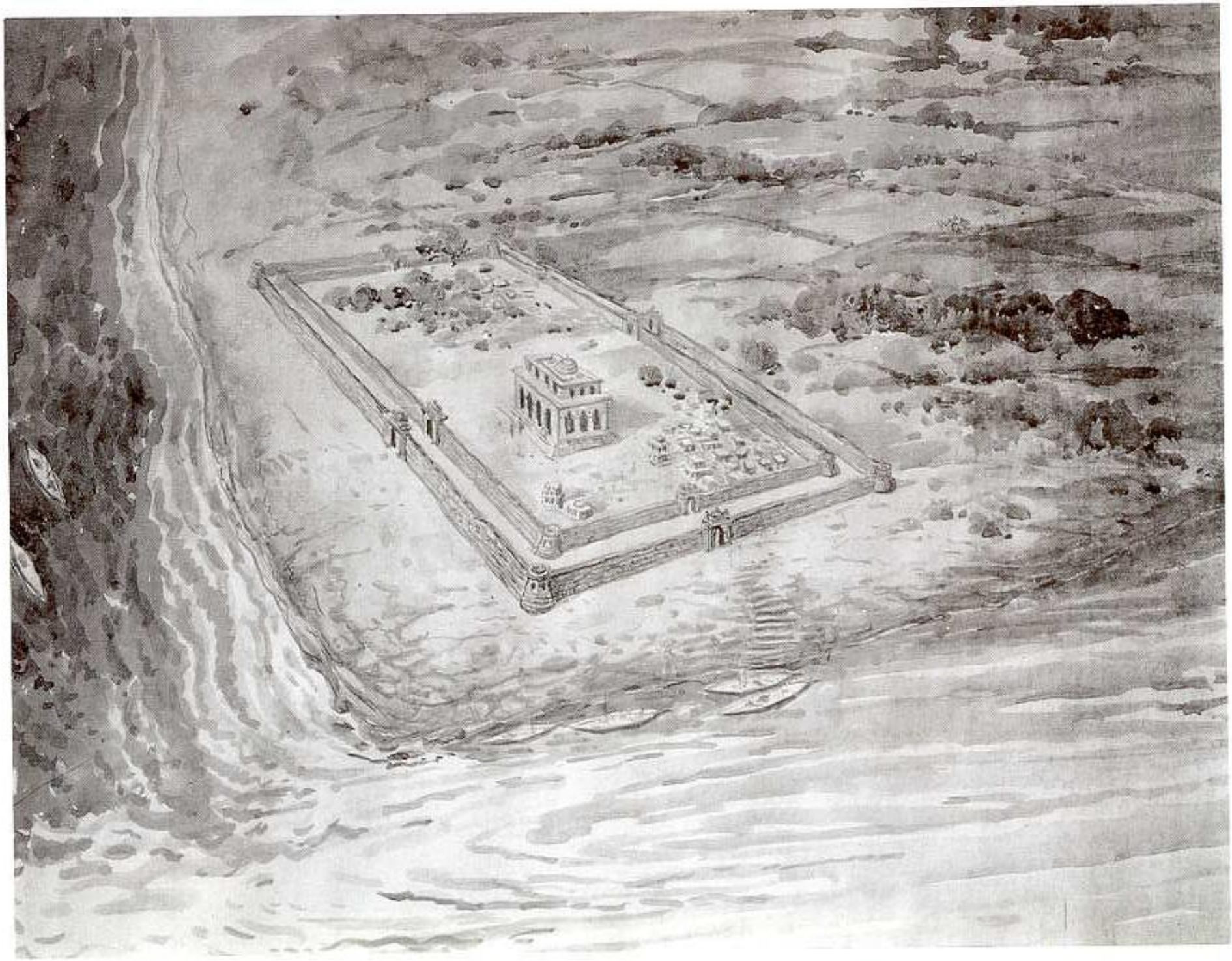
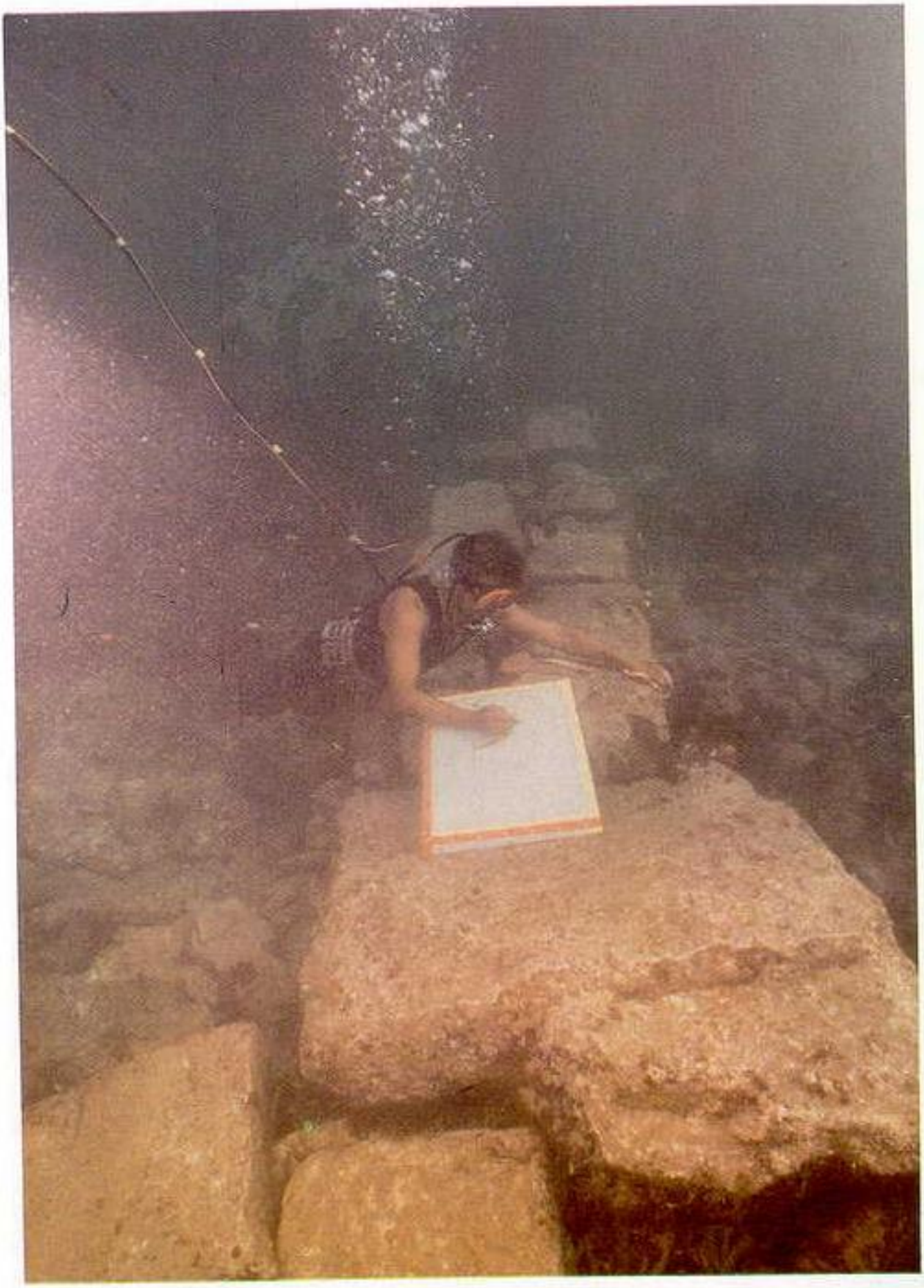


Fig. 5

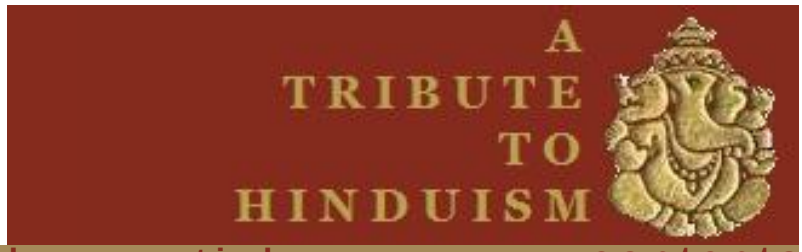


Artist's view of ancient fortified Dvārakā in Kuśasthali.



A close wall between buses A12 and S12, DWK

A long wall between buoys A12 and S12, DWR.



SIX THOUSAND YEAR BARRIER

by Glenn R. Smith (Durgadass)

http://www.hawaiian.net/~durgadas/Barrier/6000yb.html
http://www.hindunet.org/hssworld/hindutva/hindu_calendar/index.html

This article on Hindu Calendric system was originally available at http://www.hawaiian.net/%7Edurgadas/Barrier/6000yb.html However, it is currently non-functional.

Western archeologists have a curious notion that although human beings have been around for hundreds of thousands of years, civilization itself is a recent invention of only six thousand years ago. It is believed and taught that the cradle of civilization began in the fertile crescent of the Mesopotamian valley and from there spread to Egypt, India and beyond. But there seems to be reason to believe that as one becomes free from cultural and religious bias one may discover that important accomplishments of mankind may be traceable to far beyond that time barrier.

The problems in tracing origins back through time are many. First is the fact that great periods of time have a tendency to erase traces of cultures. When all traces decay then the culture is effectively obliterated. Whatever is left undestroyed by time becomes subjected to the cultural and personal opinions of archeologists. Such opinions may destroy and obliterate knowledge of the culture much more effectively than time ever could. Another problem is in the epistemology or method of knowledge used by countries foreign to the country or culture being studied. In the west we have a tradition of trying to understand life by studying corpses or trying to know health by studying disease. Archeology becomes an exercise of the imagination when trying to reconstruct a living culture based on remains of pot shards, bones and bricks.

Prior to the nineteenth century, it was piously believed in western civilization that the earth was created in seven days at around five thousand years ago. The Biblical version of creation was challenged by the dual developments of Darwinism and the discovery of dinosaur fossils. Even though the gradual acceptance of these new ideas forced a revision of geological time scales, a corresponding revision within archeological studies lagged. Part of this may have been due to another emerging ideology of the nineteenth century called progressivism. Progressivism is the idea that human beings are in a progressive march towards a goal of better living and greater knowledge. This seductive ideology had its roots in earlier centuries but had its greatest impact in the second half of the nineteenth century where it influenced the thinking of such great men as Darwin and Marx. Although it is easy to accept and defend this way of thinking as logical and sound, it does have some devious implications. In a simplistic way it implies that we as a species are infinitely more cleaver than our ancestors. Since it is possible to measure our advancement in linear terms, there must be a point beyond which in the past human beings were infinitely stupid and not clever. Such human beings were incapable of civilization and they must have lived just prior to six thousand years ago.

These ethnocentric blinders that some western thinkers unconsciously wear before venturing into the past have resulted in the tunnel vision view of history as we know it today. The western tradition of writing history may be traced to the Judeo-christian scriptures wherein one group of people with shared beliefs write about the happenings of that group and the people outside that group. The six-thousand year barrier seems to be a common trait to that tradition. Other cultures, the Hindus for example, regard the earth in terms of billions of years old and civilization in terms of hundreds of thousands of years. The Hindus do not think of time in linear terms with a beginning and an end. Rather, they think in terms of great cycles of thousands and millions of years. The archeological method of digging, study and dating of artifacts may be ill-suited to understanding different cultures that don't share similar attitudes towards time scales.

Hindu scriptures were routinely disparaged by early British indologists as exaggerated stories an myths. Biblical stories on the other hand where accepted by the same indologists as being somewhere between salient fact and articles of faith. German indologists Max Mueller proposed the theory about Aryan invaders colonizing India from the north. This implies that the Indians are so inferior that it is unlikely, if not impossible, for them to civilize themselves without outside help. Native versions of the Indian origins found within living tradition and culture were totally ignored and thought to be unreliable. The British occupation of India produced scholars who's pious duty was to discredit the Hindu tradition and culture. Dates of events given in Hindu scripture based thousands of years ago were redated by the English to have

occurred after the birth of Christ for no other reason than one could never rely on the version of a Hindu; the speculations of an English nobleman being wholly preferable. It remains ironic, however, that even if the dates given by the English be accepted at face value, the Hindu accomplishments in art, architecture, science, mathematics, literature, medicine and philosophy were made at a time when the English and all of Europe were still living a neolithic lifestyle.

To diminish this embarrassing fact, the European scholars have held up ancient Greece as their cultural champion even to the point of making ridiculous claims that the Hindus borrowed all the salient features of science and civilization from them. In no uncertain terms we are lead to believe that the Hindus were incapable of any high scientific reasoning on their own and therefore depended upon help from outside sources for further development. Contrary to this point of view, it can be shown that not only did the Hindus develop a mature culture independent from western influences, the western cultures borrowed from the Hindus more often than otherwise.

One thing to point out is that each major culture of the ancient world had calendars that were unique in themselves. Calendars are dependent upon the accurate observation of heavenly phenomenon. In this endeavor the ancients were not lacking. The five major time schemes of the ancient world are of the Mayan, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Indian and Chinese cultures. The Jewish calendar is based upon an earlier Babylonian system and has nothing uniquely original. The Greeks had no calendar that possessed characteristics different enough to place them in a separate and distinct category for they also followed the Mesopotamian standard. The Romans, who borrowed heavily from the Greeks, found it necessary to borrow from the Egyptians in order to improve accuracy. This demonstrates that the Romans considered the Greek chronography incomplete and lacking.

Hindu astronomy, their method of observation and the resulting calendrics differs considerably from the Greeks. Now the question arises that if the Hindus borrowed from the Greeks why didn't the Hindus also modify their calendar with the Greek calendar? Remember that ancient astronomy and calendrics were inseparable. Another point: It is a usual occurrence that a borrowed concept takes along a borrowed technique. The methods of observation usually accompanies the knowledge of the things observed. Why is it that the Hindus have a totally unique system of measurement and observation indigenous to their astronomical lore? The champions of western culture would have us overlook these details.

It seems highly evident that the co-existing Indian and Mesopotamian cultures exchanged ideas long before the Greeks learned how to civilize themselves. Any similarity between Greek and Hindu sciences is either co-incidental or due to Greek plagiarism of Indian and Mesopotamian concepts. Yet the bias regarding Greek primacy in all things ancient persists in western educational institutions today. Cultural bias is as destructive of fact as is the passage of time erasing artifacts. What is often passed off as profound knowledge and discovery is nothing more than the reinforcement of bias.

The main concern that would indicate the existence of civilization long before six thousand years ago is that of time measurement or calendrics, the study of which reveals much of what is missing from the digging and dating of bones. The calendar is a vital point of focus for any organized culture or society. Religious, economic and agricultural activities revolve around the calendar. To construct accurate tables of heavenly cycles, a culture must observe the sky for many centuries or at least borrow tables from another culture that has spent centuries studying the heavens. The amount of accuracy derived from observing the heavens over a long period of time suggests that the roots of civilization and some of its earliest accomplishments are much older than six thousand years. Specifically the Indian and Mesopotamian cultures.

BASIS OF THE SEXAGESIMAL SYSTEM

The sexagesimal system of measurement is based on the number sixty. There are sixty seconds in a minute, sixty minutes in a hour. When we measure angles, we use the sexagesimal to express units in degrees, minutes and seconds. This method of measurement familiar to both the Indian and Mesopotamian cultures. It may be that one culture borrowed from the other or that both developed the system independently. Or it could be of such antiquity that both cultures shared a common origin. Whatever the case, it seems quite evident that the sexagesimal system may be based in large part upon the observation of the planets, specifically Jupiter and Saturn.

After every sixty years, Jupiter and Saturn will return to the same relative place in the zodiac. Even though they conjoin every twenty years, it is every third conjunction that they will be in the same zodiacal position as they were sixty years before. Jupiter takes twelve years to complete one circuit of the zodiac. It takes thirty years for Saturn to complete a similar circuit. Consider the following:

* Jupiter takes twelve years years to transit the zodiac. The zodiac has twelve signs. Jupiter travels an average thirty degrees or one complete sign in one solar year.

* Saturn takes an average thirty years to transit the zodiac. Each zodiacal sign has thirty degrees and Saturn travels

one degree per month. Thirty months for Saturn to travel one sign. Three hundred and sixty months for Saturn to transit the entire zodiac. Jupiter divides the zodiac into twelve parts or signs. The number derived from Saturn's motion suggests the division of each sign into thirty parts or degrees.

- Jupiter and Saturn take sixty years between conjunctions to reach the same place in the zodiac. This joint motion suggests the third and fourth division of the degree into sixty minutes and each minute into sixty seconds.

The sixty years cycle of Jupiter and Saturn gives rise to another interesting number. In a sixty year period, Jupiter will complete five circuits of the zodiac and Saturn will complete two circuits. The combined individual cycles equal seven which is also the total number of visible planets plus the two luminaries.

SEVEN DAY WEEK

The primacy given to Saturn and Jupiter becomes apparent by the study of the origination of the seven day week which, contrary to common opinion, was not followed by everyone in the ancient world.

The ancient Egyptians had a ten-day week. The Vedic Indians had a six-day week. The ancient Babylonians who started the month on the day after the new moon, had the first, eighth, fifteenth and the twenty second day marked out for religious services. This was a kind of seven-day week with sabbaths, but the last week might be of eight or nine days duration, according as the month, which was lunar, had a length of 29 or 30 days. The ancient Iranians had a separate name for each day of the month, but some days, at intervals of approximately seven, were marked out as Din-i-Parvan, for religious practices. The pattern followed appears to have been similar to the Babylonian practice.

The continuous seven-day week was evolved on astrological grounds by unnamed Chaldean astronomers at an unknown epoch, but at least, long before the first century A.D. The Jews adopted it as a cardinal part of their faith during the days of their contact with the Chaldeans.

Chaldean astronomers flourished between the seventh century B.C. and the third century A.D. They gave particular attention to the study of the movement of the Sun, the Moon, and the planets, which they identified with their gods. They believed the destiny of kings and states were controlled by the gods, (the planets), and attached the greatest importance to the observation of their positions and movements. They attached magical value to the number seven which was the number of planets or gods controlling human destiny. The two outermost planets, Jupiter and Saturn, moved slowly and solemnly and therefore determined the measured boundaries of all planets within. After every sixty years Jupiter and Saturn meet in the same general area of the zodiac. During that sixty years, Jupiter completed five circuits of the zodiac and Saturn completed two circuits. The combined number of circuits for these ponderous planets is seven.

Jupiter and Saturn along with the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus and Mars, were identified with the chief gods of the Babylonian pantheon.

Notice that the order of the planets in table 1 coincides with the apparent average daily motion of the planets from the slowest, Saturn, to the fastest, the Moon.

These seven gods, sitting in solemn conclave, control the destinies of kings and countries, and it was believed that their will and judgment with respect to a particular country or its ruler could be obtained from an interpretation of the position of the seven planets in the heavens, and the nature of the motion of the planets (direct or retrograde). Part of the divinatory practices included knowing what part of the day or night was being ruled or watched over by the gods. Occurrences during a particular watch was believed to forebode particular events consistent with the nature of the watching god.

TABLE 1

PLANET	GOD - NAME	FUNCTION
Saturn	Ninib	God of Pestilence and Misery
Jupiter	Marduk	King of Gods
Mars	Nergal	God of War
Sun	Shamash	God of Law and Justice
Venus	Ishtar	Goddess of Fertility
Mercury	Nabu	God of Writing
Moon	Sin	God of Agriculture

The day was divided into 24 hours, and each of the seven gods was supposed to keep watch on the world over each hour of the day in rotation. The particular day was named after the god who kept watch at the first hour at Sunrise. Thus on Saturday, the watching god on the first hour was Saturn, and the day was named after him. The succeeding hours of Saturday were watched by the seven gods in rotation as follows: SEE FIGURE 1



Above shows the picture for Saturday. On this day Saturn keeps watch at the first hour, so the day is named after him. The second hour is watched over by (2)Jupiter, third by (3)Mars and so on. Saturn is thus seen to preside at the 8th, 15th and 22nd hours of Saturday. Then for the 23rd, 24th and 25th hours come in succession (2)Jupiter, (3)Mars and (4)Sun. The 25th hours is the first hour of the next day, which is accordingly named after the presiding planet of the hour, viz, (4) which is the Sun. We thus get Sunday following Saturday. If we now repeat the process, we get the names of the week days following each other, as follows:



Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

The Jews, it may be mentioned, reckon the days by ordinal numbers---the first, second, third.....seventh day. Although they derived their calendar almost entirely from the Babylonians, they eschewed the god names as being inconsistent with their monotheistic religion. the ordinal first day is Saturday, which is their sabbath.

The ancient Indians did not use the seven day week. The most ancient usage of day names used in India was that of the Nakshatra. There are twenty seven lunar asterisms or constellations in the old lunar zodiac. This number was derived from the average number of days it took the Moon to complete one circuit of the heavens in relation to any particular star (one sidereal revolution). Since the Hindus didn't use hours to divide their day, the natural consequence of using a seven day week would not follow. Instead they divided a day into 60 equal parts called ghatikas. Each ghatika is equal to 24 minutes. The word "ghatika" means little jar and thus the use of water clocks suggest itself. A ghatika is further divided into 60 vinadikas. So between the two cultures, it was the Hindus who made direct use of the sexagesimal system whereas the Chaldeans used an indirect method of 24 hours.

It wasn't until much later in the third century AD where we find the first usage of the seven day week in India. Indeed much of the rest of the world had not adopted it until after the first century AD. It was unknown to the writers of the New Testament who did not mention anything about the day of the week on which Christ was crucified or the the week day which he is alleged to have ascended to heaven. The fixing of Friday and Sunday for these incidents is a later concoction, dating from the fifth century after Christ. All that the New Testament books say is that he was crucified on the day before the Hebrew festival of Passover which used to be celebrated and is still celebrated on the full-moon day of the month of Nisan. The continuous seven day week was unknown to the classical Greeks, the Romans, the Hindus and early Christians. It was introduced into the Christian world by an edict of the Roman emperor Constantine, about 323 AD, who changed the Sabbath to the Lord's Day (Sunday), the week day next to the Jewish Sabbath. Its introduction into India is about the same time and from the same sources. The week days are not found in earlier Hindu scriptures like the Vedas of the classics like the great epic Mahabharata. They occur only from 484 AD, but not in inscriptions of 300 AD or earlier. Even now, they form but an unimportant part in the religious observances of the Hindus which are determined by the Moon's phases and lunar asterisms.

In the schema of the Moon's phases we see a repeated pattern to that of Jupiter and Saturn. (See page 4). A lunar month is made up of 30 tithis. Each tithi is determined when the moon moves in advance of twelve degrees ahead of the Sun. Here we see the numbers 30 and 12 that are common with Saturn and Jupiter. A complete synodic period (a complete revolution around the zodiac in relation to the Sun) of the Moon, however, takes only 29 civil days. (A civil day for the Indians is reckoned from sunrise to sunrise). It is quite a regular occurrence for a tithi to be expunged from the consecutive civil day count. This characteristic of the Hindu calendar is not found in the Greek, Chinese or Mesopotamian calendars. Other cultures, without exception, use solely a civil day count of 28, 29 and 30 days for their lunation cycles and had not even considered a pure lunar day count independent from the civil reckoning. The consistency of the Hindu astronomical methods make it unlikely that they borrowed their knowledge from other sources. And the repeated usage of the sexagesimal measurement makes it more like that they were the inventors of the system.

The lunar asterisms (nakshatras) are derived from the average daily motion of the Moon's mean sidereal cycle, which is 13° 20' of arc. In a circle of 360 degrees this would make twenty seven nakshatras. Each nakshatra has a planetary ruler and they are shown as follows:

NAKSHATRA	RULER	NAKSHATRA	RULER	NAKSHATRA	RULER	NAKSHATRA	RULER
Ashvini	Ketu	Pushyami	Saturn	Svati	Rahu	Shravana	Moon
Bharani	Venus	Aslesha	Mercury	Vishakha	Jupiter	Dhanishtha	Mars
Krittuka	Sun	Magha	Ketu	Anuradha	Saturn	Shatabhisha	Rahu
Rohini	Moon	Purva Phalguni	Venus	Jyestha	Mercury	Purva Bhadra	Jupiter
Mrigasira	Mars	Uttara Phalguni	Sun	Mula	Ketu	Uttara Bhadra	Saturn
Ardra	Rahu	Hasta	Moon	Purva Ashadha	Venus	Revati	Mercury
Punarvasu	Jupiter	Chitra	Mars	Uttara Ashadha	Sun		

In the above table you may have noticed the two strange words "Rahu" and "Ketu". These are the nodes of the moon and their usage in astronomy is important for predicting the eclipses of the Sun and the Moon. Although they possess no mass or density, they are treated as planets in the sense that they have an effect on human affairs.

NAKSHATRAS

Whatever constellation (nakshatra) the Moon was in at sunrise, the entire day was named after it. The nine rulers of the nakshatras are repeated three times in sequence. So in this sense you can say that the Hindus followed a nine-day week. The same effect as a weekday is thereby achieved in terms of socio-religious significance. Whereas the Chaldeans used an unbroken consecutive day count of hour and day rulers. The Hindus used a more concrete system of the observable Moon in a group of stars. But there is a common thread that is stitched between both the seven-day week and the twenty seven nakshatras. It is this: As we look back to figure 2 we see a seven pointed star indicating the weekday lords. Saturn is placed at the top because he is the slowest planet and the week was deemed to start with Saturday. Lets rotate that star and place the Sun at the top.



Now in figure 4, *lets make room for two more planets:*.... SEE FIGURE 4



This figure appears in a book by Chiero the famous palmist in which he refers to this as the "Seal of Solomon." If this is true then the Jewish king probably obtained it from sources during their contact with the Chaldeans and Babylonians. If we were to add two more planets to this seal the obvious place would be in the areas vacated by the points of Jupiter and Mercury. Their placement in the seal is shown in figure 5. SEE FIGURE 5



Hindu astrology treats the nodes as planets even though they possess no mass and density. They are sensitive points where the path of the Moon crosses the path of the Sun. Being invisible, it is quite fitting that they should not have a point of the star aiming at them in the diagram shown above.

But note the general position of the planets and see how they are unchanged from the Chaldean star order. Now, the next diagram, figure 6, will show the connection with the Hindu nakshatra order. SEE FIGURE 6.



Compare this diagram with table 2, the nakshatras and rulers. Here the order is clockwise starting with Ketu, going to Venus, the Sun, down to the Moon, back up to Mars, over to Rahu, Jupiter, Saturn and finally bypassing over to mercury. The detour down to the Moon doesn't seem so strange when you consider that the nakshatra reckoning is entirely dependent upon the Moon's position in the constellations. In fact, this diagram may taken as a single pointed star with the significant planet being at the single point.

It seems that the similarities between Hindu astronomy and Chaldean magical seals are too great to be a mere coincidence. It is quite likely that the two share a similar origin or that one was derived from the other. But since ancient Hindu tradition and current usage make more consistent usage of a direct base sixty system of counting, and the other cultures use a derivative of that, it seems more likely that the sexagesimal is of Hindu origin.

It may be argued that the sexagesimal was not founded upon the joint cycles of Jupiter and Saturn but upon some other measurement such as the average number of three hundred and sixty days in a year. This, of course, is assuming that ancient man was incapable of counting the correct number of days in a year and that he was infinitely unclever. For the sake of argument, lets accept that position. There still remains the problem of dividing the year into parts that would yield a base sixty system of counting. The Babylonians divided their year into three seasons. The Hindus, however, divided their year into six seasons. Of the two cultures which do you think would arrive at a base sixty system?

But judging from the rest of Hindu astronomical techniques it is clear that they knew precisely how long the solar year was. All the other planetary cycles were also studied with great scrutiny. From this it may be tempting to think that the sexagesimal was arrived at in order to provide the great average mean of measurement for celestial phenomena just as today the binary mode of counting is most convenient for computer science. Three hundred and sixty, which is a multiple of the sexagesimal, is the midpoint number between the 365 day solar year and the 354 day lunar year. One synodic period of mars is 780 days which is equally divided by 60 thirteen times. Between two consecutive conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter in a twenty year period, Mercury will go retrograde a little over sixty times. The Hindus also based their knowledge of breath control, Pranayama, upon the sexagesimal system. In one twenty four hour period, or between two consecutive sunrises, a person takes an average of 21600 breaths, each breath being four seconds long. This number, 21600 divided by 60 equals 360.

To all but the harshest critic the above may be evidence enough to form an opinion on the origin of the sexagesimal system. But the critic may remain unconvinced for various reasons. The above is only circumstantial. One can apply any number of coincidental facts to any ancient culture and come up with some pretty amazing things. After all, no ancient text were quoted giving support to Hindu origins. To quell these doubts we present final evidence that not only shows the superiority of Hindu astronomy but also proves damaging to the theory that the Greeks were the greatest in all matters of the ancient world.

HINDU COSMOLOGICAL TIME CYCLES

The structure of Hindu astronomy is built upon the foundation of their unique concept of cosmological time cycles. No

other culture on Earth has or is known to have such a unique system of cosmology. The only other culture to come close to the vast scale of time conceived by the Hindus are the Mayan. Western scholars have completely misunderstood the value of the Hindu cosmological time cycles and believed them to be nothing more than crude number speculations. In their translation of the Surya Siddhanta, the editors Burgess and Whitney routinely disparage the Hindu authors:

The system of periods is not of astronomical origin.....Its artificial and arbitrary character is apparent. It is the system of the Puranas and Manu, a part of the received Hindu cosmogony, to which astronomy was compelled to adapt itself.....The arbitrary and artificial method in which the fundamental elements of the solar system are here represented is not peculiar to the Surya-Siddhanta; It is also adopted by all other text books, and is to be regarded as a characteristic feature of the general astronomical system of the Hindus.

Not only is this opinion in error but the astronomical quantities derived from these cosmological time cycles are vastly more accurate than anything achieved by the Greeks. And they were in use at a time when the British were still living a neolithic lifestyle.

OUTLINE OF HINDU COSMOLOGY

Prior to the creation of the universe, Lord Vishnu lies asleep on the ocean of all causes. He rests upon a serpent bed with thousands of cobra-like hoods. While asleep, a lotus sprouts from His navel. Upon this lotus is born Brahma the creator of the universe. Lord Brahma lives for a hundred years and then dies, while Lord Vishnu remains. One year of Brahma consists of three hundred and sixty days. At the beginning of each day Brahma creates the living beings that reside in the universe and at the end of each day the living beings are absorbed into Brahma while he sleeps on the lotus. On day of Brahma is known as a KALPA. Within each KALPA there are fourteen MANUS and within each MANU are seventy one CHATUR-YUGAS. Each CHATUR-YUGA is divided into four parts called YUGAPADAS.

From the first chapter of Surya-Siddhanta, the most revered authoritative source of Hindu astronomy, we have the following passage:

11. That which begins with respirations (prana) is called real.....Six respirations make a vinadi, sixty of these a nadi:

12. And sixty nadis make a sidereal day and night. Of thirty of these sidereal days is composed a month; a civil (savana) month consists of as many sunrises;

13. A lunar month, of as many lunar days (tithi); a solar (saura) month is determined by the entrance of the Sun into a sign of the zodiac; twelve months make a year. This is called a day of the gods.

14. The day and night of the gods and of the demons are mutually opposed to one another. Six times sixty of them are a year of the gods, and likewise to the demons.

15 & 16. Twelve thousand of these divine years are denominated a chatur-yuga; of ten-thousand times four hundred and thirty two solar years is composed that chatur-yuga, with its dawn and twilight. The difference of the krita-yuga and the other yugas, as measured by the difference in the number of the feet of virtue in each is as follows:

17. The tenth part of a chatur-yuga, multiplied successively by four, three, two, and one, gives the length of the krita and the other yugas: the sixth part of each belongs to its dawn and twilight.

18. One and seventy chatur-yugas make a manu; at its end is a twilight which has the number of years of a krita-yuga, and which is a deluge.

19. In a kalpa are reckoned fourteen manus with their respective twilights; at the commencement of the kalpa is a fifteenth dawn, having the length of a krita-yuga.

20. The kalpa, thus composed of a thousand chatur-yugas, and which brings about the destruction of all that exists, is a day of Brahma; his night is of the same length.

21. His extreme age is a hundred, according to this valuation of a day and a night. The half of his life is past; of the remainder, this is the firsts kalpa.

22. And of this kalpa, six manus are past, with their respective twilights; and of the Manu son of Vivasvat, twenty seven chatur-yugas are past;

23. Of the present, the twenty eighth chatur-yuga, this krita yuga is past.....

Now to make plain what is stated above. Commentaries are very clear on the fact that in verse 12 the "sidereal day" refers to a revolution of the Earth relative to any fixed star and is the true revolution reference point of the Earth. Verse 13 refers to "a day of the gods" means one sidereal year. A night of the gods is half a sidereal year. Verse 21 mentions "his extreme age is a hundred refers to the lifespan of Brahma and consists of one hundred years of 360 days. Each of these days being two kalpas long. Verse 23 shows that the Surya-Siddhanta was composed right after krita-yuga and during the treta-yuga. The present yuga we are in right now is the kali-yuga which is said to have begun on Friday February 18th 3102 B.C. of the Julian calendar. This becomes clearer when represented in a tabular form.

TABLE 3 INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE CHATUR-YUGA PERIOD

PERIOD	DIVINE YEARS	SOLAR YEARS	PERIOD	DIVINE YEARS	SOLAR YEARS
dawn	400	144,000	dawn	300	108,000
KRITA YUGA	4000	1,440,000	TRETA YUGA	3,000	1,080,000
twilight	400	144,000	twilight	300	108,000
TOTAL	4,800	1,728,000	TOTAL	3,600	1,296,000

PERIOD	DIVINE YEARS	SOLAR YEARS	PERIOD	DIVINE YEARS	SOLAR YEARS
dawn	200	72,000	dawn	100	36,000
DVAPARA YUGA	2000	720,000	KALI YUGA	1,000	360,000
twilight	200	72,000	twilight	100	36,000
TOTAL	2,400	864,000	TOTAL	1,200	432,000

CHATUR YUGA TOTAL **12,000 DIVINE YEARS** **4,320,000 SOLAR YEARS**

INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE KALPA PERIOD

Two kalpas make a day and night of Brahma. The kalpa is 4,320,000,000 sidereal years made up of 1,000 chatur-yugas or 10,000 kali-yugas. An additional dawn and twilight of 1,728,000 years each is made to fit the kalpa.

TABLE 4

1 CHATUR YUGA = 4,320,000 sidereal years

1 MANU = 71 CHATUR YUGA plus a twilight the length of one krita yuga

71 Chatur yuga = 306,720,000 sidereal years
1 krita yuga as introductory dawn = 1,728,000 sidereal years
1 Manu = 308,448,000 sidereal years

1 KALPA = 14 MANUS plus introductory dawn of one krita yuga

14 Manus = 4,318,272,000 sidereal years
1 krita yuga as introductory dawn = 1,728,000 sidereal years
1 Kalpa = 4,320,000,000 sidereal years

The entire life-span of Brahma may be measured thus :

day of Brahma	4,320,000,000 sidereal years
night of Brahma	4,320,000,000 sidereal years
Total	8,640,000,000 sidereal years

days in a year	x 360
one year of Brahma	3,110,400,000,000 sidereal years
one hundred years	x 100
Brahma's life span	311,040,000,000,000 sidereal years
time before Brahma's rebirth	311,040,000,000,000 sidereal years

After Brahma dies it takes a period of time equal to his lifespan until he is reborn and the cycle starts over.

ASTRONOMICAL VALUES DERIVED

Now that the Hindu cosmological time cycles are completed we can derive useful astronomical values from them. The first is the measurement of the day which begins with the breath. One respiration is a prana. Six prana equal one vinadi. Sixty vinadis equal one nadi, (also known as a ghatika). Sixty nadis equal one sidereal day. A sidereal day equal the time it takes for the earth to make one complete rotation on its axis in relation to a fixed star. A sidereal day is slightly shorter than a civil day of 24 hours. A sidereal day is equal to 23 hours, 56 minutes and 3.4446 seconds.

1 SIDEREAL DAY	23h 56m 03.4446s
60 NADIS	23h 56m 03.4446s
1 NADI	23m 56.06s
VINADI	23.93s
1 PRANA	3.99s

It is clear in the text of Surya-Siddhanta and the current practice of Indian astrology that SIDEREAL measurements are of primary importance. Tropical measurements are also used but in a secondary way.

THREE MEAN MOTIONS OF THE SUN

The three mean motions of the Sun used to construct the Cosmological Time Cycles shown above are as follows:

1 sidereal year = 360.....days.....(I)

_____ 6.....days.....(II)

_____ 0.2563795.....days.....(III)

_____

366.2563795.....sidereal revolutions of the Earth

Remember we are not talking about civil solar days here, we are talking about the total number of times the Earth rotates on its axis in relation to a single star during the course of one year. This happens to be one greater than the mean solar days in a year which is.....

1 sidereal year = 365.2563795...mean solar days.

These three mean motions of the Sun may be compared to the hour, minute a• nd second hands of a clock. Each cycle is counted and completed separately. Using this system of the three mean motions, the ancients reckoned time that put the day, year and longer periods of time into exact correspondence with each other.

PROOF OF THE SEXAGESIMAL NUMBER SYSTEM

The first two mean solar motions, that of 360 + 6 Earth revolutions, generate the sexagesimal number system

completely. A count of six for every 360 is the same as one for every 60. This is the basis of the six seasons of the year observed by the Hindus. Counting six days per year, the second mean motion of the Sun completes a cycle of 360, the number of degrees in a circle, after 60 years which correlates with the Babylonian sossos period and the cycles of Jupiter and Saturn.

YEAR	1st MEAN MOTION	2nd MEAN MOTION	TOTAL
1	360	6	366
2	720	12	732
3	1080	18	1098
4	1440	24	1464
5	1800	30	1830
*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*
10	3600	60	3660
*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*
60 (sossos)	21,600	360	21,960
*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*
600 (neros)	216,000	3600	219,600
*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*
3600 (saros)	1,296,000	21,600	1,317,600

In the same interval that the first mean motion completes a count of 21600 it has done so at a rate 60 times greater than the second mean motion 360 X 60 and represents the number of arc minutes in a circle. The number 21600 is also the same average number of breaths (prana) a person will make in a 24 hour period.

VEDIC EVIDENCE OF THE SIDEREAL YEAR

The Rig Veda, the earliest of the Hindu scriptures says the following:

Twelve spokes, one wheel, navels three.

Who can comprehend this?

On it are placed together three hundred and sixty like pegs.

They shake not in the least.

(Dirghatama Rishi, Rig Veda 1.164.48)

A seven-named horse does draw this three-naved wheel....

Seven steeds draw the seven-wheeled chariot.....

Wise poets have spun a seven-strand tale

around this heavenly calf, the Sun.

(Dirghatama Rishi, Rig Veda 1.164.1-5)

The number seven related to the Sun has much significance when understanding the third mean solar motion (0.2563795). The Kali-yuga of 432,000 years is the unit of reference for determining the length of the sidereal year in Hindu cosmological time cycles. During the course of 10,000 years there are seven rotations of the third mean solar motion. For a single year the count is 0.2563795 diurnal revolutions of the earth. For two years it is .512759 and so on. One complete rotation (to equal 366.2564...) of the third motion takes 1428.571429 sidereal years. Or you can reduce it to a fraction of 1428 4/7 sidereal years.

The integer of this sidereal interval, 1428 years, multiplied by the number of years in a Kali-yuga and then further multiplied by seven equals the number of years of fourteen Manus. (see table 4).

1428 X 432,000 X 7 = 4,318,272,000 = 14 MANUS

The fractional part of this sidereal interval, 4/7 years, multiplied by seven and further multiplied by the number of years in a Kali-yuga equals the time of an introductory dawn (see table 4).

(4/7) x 7 x 432,000 = 1,728,000 years = introductory dawn.

Relating the Vedic verses above to what we have just demonstrated it is clear that the "navels three" refer to the three mean motions of the Sun and "seven-wheeled chariot" to the rate of precession of the equinoxes. Thus, there can be no doubt that the cosmological time cycles were already an established conclusion at the time of the Vedic era and not in the formative stages.

PRECESSIONAL CONSTANT DEMONSTRATED

Before demonstrating the unmistakable fact of the precession inherent in the cosmological time cycles, let us show the readers how the British translators of the Surya-Siddhanta made fools of themselves when they wrote:

To make such a division accurate, the year ought to be tropical, and not the sidereal; but the author of the Surya-Siddhanta has not yet begun to take into account the precession.....The earliest Hindu astronomers were ignorant of, or ignored, the periodical motion of the equinoxes.....

Again this opinion is in error. If Burgess and Whitney were not so blinded by arrogance and conceit they might have been able to improve their knowledge by careful study of the Surya-Siddhanta. The precession is clearly derived from the cosmological time cycles as shown below. The chatur-yuga of 4,320,000 years is the unit of reference for determining the rate of precession used in the construction of the Hindu cosmological time cycles.

The constant rate of precession is 50".4 = 0° .014 = 7/500 degrees or precession per sidereal year.

This is the same as one degree of precession in 71 3/7 = 71.42857.....sidereal years.

This correlates to the cosmological time cycles as follows:

In the interval of 1/14th kalpa there are:

(71 3/7) x 4,320,000 x 0°.014 = 4,320,000 degrees of precession = 12,000 precessional years

From table one we see that a period of one chatur yuga is 4,320,000 years and is equivalent to 12,000 divine years.

Other related values of interest are:

1 precessional year	= 25,714 2 / 7 sidereal years
7 precessional years	= 180,000 sidereal years
7 x 24 = 168 precessional years	= 1 chatur yuga
168,000 precessional years	= 1 kalpa
(4,320,000 /168) x 0.014	= 360 degrees

DERIVATION OF THE TROPICAL YEAR

In a chatur yuga, there are :

4,320,000 sidereal years = 4,320,000 + 168 tropical years

where 168 is the number of precessional years. Therefore,

1 tropical year = (4,320,000 x (366.2563795... - 1)) / 4,320,168

= 365.2421756... mean solar days

It has been shown conclusively that the Hindu Cosmological time cycles are based upon the diurnal motion of the Earth in reference to any particular fixed star, hence it is purely of sidereal origin. The later practice of adopting the ahargana or "heap of days" is based upon solar and civil day reckoning which is of obvious practical value for calendrics. The sidereal basis of the cosmological time cycles is without question the oldest known positive proof of the origin for the sexagesimal number system.

COMPARISON WITH MODERN SCIENCE

The standard values for the tropical year and annual precession in longitude determined by Simon Newcomb for the epoch 1900.0, mean noon at Greenwich December 31st 1899 are:

1 tropical year	= 365.2421988
precession in one year	= 50".2564

The sidereal year and its precessional constant may be derived from these values. 1 sidereal year (1900.0) = (360" / (360" - 50".2564)) x (365.2421988) + 1

= 366.2563627 diurnal revolutions of the Earth

precession in longitude in one year = (365.2563627 / 365.2421988) x (50".2564)

= 50".2583

The following shows the astronomical quantities used in the construction of Hindu cosmological time cycles with those of Simon Newcomb for the epoch 1900.0

QUANTITY	HINDU	NEWCOMB	DIFFERENCE
constant of precession	50".4 / yr	50".2583 / yr	0".1417 / yr
sidereal year (solar)	365.2563795	365.2563627	1.4 sec / yr
tropical year	365.2421756	365.2421988	- 2.0 sec / yr

The sidereal year in the above table refers to the number of solar civil days it takes for the earth to orbit the sun in relation to any particular star. The former is a sidereal-diurnal relation and the later is a sidereal-solar relation. The very close agreement between the length of the year as measured by Hindu cosmological time cycles and that determined by modern science, together with the demonstrated great antiquity of the cycles, shows that the rotation of the Earth is not being sensibly retarded by "tidal friction" or any other cause. Astronomers today would do well to look for lack of accuracy in their measurement of the Sun's mean motion and to the variations of long periods in the rotation of the Earth to explain the so-called slowing down of the earth.

BREAKING THE BARRIER

The question may be asked how could such accurate constants of precession, as that of the Hindu cosmological time cycles, have been obtained without modern instruments and techniques? At least one thing must be allowed for and that is a very long period of uninterrupted observation.

Naked eye observations are accurate up to 1/6 of a degree. In the case of observing the precession moving uniformly on the celestial sphere, it would then be possible to obtain an accurate rate up to three decimal places in not less than 50" x (72 years / 1°) or 3,600 years. Measuring the precession is not as simple as that, however. Before attempting to measure the precession, the exact times of the equinoxes must be measured first. Ptolemy, the Greek astronomer,

speaks with pride in the Almagest of "very accurately" observing the equinox to within a quarter of a day! That is, to within at best one quarter of one degree of arc. Add to this the difficulty presented by the proper motion of the stars. The star Sirius, for example, has a very large proper motion of -0".553 ecliptic longitude per year. It would take 1,000 years for Sirius to move 1/6 of a degree and for this mistake to be noticed by a naked eye observer. In addition to this, still, the motion of the Earth's perihelion would become noticeable and have to be accounted for. With all these factors, it is difficult to imagine how they can be resolved into a system that would allow continuous observation to produce a constant of precession accurate to three decimal places in less than 10,000 years.

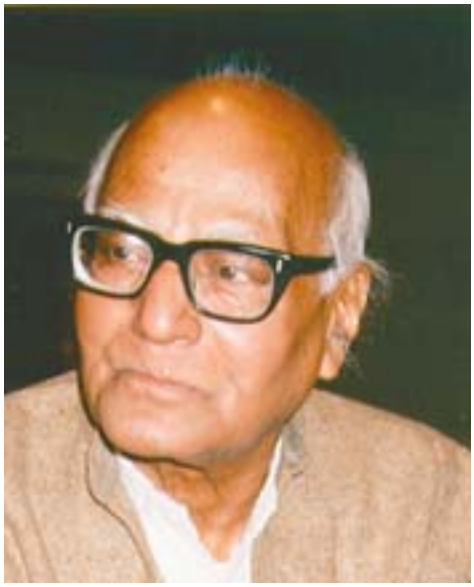
Similar arguments can be put forth to show that to measure the sidereal period of the Sun to eight decimal places could not be accomplished by naked eye observations alone in any less time.

Even if we cannot comprehend a civilization going back 10,000 years prior to the six-thousand year barrier, we still must face the incredible genius of the cosmological time cycles themselves: a calendar for eternity so accurate that its formulations must be considered as laws of nature, while at the same time a structure so simple, symmetrical, and orderly, that the best scholars and astronomers of modern times have completely failed to see the astronomical basis. In this light we can understand why the Hindus regarded this knowledge as a revelation from the gods.

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Show in alphabetical order



181 **Ram Swarup** (1920-1998) a foremost spokesperson of Hindu spirituality and culture in India. He will probably prove to have been the most influential Hindu thinker and Hindu Revivalist in the second half of the 20th century. Arun Shourie has called him a scholar of the first rank. In the 1950s when Indian intellectuals were singing paens to Marxism and Mao, he wrote critiques of communism. **He** was also an author of several books, Hinduism vis-à-vis Christianity and Islam and Christianity, an Imperialist Ideology

"Hindu dharma was a great reconciler. It reconciled various viewpoints, various doctrines. It knew how to look at things from various angles and viewpoints. It knew no conflict between science and religion, between rationalism and spiritualism. It was so because it was not dogmatic in reason or religion.

"Hinduism was organized for peaceful and harmonious co-existence, not for continued confrontation with external enemies in the shape of unbelievers. It is no accident of history that though Hinduism knew internal feuds like any social polity, it never crossed its borders to wage wars against people simply because they worshipped different Gods. Organized on such non-military principles, there is no wonder that Hinduism did not even have a name for itself. "

In Sanatana Dharma, there is no single life, no single judgment, or eternal punishment. There is more than one life and of course, there is no single judgment. In fact, there is no judgment at all as such, for the idea is to help and to judge and condemn. The inner dynamics of incarnation is not reward or punishment but self-improvement, and ultimately self-discovery and self-recovery, moksha.

(source: **On Hinduism Reviews and Reflections - By Ram Swarup** p 1-46).

182. **Rene Grousset** (1885-1952) French art historian. He gives a fine interpretation of the **image of Nataraja:**



"Whether he be surrounded or not by the flaming aureole of the Tiruvasi (Pabhamandala) – the circle of the world which he both fills and oversteps – the King of the Dance is all rhythm and exaltation. The tambourine which he sounds with one



of his right hands draws all creatures into this rhythmic motion and they dance in his company. The conventionalized locks of flying hair and the blown scarfs tell of the speed of this universal movement, which crystallizes matter and reduces it to powder in turn. One of his left hands holds the fire which animates and devours the worlds in this cosmic whirl. One of the God's feet is crushing a Titan, for "this dance is danced upon the bodies of the dead", yet one of the right hands is making a gesture of reassurance (abhayamudra), so true it is that, seen from the cosmic point of view…the very cruelty of this universal determinism is kindly, as the generative principle of the future. And, indeed, on more than one of our bronzes the King of the Dance wears a broad smile. He smiles at death and at life, at pain and at joy, alike, or rather,..his smile is death and life, both joy and pain…**From this lofty point of view, in fact, all things fall into their place, finding their explanation and logical compulsion. Here art is the faithful interpreter of a philosophical concept.** The plastic beauty of the rhythm is no more than the expression of an ideal rhythm. The very multiplicity of arms, puzzling as it may seem at first sight, is subject in turn to an inward law, each pair remaining a model of elegance in itself, so that the whole being of the Nataraja thrills with a magnificent harmony in his terrible joy. And as though to stress the point that the dance of the divine actor is indeed a sport, (lila) – the sport of life and death, the sport of creation and destruction, at once infinite and purposeless – the first of the left hands hangs limply from the arm in the careless gesture of the gajahasta (hand as the elephant's trunk). And lastly, as we look at the back view of the statue, are not the steadiness of these shoulders which uphold world, and the majesty of this Jove-like torso, as it were a symbol of the stability and immutability of substance, while the gyration of the legs in its dizzy speed would seem to symbolize the vortex of phenomena."

(source: **The Civilization of the East – India - by Rene Grousset** p. 252 - 53).

He speaks of the Trimurti statue at **Elephanta Caves**:

"Universal art has succeeded in few materialization of the Divine as powerful and also as balanced. He believed that it is "the greatest representation of the pantheistic god created by the hands of man."

He concludes with poetic enthusiasm: "Never have the overflowing sap of life, the pride of force superior to everything, the secret intoxication of the inner god of things been so serenely expressed."

(source: **The India I Love - By Marie-Simone Renou** p. 88-93).

In the words of Rene Grousset, " The three countenances of the one being are here harmonized without a trace of effort. There are few material representations of the divine principle at once as powerful and as well balanced as this in the art of the whole world.

Nay, more, here we have undoubtedly the grandest representation of the pantheistic God ever made by the hand of man...Indeed, never have the exuberant vigor of life, the tumult of universal joy expressing itself in ordered harmony, the pride of a power superior to any other, and the secret exaltation of the divinity immanent in all things found such serenely expressed."

(source: **The Civilization of the East – India - by Rene Grousset** p.245-6).

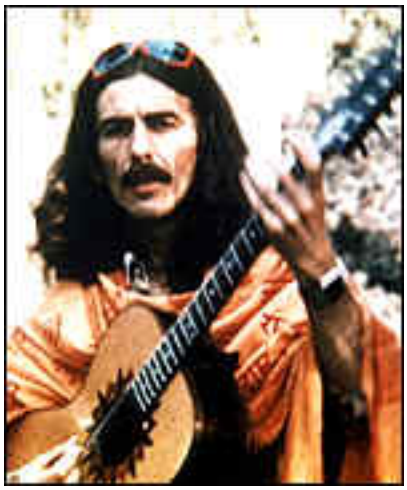
In its Olympian majesty, the Mahesamurti of Elephanta is worthy of comparison with the Zeus of Mylasa or the Asklepios of Melos."

(source: **Civilizations of the East - By Rene Grousset** Vol. II, p. 245-246).

He writes about the **Indian influence in South East Asia**: "In the high plateau of eastern Iran, in the oases of Serindia, in the arid wastes of Tibet, Mongolia, and Manchuria, in the ancient civilized lands of China and Japan, in the lands of the primitive Mons and Khmers and other tribes of Indo-China, in the countries of the Malaya-Polynesians, in Indonesia and Malay, **India left the indelible impress of her high culture, not only upon religion, but also upon art, and literature, in a word, all the higher things of spirit."**

"There is an obstinate prejudice thanks to which India is constantly represented as having lived, as it were, hermetically sealed up in its age-old civilization, apart from the rest of Asia. Nothing could be more exaggerated. During the first eight centuries of our era, so far as religion and art are concerned, central Asia was a sort of Indian colony. **It is often forgotten that in the early Middle Ages there existed a "Greater India," a vast Indian empire.** A man coming from the Ganges or the Deccan to Southeast Asia felt as much at home there as in his own native land. In those days the Indian Ocean really deserved its name."

(for more on Greater India refer to chapter on **Suvarnabhumi** source: **Civilizations of the East - By Rene Grousset** Vol. II, Chapter - Farther India and the Malay Archipelago p. 275-343).



183. **George Harrison** (1943-2001) **former Beatle** and rocker, who was the impetus for the group's spiritual quest of the 1960s which brought them to India. In 1965, he discovered the Indian string instrument, the sitar. Harrison was in India, to learn how to play the instrument under the renowned sitar maestro Ravi Shankar. But for some, Harrison brings back memories of a time when the West turned to India for inspiration and enlightenment.

One reason he became interested in India, he was to say in a 1992 interview, was because "**it unlocked this enormous big door in the back of my consciousness". Eventually he became a devotee of Hindu God Krishna,** donating large sums of money to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and even donating a 23-acre site outside London to the movement. He also incorporated the trademark Hare Krishna chants in his music. Harrison had been close to the International Society of Krishna Consciousness since the 1960s. The ISKCON in a statement said, "During his last days, Krishna devotees were by his side and he left his body to the sounds of the Hare Krishna Mantra."

(source: **rediff.com** 12/01/01).

Harrison became deeply interested in India. The late George Harrison, a longtime devotee of Hinduism, left £700,000 to build a temple in the holy city of Varanasi in India according to Hare Krishna devotees.

(source: **BBC News.com**).

His real interest remained Indian spirituality. In 1976, he told me that the most influential book he had ever read was **Yogananda Paramahansa's Autobiography of a Yogi.** "None of this will last," he repeated. "In the end, there's only God-consciousness."

(source: **He was keener on God than on rock - By Vir Sanghvi** Hindustan Times 12/1/01).

George Harrison "Beatle yogi" who linked Western pop to the strains of the sitar, would have liked himself to be remembered as the man who spread the message of Indian spirituality to the decadent West.

(source: **Hindustan Times** 12/01/01).

George Harrison, the 'Quiet Beatle' was the most Indian of the quartet. It was **his spiritual yearning** that brought the Fab Four to the banks of the Ganges and to the feet of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Pandit Ravi Shankar. Harrison introduced a whole generation of western performers and entertainers to Indian music and mysticism following a 1966 visit to Rishikesh where he drank deeply of ragas and religion.

(source: **George Harrison: The India connection - By Chidanand Rajghatta** Times of India 12/1/01).

At a time before Westerners were flocking to yoga classes, Harrison became one of the first proponents of Eastern culture, studying meditation and Indian music. (source: **abcnews.com**).



In 1973, he came up with a neatly arranged album aptly titled, Living in the Material World. The songs reflect the Hindu view of the world and a culmination of his quest for self-realisation. The song, The Art of Dying for instance, deals with the philosophy of Karma and reincarnation. He even inculcated in himself the orthodox-Hindu way of life by waking up at the crack of dawn, bathe in cold water and study **Bhagvad-Gita**.

(source: **Living in a yellow submarine - Dailypioneer.com**).

He passed away to the sonorous tone of Hare Krishna chants. **He was a lifelong follower of Hinduism and was closely associated with the Hare Krishna movement.** Harrison had produced the **Chants of India**, a recording of Indian religious music. A collection of mantras and prayers from the Vedas, Upanishads, and other scriptures powerfully transports the listener to a place of peace where it's possible to be one with the universe.

(source: **Times of India** 12/03/01).

In an Interview, Henley-On-Thames, Oxfordshire, 1982, this is what the rocker said on His Personal Spirituality:

"I always felt at home with Krishna. You see it was already a part of me. I think it's something that's been with me from my previous birth…. I'd rather be one of the devotees of God than one of the straight, so-called sane or normal people who just don't understand that man is a spiritual being, that he has a soul."

(please refer to Lyrics for **My Sweet Lord**, **Hare Krsna Mantra** and **Govinda**).

In his album **Brainwashed**, former Beatle, George Harrison's answer is "God, God, God" and we eventually get a reading from How To Know God (The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali) and a chant seemingly called Namah Parvati performed along with his son Dhani.

It is the perfect end to a final album of the man who took the world to the feet of the Maharishi and **became Krishna's most famous devotee. "Namah Parvati"** was appended it as the album's spiritual benediction, a touching reminder that while musicians come and go, music can truly embody their spirit forever.

The album is dedicated to the Yogis of Hinduism.

(For more on George Harrison refer to chapter **GlimpsesVI**).



184. **Dr R. Chidambaram** (1936 -) Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India has said: "Bhagwat Gita" continues to be the source of inspiration for both Indian and western scientists and "one sees a thread of similarity in the spiritual thinking of great scientists like Srinivasa Ramanujan, C V Raman, Chandrasekhar,"

He said **Bhagwad Gita** has influenced the thinking of even many foreign scientiss like Erwin Schrodinger and Robert Oppenheimer.

"I myself have been influenced by the Saivite religious environment in my family and the great intellectual force of Advaita Vedanta," he said.

(source: **Hindustan Times** 12/22/01).

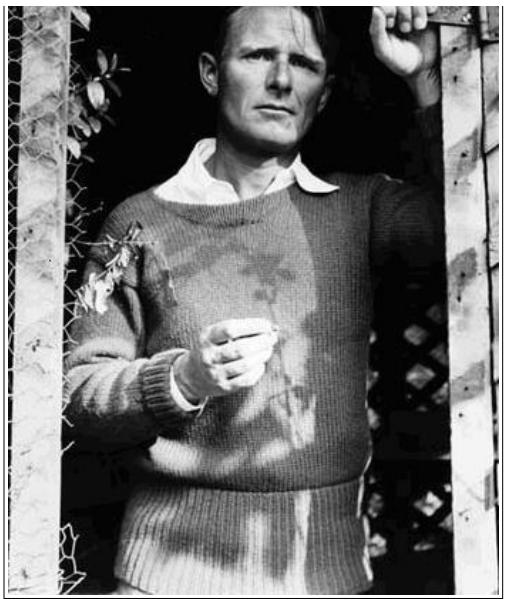
185. **Houston Stewart Chamberlain** (1855-1927) British born writer, and admirer of music composer Richard Wagner. In his major work, **The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century**, he extolled the profundity of Indian philosophy and praise of Hindu mysticism.

"Indian thought is unsurpassed in depth and comprehensive many-sidedness."

(source: **The Soul of India - By Amaury de Riencourt** p 276-279).



186. **Christopher W. B. Isherwood** (1904-1986) Translator, biographer, novelist, and playwright, he is the author of over twenty books, including Vedanta for the Western World and My Guru and His Disciple **-** a book about Swami



Prabhavananda, who guided Isherwood for some thirty years. During the 1940s his interests turned from Christianity to Hinduism. With his guru Swami Prabhavananda Isherwood translated from the Sanskrit **The Bhagavad-Gita** and **The Yoga Aphorism of Patanjali.** Isherwood broke from the strictly chronological format to create a spiritual autobiography wherein the values of Vedanta Hinduism counter his life as a Hollywood scriptwriter.

"I believe the Gita to be one of the major religious documents of the world. If its teachings did not seem to me to agree with those of the other gospels and scriptures, then my own system of values would be thrown into confusion, and I should feel completely bewildered. The Gita is not simply a sermon, but a philosophical treatise."

(source: **Living Wisdom: Vedanta in the West - Pravrajika Vrajaprana** (Editor) **Essay on Gita and the War** - **By Christopher Isherwood** 93-99).

Turning from Christianity to Hinduism In 1943 he became follower of Swami Prabhavananda, producing several works on Indian Vedãnta in the following decades.

187. **Dr. D. T. Suzuki** (1870-1966) Japanese Buddhist and Zen scholar, who has written several books, including Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture (1938, rev. ed. 1959), An Introduction to Zen Buddhism. He has said:

"The study of Japanese thought is the study of Indian thought."

(source: **India: Mother of Us All - By Chaman Lal** p. 25).

188. **Rizwan Salim** (?) reviewer, New York Tribune, Capitol Hill reporter, Engineering Times, assistant editor, American Sentinel, published in Hindustan Times has wisely observed:



"Given the reality that **Hindustan is the longest surviving ancient civilization and Hindus have to their credit so many unccountable and such astonishing achievements** of architecture and painting, music and dance, poetry and drama, epics and narratives, intellectual systems and philosophical doctrines, healing systems and mind-body disciplines, Hindus of every caste and class today should have possessed a well-informed and well-developed, intense and, fully conscious cultural pride.

But one of the principal tragedies of contemporary India is that the



majority of even the educated and otherwise affluent Hindus do not possess a deep and extensive knowledge of their culture-and do not give evidence of an intensely felt cultural pride.' Lacking profound cultural knowledge and intense cultural pride, India's intellectuals regard the fashionable ideas and ideologies from Europe and America as unquestionably superior to Bharat's thousands of years old Hindu culture and wisdom."

There are not very many scholars of high ability and international reputation in India today who illuminate Hindu culture and Hindus' past great accomplishments. It is an embarrassing truth that the best Indologists are found in the Netherlands and Sweden, Germany and France, Japan and Italy-not in Delhi and Ujjain, Varanasi and Puri, Madurai and Mysore."

"It is clear that India at the time when Muslim invaders turned towards it (8 to 11th century) was the earth's richest region for its wealth in precious and semi-precious stones, gold and silver; religion and culture; and its fine arts and letters. Tenth century Hindustan was also too far advanced than its contemporaries in the East and the West for its achievements in the realms of speculative philosophy and scientific theorizing, mathematics and knowledge of nature's workings. Hindus of the early medieval period were unquestionably superior in more things than the Chinese, the Persians (including the Sassanians), the Romans and the Byzantines of the immediate preceding centuries. **The followers of Siva and Vishnu on this subcontinent had created for themselves a society more mentally evolved - joyous and prosperous too - than had been realized by the Jews, Christians, and Muslim monotheists of the time.** Medieval India, until the Islamic invaders destroyed it, **was history's most richly imaginative culture and one of the five most advanced civilizations of all times."**

The descendents of those who built the magnificent temples of Bhojpur and Thanjavur, Konark and Kailas, invented mathematics and urban surgery, created mind-body disciplines (yoga) of astonishing power, and built mighty empires would almost certainly have attained technological superiority over Europe."

(source: **Need for Cultural pride - Revival - By Rizwan Salim** The Hindustan Times 9/20/1998).



189. **François-Auguste-René Rodin** (1840-1917) French sculptor, who imbued his work with great psychological force, which was expressed largely through texture and modeling. He is regarded as the foremost sculptor of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In a magnificently poetic outburst about the **Mahesamurti (Trimurti) of the Elephanta Caves**:

"This full, pouting mouth, rich in sensuous



expressions, these lips like a lake of pleasure, fringed by the noble, palpitating nostrils."

(source: **Civilizations of the East - By Rene Grousset** Vol. II, p. 245-246).

Rodin described the statue of Nataraja or King of Dance - as the perfect embodiment of rhythmic movement.

(source: **Indian Art - By Vidya Dehejia** p. 12).

190. **Gerald James Larson**, An American scholar who points out that there are in a manner of speaking almost as many Gitas as there are readers of it and that:

"What the Gita is, finally is inseparable from its many contextual environments, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, scholarly and popular, corporate and personal, secular and sacred - contextual environments that have emerged in an on-going historical process and will continue to emerge as that historical process unfolds." and he adds:

" An interesting monograph could be written on the Gita as symptomatic of trends in nineteenth-and twentieth-century European and American scholarly thought."

(source: **The Universal Gita: Western Images of the Bhagavad Gita a Bicentenary Survey - By Eric J. Sharpe** p. 14).

191. **Dorothea Chaplin** mentions in her book, **Matter, Myth and Spirit or Keltic and Hindu Links** (pp. 168-9),

"Long before the year 460 B.C. in which Hippocrates, the father of European medicine was born, the Hindus had built an extensive pharmacopoeia and had elaborate treatises on a variety of medical and surgical subjects...The Hindus' wonderful knowledge of medicine has for some considerable time led them away from surgical methods as working destruction on the nervous system, which their scientific medical system is able to obliviate, producing a cure even without a preliminary crisis."

(source: **Matter, Myth and Spirit or Keltic and Hindu Links - By Dorothea Chaplin** p. 168-9).



192. **Alexandra David-Neel** (1868-1969) French explorer, writer, Orientalist and mystic. She had studied Sanskrit and Buddhism at the Sorbonne University and made her first journey alone to India. Though educated in a convent, she became interested in spiritualism and theosophy and joined a group with similar interests, one of this group was Mirra Richard, the future "Mother" of Pondicherry. She had remarked that **the role Gods play in India is remarkable. She** has said:

"because the images of statues are like a battery which is charged over the ages by the adoration of the devotees, who in turn can draw energy, inspiration, or grace from these statues." She goes on: "As a battery, the energy in the statue will not get discharged, as

long as the faithful continue to worship it by their adoration." And she concludes: " Gods are thus created by the energy given out by the faith in their existence."

(source: **Arise O' India - By Francois Gautier** p. 15).

193 **Rev. William Robertson**

He could not but praise "the ancient and high civilization of the inhabitants of India."

(source: **The Invasion That Never Was - By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 17).

194. **Professor Rudolph Otto** (1869-1937 Was associate professor at Göttingen. Eventually he became a professor of systematic theology, first at Breslau in 1915, then at Marburg in 1917. He is emphatic that the idea of a Son of God is certainly not from Israel....The figure of a being who had to do with the world, is of high antiquity among the Aryans....and points back in some way to influences of the Aryan East. "These materials are found in India, in more primitive forms not merely as a late period but in the remotest pre-Christian Kausitaki Upanishad."

(source: **Eastern Religions and Western Thought - By Sir Sarvapelli Radhakrishnan**. p. 161).

195. **Sir John Malcolm** (1829-1896) Was the Governor of Bombay and author of A Memoir of Central India including Malwa and Adjoining Provinces and also worked for the East India Company and he remarked:

"The Hindoo...are distinguished for some of the finest qualities of the mind; they are brave, generous, and humane, and their truth is as remarkable as their courage. "

(source: **The Invasion That Never Was - By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 17).

196. **David Frawley** (?) also known as **Pandit Vamadeva Shastri** the American eminent teacher and practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine and Vedic astrology and author of several books, including **Arise Arjuna : Hinduism and the modern world** and **Awaken Bharata: A Call for India's Rebirth** - in which the need for a new intelligentsia, "intellectual kshatriya" or intellectual warrior class trained in Vedic dharma, to handle challenges was emphasized.

He writes:

"The Hindu mind represents humanity's oldest and most continuous stream of conscious intelligence on the planet. Hindu sages, seers, saints, yogis and jnanis have maintained an unbroken current of awareness linking humanity with the Divine since the dawn of history, and as carried over from earlier cycles of civilization in previous humanities unknown to our present spiritually limited culture."

"The Hindu mind has a vision of eternity and infinity. It is aware of the vast cycles of creation and destruction that govern the many universes and innumerable creatures within them."

(source: **Hinduism and the Clash of Civilizations - By David Frawley** p. 12-13).

He considers **Hinduism to be a religion of the Earth**, because, as he describes beautifully:

"…it honors the Earth as the Divine Mother and encourages us to honor her and help her develop her creative potentials. The deities of Hinduism permeate the world of nature…they don't belong to a single country or book only. It is not necessary to live in India to be a Hindu. In fact, one must live in harmony with the land where one is located to be a true Hindu.

"I see Hinduism as a religion eminently suited for all lands and for all people because it requires that we connect with the land and its creatures - that we align our individual self with the soul of all beings around us. Hinduism finds holy places everywhere, wherever there is a river, a mountain, a large rock, or big tree, wherever some unusual natural phenomenon be it a spring, a cave, or a geyser."

"True religion, whether it predominates in the Eastern or Western parts of the world, is not a matter of geography," says Frawley. "All the religions of the world are followed in areas far beyond the geographical locale of their origin. Religion speaks of the ultimate issues of life and death and should orient us to the Eternal and the Universal. In this respect, **Hinduism with its universal view has greater relevance for all human beings than any belief system, which divides humanity into believers and non-believers."**

(source: **About.com**).

The Indian tradition is pluralistic and has always offered freedom of worshipping the divine in the name and form of one's choice and according to one's individual samskaras. It is pluralistic both at the level of religious practices as well as philosophical teachings. For this reason we find more religions inside Hinduism than among all of the world's religions put together.

Pluralism means freedom. It means that we should accept religious differences as a fact of life, like other natural variations. We need freedom to arrive at the truth. The pursuit of dharma, the urge for self-realization and desire for liberation are common to all paths. Rather than as a cause for confusion, I see Indian pluralism as constructively facilitating an individual's spiritual quest.

(source: **Vedacharya from the West** - **Times of India** March 30, 2000).

David Frawley has convincingly argued, the **central value of Hinduism is not "tolerance" (as interested parties try to make Hindus believe) but truth.**

(source: **Bharatiya Janata Party vis-a-vis Hindu Resurgence - By Koenraad Elst** p. 135).



197. **Pierre Loti** (1850-1923) pseudonym of Louis-marie-julien Viaud, a novelist whose exoticism made him popular in his time and whose themes anticipated some of the central preoccupations of French literature between World Wars. Loti's career as a naval officer took him to the Middle and Far East, thus providing him with the exotic settings of his novels and reminiscences. Some of his books include **Voyages 1872-1913** and **L'Inde sans les Anglais**.

He expressed his esteem for India in the following pregnant words:

"And now **I salute thee with awe, with veneration, and wonder,**

ancient India, of whom I am the adept, **the India of the highest splendor of art and philosophy.** May thy awakening astonish the Occident, decadent, mean, daily dwindling, slayer of nations, slayer of Gods, slayer of souls, which yet bows down still, ancient India, before the prodigies of thy primordial conceptions!"

(source: **Sanskrit Civilization - G. R. Josyer** International Academy of Sanskrit Research. p. 1)

198. **William Edward Hartpole Lecky** (1838-1903) Irish historian, essayist, author of **The Substance of History of European Morals** (From Augustus to Charlemagne).

He quotes an old tradition in Greece that **Pythagoras himself had come to India** and learnt philosophy from the gymnosophists. It seems he believed in an "all-pervading soul" which is at least one important attribute to Hindu atman. Pythagoras believed in rebirth or transmigration ; he taught and practiced harmlessness or no-injury, he taught silence; he taught that the end of man is to "become like God". Orphic mysteries taught release (lysis) from all material entanglements, which is close to **moksha of the Hindus.**

(source: **On Hinduism Reviews and Reflections - By Ram Swarup** p. 197).

199. **Paul Hubert**, a French Theosophist, was to write in glowing terms of Charles Wilkins translation the **Bhagavad Gita.** In his book **Histoire de la Bhagavad Gita** he said it was one of the **'striking events in the universal history of philosophy'**

(source: **The Universal Gita: Western Images of the Bhagavad Gita a Bicentenary Survey - By Eric J. Sharpe** p. 4).



200. **Prince Muhammad Dara Shikoh** (1627-1658 AD) the favorite Sufi **son of Moghul emperor, Shah Jehan**. Known the world over for his unorthodox and liberal views. He was a mystic and a free thinker. Dara Shikoh's most important legacy is the translation of fifty Upanishads, known under the title of Sirr-i-Akbar ("The Great Secret"). It was completed in 1657, together with paraphrases and excerpts from commentaries which in various cases, though by no means throughout, can be traced back to Sankara.

He had learned Sanskrit and studied the Hindu scriptures in the original. He studied the Torah, the Gospels and the Psalms, **but it is the "Great Secret" (Sirri-i-Akbar) of the Upanishads which, in his view, represents the most original testimony of the oneness of God or the Absolute.**

His personal fate is well-known: in 1659, two years after the completion of the Sirr-i-Akbar, he was executed by order of his brother, Aurangazeb, and with the consent of the Islamic orthodoxy community (Ulama), who claimed that he was a heretic and a danger to the state, the faith and the public order.

(source: **India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding - By Wilhelm Halbfass** p. 34).

He translated the **Upanishads**, **Bhagavad Gita** and **Yoga - Vashishta** into Persian directly from Sanskrit and called it **Sirr-e-Akbar (The Great Mystery**). Titled **"The Upanishads: God's Most Perfect Revelation"** and then into Latin by Anquetil Duperron (1801 and 1802) under the title **Oupnekhat,** contained about fifty. This translation introduced Western readers to the Upanishads. Schopenhauer's reaction to it is well-known.

The Quran itself, he said, **made veiled references to the Upanishads as the "first heavenly book and the fountainhead of the ocean of monotheism."**

Dara Shikoh, wrote in his Persian translation of the **Upanishads**.

"After gradual research; I have come to the conclusion that long before all heavenly books, God had revealed to the Hindus, through the Rishis of yore, of whom Brahma was the Chief, His four books of knowledge, the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda."

In his **Majma al-Bahrain**, he sought to reconcile the Sufi theory with the **Vedanta.**

He was able to affirm that Sufism and **Advaita Vedantism (Hinduism)** are essentially the same, with a surface difference of terminology."

And in introduction to this work he says that one finds in Upanishads the concept of tawhid (the doctrine of Unity of God, the most fundamental doctrine of Islam) after the Qur'an and perhaps the Qur'an refers to Upanishad when it refers to Kitab al-Maknun (The Hidden Book). His work Majma`ul Bahrayn (Mingling of the Two Oceans i.e. Hinduism and Islam) is very seminal work in the history of composite culture of India.

Two years after the completion of the Sirr-i-Akbar, Dara was executed on the orders of his brother - Aurangazeb.

(source: **http://ecumene.org/IIS/csss59.htm** and **dailypioneer.com**).

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

271. **Paul Brunton** (1898 -1981) was a British philosopher, mystic, traveler and author of **A Hermit in the Himalayas**, **A Message from Arunachala** and **The Orient: Legacy to the West**. **A Search in Secret India** is one of the great classics of spiritual travel writing. With a keen eye for detail, Paul Brunton describes taking a circular journey round India: living amongst yogis, mystics and gurus, seeking the one who would give him the peace and tranquility that come with self-knowledge. His vividly told search ends at Arunachala, with Sri Ramana Maharshi. He has observed:

"We are witnessing in the West the appearance of an at present thin but slowly deepening current of interest in those very thoughts and ideas which the **young men of India are today doing their best to reject as inadequate to their needs and which constitute the faith and religious traditions of their forefathers."**

"For Indian culture is fruitful in the domain of psychology, philosophy, and religion, so fruitful that there are few doctrines which appeared out of original Western sources that have not already been anticipated and developed...in India. "

The **Bhagavad Gita** contains the **mental quintessence and successful synthesis of the various systems of religion and philosophy, it offers a unique epitome of the high culture of prehistoric India.** The following sentences from the Bhagavad Gita unite in making the same declaration of an unseen Reality and Unity which dwells behind nature.

“My self is the bearer of all existence.”
“All this world is pervaded by Me in My unmanifested form.”

This doctrine is the keystone in the entire arch of the earliest Indian philosophy.

This idea appealed to several “wise men” of our Western world - philosophers and scientists, living so many centuries later, including **Tennyson, Thomas Carlyle**, and **Ralph Waldo Emerson.**



Alfred Lord Tennyson, (1809-1892) one time Poet Laureate of England sings:

“The sun, the moon, the stars, the hills and the plains,
Are not these, O Soul, the vision of Him who reigns?
The ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear this vision – were it not He?”

"**Ralph Waldo Emerson** (1803-1882), whose **Transcendentalism earned him the appellation of "the Boston Brahmin."** Reading through his writings and essays we find several passages which insists, as the Hindu texts on the subordinate character of the visible material creation."

The work of physicists like Currie, Rutherford, Fermi, Cockcroft, Chadwick, Anderson and Millikan has brought us to the practical and proven scientific principle that the inner structure of matter is reducible to a single fundamental substance, an essential and immortal energy which is the "life" of the myriad forms that make up the universe. Modern development in the laboratory will vindicate the theory of a single element underlying all the visible and different manifestations of material Nature, we shall have to grant that **the assertions of the Hindu philosophers, made thousands of years ago....are but results of the insight practiced by keenly perceptive and concentrated minds."**

"The ancient Hindus took their philosophic statements in the nature of a revelation from on high, as issuing forth from their seers as a result of a personal self-experience in the spiritual domain. Our Western scientists have no such experience, and if they are approaching similar conclusions, it is because they are working their way from the profoundest depths of this material world up to its farthest frontier where the ions elude them and vanish into mystery……the wisest men of the ancient East and the modern West…are beginning to arrive at precisely the same conclusions."

" This Indian doctrine declares human cognition of the entire manifold universe to be illusionary in character. The vast multitude of tangible objects and tangible creatures which we so plainly witness around us were said to be the product of the constructive imagination of the One Hidden Self. Man and his material environments were but finite dreams passing through the mind of the Infinite Dreamer. **Consequently all that we know of the world is nothing more or less than a series of idea held in our consciousness.** Thus we arrive at a completely idealistic metaphysics which, because of its very nature, must apparently remain for ever purely speculative and beyond the scope of the finest instruments which can be devised to prove or disprove. Nevertheless the strangeness and unfamiliarity of the doctrine fascinated the Indian mind to an amazing extent. **That this early foreshadowing of modern idealistic philosophy was not merely a worthless superstition is evidenced by the fact that some brilliant minds of the West have been equally fascinated and perplexed. "**

One of the greatest 19th century scientists was **Thomas Henry Huxley** (1825-1895), his work, **Collected Essays** vol. VI, serve to show **how much ancient Indian philosophy anticipated modern Western thought.**

(source: **Indian Philosophy and Modern Culture - By Paul Brunton** p. 9 - 92 London Rider & Co. Paternoster House, E. C). For more on Paul Brunton refer to chapter on **Glimpses VI**).



272. **William Cooke Taylor** (1800-1849) author of several books including **A popular history of British India, commercial intercourse with China, and the insular possessions of England in the eastern seas**. He spoke glowingly of Sanskrit literature:

"It was an astounding discovery that Hindustan possessed, in spite of the changes of realms and chances of time, a language of unrivalled richness and variety; a language, the parent of all those dialects that Europe has fondly called classical - the source alike of Greek flexibility and Roman strength. **A philosophy, compared with which, in point of age, the lessons of Pythagoras are but of yesterday, and in point of daring speculation Plato's boldest efforts are tame and commonplace. A poetry more purely intellectual than any of those which we had before any conception; and systems of science whose antiquity baffled all power of astronomical calculation.** This literature, with all its colossal proportions, which can scarcely be described without the semblance of bombast and exaggeration claimed of course a place for itself - it stood alone, and it was able to stand alone."

"To acquire the mastery of this language is almost the labor of life; its literature seems exhaustless. The utmost stretch of imagination can scarcely comprehend its boundless mythology. Its philosophy has touched upon every metaphysical difficulty; its legislation is as varied as the castes for which it was designed."

(source: **Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Vol. II (1834) - W. C. Taylor's paper on Sanskrit Literature**).

273. **Gertrude Emerson Sen** (- 1982) historian and journalist and Asia specialist. Author of several books including **The Story of Early Indian Civilization**. She married a Bengali - Basiswar Sen and in her **Voiceless India**, she learned to love the deep-rooted Indian view of life, Indian ways of thought and Indian ideals.

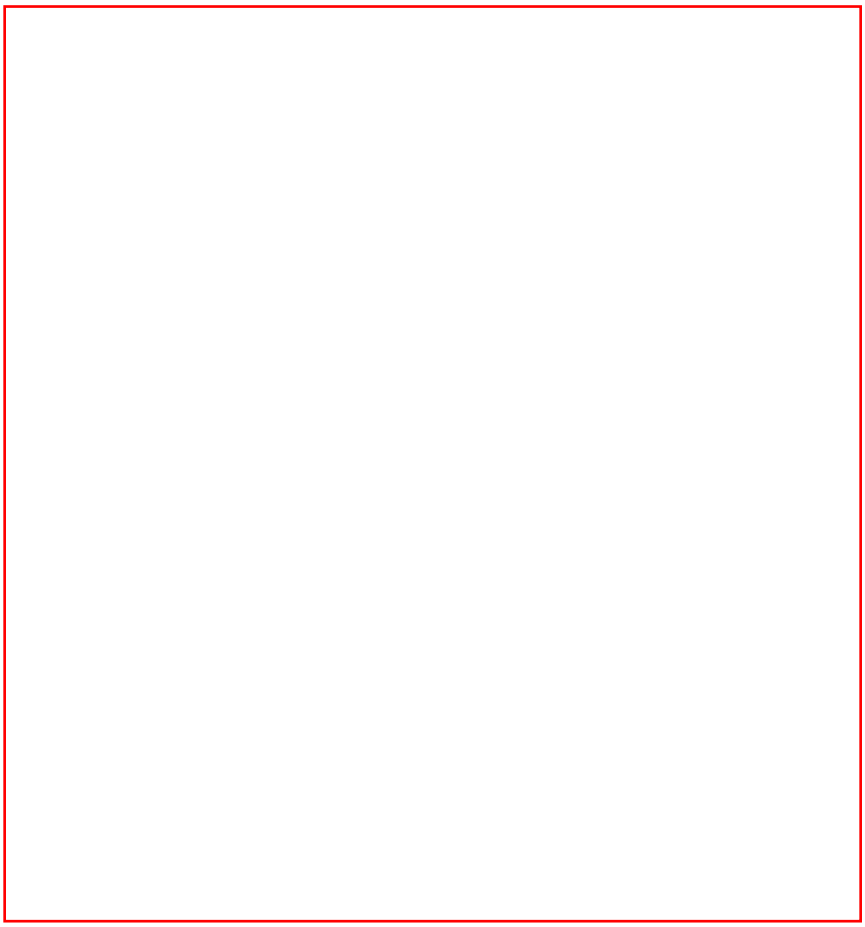


She considered **Hinduism a priceless heritage of India**. The vast archaic literature been handed down, and which faithfully preserves the ideas and ideals of those far-off times. It establishes the wonderful continuity and depth of Indian civilization.

"As the **Indian sages pondered** on the problem of good and evil, they were confronted with the apparent injustices and cruelties of the world around them, and this state of affairs was finally reconciled with their idea of Brahman by the conception of a universal ethical law applying to all life. This law as proclaimed as the **law of karma.** In the words of the **Upanishads**, "As is a man's desire so is his will, and as is his will so is his deed, and whatever deed he does that he will reap."

"India held a strange and irresistible attraction for the whole of Asia in the first millennium. People in the most primitive stage of development as well as the Chinese with a civilization as ancient and illustrious as India's own, acknowledged India as first in the supreme realm of spiritual perception. Yet the civilization of India, transplanted abroad, did not have a deadening effect of suppressing or stifling native genius, as the imposition of a foreign culture often does. On the contrary, it called out the best that others

had to give. As a result of India's fertilizing influence, new and distinctive types of culture everywhere arose, and each new colony was able to create and contribute fresh treasure, to be added to the great Asiatic heritage. **How Indian religions and Indian culture blossomed anew in foreign environments and endured for many centuries is a fascinating and little appreciated chapter of Indian history."**





Shiva and Parvati - Japan *Goddess Saraswati - Japan*
India's religious and cultural ideas lapped at the far shores of Korea and Japan.

"The Indian colonies which began to grow up all along the periphery of the motherland were essentially cultural and religious, rather than political or racial. Yet they were subject to strong Indian influences. These swept outward like tidal waves. They passed south to Sri Lanka and beyond to the remote islands of the Pacific. They inundated Burma, Malaya, Siam and Indo-China. They overwhelmed Nepal and Tibet. From Afghanistan, they passed along to central Asia and China. **They lapped at the far shores of Korea and Japan. Indian religious ideas and literature, Indian conventions of art and architecture, Indian legal codes and social practices...all took root in these outer territories."** "For a long time Indians seem to have held the monopoly of maritime commerce in both the southern and eastern seas of Asia. They possessed large ocean-going vessels, in which they first ventured to Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaya and gradually they extended their journeys to Java and Sumatra and then to southern China.'

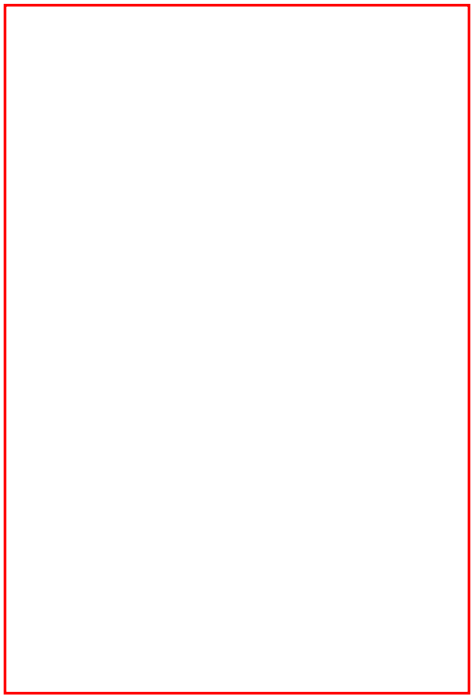
(source: **The Pageant of India's History - By Gertrude Emerson Sen** p. 52 - 322).

274. **J. Seymour Keay** (?) British M. P. Banker in India and Indian Agent writing in 1883:

" It cannot be too well understood that our position in India has never been in any degree that of civilians bringing civilization to savage races. **When we landed in India we found there a hoary civilization, which, during the progress of thousands of years, had fitted itself into the character and adjusted itself to the wants of highly intellectual races.** The civilization was not perfunctory, but universal and all pervading - furnishing the country not only with political systems, but with social and domestic institutions of the most ramified description. **The beneficent nature of these institutions as a whole may be judged from their effects on the character of the Hindu race.** Perhaps there are no other people in the world who show so much in their character the advantageous effect of

their own civilization. They are shrewd in business, acute in reasoning, thrifty, religious, sober, charitable, obedient to parents, reverential to old age, amiable, law-abiding, compassionate towards the helpless and patient under suffering."

(source: **Hindu Swaraj or Indian Home Rule - By M. K. Gandhi** p. 106).



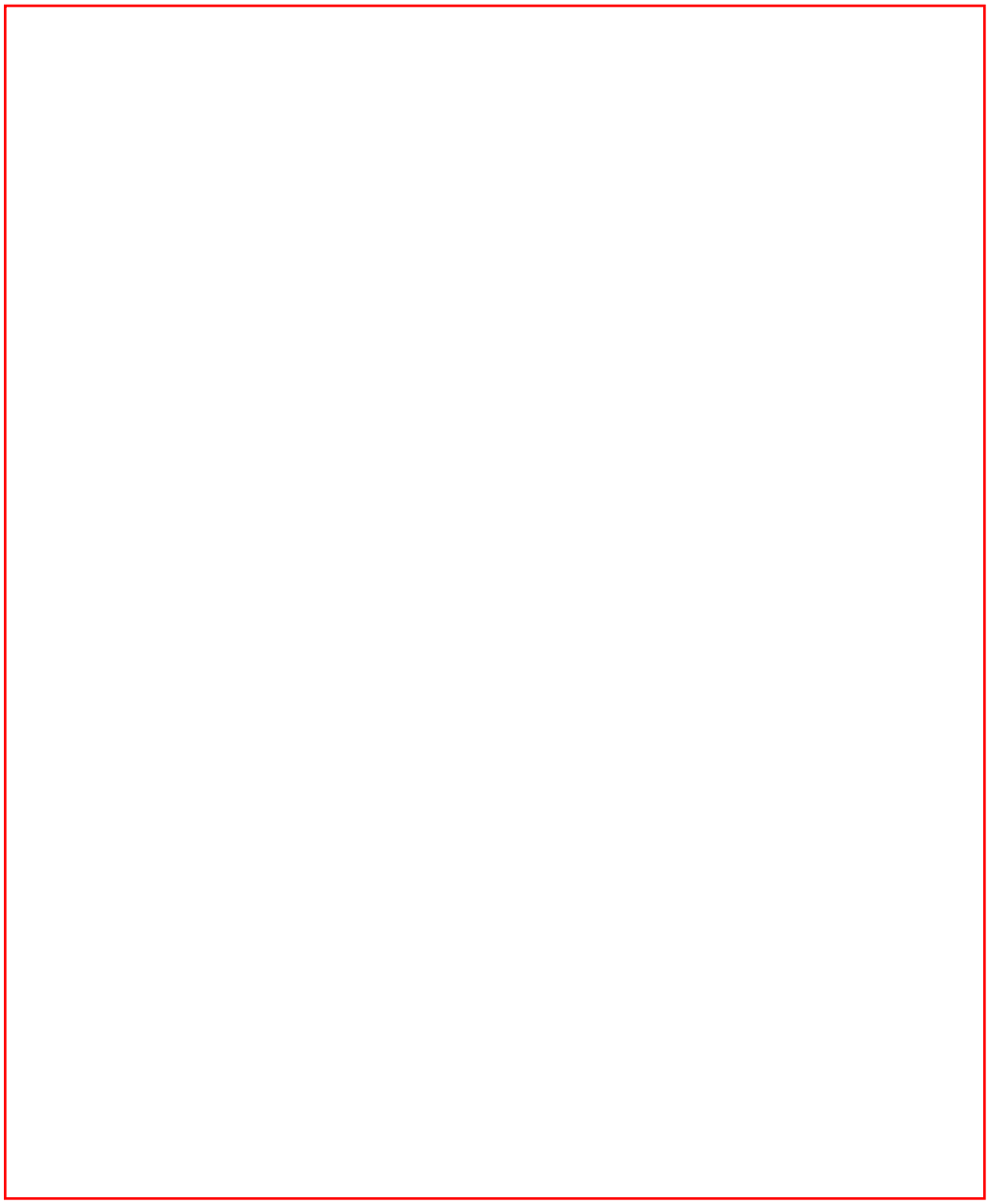
275. **Swami Rama Tirtha** (1873-1906) renounced his career as a Mathematician in order to practice and preach Vedanta.

"Sanatana means Eternal. In its purest form, this religion is Sanatana, because it is based on Truth. Truth is immortal and is never annihilated. It remains the same yesterday, today and forever. Therefore our true Sanatana Dharma, in its purest form, cam never be exterminated. It, however, does not follow that we should relax into inaction, in the belief that our religion is the best or that it can never be destroyed. No, no. This idle thinking is the result of our indolent minds. **It is, therefore, absolutely essential for the followers of Sanatana Dharma to keep it safe from the evil and aggressive designs of the non-Hindus, who are generally ever ready to malign us."**

Truth is not only Eternal but also unlimited and infinite. It is all-embracing. It is the religion for all, irrespective of their caste, creed or nationality. In fact, it is great and glaring, and never sectarian. It is liberal. Other religions have all been founded by individuals. **But this Sanatana Dharma is not based on the teachings of any one single person.** Much before Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Shankarcharya and others, the germs of the fundamental principles of Sanatana Dharma were present.

Sanatana Dharma is very simple and natural because it is based on the Laws of Nature. The man whose life is molded according to these Laws, irrespective of their being physical, mental and spiritual, is in the real sense, a Sanatani. **Santana Dharma is a grand and all-embracing religion.** There should be no narrow mindedness in a Sanatani. **He should feel His presene in the Chandala, in the thief, the lowest beings, the sinners, the foreigners and in all. He should worship God in all, especially in the hungry, the needy and the downtrodden with selfless service and liberality. This is in real sense, the true worship of and devotion to God."**

(source: **Om Sanatana Dharma - By Swami Rama Tirtha** p. 20-29 and p. 73).



carved temple horse court

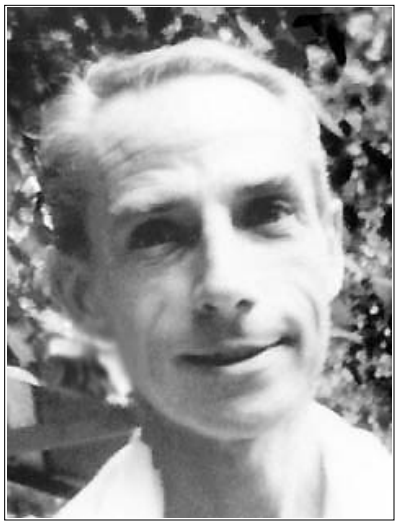
276. **R S Nathan** (?) author of **Hinduism That is Sanatana Dharma**, observes:

"The result is the **profound Philosophy of Vedanta** to which more and more men and women from all parts of the world are flocking today for light, solace and fulfillment. So in India, **Philosophy is not a hobby or an escape, but an intense search for Truth** after having found from experience that mundane achievements only complicate our lives and takes us farther from our real goal. In fact Rishis of yore did not make a distinction between Science on the one side, and Religion and Philosophy on the other. The Science of the Upa-Vedas and the Vedanagas, and the Philosophies are the Vedas-Vedangas, all culminating in the Vedanata – the end of the Vedas.

"Sanatana Dharma" the most ancient of all the living religions of today, a non-prophetic religion popularly known as "Hinduism" since the last few centuries, based on all-embracing universal love, the eternal values of life and human endeavor, time-tested knowledge and wisdom, and all-comprehensive in its vision, has a permanent message enshrined in it, for the entire humanity irrespective of time, place and circumstances."

(source: **Hinduism That is Sanatana Dharma - By R S Nathan** preface and 36 - 46

published by Central Chinmaya Mission Trust - Bombay 1989).



277. **Satprem** (1923 -1989) aka Bernard Enginger, a sailor and a Breton born in Paris. A member of the French Resistance. Satprem was arrested by the Gestapo when he was twenty and spent a year and half in concentration camps. Devastated he journey first to Upper Egypt, then to India, where he served in the French colonial government of Pondicherry. There he discovered Sri Aurobindo and Mother. Their Message - "Man is a transitional being" - struck a deep chord.

His first essay was dedicated to **Sri Aurobindo or the Adventure of Consciousness** a book that has led so many to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. His book, **Evolution II** translated from the French by Michel Danino is dedicated to the **Souls of India**:

"the millions souls of India
unknown to themselves
unknowing of their own Treasure
with my love infinite

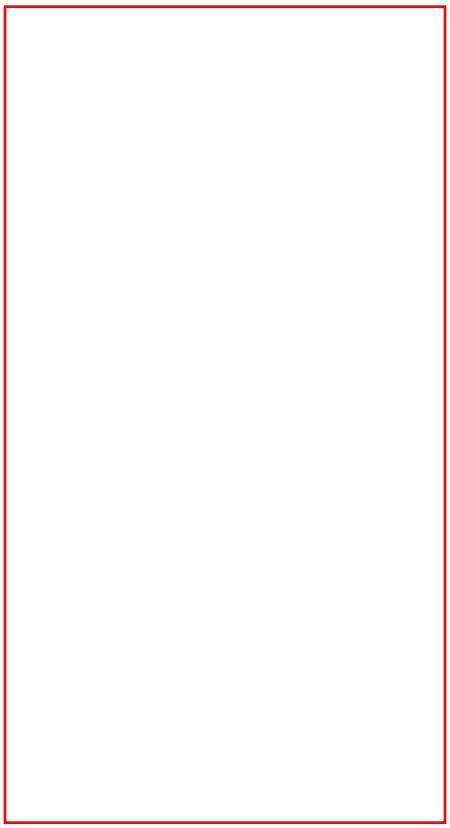
In his book, Evolution II, he wondered after Man, who? But the question is: After Man, how?

(source: **Evolution II - by Satprem** - **Translated by Michel Danino**).

Satprem believed in the Hindu **concept of reincarnation** and asks:

"Which sadist God has decreed that we would have only one life to realize ourselves and through which colossal ignorance Islam and Christianity have decided that we shall go to Heaven or Hell, according to the deeds, bad or good, which we have committed in a single life?"

(source: **Arise O'India - By Francois Gautier** p. 10-11 ISBN 81-241-0518-9 Har-Anand Publications 2000).



278. **Allama Iqbal** (1873-1938) Indian thinker and poet.

The great civilization of the Indian subcontinent, has had its roots deep in antiquity, some seven to eight thousand years ago, and its flowering in the third millennium B.C. still lives on. In contrast, when we look round the world we are surprised by the fact that the Egyptian and Mesopotamia civilizations that flourished alongside this Indic Civilization have all disappeared, leaving hardly any trace behind. Why? The Indian psyche has indeed been pondering over this great cultural phenomenon of 'livingness', and this quest has been very aptly echoed by him in the following words:

Yunan-o-Misra Ruma sab mit gaye jahan se
Ab tak magar hai baqi namo-nishan hamara
Kuchh bat hai ki hasti mitati nahin hamari
Sadiyon raha hai dushman daur-i-zaman hamara

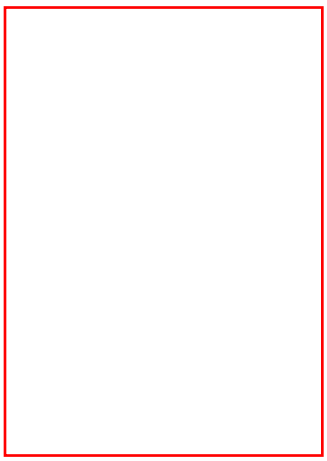
Ancient civilizations of Greece, Egypt and Rome have all disappeared from this world, but the elements of our civilization still continue. Although world-events have been inimical to us for centuries, there is something in our civilization which has withstood these onslaughts.

(source: **The Saraswati Flows on: The Continuity of Indian Culture - By B. B. Lal**. p. Chapter V p. 136). For more on B B Lal refer to chapter **Quotes251-270**).

Iqbal, described **Lord Ram as the Imam of Hindustan.**

(source: **Saeed Naqvi column - indianexpress.com**).

279. **Ekkirala Krishnamacharya** (1926-1984) author of **Cradle of Indian History**, physician, educationist and Kulapati (rector) of the Theosophy-related World Teacher Trust in Visakhapatnam. Fondly called by his disciples as `Master E.K'.



"There was no religion in this land, nor was any religion necessary for the Indians. The ancient Indians had a code of law for man to follow. This was framed in accordance with various truths working in natrue. The law of the existence of nature and its creation was observed in all its detail and the law for man to follow as copied in accordance with it. This was called **Dharma.** The term means that which bears and protects. It is that which bears and protects when we follow (it). Man is honored when he honors it. He receives protection when he protects it. It was made into a constitution called **Bharata Dharma.** It was the path of life commonly accepted throughout the land. Any attempt for religion is naturally limited and narrow when compared with this."

So Dharma, is nothing but living in accordance with the laws of nature. He used to say that the only qualification required to learn the **`Gayatri Mantram'** was the urge to learn it, and today lakhs of people all over the world, irrespective of caste, creed or religion have mastered it. He siad: "Secularism only means `not guided by religion' but not discarding religion altogether. While some countries do not feel ashamed

to call themselves Christian or Islamic nations, it is only India which is giving freedom to all people to practize their own religion,"

In 1974, he toured Europe and America five times between 1972 and 1983 and **propagated the message of Sanatana Dharma, spiritual astrology, Pantanjali's Yoga, Bhagavadgita and spiritual psychology.**

(source: **Who is a Hindu? - Koenraad Elst** and **An embodiment of service - The Hindu** - Sept 09' 02).



280. **Swami Ghanananda Saraswati** (?) the first African swami was initiated by Swami Krishnanand of India in 1975. He heads the Hindu Monastery of Africa in Accra, Ghana, regularly imparting spiritual guidance to devotees. He writes:

"African religions and Hinduism have certain similarities. Traditional African religions recognize the many aspects of Brahman and worship God as Prithivi, Vayu, Varuna, Agni, etc., just as in Hinduism. Only Africans who have been exposed to Hinduism can appreciate these similarities which help them to better understand African beliefs and aspirations."

"I was searching for the truth. **I went through some books on yoga and discovered that Hinduism is a very good religion. It is open minded. It teaches you about God. It also teaches you about science of the soul.** Later I went to Rishikesh and stayed with Sivananda's ashram, the Divine Life Society. There I found that **Hinduism is a straightforward religion that revealed the truth.**

I believe that Hinduism will grow with time among both Indians and Africans. It is now time for India and Hindu masters to turn their attention to Africa, with swamis and brahmins coming to conduct workshops, etc., and thereby give Africa a chance to remove the veil of spiritual darkness that has given Africa the name "the dark continent."

(source: **Hinduism Today** - August 1998 and July/August/September 2003 p. 63).

281. **Herbert George H. G. Wells** (1866 -1946) historian, a bitter critic of the Roman Catholic Church and author of several books including **A Short History of the World** and **Crux Ansata: An Indictment of the Roman Catholic Church** and **The Time Machine.**

In Hinduism, tolerance is not simply a matter of policy but an article of faith. He say that Hindu kings actually welcomed with open arms Christian missionaries and Muslim fakirs and Buddhist monks for a free exchange of ideas. One great Hindu king, Ashoka, in fact changed his religion to Buddhism and propagated Buddhism throughout India.

(source: **Am I a Hindu - by Ed Viswanathan** p. 8).

H. G. Wells has remarked: "The history of India for many centuries had been happier, less fierce, and more dreamlike than any other history. In these favorable conditions, they built a character - **meditative and peaceful and a " nation of philosophers such as could nowhere have existed except in India."**

(source: **The Outline of History - By H. G. Wells** p. 855).

282. **M. J. Akbar** Indian journalist and editor of Asian age and author of **The Shade of Swords: Jihad and the Conflict Between Islam and Christianity** writes:

"Hinduism has a supernatural aspect, which involves faith in an afterlife; and a natural one, which guides the worldly behavior.

If Hinduism has a defining message, then it is humanism. **There is space in its philosophy for everyone, which is one reason why India is a home to every single religion in the world.** Anyone who has been persecuted anywhere else has found an undisturbed haven in India. This remained true even when men distorted the philosophy of Hinduism and introduced the inequities of caste: The attitude of Hinduism to other faiths continued to be liberal. **Hinduism is synonymous with humanism. That is its essence and its great liberating quality."**

(source: **Of human bondage - arabnews.com**).



283. **Andrew Harvey** (1952 -) has devoted hi life to studying the world's mystical traditions. He is the author of several books including **The Direct Path creating a journey to the divine through the world's mystical traditions.**

"The Sanatana Dharma is a gallimaufry of the most extravagantly varied faiths, rituals, customs, beliefs; Hinduism has no single dogmatic authority and, until very recently in its history, no "missionary zeal" to convert others, sine it has never seen itself as the one true religion or the only hope of salvation.

"While there is no one 'exclusive' dogmatic Hindu tradition, then, there is a very definitely, a spirit of inquiry and of revelation that is so consistent with the greatest of modern Hindu mystics, Ramana Maharshi...down the Upanishads more than two thousand years before him. It is this consistency that gives the Hindu mystical tradition its timeless purity, weight, and grandeur. "

"What, then, is the core truth of the Hindu tradition? It is the truth of the mystery of a Spirit that pervades, creates, and transcends all things and of each soul's conscious identity with it beyond space and time. In the Upanishads, this all-pervading, all-creating, all-transcending Spirit is named Brahman. For the Upanishads and all the later teachings rooted in them, every human

being is naturally one with Brahman in his or her Atman, his or her "soul" or "indwelling core of divine consciousness." The aim of human life and the source of liberation from all the chains of life and death is to know, from inmost experience, the Atman's identity with Brahman and to live the calm, fearless, selflessly loving life that radiates from this knowledge."

"It is its sublime ancient tolerance, that was the true proof of the wisdom and mature dignity of the Hindu tradition. While there is no one "exclusive" dogmatic Hindu tradition, then, there is very definitely, a spirit of inquiry and of revelation that is so consistent that we find one of the greatest of modern Hindu mystics, Raman Maharishi, speaking in ways and with images that echo exactly the terminology of the anonymous seers who wrote down the Upanishads more than two thousand years before him. **It is this consistency that gives the Hindu mystical tradition its timeless purity, weight, and grandeur.** It is as if one eternal voice is speaking in and through a myriad different voice tirelessly exploring different registers of its own majestic range, as if all the tradition's poems and meditations and philosophical texts are, in Zaehner words, "different-shaped peaks in one vast, grand, interconnected mountain chain, like the Himalayas."

"The Hindu tradition provides exquisite, firm guidance toward this attunement because it has always recognized that different temperaments take different paths into the Sacred Marriage. It has not only recognized the validity of other religions, but has also acknowledged within itself a variety of paths." No other mystical tradition has had so broad and wise and all-embracing a vision of the different aspects and faces of the path. As Robin Zaehner used to say, "If anyone feels excluded from the Hindu embrace it is by his or her own perverse choice."

"Perhaps the supreme gift of Hinduism to the world is that its Tantric traditions have kept the truth of the splendor, majesty and power of the Bride vibrant and alive in all her unbridled fullness. Worshipping Her as Devi, Ambika, Durga, Lakshmi or Kali, the Hindu Tantric mystics have known how to adore Her both as Queen of Transcendence and Earth Mother, and love Her both in Her terrifying, life-devouring aspects and as infinitely benign and tender."

(source: **Teachings of Hindu Mystics - By Andrew Harvey** p. xv - xxix).

284. **General Joseph Davey Cunningham** (1812-1851) author of **A history of the Sikhs, from the origin of the nation to the battles of the Sutlej** says:



"Mathematical science was so perfect and astronomical observations so complete that the paths of the sun and the moon were accurately measured. The philosophy of the learned few was perhaps for the first time, firmly allied with the theology of the believing many, and Brahmanism laid down as articles of faith the unity of God, the creation of the world, the immortality of the soul, and the responsibility of man. The remote dwellers upon the Ganges distinctly made known that future life about which Moses is silent or obscure, and that unity and Omnipotence of the Creator which were unknown to the polytheism of the Greek and Roman multitude, and to the dualism of Mithraic legislators, while **Vyasa** perhaps surpassed Plato in keeping the people tremblingly alive to the punishment which awaited evil deeds."

(source: **History of the Sikhs - By Joseph Davey Cunningham**).

285. **H. T. Goldich** (?) writes:

"No river on the surface of the globe, can compare with the Ganges in sanctity. From her source to her outflow in the Bay of Bengal, every yard of the river is sacred. To bathe in the Ganges at stated festivals is to wash away sin; to die and cremated on the river bank is to attain eternal peace. Tracing magnificent curves through the flat lowlands, the four rivers – Ganga, Jumna, Gogra and Gandaki – have for centuries combined to form an over-ruling factor in the development of Indian races."

Below the Rajmahal hills, the flood-discharge amounts to a million and a half cubic feet per second. Nearly every vegetable product which feeds and clothes, a people, or enables them to trade with foreign countries, is to be found in its basin. Upon its banks, in the present day, are such centers of wealth as Calcutta, Patna, Benares, Allahabad, Cawnpore – with Agra and Delhi on its affluent Jumna. "There is not a river in the world which has influenced humanity or contributed to the growth of material civilization or of social ethics, to such an extent as the Ganges. The wealth of India has been concentrated in her valley; and beneath the shade of trees, whose roots have been nourished on her waters, **the profoundest doctrines of moral philosophy have been conceived to be promulgated afar for the guidance of the world."**

(source: **Imperial Gazetteer of India** – The Clarendon Press. Oxford. I 22-26 and **Our Heritage and Its Significance - By Shripad Rama Sharma** p. 16-17).

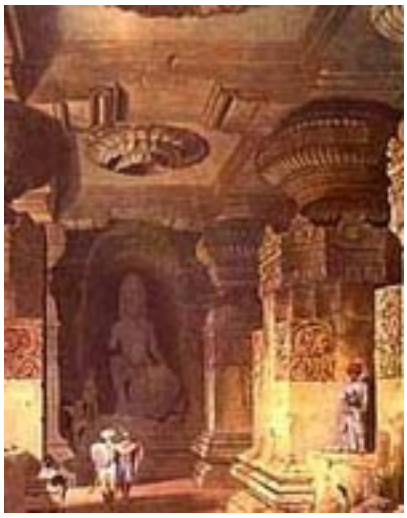
286. **Dhan Gopal Mukerji** (1890 -1936) was the first South Asian immigrant to the United States to carve out a successful literary career, publishing more than twenty books **Caste and Outcast** was the first book on India written by an Indian that was widely read in America. As an interpreter of Indian thought and spirituality, Mukerji's influence on American literary circles was considerable. Among his long-time literary associates were the eminent critic Van Wyck Brooks and the historians Will and Ariel Durant. Mukerji's opus was an integral part of a far-flung intellectual effort in the early twentieth century that seriously studied **Indian civilization and drew upon it for inspiration and direction.** Those involved included such figures as T. S. Eliot, Theodore Dreiser, Eugene O'Neill, Lewis Mumford, Luther Burbank and A. J. Liebling.

The book won high critical acclaim: Saturday Evening Post reviewed it as "the most important and inspiring book that has appeared in America since the war." **Its theme is the contrast between Hinduism's pervasive spirituality and tolerance and the Western world's materialism and religious dogmas.** Mukerji proposes that the West should learn "repose and meditation" from India, and India should learn the value of "activity and science" from the West. In Caste and Outcast, Mukerji depicts India as a tolerant Hindu civilization.

He illustrates **Hinduism's tolerance** with numerous narratives. An example: As a child, Mukerji brings home a picture of Christ given to him by his Christian teacher in the missionary school with the admonition to get rid of false Hindu gods and instead worship

the only true god, Christ. Mukerji's mother places the picture of Christ next to Vishnu's and says, "God is one. We have given him many names. Why should we quarrel about names?" She burns incense and meditates before the images of Christ and Vishnu."

He talks about the role of **Art in Hinduism**. "According to the **Shilpa Sastras**, in which the symbolic art of India has been thoroughly explained, certain rules have been laid down for the guidance of artists. One of these is that the novice should not be taught the technique for the asking. He must meditate, and find within himself a vision that clamors for expression, and only then may his masters instruct him in technique.



In India, all our art is ritualistic, especially the art of the temples and the caves. When I went to the cave temples, to Elephanta or Ellora, I found mountains hollowed out, and temples built underneath them. The columns supporting the roof resembled elephant legs, and the ceilings and the walls were gorgeously decorated with the sculptured forms of human beings and of gods. About 200 B.C, or earlier, a groups of monks went to meditate under the rocks of Ajanta. In meditation they experienced ecstasy, and having experienced it, they carved it on the wall. The story of all the gods of India is carved on these walls, and the youngest of them all is Buddha. **Seven hundred years of Indian history is written out in these caves covering vastness with terrific forms.**

I shall never forget my first visit to Ellora, reached after two days tramp from the nearest town. **When the sages of southern India wanted to create an image of the universe, they went to Ellora. They worked for one hundred and fifty years and used up generations of artists. They carved a mountain into galleries, and as these rose higher and higher, they gradually attained the summit, and the whole mountain was covered as the Himalayas are covered with strange life."**

The "Outcast" in the title refers primarily to Mukerji's experience in America as a newly arrived, penniless Indian student at the University of California, Berkeley, where he suffered from racial discrimination - the **Indian students were routinely refused service in the campus restaurants.**

(source: **Caste and Outcast - By Dhan Gopal Mukerji** p. 110 -120). For more on Dhan Gopal Mukerji refer to **IndiaStar Review**).

287. **Haven O'More**, a scholar at the University of Chicago and author of several books, including **Butoh : Dance of the Dark Soul and Sacrificial Bone Inscriptions**, has written:

"Greater than any mountain, the Mahabharata sits supreme...."

(source: **Nostradamus and Beyond: Visions of Yuga-Sandhi - By N S Rajaram** p. 41).



288.**Yann Martel** (1963 -) a Canadian who won this year's Booker Prize for **Life of Pi** thinks:

"Hinduism -- is a very open religion. It can lend itself to so much,"

Martel claims he has always loved India. "India is all lives in one place, India is all emotions in one place. It's an extra - ordinary, dazzling place, it's all the wonder and horror of life."

According to him, India stokes the fires of creativity. "There are stories that can be told only in India. There are things that are possible in India that are not possible anywhere else." **"It's a country that dazzles me because it is all of life. I truly think that in some ways, India is the richest place on earth."**

(source: **India is the richest place on earth: Booker winner- sify.com**).

289. **Sir Henry James Summer Maine** (1822-1888) His first work, **Ancient Law** was his most famous. He was (1862-69) legal member of the viceroy's council in India, where he planned the codification of Indian law.

This eminent Jurist has shown that the **old Brehon laws of Ireland are derived from Vedic laws of India.**

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisirkumar Mitra** p. 208).

Sir Henry Maine, a former Vice Chancellor of Calcutta university and an advisor to the Viceroy echoed the sentiment of many Englishmen when he said: **"A nation has been born out of Sanskrit."**

(source: http://members.tripod.com/~ramkumaram/article3.html).



290. **E. M. Plunkett** (?) writes in his book **Ancient Calendars and Constellations**:

"The opinion of the Greek writers at the beginning of the Christian era may be quoted as showing the high estimation in which Indian astronomy was held. In the Life of Appollonius of Tyana, the Greek philosopher and astrologer, written by Philostratus about 210 CE, the wisdom and learning of Appollonius are set high above his contemporaries because he had studied astronomy and astrology with the sages of India."

(source: **Antiquity of Indian Astrology**).

291. **James Prinsep** (1799-1840) an employee of the East India Company, deciphered the Brahmi script in 1883 and author of **Essays on Indian antiquities, historic, numismatic, and palaeæographic of the late James Prinsep,** is recorded to have observed that:

"Greek was nothing more than Sanskrit turned topsy-turvy."

"The fact, however, that he (Pythagoras) derived his doctrines from an Indian source is very generally admitted. Under the name of Mythraic, the faith of Buddha had also a wide extension."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 280 - 281).

292. **William Enfield** (1741-1797) has written:

"We find that it (India) was visited for the purpose of acquiring knowledge by Pythagoras, Anaxarchus, Pyrrho, and others who afterwards became eminent philosophers in Greece."

(source: **History of Philosophy - By William Enfield** Vol. I p. 65).

293. **Thomas Carlyle** (1795 - 1881) Scottish-born English historian and essayist who was leading figure in the Victorian era.

He was a historian, novelist and essayist who exerted a huge influence over the Victorian age. His major works are the satirical novel **Sartor Resartus** (1833-4) **The French Revolution** (1837) and the lecture-series **On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History** (1841).

The Vedantic note in Carlyle's writings is too well known to require mention. **And the Gita was the only book he chose to present to Ralph Waldo Emerson when the latter met him for the first time.**

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisirkumar Mitra** p. 204).

Thomas Carlyle, in Sartor Resartus exclaims:

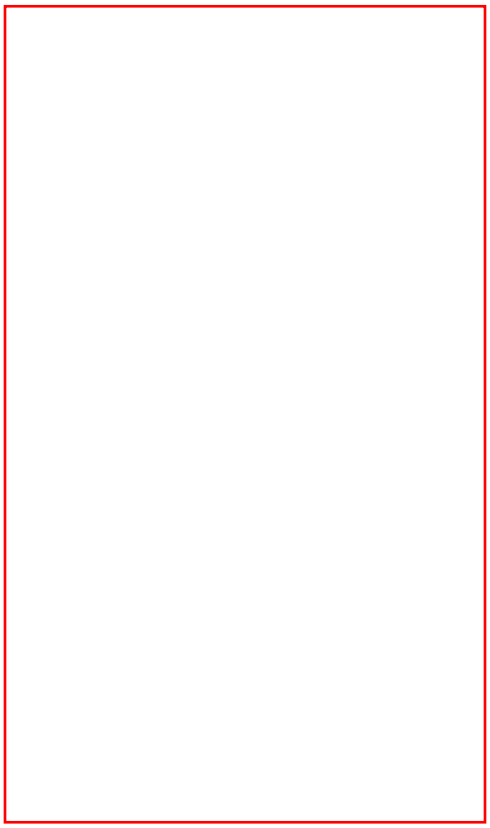
“Detached, separated! I say that there is no such separation, nothing hitherto was ever stranded, cast aside; ….The withered leaf is not dead and lost, there are Forces in it and around it, though working in inverse order, else how could it rot?…Rightly viewed no meanest object is insignificant: all objects are as windows, through which the philosophies eye look into infinitude itself.”

In the last lines he rises to passionate heights in his assertion of the same theory which fascinated the first Hindu thinkers.

(source: **Indian Philosophy and Modern Culture - By Paul Brunton** p. 33 - 35 London

Rider & Co. Paternoster House, E. C).

294. **Sardar Kavalam Madhava Panikkar** (1896-1963) Indian scholar, journalist, historian from Kerala, administrator, diplomat, Minister in Patiala Bikaner and Ambassador to China, Egypt and France. Author of several books, including **Asia and Western Dominance**, **India Through the ages** and **India and the Indian Ocean**. He has succinctly summed up the basic tenets of Hinduism, which show that the Divine for the Hindu is a family phenomenon and not a distant Truth. He says:



"The Hindu believe in one God, conceived as the universal soul or Paramatma, the absolute and eternal, beyond the categories of thought and expression, and embracing the entire universe. The text - there is only One, the learned speak of it in many ways. Though the Paramatma is impersonal or without qualities in itself in relation to the world expressed in terms of the relative, it is personal and man's mind conceives it as having qualities and form. This leads to the doctrine of Ishta Devata, or God, as conceived according to one's preference, as father, mother, guru, lover or even friend. The One Supreme thus assumes for the devotee the qualities and form in which he likes to worship. Many who worship the Supreme as Krishna think of him as a playful child, others as the great guru. In the same way, God is conceived by others as the Divine Mother. It is this doctrine of Ishta Devata, the freedom given to every one to worship God with the attributes of his own choice, never however forgetting that the Supreme has no qualities, that has led to the misconception that Hinduism is polytheistic. In a sense, it is true that there can be as many forms of Godhead in Hinduism as there are believers, for each one can conceive God only as the limitations of his own mind permit him."

(source: **Hinduism: Its Contribution to Science and Civilization- By Prabhakar Machwe** p. 114-115).

295. **Joseph Needham** (1900-1995) is famous mainly for the formidable magnitude and scholarship of his work on science in China. He impressed by the achievements of India in the field of knowledge and learning.

He comments on the Indian fascination with perpetual motion, 'to seek the ultimate origin or predisposition of the Indian conviction in the profoundly Hindu world view of endless cyclical change, kalpa and mahakalpas succeeding one another in self-sufficient and unwearying round. For Hindus as well as Taoists, the universe itself was a perpetual motion machine."

(source: **The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society - By Richard Lannoy** p. 292).

In his lecture to the students of Cambridge University in 1963 he gave **full compliments to India's intellectual heritage.** He said, 'it is good to remember, therefore, that our own pious founders were not the only men, and that Christendom was not the only culture, to set on foot great and noble institutions of learning where successive generations of

students assembled to get the benefits of education and research. When the men of Alexander the Great came to Taxila in India in the fourth century BC they found a university the like of which had not then been seen in Greece… and was still existing when the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hsien went there about AD 400.

(source: **infinityfoundation.com**).

"....Indian culture in all probability excelled in systematic thought about Nature (as for example in the **Samkhya atomic theories** of Kshana, bhutadim paramanu,etc.), including also biological speculations...When the balance comes to be made up, it will be found I believe, that Indian scientific history holds as many brilliant surprises....."

(source: **Homo Faber: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West 1500-1972 - by Claude Alphonso Alvares** p. 69 - 70).



296. **Stephen Knapp (Sri Nandanandana Dasa)** (?) American born author of several books including **The Secret Teachings of the Vedas : The Eastern Answers to the Mysteries of Life** and **Proof of Vedic Culture's Global Existence**.

He has observed the following about the **total freedom** in Hinduism:

"One of the **unique things about Vedic philosophy** is that within the many texts it contains, it deals with all varieties of viewpoints, from impersonalistic atheism, outright materialism, to loving devotion to God. And you have room to discover and realize the knowledge at your own rate, whether it be many months, many years, or even lifetimes. In other words, you may at first be an impersonalist persuasion and believe that the Supreme is only a great unembodied force. Or you might believe that God is a person. Or you may worship Durga, Ganesh, Shiva, Vishnu or Krishna, and still be considered on the Vedic path, though on different parts of the path. **But this is the sort of freedom and opportunity you have in the Vedic philosophy for your growth and development.** However, we find that in other religions, such as Christianity and Islam, if you question or doubt the local scriptures or authorities, or argue different points of view, or look for answers from another religion, your faith will be questioned, you may be called a heretic, and you may even be excommunicated from the Church, which is supposed to equate with eternal damnation. **This is obviously a very closed minded discipline to work in compared to the freedom of Vedic system. After all, what kind of God would make a system in which you have only one life to live and only one chance to discover how to attain Him, and then follow all the scriptural demands and requirements or face eternal damnation?**

"In fact, history shows that the three traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have, in their monotheistic theology developed patterns and traits of prejudice, intolerance, violence and war against all other religions and cultures. In fact, the history of these three religions show that they have spread primarily because of political intolerance for other

religions, militant zeal, and through fear of persecution, rather than by spiritual purity. **Hinduism, on the other hand, has not spread on the basis of fear, whether that fear be of political persecution or fear of a wrathful God. "**



"The Vedic philosophy contains the oldest spiritual texts of any religion in the world, and its more advanced concepts can be difficult for event the greatest scholars of the West to fathom."

(source: **The Universal Path to Enlightenment - By Stephen Kanpp** preface vi-viii and 4).

"The Vedas are not new to the Western world. There have been seekers, writers, poets, philosophers, and people of all levels who have appreciated the depth, inspiration, and insight of Vedic thought for many years."

(source: **The Secret Teachings of the Vedas - By Stephen Knapp** p. 31 and http://www.stephen-knapp.com/).

297. **Shri Jagmohan** (?) Union Minister of Tourism and Culture of India has recently observed:

"The hallmark of India has been the power of its mind. It was this power of mind which found expression in its pre-eminent philosophy, religion, culture and way of life.



One of the finest pieces of evidence which shows how powerful and insightful was once the Indian mind was its clear and correct understanding of the pattern of human existence on this planet and beyond. It perceived the “non-dual reality” that lies behind the smoke-screen of “surface duality” and realized that the universe was an organic web in which every item of life and nature was inextricably enmeshed with every other item. It also understood that this web was permeated with a cosmic force of which man and nature are the constituents as well as the contributors.

This deep perception, this great realization and **this subtle understanding of the Indian mind so impressed the renowned American poet and philosopher, Emerson, that he wrote a beautiful poem, titled “Brahma”, in which he gave expression to the concept of non-duality. Clearly, what the Indian mind discovered, centuries earlier, by virtue of its perceptive power and its higher level of consciousness, was discovered by the modern science only recently.** The profundity of the concepts of the universe being an organic web, as evolved by the Indian mind, in the heydays of its power, can best be brought

The Indian mind was the earliest to grasp the significance of maintaining the ecological balance. From time immemorial, our sages and saints have been propagating: “The Earth is our Mother and we are its Children.” One of the earliest **Vedic hymns**, composed over 4,000 years ago, gave the message of what is now termed as sustainable development: “Whatever I dig of you, O Earth,\ May you of that have quick replenishment!\ O Purifying One, may my thrust never\ Reach right unto your vital points, your heart!”

(source: **Power of the Indian mind: our heritage & asset - by Jagmohan** - tribuneindia.com - editorial - Sunday February 23 2003).

298. **L S S O'Malley** (?) author of Popular Hinduism writes about Hindu Literature as giving help to a sense of moral value and to maintain a healthy ethical standard. The two great epics, the Mahabharata and Ramayana, are a means of moral education for millions, teaching moral lessons in concrete terms and illustrating in the lives of heroes and heroines such virtues as truth, love, fidelity, courage and calm resignation.

"Besides giving examples of noble lives, the literature of the Hindus is full of lines announcing moral truths and inculcating virtue. In the **Ramayana** Rama, who is himself a pattern of loyal truthfulness, declares: "Truth is lord in the world; virtue always rests on truth.

The **Mahabharata** has been described as an encyclopedia of moral teaching, the nature of which may perhaps be judged from a few extracts. "The sum of true righteousness is to treat others as you yourself would be treated. Do nothing to your neighbor that you would not have your neighbor do to you hereafter." "It is the constant duty of the good to injure no one by thought, word or deed, to give to others and to be kind to all." "High minded men delight in doing good without thought of their own interest. when they confer a benefit on others, they do not count on favors in return." "Fasts, ablutions and austerities are all in vain unless the soul is pure." "Overcome the wicked by goodness."

' The complexity of Hinduism is so great, the forms which it assumes so protean, that it defies precise definition. It is a composite religion made up of many conflicting elements.... **It allows the greatest possible freedom of thought as apart from practice,** as is admitted by Hindu scholars."

Hinduism has a highly spiritual side and contains many sublime conceptions."

(source: **Popular Hinduism - L S S O'Malley** p. 81- 86).

299. **Sir James Mackintosh** (1765-1832) British writer and Philosopher. He was trained as a physician, but after settling in London he became a writer and lawyer. He served as recorder of Bombay (1804-6) and judge in Bombay vice-admiralty court (1806-12). He called:

"**the theory (propounded by Vedanta) refined, abstruse, ingenious and beautiful.**"

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 297).

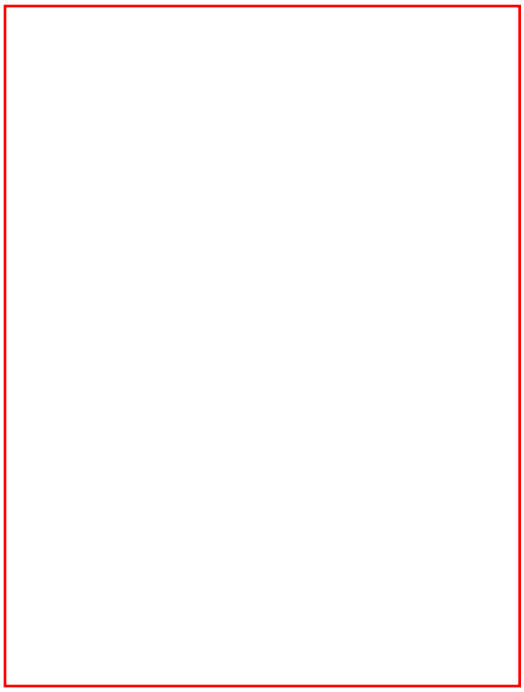
300. **Gustav Holst** (1874 - 1934) composer of **S¯avitri ; The dream-city**, **Choral hymns from the Rig Veda** and **S¯avitri; an episode from the Mah¯abharata, Op. 25** He was Vaughan Williams' greatest friends. Despite his German name, Holst was born in Cheltenham in 1874. Holst's music as exploring 'mystical regions'

Conventional religion did not interest Holst, and he felt himself drawn towards Hinduism. He believed in the concept of Dharma and the idea of life after death, and this eastern influence also led to his love of astrology. Holst's beliefs are revealed in a letter to a friend : -

'…everything in this world – is just one big miracle. Or rather, the universe itself is one.'

He conceived as well a passion for Wagner, whose style looms large in Hoist's apprentice

works, and an interest in Hindu philosophy and literature. The most notable of many works springing from Holst's preoccupation with Hinduism was the chamber opera **Savitri** dating from 1908, based on an episode from the epic poem **Mahabharata**: its economy and intensity are exemplified in the arresting and dramatic opening, where Death sings, offstage and unaccompanied.



This English composer composed operas about **Sita** and **Savitri** and other works based on Hindu themes. **It was in 1895 that Holst first became interested in Hindu philosophy and Sanskrit literature.** His immediate impulse was to set some hymns from the **Rig Veda,** the most important of the Hindu scriptures, to music. Finding the English translations he discovered were hopelessly stilted, Holst decided to learn Sanskrit so that he could translate the words to his own satisfaction. in doing so, he opened an entirely new world for himself.

Holst began work in an opera, Sita, in 1899. It is based in the Hindu epic **Ramayana.** He worked on it, on and off, until 1906. Although it was never performed in his lifetime, he learned a great deal from it . In 1903 he also wrote a symphonic poem titled Indra, which was a vivid portrait of the god, Indra, and his battle with the drought.

At home in England again, a reinvigorated Holst began working on another Indian opera which he called, Savitri. This was a much smaller work only lasting a little over thirty minutes. The music was written for three soloists, a small hidden chorus, and a chamber orchestra. During this time, Gustav was at the height of his interest in setting Sanskrit texts. From 1908 to 1912, he wrote four sets of hymns from the Rig Veda, the Vedic Hymns for voice and piano, and the large scale choral work called The Cloud Messenger.

(source: http://hem.passagen.se/alkerstj/worldofclassicalmusic/early20th/gustav_holst.html and http://wso.williams.edu/~ktaylor/gholst/). For more refer to chapter on **Hindu Music**).

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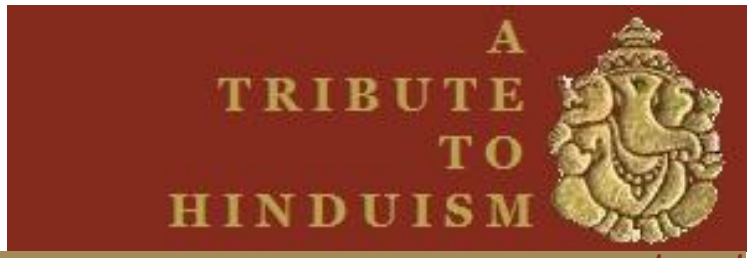


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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003



It is clear that the motives of Western scholarship in pursuing Indology were far from altruistic. Motivated western scholarship in India's religious, cultural and historical spheres has a checkered history. The pioneers in this field have been western Christian missionaries. It was Pope Honorius IV (1286-87 A.D.) who first encouraged the study of oriental languages as an aid to missionary work. Soon after, the Ecumenical Council of Vienna (1311-12 A.D.) decided that "the Holy Church should have an abundant number of Catholics well versed in the languages, especially in those of the infidels, so as to be able to instruct them in the sacred doctrine." In 1870, The First Vatican Council, Hindu beliefs were specifically selected for condemnation in the "five anathemas against pantheism" according to Jesuit John A. Hardon in the Church-authorized book, **The Catholic Catechism.**

History of Indology
The First Scholars
Thoughts of Modern Indian Scholars
Women in the Age of Imperialism
Technology and Culture in India
Conclusion
Articles

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History of Indology:

The first Westerners to investigate the Vedic literatures were the British in the last half of the eighteenth century. It was the British Sanskritists and educators in India, during the 1700 and 1800's, who **first portrayed Vedic literature and culture as something barbaric, inferior, and recent. This cultural prejudice** was the result of deliberate undermining with the disguised intention of asserting the superiority of their own Christian-based values and outlook, as well as the perpetuation of colonial rule. India was the centerpiece of Britain's imperialistic exploits. **And many of the notable professors at the time had the audacity to consider themselves to be better authorities on their questionable translations of the Vedas then the Indian scholars.** Western Indology itself, has its roots in European colonialism and Christian missionary propaganda.



Pope Honorius IV encouraged the study of oriental languages as an aid to missionary work.

It was Indologist **W.W. Hunter** who said: **"Scholarship is warmed with the holy flame of Christian zeal."**

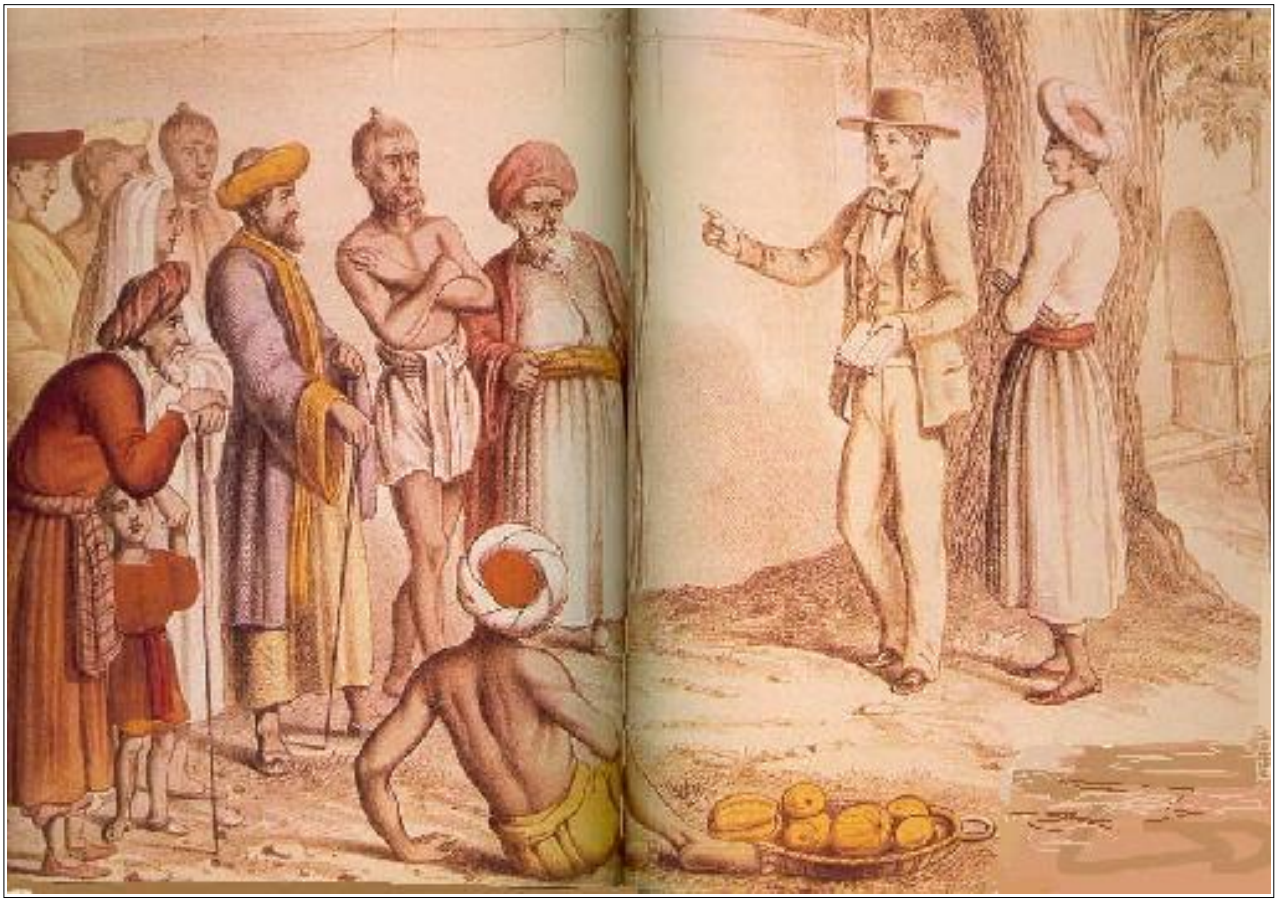
On November 7th, 1919, "The Daily Telegraph (London), wrote: "There is no Civilization known to the world except that of Christianity." All then who are not Christians are uncivilized." **Cardinal Bourne**, speaking about this time at Waterford, said:

" When you come to nations where Christianity had not penetrated, there was no civilization in our sense of the word except fragments which they had picked up from the Christian Civilized Nations."

(source: **Is India Civilized: Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p.28).

Catholic Bishop of Plymouth wrote of the books "dignified" by the Sanskritists under the name "Sacred Books of the East" as being **"gibberish".**

At first the British government was careful not to force any change in religion upon the Indian people. This policy seemed judicious for ruling the several hundred million Indian citizens without precipitating rebellion. It can be easily summed up in the words of a tea-dealer **Mr. Twinning,** "As long as we continue to govern India in the mild, tolerant spirit of Christianity, we may govern it with ease; but if ever the fatal day should arrive, when religious innovation shall set her foot in that country, indignation will spread from one end of the Hindustan to the other, and the arms of fifty millions of people will drive us from that portion of the globe, with as much ease as the sand of the desert is scattered by the wind". Another point of view in support of that policy was by Montgomery. "Christianity had nothing to teach Hinduism, and no missionary ever made a really good Christian convert in India. He was more anxious to save the 30,000 of his country-men in India than to save the souls of all the Hindu by making them Christians at so dreadful a price".



A British Protestant missionary expounds on Christian doctrine to the natives.
(source: What Life Was Like In The Jewel In The Crouwn - Time Life).

Despite facing such resistance in the beginning, missionaries won the battle in 1813 resulting in full right to visit and preach their religion in India. The Christian population in India in 1893 was around 600,000 but today it has grown up to 24 million, an increase of 4000% in 106 years!

However, soon, "the company manifested a laudable zeal for extending, as far as its means went, the knowledge of the Gospel to the pagan tribes among whom its factories were placed." The British showed very little interest in Hindu scriptures in the beginning. Doubtless this was in part a reflection of the usual British attitude to India during most of the period of the Raj: that **India as a whole was a profitable nuisance.**

Lord Cornwallis, a contemporary of William Jones, made his famous and bold announcement in "Every native of Hindostan, I verily believe, is corrupt."

The missionaries in India were always supporters of colonialism; they encouraged it and their whole structure was based on **"the good of Western civilized world being brought to the Pagans."** The Christian missionaries had no sympathy for Hinduism which, in their view, was **"at best, work of human folly and at worst the outcome of a diabolic inspiration."**

(source: **Ancient India - By V. D. Mahajan** p. 1).

Preacher, **William Archer**, wrote in his book, **India and the Future**:

"The plain truth concerning the mass of the [Indian] population — and the poorer classes alone — is that they are not civilized people."

Reverend A. H. Bowman wrote that Hinduism was a:

"…great philosophy which lives on unchanged whilst other systems are dead, which as yet unsuplanted has its stronghold in Vedanta, the last and the most subtle and powerful foe of Christianity."

In the word of **Charles Grant** (1746-1823), **Chairman of the East India Company**:



"We cannot avoid recognizing in the people of Hindustan a race of men lamentably degenerate and base...governed by malevolent and licentious passions...and sunk in misery by their vices.."

Charles Grant, who exercised a tremendous influence in the Evangelical circles, published his Observations as early as 1797 in which he attacked almost every aspect of Indian society and religion, determined the "true place" of Indians "in the moral scale" by describing them as morally depraved, "lacking in truth, honesty and good faith"and "in every way different" from the British, enriched the ideological armoury of the Christian missionaries, and provided a justification as well as an agenda for the British rule.

(source: **Aryans and British India - By Thomas R. Trautmann** p.103).

In 1792, Charles Grant who for his over zeal for the conversion of the Hindus was known as the only Christian chairman of the East India Company wrote his infamous tract, Observations on the State among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to morals and means of improving them, written chiefly in the year 1792. In its pages, **Grant had advanced the theory that all problems of India and of the English of India could be reasonably traced and satisfactorily solved if the Hindus of India were converted to Christianity.**

Grant had been an active member of the **Clapham Sect** known also in the British Parliament by the name of **Evangelical Party** which had William Wilberforce as its leader.

Grant argued: "We proceed, the, to observe, that it is perfectly in the power of the country (England) by degrees, to impart to the Hindoos our language, afterwards, through that medium, to make them acquainted with our easy literary compositions, upon a variety of subjects; and, let not the idea hastily excite derision, progressively with the simple elements of our art, philosophy and (Christian dogma and tenets) religion. These acquisitions will silently undermine, and at length subvert the fabric of error (Hinduism); and all the objections that may be apprehended against such a change, are it is confidently believed, capable of solid answer."

(source: **The Hindu - By Krishna Vallabh Paliwal and Brahm Datt Bharti** p. 1-2).

"Aryan," a word that today evokes images of racial hatred and atrocity, was first used by Europeans to suggest bonds of kinship, as Thomas Trautmann shows in his far-reaching history of British Orientalism and the ethnology of India. When the historical relationship uniting Sanskrit with the languages of Europe was discovered, it seemed clear that Indians and Britons belonged to the same family. Thus the Indo-European or Aryan idea, based on the principle of linguistic kinship, dominated British ethnological inquiry. In the nineteenth century, however, an emergent biological "race science" attacked the authority of the Orientalists. **The spectacle of a dark- skinned people who were evidently civilized challenged Victorian ideas,** and race science responded to the enigma of India by redefining the Aryan concept in narrowly "white" racial terms. By the end of the nineteenth century, race science and Orientalism reached a deep and lasting consensus in regard to India, which Trautmann calls "the racial theory of Indian civilization," and which he undermines with his powerful analysis of colonial ethnology in India.)

As Thomas Trautmann puts it, " **Evangelical influence drove British policy down a path that tended to minimize and denigrate the accomplishments of Indian civilization and to position itself as the negation of the (earlier) British Indomania" that was nourished by belief in Indian wisdom."**

(source: **The Invasion That Never Was - By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 23-24).



The Evangelicals, horrified by the idea that Christians could take the idolatry and improprieties of a pagan culture seriously, seeing in India an unlimited field for missionary activity, and insisting that it was part of a Christian government's duty to promote this.

In 1790, **Dr. Claudius Bucchanan**, a missionary attached to the East India Company, arrived in Bengal. He was convinced that God had given the Company dominion over India for the specific purpose of India's christianization. "No Christian nation," he wrote, "ever possessed such an extensive field for the propagation of the Christian faith, as that afforded to us by our influence over the hundred million natives of Hindoostan. No other nation ever possessed such facilities for the extension the faith as we have in the government of a passive people, who yield submissively to our mild sway, reverence our principles, and acknowledge our dominion to be a blessing. Why should it be thought incredible that Providence hath been pleased, in a course of years to subjugate this Eastern empire to the most civilized nation in the world, for this very purpose."

His conviction was fully shared by **William Wilberfore** who proclaimed in the British Parliament in June 1813, "Our religion is sublime, pure and beneficent. Theirs is mean, licentious, and cruel."

(source: **History of Hindu-Christian Encounters - By Sita Ram Goel** South Asia Books July 1990 ISBN 9990049173 p.33).

Not long after his arrival, Claudius Bucchanan went further:

"Neither truth, nor honesty, honor, gratitude, nor charity, is to be found in the breast of a Hindoo." What a comment to make about a nation that gave the world the Vedas and the Upanishads, at a time when Europeans were still living in their caves!

Bucchanan traveled to Puri in Orissa and witnessed the annual *Ratha-yatra* (or as Bucchanan called it, 'The horrors of Juggernaut'). His description of Jagannatha – 'The Indian Moloch', has been recorded by the historian George Gogerly as- "…a frightful visage painted black, with a distended mouth of bloody horror." Perhaps, by seeing the face of Lord Jagannatha, the British hallucinated and saw a projection of their own international destiny of bloodshed and carnage. In any case, from the time the British observed the 'terrifying' sight of the Lord on **His gigantic chariot, the word 'juggernaut' entered the English language and became synonymous with any great force that crushes everything in its path.**

Gogerly went on to write –

"The whole history of this famous god (Krsna) is one of lust, robbery, deceit and murder…the history of the whole hierarchy of Hindooism is one of shameful iniquity, too vile to be described."

To most 18th century Englishmen, religion meant Christianity. Naturally racism played its part also. This attitude of Europeans toward Indians was due to a sense of superiority - a cherished conviction which was shared by every Englishman in India, from the highest to the lowest. Upon his arrival in 1810, the **Gov. General marquis of Hastings** wrote in his diary on October 2, 1813:

"the Hindoo appears a being merely limited to mere animal functions, and even in them indifferent.....with no higher intellect than a dog or an elephant or a monkey, might be supposed capable of attaining.."

(source: **The History and Culture of Indian People - By R. C. Majumdar** volume X, 2nd edition, Bombay, 1981, p. 338).

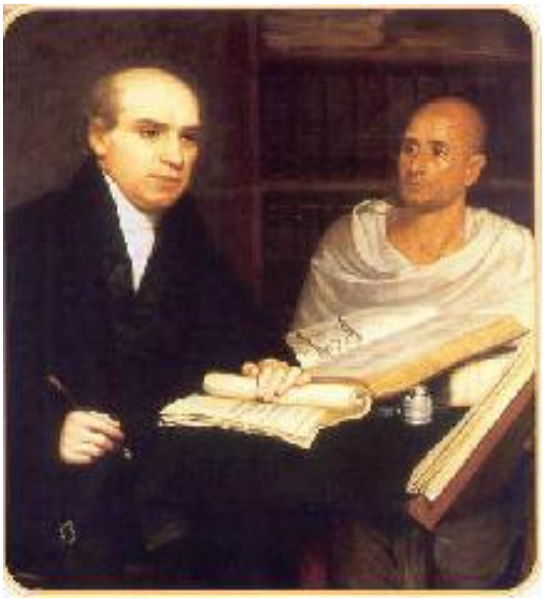
William Carey (1761-1834)



Without governmental sanction or license, the Christian evangelists came to India and proselytized to undermine the "superstitions of the country". The history of western (missionary) scholarship in Oriental Studies in India can be traced to William Carey, the pioneer of modern missionary enterprise in India. Carey was an English oriental scholar and founder of the Baptist Missionary Society. From 1801 onward, as Professor of Oriental Languages, he composed numerous philosophical works, consisting of 'grammars and dictionaries in the Mahratti, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Telugu, Bengali and Bhatanta dialects. From the Serampor press, there issued in his life time, over 200,000 Bibles and portions in nearly 40 different languages and dialects, Carey himself undertaking most of the literary work.' (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1950, Vol. 4, p. 860). Carey and his colleagues experimented with what came to be known as Church Sanskrit. **He wanted to train a group of 'Christian Pandits' who would probe "these mysterious sacred nothings" and expose them as worthless.** He was distressed that this "golden casket (of Sanskrit) exquisitely wrought" had remained "filled with nothing but pebbles and trash." He was determined to fill it with "riches - beyond all price", that is the doctrine of Christianity

(source: **Richard Fox Young, Resistant Hinduism,** Vienna, 1981, p. 34).

Carey a cobbler by profession, had published a book, **An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use means for the Conversion of the Heathens**, in 1792 while he was still in England.



Baptist William Carey learned to speak and read classical Indian languages with the help of Pandit Mrityunjay.

In the 19th century, Christian theologians were highly critical of Hinduism. **William Archer** wrote in his book, India and the Future, "The plain truth concerning the mass of the [Indian] population — and the poorer classes alone — is that they are not civilized people." However, these uncivilized people proved unenthusiastic about missionary promises that conversion would mean prosperity, wealth and education. **Reverend A.H. Bowman** wrote that Hinduism was a "great philosophy

which lives on unchanged whilst other systems are dead, which as yet un supplanted has its stronghold in Vedanta, the last and the most subtle and powerful foe of Christianity."

Alexander Duff (1806-1878) a prominent missionary, founded the Scots College, in Calcutta, which he envisioned as a "headquarters for a great campaign against Hinduism." Duff sought to convert the natives by enrolling them in English-run schools and colleges, and he placed emphasis on learning Christianity through the English language. He wrote,

" While we rejoice that true literature and science are to be substituted in place of what is demonstrably false, we cannot but lament that no provision has been made for substituting the only true religion-Christianity - in place of the false religion which our literature and science will inevitably demolish… Of all the systems of false religion ever fabricated by the perverse ingenuity of fallen man, Hinduism is surely the most stupendous."

(source: **The History and Culture of Indian People - By R. C. Majumdar** volume X, 2nd edition, Bombay, 1981, p. 155).

Duff received remarkable success in his educational and missionary activities amongst the higher classes in Calcutta. The number of students in the mission schools was four times higher than that in government schools. It is an axiomatic truth that the aim of missionaries like Duff was not so much education than conversion. They were obliged to use the excuse of education in order to meet he needs of the converted population, and more importantly, to train up Indian assistants to help them in their proselytizing. Duff remained unsatisfied with converting Indians belonging to low-castes and orphans – his chosen target was the higher castes, specifically the brahmanas, in order to accelerate the demise of Hinduism.

"India was the chief seat of Satan's earthly dominion"



John Muir (1810-1882) had come to Calcutta in 1828 as a civil servant of the East India Company. He was, for some time, a student of William Carey. He published his first draft of his **Matapariksha** in 1839. It drew three rejoinders from Hindu pandits, Somnatha, whose real name was Subaji Bapu, a Maharastrian scholar, Harachandra Tarkapanchanana and Nilakanth Gore.

In his publication, Muir asserted that miracles mentioned in Hindu scriptures were false and 'merely ornamental in that religion instead of being at its very center as in Christianity. This way of arguing is pompously called Evidential Apologetics in Christian theology. At one point, however, Muir was deliberately dishonest. **He criticized the cosmography of the Puranas as erroneous. Surely he must have known what Galileo and Copernicus had done to the cosmography of the Bible and how they had suffered persecution at the hands of the Church.**

(source: **History of Hindu-Christian Encounters - By Sita Ram Goel** p. 78 . **The Shadow of the Cross - By Sisir Kumar Das** 1974 p. 51-78).

Sir Charles Trevelyan, an officer, with the East India Company asserted in a widely circulated tract:

"The multitudes who flock to our schools ... cannot return under the dominion of the Brahmins. The spell has been for ever broken. Hinduism is not a religion that will bear examination... It gives away at once before the light of European sciences."

"Educated in the same way, interested in the same objects, engaged in the same pursuits with ourselves, they become more English than Hindus...The young men brought up in our

seminaries, turn with contempt from the barbarous despotisms, under which their ancestors groaned....Instead of regarding us with dislike, they court our society...the summit of their ambition is, to resemble us."

(source: **Christianity's Scramble for India and The Failure of the Secularist Elite - By N S Rajaram** p. 70).

The Crown of Hinduism, by the Scottish missionary, **J N Farquhar**, who worked in India in the cause of his brand of Christianity during the period 1891 to 1923. What this book tries to project is that while there may well be some good points in Hinduism, ultimately the true salvation can only be achieved through Jesus Christ, who is the crown of Hinduism.

Richard Temple, another high officer, said in a 1883 speech to a London missionary society intended to generate donations to missions: " India presents the greatest of all fields of missionary exertion... India is a country which of all others we are bound to enlighten with external truth...But what is most important to you friends of missions, is this - that there is a large population of aborigines, a people who are outside caste....If they are attached, as they rapidly may be, to Christianity, they will form a nucleus round which British power and influence may gather. He addressed a mission in New York in the most explicit terms: "Thus India is like a mighty bastion which is being battered by heavy artillery. We have given blow after blow, and thud after thud, and the effect is not at first very remarkable; but at last with a crash the mighty structure will come toppling down, and it is our hope that someday the heathen religions of India will in like manner succumb."

According to **Kate Teltscher** in her book **India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India 1600-1800.** p. 94, 22



"One **Professor McKenzie**, of Bombay found the ethics of India defective, illogical and anti-social, lacking any philosophical foundation, nullified by abhorrent ideas of asceticism and ritual and altogether inferior to the 'higher spirituality' of Europe. He devoted most of his book '**Hindu Ethics**' to upholding this thesis and came to the conclusion that Vedic philosophical ideas, 'when logically applied leave no room for ethics'; and that they prevent the development of a strenuous moral life."

All efforts were made by the missionaries to portray Hinduism as backwards, illogical, debauched and perverse. As one preacher exclaimed,

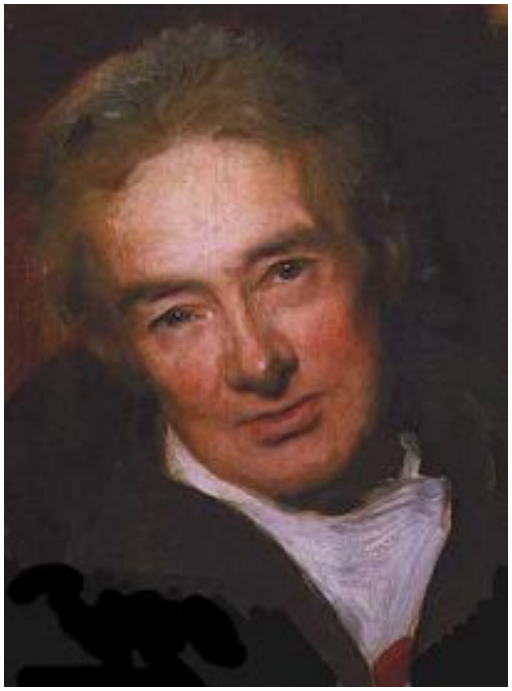
'The curse of India is the Hindoo religion. More than two hundred million people believe a monkey mixture of mythology that is strangling the nation.' 'He who yearns for God in India soon loses his head as well as his heart.'

The missionaries opposed the government's efforts to take a neutral stand towards Indian culture and worked with more zeal for the complete conversion of the natives. Thus India became an arena for religious adventure.

"Hinduism was often perceived as the enemy to be conquered by Christian forces. Efforts were made to depict Hinduism as poetry, fiction or mythology. Hinduism was a manifest work of Satan, provides Christianity with devils to destroy; an element lacking in 18th century Europe with the decline in witch-craft prosecution. The devil is defeated through conversion. Proof of God's victory is provided by the accounts of multiple baptisms that regularly appear in the Lettres edifiantes. In one day, Father Bouchet baptizes 500 hundred converts. Such scenes, where a single missionary saves huge numbers of pagan souls from damnation, emphasize the thrilling drama of conversion. They present the reader with an exciting image of heroic enterprise and a flattering representation of Western influence over Indians. **Efforts were made to show Hinduism as strangely illogical and perverted. Thus, India was turned into an**

arena for religious adventure. In the words of Edward Said's Orientalism, produces an unshakeable assumption of European superiority, with the East always functioning as the West's negative foil."

(source: **India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India 1600-1800 - By Kate Teltscher** p. 94, 22).



William Wilberforce (1759-1833) British politician declared: "The people of India are today enslaved by, they today groan under the yoke of "a monstrous and absurd superstitions of their native faith." The evils of that faith, he noted were "inveterate", not jut long-lasting but inherent. He talked of the "dark and degrading superstitions," the inhuman cruelties of Hinduism, of its "mean, licentious, and cruel" nature. On the testimony of many like-minded persons, Wilberforce said **Indians to be mean and petty, to be liars and thieves, widow-burners, and murderers of infants.**

In 1813, Wilbeforce spoke to the **House of Commons on behalf of the missionaries toiling in India**: "On the principle, we might have anticipated the moral condition of the Hindoos, by ascertaining the character of their deities....**Their divinities are absolute monsters of lust, injustice, wickedness, and cruelty. In short, their religious system is one grand abomination."**

He maintained, quoting the Directors of the East India Company, that these traits of character flowed directly from “the nature of their superstitions and the degraded character of their deities, as well as the almost entire want of moral instructions.” Further, “I scarcely need to remark that in its superstitious rites, there has commonly been found to be a natural alliance between obscenity and cruelty, and of the Hindoo superstitions it may be truly affirmed, that they are scarcely less bloody that lascivious” .

Wilberforce went on to say that “we might have anticipated the moral condition of the Hindoos, by ascertaining the character of their deities.” The perpetrator of a crime “found precedent in one of its national gods … in the adventures of the countless rabble of Hindoo deities, you may find every possible variety of every practicable crime. … Every vice has its patron … their divinities are absolute monsters of lust, injustice, wickedness and cruelty. In short, their religious system is one grand abomination.”

Some years later, in 1853, **Reverend J. Tucker** addressed the Select Committee on Indian Territories, citing **the progress made in native conversions through missionary schools,** and through “cordial support and assistance to missionary proceedings” of civil and military government individuals. He was particularly proud to present a letter written by the **Tinnevelly Congregation of Indian Protestant Christians.** It read in part:

"To Her Most Gracious Majesty Victoria,
By the Grace of God,
Queen by the Grace of God,
Queen of Great Britain and Defender of the Faith

We, **native Christians** … have embraced the Christian religion in number of 40,000 persons, presume to approach the feet of your Gracious Majesty, with all humility and reverence, presenting this humble memorial.

We desire to acknowledge in your Majesty's presence that we, your humble subjects, and all our fellow-countrymen, placed by the providence of Almighty God under the just and merciful rule of the English Government, enjoy a happiness unknown to our forefathers in the inestimable blessings of peace. … by the gratitude we feel, we humbly acknowledge it to be our delightful duty, heartily and incessantly, to beseech Almighty God, the King of Kings, to "endure our Gracious Queen plenteously with heavenly gifts, to grant her health and wealth long to live, to strengthen her … and finally, after this life, attain everlasting joy and felicity."

Incalculable are the benefits that have accrued … we who are Christians are bound to be especially grateful for having received … the privilege of ourselves learning the true religion and its sacred doctrines, and of securing it for our sons and daughters … (emphasis added).

… Our countrymen (seeing) the vast number of boys and girls, children of Christian, Heathen, Mohammedan and Roman-catholic parents, learning gratuitously both in Tamul and English, at the expense of English missions, repeat their ancient proverbs, and say, "Instruction is indeed the opening of sightless eyeballs"…

***

Another leading missionary, a Baptist, **William Carey** (1761-1834), smuggled himself into India and propagandized **against the Vedic culture** so zealously that the British government in Bengal curbed him as a political danger. The missionaries actively denounced the Vedic literatures as "absurdities" meant for the "amusement of children". How close was the nexus between the 'neutral' British rulers and Christian missionaries? "It is not only our duty," declared **Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister**, "but in our own interest to promote the diffusion of Christianity as far as possible throughout the length and breadth of India."

"Every additional Christian," declared **Lord Halifax, the Secretary of the State**, "is an additional bond of union with this country and an additional source of strength to the Empire." "They are doing for India," as **Lord Reay** introducing a deputation of Indian Christians to the Prince of Wales, said "more than all those civilians, soldiers, judges and governors whom your Highness has met;" "They are the most potent force in India," declared **Sir MacWorth Young**.

And so the effort to civilize India, to secure it for the British Empire, to gather it up as the rich harvest for the Church proceeded as a joint endeavor: the civil servants helped by many devices, including among these their "religious neutrality": :the soldiers of the Cross" reinforced each other's efforts; and the scholars helped working to "undermine" and "encircle" and thereby prepare the way for "the **soldiers of the Cross**" to finally storm" the strong fortress of Brahminism".

(source: **Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas - By Arun Shourie** ASA Publications ASIN 8190019945 p.109-132).

In fact, the façade of neutrality was a convenient strategy. As **Reverend Tucker** told the Select Committee on Indian Territories, in 1853, "I should be sorry to see the Government departing from its present position of strict neutrality. If the Government openly announces Christianity to be a part of the education it imparts, Christianity will immediately lose the high vantage point it now occupies." (*ibid, p. 120*).

Sir William Muir (1819- 1905) a representative of the mighty British Empire, wrote various articles in the **Calcutta Review**, put it bluntly: "From all the varieties of heathen religions Christianity has nothing to fear for they are but passive exhibitions of gross darkness which must vanish before the light of the Gospel."

In 1845 he said, "**the Hindu, sickened by idolatry** (Islam's and Christianity's common name for Hinduism), turns to the other two religions which surround him, and inquires into their respective claims.. we must be ready at hand to meet him with the proofs of our most holy faith...the comparison of the two religions, Christianity and Islam, cannot fail to be of essential service, under God's blessings, to lead to practical results."

(source: **Hindu View of Christianity and Islam - By Ram Swarup** Publisher: Voice of India p. 16-55).

While in India Baptist Christian missionaries used their time in collecting materials derogatory to Hinduism. **Dr. R. C. Majumdar**, author of **The History and Culture of the Indian People**, writes:

" A number of people including William Wilberforce, sought to refute these arguments by painting in black colors the horrible customs of the Hindus such as sati, infanticide, throwing the children into the Ganga, religious suicides, and above all idolatry. Vivid descriptions were given of the massacre of the innocent resulting from the car procession of Lord Jagannath at Puri, and the Baptists put down the number of annual victims at not less than 120,000. When challenged they had to admit that they did not actually count the dead bodies but arrived at the figure by an ingenious calculation."

(source: **The History and Culture of Indian People - By R. C. Majumdar** volume X, 2nd edition, Bombay, 1981, p. 152-153).

Bishop Heber's (1783- 1826) **Hymn**



From Greenland's icy mountains, from India's coral strand;
Where Afric's sunny fountains roll down their golden sand:
From many an ancient river, from many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver their land from error's chain.

What though the spicy breezes blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle;
Though every prospect pleases, and only man is vile?
In vain with lavish kindness the gifts of God are strown;
The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone.

Shall we, whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high,
Shall we to those benighted the lamp of life deny?
Salvation! O salvation! The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth's remotest nation has learned Messiah's Name.

Waft, waft, ye winds, His story, and you, ye waters, roll
Till, like a sea of glory, it spreads from pole to pole:
Till o'er our ransomed nature the Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator, in bliss returns to reign.

The hymn was published in the *Evangelical Magazine* in July 1821. It is considered one of the finest missionary hymns in the English language. It is one of the many specimens of

contempt which Christians have shown for Hindus. The hymn was included in the official hymns of the Anglican Church in England and elsewhere.

Gandhi had chided the Christian missionaries for misrepresenting Hinduism.

"You, the missionaries," he said, "come to India thinking that you come to a land of heathens, of idolators, of men who do not know God. One of the greatest Christian divines, **Bishop Reginald Heber, wrote the two lines which have always left a sting with me**: 'Where every prospect pleases, and man alone is vile.' I wish he had not written them. My own experience in my travels through out India has been to the contrary. I have gone from one end of the country to the other, without any prejudice, in a relentless search for truth, and I am not able to say that here in this fair land, watered by the great Ganga, the Brahmaputra, and the Jamuna, man is vile. He is not vile. He is as much a seeker after truth as you and I are, possibly more so...."

He further commented: "I have read several missionary publications and they are able to see only the dark side and paint it darker still. The famous hymn of Bishop Heber's - 'Greenland's icy mountains' - **is a clear libel on Indian humanity.** I was favored with some literature even in the Yervada prison by well-meaning missionaries, which seemed to be written as if merely to belittle Hinduism."

(source: **The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi** Volume 27 New Delhi 1968 p.214- 436).

Christian missionaries were attacking the Puranas for containing passages which they considered obscene. **Swami Vivekananda** had studied the Bible and knew that it contained a lot which was far worse. "The Chinese,' he wrote, "are the disciples of Confucius, and the Buddha, and their morality is quite strict and refined. The Christian missionaries translated the Bible into Chinese tongue. Now in the Bible there are some passages so obscene as to put to shame some of the Puranas of the Hindus. Reading those indecorous passages, the Chinamen were so exasperated against Christianity that they made a point of never allowing the Bible to be circulated in their country...They raised a cry, saying: "Oh, horror! This religion has come to us to ruin our young boys, by giving them the Bible to read...."

(source: **The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda** Calcutta, 1985 Volume V. p. 503).

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The First Scholars:

Such are the settings in which the first Indologists first appeared.



Sir William Jones, the first British to master Sanskrit and study the Vedas, drew fire from the eminent British historian **James Mill,** author of **History of India**, for his "hypothesis of a high state of civilization". Typically, Mill believed that the:

"The people of India were never advanced and that they had no right to a claim a glorious past. And that it was a historical fantasy...."

James Mill, father of John Stuart, had published his history of India in 1818. Though Mill spoke no Indian languages, indeed had never been to India, his damning indictment of Indian society and religion had become the standard work -



required reading for all who would serve in India.

At any rate, by translating the Vedas for the Western reader and thus evincing the ancient Vedic genius, the scholars increased India's prestige in the West.

Sir William Jones (1746-1794), **Charles Wilkins** (1749-1836) and **Thomas Colebrooke** (1765-1837) are considered the fathers of Indology. Sir Jones was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court in Calcutta. He translated a number of Sanskrit works into English and his works into the investigations into languages mark him as one of the most brilliant minds of the 18th century. Yet he was not prone to invective against another's religion, particularly the Vedas, which he admired. He described the Bhagavata Purana as “a motley story”. He speculated that the Bhagavad Gita came from the Christian Gospels, which had been brought to India and "repeated to the Hindus, who ingrafted them on the old fable of Kesava, (a name for Krishna). Of course, this theory has been discredited since records of Krishna worship predates Christ by centuries.

According to **Thomas R. Trautmann**, author of **Aryans and British India**, **"neither Jones nor any of the British Orientalists had any doubt as to the present superiority of European civilization to that of India".**

" The Aryan idea was a unifying idea in the initial phase of British expansion it ceased to be so later when the British stranglehold on India tended to be strong and the emphasis on affinities between Britons and Indians would more hinder than facilitate the consolidation of the British power in India. The heart of the matter, therefore, remains that British imperialism spoke in different voices at different times, though its goal was always the same, i.e., to devise new mechanisms of control and administration of the Indian colony in consonance with the policies of the home government. In 1861 John Crawfurd went to the extent of saying : "I am not prepared to admit the claim of a common descent between Hindu, Greek, and Teuton, for that would amount to allowing that there was no difference in the faculties of the people that produced Homer and Shakespeare and those that have produced nothing better than the authors of the Mahabharat and Ramayana; no difference between the home-keeping **Hindus who never made a foreign conquest of any kind, and the nations who discovered, conquered, and peopled a new world"(p.181). His contempt for Indians and their civilisation was accompanied by his belief in "the dangers of intermarriage between races widely apart on the scale of civilization"(p.181). For him, Trautmann points out, "philology is bad for racial hygiene"(p.181)."**

(source: **Aryans and British India - By Thomas R. Trautmann** http://www.indolink.com/Book/aryans.html).

H. H. Wilson (1786-1860), described as the greatest Sanskrit scholar of his time", became the Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford in 1833. Wilson felt that the Christian culture should simply replace the Vedic culture, and he believed that full knowledge of the Indian tradition would help effect that conversion. He felt hopeful that by inspired, diligent effort the "specious" system of Vedic thought would be "shown to be fallacious and false by the Ithuriel spear of Christian truth. He also was ready to award a prize of two hundred pounds.. "for the best refutation of the Hindu religious system."



The famous French Missionary, **Abbé Dubois,** wrote a whole chapter on Hindu temples in his book, "Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies." Coming to Hindu idols he says "Hindu imagination is such that it cannot be excited except by what is monstrous and extravagant" (p.607). Abbé Dubois' book has run through a dozen of reprints in England and remains the best primer for the average western traveler to India to this day.

Abbé Dubois influenced **James Stuart Mill's** malicious **History of British India** which was written in six volumes in 1818. The volumes were compulsory reading for candidates wishing to



appear for the I.C.S. exams. Mill's history has in fact mesmerized the best Hindu minds.

To illustrate, James Mill's tripartite periodization of Indian history into 'Hindu', 'Muslim' and 'British' epitomized in his infamous **The History of British India** **was not an innocent exercise.** It is well known that throughout Indian history the frontiers of the religion(s) of ruler(s) did not overlap with those of the people. If at all the defining criterion of Mill was the ruler's religion, the logic of such a formulation demanded that the third period should have been designated as 'Christian'. It is now recognized that **Mill's periodization stemmed from the imperialist objective of fomenting a religious divide in India** (no wonder Mill's History was one of the prescribed texts at the Haileybury College, where the prospective English officers received their training before coming to India).

(source: **Aesthetic deceptions - By K. M. Shrimali - hindustantimes.com** The writer is Professor of History, Delhi University).

Mill comments on the Hindu's pretensions to a remote antiquity as an example of the boastful and turgid vanity of the oriental nations...

He has nothing positive to comment on the Hindu manners. 'the vices of falsehood, indeed, they carry to a height almost unexampled among the other races of men. "the languid and slothful habits of the Hindus."

The level of Hindu fine arts was lower than " the height of even of the Egyptians, much less of the Greeks and Romans. " This is the first major racist elaboration of the ancient Indian history and culture in Western Indology, and all that we note here is that Mill's contempt for ancient India extends to the other Asian civilizations as well as that much of Mill's framework has survived in the colonial and post-colonial Indology.

(source: **Colonial Indology: Sociopolitics of the Ancient Indian Past - By Dilip K. Chakrabarti** p. 92-94).

Another renowned pioneer Indologist was **Fredrich Max Muller** (1823-1900). He is best known for his series Sacred Books of the East. Muller speaking at the Christians Missions in **Westminster Abbey in 1873** he **declared that Hinduism was dying or dead** because it belonged to a stratum of thought which was long buried beneath the foot of modern man. He continued: " The worship of Shiva, Vishnu, and other popular deities was of the same and in many cases of a more degraded and savage character than the worship of Jupiter, Apollo or Minerva. 'A religion', he said ' may linger on for a long time, it may be accepted my large masses of the people, because it is there, and there is nothing better. But when a religion has ceased to produce defenders of the faith, prophets, champions, martyrs, it has ceased to live, in the true sense of the word; and in that sense the old orthodox Brahmanism has ceased to live for more than a thousand years."

(source: **Hinduism: a religion to live by** **- Nirad C. Chaudhari** Oxford University Press February 1997 ISBN 0195640136 p. 116 -117).

In 1876, Muller wrote to a friend, **" India is much riper for Christianity than Rome or Greece were at the time of Saint Paul."**

(source: **Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself - By Satsvarupa dasa Goswami** Bhaktivedanta Book Trust ISBN 0912776889 June 1985 p. 178).



" The rotten tree for some time had artificial supports ...but if the English man comes to see that the tree must fall...he will mind no sacrifice either of blood or of land...I would like to lay down my life, or at least lend my hand to bring about this struggle"

(source: **Life and letters of the Rt. Hon. Fredrich Max Muller,** Vol. I, pp. 190-92.).



" I do not claim for the ancient Indian literature any more that I should willingly concede to the fables and traditions and songs of savage nations . I simply say that in the Veda we have a nearer approach to a beginning, and an intelligent beginning, than in the wild invocations of the Hottentotes and Bushmen, "

(source: **The Hindu world, an encyclopedic survey of Hinduism' - By George Benjamin Walker**, New York: Praeger, 1968. 2v.)

Max Muller wrote: **"This edition of mine and the translation of the Veda will hereafter tell to a great extent... the fate of India, and on the growth of millions of souls in that country. It is the root of their religion, and to show them what the root is, I feel sure, the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last 3000 years."**

(source: **The Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Fredrich Max Muller,** edited by his wife. Longmans, London, 1902, Volume I, p. 328) **Vedic Aryans and the Origins of Civilization - By N. S. Rajaram & David Frawley** p. 10).

" The rotten tree for some time had artificial supports...but if the English man comes to see that the tree must fall...he will mind no sacrifice either of blood or of land...I would like to lay down my life, or at least lend my hand to bring about this struggle"

(source: **The Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Fredrich Max Muller,** edited by his wife. Longmans, London, 1902, Volume I, pp. 190-92).

In another letter, Mueller wrote to his son:

"Would you say that any one sacred book is superior to all others in the world?...I say the New Testament, after that, I should place the Koran, which in its moral teachings, is hardly more than a later edition of the New Testament. Then would follow according to my opinion the Old Testament, the Southern Buddhist Tripitaka, the Tao-te-king of Lao-tze, the Kings of Confucius, the Veda and the Avesta."

(source: **Life and letters of Max Mueller** Vol. II, Ch. XXXII., page 339).

In an audacious letter to **N. K. Majumdar**, Mueller wrote:

'Tell me some of your chief difficulties that prevent you and your countrymen from openly following Christ, and when I write to you I shall do my best to explain how I and many who agree with me have met them and solved them...From my point of view, India, at least the best part of it, is already converted to Christianity. You want no persuasion to become a follower of Christ. Then make up your mind to work for yourself. Unite your flock - to hold them together and prevent them from straying. The bridge has been built for you by those who came before you. STEP BOLDLY FORWARD, it will break under you, and you will find many friends to welcome you on the other shore and among them none more delighted that you old friend and fellow labourer."

(source: **Western Indologists: A Study in Motives - P B Dutt** http://www.philosophy.ru/library/asiatica/indica/authors/motives.html).

Mueller harshly criticised the view of the German scholar, **Dr. Spiegel**, who claimed that the Biblical theory of the creation of the world is borrowed from the ancient religion of the Persians or Iranians. Stung by this statement Max Mueller writes:



'A writer like Dr. Spiegel should know that he can expect no money; nay, he should himself wish for no mercy, but invite the heaviest artillery against the floating battery which he has launched in the troubled waters of Biblical criticism.'

Dr. Spiegel was not the only target of Mueller's bigotry. In 1926 the French scholar **Louis Jacolliot**, Chief Judge in Chandranagar, wrote a book called **La Bible dans l'Inde**. **Within that book, Jacolliot theorized that all the main philosophies of the western world originated from India, which he glorified thus:**

'Land of ancient India! Cradle of Humanity. hail! Hail revered motherland whom centuries of brutal invasions have not yet buried under the dust of oblivion. Hail, Fatherland of faith, of love, of poetry and of science, may we hail a revival of thy past in our Western future.'

Mueller said while reviewing Louis Jacolliot's book that, 'The author seems to have been taken in by the Brahmins of India.'

Another revealing incident of Mueller's glaring ignorance was when a *brahmana* came from India to meet the famous Sanskrit scholar. When he came face to face with Mueller and spoke to him in chaste Sanskrit, Mueller admitted that he couldn't understand what the gentleman was saying!

No wonder **Arthur Schopenhauer** acerbically said, **"I cannot resist a certain suspicion that our Sanskrit scholars do not understand their texts any better than the higher class of school boys their Greek and Latin."**

Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaja, was so disgusted with the level of Mueller's knowledge of Sanskrit that he likened him to a "toddler learning to walk". He wrote:

"Prof. Max Mueller has been able to scribble out something by the help of the so called 'tikas' or paraphrases of the Vedas current in India."

(source: **Satyartha Prakash** Third Edition p. 278). Note: Swami Dayanand Saraswati commented very negatively on Max Mueller's knowledge of Sanskrit by saying that his depth of understanding is like a Aak plant among the trees (Indian Sanskrit scholars).

It was Max Mueller who said: "I do not shrink from saying that their religion (Hinduism) is dying or dead. And why? Because it cannot stand the light of day. The worship of Siva, Vishnu and other popular deities is of the same, nay, in many cases of a more degraded and savage character than the worship of Jupiter, Apollo and Minerva. It belongs to a stratum of thought which is long buried beneath our feet…"

(source: **In the matter of conversions…- By M V Kamath indiainfo.com**).

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All this from the man (Max Muller) who has Bhavans named after him all over India. Muller's purpose was to uproot Hinduism!!

Muller concluded : "But the ancient religion of India is doomed,"

"and if Christianity does not step in, whose fault will it be?"

(source: **Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas - By Arun Shourie** ASA Publications ASIN 8190019945 p. 139).

Exposing the roots of another culture so as to support everything that has flowed from it for 3,000 years, and this seen as God's work. Not quite the motive and belief we would associate with an objective scholar like Max Muller!

The credit of consolidating of the Aryan concept in the second half of the 19th century goes more to Max Mullller than to anybody else. It was he who sold the idea quite aggressively to the Western audience of his time. It was also something which was eagerly lapped up by his 'native' audience, although he himself was never ready for the rough and tumble of the Indian dust. In Max Muller's parlance " a native writer" exclaimed in **Indian Mirror**, Calcutta, of 20 September, 1874: "we were niggers at one time. We now become brethren."

(source: **Colonial Indology: Sociopolitics of the Ancient Indian Past - By Dilip K. Chakrabarti** p. 92-94).

Theordore Goldstucker (1821-1872) born in Germany, professor of Sanskrit at London's University College wrote the Dictionary of Indian Biography. He regarded the people of India as being burdened by Vedic religion, which had only brought them worldwide "contempt and ridicule." Thus, he proposed to reeducated them with European values. In his book, **Inspired Writings of Hinduism,** Goldstucker assailed the validity of Vedic literature. His aim was to demonstrate to the new generation of Vedic followers that he had scholastically annihilated their scripture and that they should show their appreciation by adopting European values and improving their character.



Successor to Wilson in **Oxford's Boden Chair** was **Sir Monier-Williams**(1819-1899) **who was a Christian of warm Evangelical convictions.** He said:

"For what purpose then has this enormous territory been committed to England? Not to be the 'corpus vile' of political, social, or military experiments; not for benefit of our commerce, or the increase of our wealth - but that every man, woman and child, from Cape Comorin to the Himalaya mountains, may be elevated, enlightened Christianized."

(source: **Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas - By Arun Shourie** ASA Publications ASIN 8190019945 p. 152)

In 1869 **Dr. Franz Lorinser** published a new translation and commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, **Die Bhagavad-Gita: Uebersetzt und erlautert**.

Lorinser believed that the Gita, which the world already regarded as **'one of the fairest flowers of heathen world', actually owed its ' purest and most greatly praised teachings' to the New Testament!**

Historian **Arthur D.Innes** writes:

"The educators had hardly concealed their expectations that with Western knowledge the sacred fairy tales of the East would be dissolved and the basis of popularly cherished creeds would be swept away.

Richard Temple said:

"Hinduism is gradually breaking up, like the clouds before the rising sun…. it is being dissipated like the mist, before the science of the 19th century."

W. J Wilkins in his **Daily Life and Work in India** p. 252 was another Christian missionary who worked in India to gather harvest of converts for Christ. He said: "If this faith in the Divine origin of these books (the Vedas) could be destroyed, they could then reasonably hope the people would

listen with unprejudiced minds to their statements respecting Christianity…"

Rev. J Fr. Stacker another Christian zealot in his book, **Arsenal for the Christian Soldier in India** p. 493 had this to say: "The Hindu religion resembles the Christian just as a counterfeit coin resembles a true one."

(source: **The Hindu - By Krishna Vallabh Paliwal and Brahm Datt Bharti** p. 98-99).

Sir W. M. Williams, a Sanskritist with great missionary sympathies, prophesied, "When the walls of the mighty fortress of Brahminism are encircled, undermined and finally stormed by the soldiers of the Cross, the victory of Christianity must be signal and complete."

Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan (1807- 1886) was the brother-in-law of Thomas Macaulay and author of **Christianity and Hinduism Contrasted**. 1882. He addressed the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-on-Tyne. He states:

"...as the Christian religion is the only one capable of correcting the disorder caused by the passions of mankind, and of gradually leading on the world to a state of perfection, it must be of divine origin, and we are bound to promote its universal diffusion in obedience to its founder, Jesus Christ. It this is true as a general proposition, we are under a special obligation to **our magnificent Indian Empire,** and the facilities for the task are in proportion to the obligation;" their special loathing in this context for Hinduism; their premise, their hope, indeed their expectation that Christianity would soon prevail; their calculation that it was enough for Government to spread western lore and learning for Hinduism to be destroyed - The grammar and spelling books suffice to destroy the Hindu religion."



"Although India has yet to become Christian, a higher standard of morality has been established, and the spirit of Christianity is becoming diffused throughout the society. Christian knowledge is spreading in every direction in advance of openly professed conversions, and it has become a common thing to meet with natives who know more of the Bible than most Christians.

He wrote in 1838: "Familiarly acquainted with us by means of our literature, the Indian youth almost ceases to regard us as foreigners. **They speak of our great men as we do. Educated in the same way, interested in the same objects, engaged in the same pursuits with ourselves, they become more English than Hindus..."**

He delivered this to the Baptist Missionary Society in London in April 1888:

"..That every British is spreading the truth of Christianity that Providence has placed the Empire at the disposal of Britain; that Buddhism and Hinduism are dying and dead; that the tribals ought to be made the special focus of the exertions of the missionaries."

(source: **Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas - By Arun Shourie** ASA Publications ASIN 8190019945 p 80-92).

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Lord Thomas Babbington Macaulay (1800-59) is best known for introducing English education in India. Macaulay was the first Law Member of the Governor-General's Legislature.

He wrote in his **notorious 1835 Minute** that Hinduism was based on **" a literature admitted to be of small intrinsic value ...(one) that inculcates the most serious errors on the most important subjects ... hardly reconcilable with reason, with morality...fruitful of monstrous superstitions. " Hindus had therefore been fed for millennia with a "false history, false astronomy, false medicine ...in company of a false religion."**

"A war of Bengalees against English men was like a war of sheep against wolves, of men against demons."



Baron Macaulay (1800-1859): The life-long bachelor was a skilled politician and author

Dismissing with incredible arrogance the profound speculation and beautiful language of the Sanskrit classics, he said, " I doubt whether the Sanskrit literature be as valuable as that of our Saxon and Norman progenitors."

(source: **India: A World in Transition - By Beatrice Pitney Lamb** p. 194)).

Macaulay advised in 1835 the creation of an Indian elite through Western style education, making them **`Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, in intellect.'**

The policy was frankly one of Westernizing India.

Though not a missionary himself, he sincerely believed that Christianity held the key to the problems of administering India. In a letter to his father in 1836, **Macaulay** exulted, "...It is my belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be effected without any efforts to proselytize, without the smallest interference with religious liberty, by natural operation of knowledge and reflection. I heartily rejoice in the project."

" I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is, indeed, fully admitted by those members of the Committee who support the Oriental plan of education." The superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable." The question now before us is simply whether, when it is in our power to teach this language, we shall teach languages in which, by universal confession, there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared to our own; whether, when we can teach European science, we shall teach systems which, by universal confession, whenever they differ from those of Europe, differ for the worse; and whether, when we can patronize sound Philosophy and true History, we shall countenance, at the public expense, medical doctrines, which would disgrace an English farrier,--Astronomy, which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school,--History, abounding with kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long,--and Geography, made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter." " I would at once stop the printing of Arabic and Sanscrit books, I would abolish the Madrassa and the Sanscrit college at Calcutta. Benares is the great seat of Brahmanical learning."

(source: **http://www.tc.umn.edu/~raley/research/english/macaulay.html**)
Please read the following article: **Haunted by Macaulay's ghost - By Francois Gautier**)

"To the literature of Britain . . . which has exercised an influence wider than that of our commerce and mightier than that of our arms . . .before the light of which impious and cruel superstitions are fast taking flight on the Banks of the Ganges!"

(source: http://members.tripod.com/~INDIA_RESOURCE/britishedu.htm).

He remarked that Indians were: "lesser breeds without the law" and summed up the opinion of many. In 1885 he wrote of the "monstrous superstitions" of India and summarily condemned ancient Sanskrit texts as "less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England."

(source: **Oriental Enlightenment: The encounter between Asian and Western thought - By J. J. Clarke** p.73)

He wrote to his father in 1836:

"It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal, thirty years hence."

Macaulay's object was to undermine the social and religious institutions of India. **The Indian Daily News**, for instance, wrote in its leader on March 29, 1909: "Lord Macaulay's triumph over the Oriental School, headed by Dr. Wilson, was really the triumph of a deliberate intention to undermine the religious and social life of India."

Macaulay looked upon India much in the same way as a landlord looks upon his serfs. He wrote: **"We know that India cannot have a free government. But she may have the next best thing - a firm and impartial despotism."**

He had no heart, no sympathy for the longings and ambitions of educated India, nor had he ever tried to understand them. His idea was to bind India with the fetters of legislation, albeit the chain might be gilded. In his famous speech of the 10th July, 1838, Macaulay said: "I believe that no country ever stood so much in need of a code of laws as India; and I believe also there never was a country in which the want might so easily be supplied...It is a work which especially belongs to a Government like that of India, to an enlightened and paternal despotism."

(source: **Rise Of The Christian Power In India - By Major Baman Das Basu** (1867-1930) Calcutta R. Chatterjee 1931 p. 802-807).

The question in Macaulay's mind was not just of perpetuating British imperial control over India: his aim was to rescue Indians from Hinduism, he was certain about the superiority of Christianity and about the boons that would follow as it spread in India. For he declared four years later in his essay, "Gladstone on Church and State," the heathenism of India is "more cruel, more licentious, more fruitful of absurd right, and pernicious laws" than that of any other part of the world. The people of India, he declared in "The Gates of Somnath", are idolators, blindly attached to doctrines and rites which, considered meekly with reference to the temporal interests of mankind, are in the highest degree pernicious."...Hence to condone Brahminical idolatry and to discountenance Christianity is to "commit high treason against humanity and civilization."

(source: **Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas - By Arun Shourie** ASA Publications ASIN 8190019945 p.64).

Bishop James M. Thoburn (1836-1922) wrote in his book, The Christian Conquest of India in 1906, about the Millions Waiting to be converted in the British Empire:

“In her most palmy days Rome ruled over only one hundred and twenty million people, while

in India today nearly three hundred million souls are subject, more or less directly, to the rule of the King-Emperor. China alone among the great kingdoms and empires of the world can compare with India in population at the beginning of this new century, and this splendid realm has opened all her gates and doors to the Christian missionary. Instead of the wretched little vessels in which Paul coasted around the Mediterranean ports, the Indian missionary has floating palaces to convey him at sea, while palatial cars await him when he wished to travel by land. God has opened his pathway to even the most remote tribes, while a sympathetic and enlightened government protects him from hostile persecution, or even the menace of danger. The original commission to evangelize the nations still stands, while God, who rules over all nations, sets an open door before his servants who are willing to enter and evangelize the waiting millions."

"The time is auspicious, and the missionaries of India should not lose a day or an hour in sounding the trumpet for a great forward movement. As Paul, the ideal missionary for all lands and all times, aimed first at Greece and next for Rome, so should the missionaries of our modern day aim for all the great centers of population, commerce, and political rule in the empire. This does not mean that outlying and distant places are to be negated, but only that the great centers of power and influence should be quickly seized and strongly held. A wide and firm grasp is needed. **The word should be passed all along the line that India is to be won for Christ, and that the greatest movement ever attempted in the history of Christianity is now at hand. Nothing in all modern history, nothing since the day of Pentecost, has been equal to the present opportunity.**

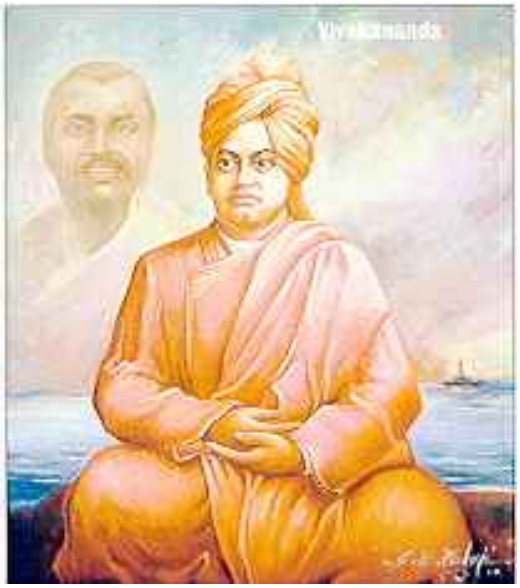
The old may rejoice that they have lived to see this day, but the young may rejoice still more in the hope of seeing a day when a million souls will be found inquiring the way to Zion in North India, a million in West India, a million more in Burma, and still a million more in South India. A million? Why not ten million? **Why not the Christian Conquest of India?**

(source: **The Christian Conquest of India - By Bishop James M. Thoburn** Publisher: Jennings And Graham Date of Publication: 1906 p. 244-245).

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As the British became more sure of their position in India and developed a sense of mission, there grew up a contempt for Indian culture. This was partly due to cultural arrogance on the part of the British, who dismissed Indian literature as pagan rubbish and Indian science as primitive nonsense. Macaulay disposed of 'the whole native literature of India' as 'medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier – Astronomy, which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school – History, abounding with kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long – and Geography, made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter.'

(source: **British India - By Michael Edwardes** p. 305-306).



Swami Vivekananda was to shatter Macaulay's dream and hope. The key point here is Macaulay's belief that 'that knowledge and reflection' on the part of the Hindus would cause them to turn to Christianity. His plan was to turn the strength of the educated Hindus against them, to use their commitment to scholarship to uproot their own tradition. To this end, he wanted someone willing and able to interpret Hindu Scriptures in such a way that the newly educated Hindu elite would see for itself the difference between their scriptures and the New Testament and choose the latter. It is a measure of Macaulay's seriousness that he persisted with his hare-brained scheme until he found just the man for it. The man was Friedrich Maximillian Mueller (1823-1900) who was to be touted as the foremost Indologist, Scholar Extraordinaire (by Nirad Chaudhury) and Vedemaharishi Mokshamula Bhatta (of Oxford).

Swami Vivekananda pointed out more than a century ago: **" The histories of our country written by English [and other Western] writers cannot but be weakening to our minds, for they talk only of our downfall. How can foreigners, who understand very little of our manners and customs, or religion and philosophy, write faithful and unbiased histories of India? Naturally, many false notions and wrong inferences have found their way into them. It is for Indians to write Indian history."**

As Swami Vivekananda pointed out, the goal of the British was to weaken the Indian spirit, particularly the Hindu spirit, because the nationalist movement in India was mainly a Hindu movement. Most of the distortion in Indian history had already been done for them by the British, and then by their successors during the Congress rule.

(Please refer to **Eminent Historians - By Arun Shourie** Harper-Collins, New Delhi ISBN 8190019988).

Swami Vivekanada responded to a concerted attack on Hinduism:

"We who had come from the east have sat here day after day and have been told in a patronizing way that we ought to accept Christianity because Christian nations are the most prosperous. **We look about us and we see England the most prosperous Christian nation in the world, with her foot upon the neck of 250,000,000 Asiatics.** We look back into history and see that the prosperity of Christian Europe begin with Spain. Spain's prosperity began with the invasion of Mexico. Christianity wins its prosperity by cutting the throats of its fellow men. At such a price the Hindoo will not have prosperity."

"When someone suggested to him that Christianity was a saving power, he opened his great dark eyes upon him and said: **"If Christianity is a saving power in itself, why has it not saved the Ethiopians, the Abyssinians?"**

(source: **Hinduism for Our Times - By Arvind Sharma** Oxford Univ Pr June 1996 ISBN 0195637496 p. 72-73).

"On metaphysical lines, he wrote "no nation on earth can hold a candle to the Hindus' and curiously all the fellows that come over here from Christian lands have that one antiquated foolishness of an argument that because the Christians are powerful and rich and Hindus are not, so Christianity must be better than Hinduism. To which the Hindus very aptly retort that, that is the very reason why Hinduism is a religion and Christianity is not..."

(source: **The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda** Calcutta, 1985 Volume VI. p. 390-391 and **History of Hindu-Christian Encounters - By Sita Ram Goel** South Asia Books July 1990 ISBN 9990049173 p. 90).

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No Hindu Culture

So far as Europeans were concerned, it was fashionable for a time to deny the mere existence of such a thing as an Indian culture. Here are two representative quotations to illustrate this point:

Says **Sir Henry Norman**, in his book on the Far East: "Asia - always excepting Japan - has never been civilized and never will be unless a great change comes which this age is not likely to see otherwise than at the **mouth of the cannon and the point of the bayonet."**

William Archer, who in his day was considered a dramatic critic of some standing, author of gave expression to the following judgment on India:

"Barbarian, barbarism, barbarious, I am sorry to harp on these words. But they express the essence of the situation...The plain truth concerning the mass of Indian population - and not the poor classes alone - is that they are not civilized people."

Naturally they could have no culture. Of minor poets like Robert Nicholls, or **imperialist propagandists like Katherine Mayo**, or the general run of Christian missionaries who could see nothing good in India. I need not say anything; for their views do not deserve consideration.

(source: **Essential Features of Indian Culture - By K. M. Panikkar** Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Mumbai.1964 p. 23-24).

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Bishop Caldwell on Dravidian Grammar:

' The idea of the Dravidian migrations from the north was first put forth by Bishop (who else). Caldwell, insisted that the Dravidians had 'invaded' India long before the Aryans. As this theory had no basis in tradition, history or even archeology, it has tried to draw linguistic support from 'Dravidian-speaking Brahuis in Baluchistan and in Central and East India'.



"It is not only our duty," declared **Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister**, " but in our own interest to promote the diffusion of Christianity as far as possible throughout the length and breadth of India"; " Every additional Christian," declared **Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State**," is an additional bond of union with this country and an additional source of strength to the Empire."

Rev William Ward, an English missionary who wrote a four-volume polemic which characterized Hindu faith as "a fabric of superstition" concocted by Brahmins, and as "the most complete system of absolute oppression that perhaps ever existed". (How would Christians feel if the compliment is returned by saying that nothing could excel superstition and oppression as the concepts of *virgin birth, resurrection and slavery in the Bible,* the pillars of faith that are central to Christianity?).

Barthelemy de Saint Hilare, the Education Minister of the French Government of 1883, declared that:

"**the Hindu system of thought is hideous, without any intellectual rigor and coherence and cannot be compared with those of ancient Greece or modern Europe."**

(source: **Arise O' India - By Francois Gautier** Har Anand publisher ISBN: 81-241-0518-9 p. 26).

John P. Jones in 1915 said:

"Schools for Non-Christians are especially established with a view to reaching and affecting the non-Christian community. They represent the leaven of Christianity in India. They are pre-eminently an evangelistic agency. ... I fearlessly maintain that more conversions take place, and more accessions are made, through these schools than through any other agency..."

Moriz Winternitz



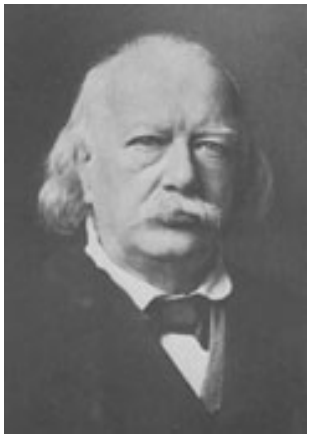
Unfortunately, not all scholars appreciated the timeless wisdom of the Vedas and Upanisads. **Some scholars were so convinced of the superiority of Christianity and western philosophy that they had no qualms in shamelessly expressing their feelings publicly.**

In 1925 The Professor of Indian Studies at the German University of Prague, **Moriz Winternitz** (1863-1937), denounced Schopenhauer for his admiration of the **Upanisads** with the following words -

'Yet I believe, it is a wild exaggeration when Schopenhauer says that the teaching of the Upanishads represents 'the fruit of the highest human knowledge and wisdom' and contains 'almost superhuman conceptions the originators of which can hardly be regarded as mere mortals...'

On the subject of the *Vedas*, Winternitz had this to say -**'It is true, the authors of these hymns rise but extremely seldom to the exalted flights and deep fervor of, say, religious poetry of the Hebrews.'**

Weber, Boehtlingk, Kuhn and Goldstucker:



1. The famous German indologist **Albrecht Weber** (1825-1901) was a notorious racist whose German nationalistic tendencies were thinly veiled as works on Indian philosophy and culture.

When **Humbolt** lauded praise upon the **Bhagavad-gita**, Weber became disgusted. His immediate response was to speculate that the *Mahabharata* and *Gita* were influenced by Christian theology -

'The peculiar colouring of the Krishna sect, which pervades the whole book, is noteworthy: Christian legendry matter and other Western influences are unmistakably present...'

Two Sanskrit scholars, Franz Lorinser and E. Washburn Hopkin, were quick to support Weber's postulation. However, their theory lacked any hard evidence and was considered so ludicrous that most scholars in European universities rejected it, despite their Christian leanings. Nevertheless, the propagation of this eroneous hypothesis played its mischief and was mainly responsible for the hesitation of the Western scholars to assign to the *Mahabharata* a date, earlier than that of the Christian era.

In Chapter 4 of his book **Krishnacharita**, the famous Bengali writer, **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya**, spoke about Weber as follows –



'The celebrated Weber was no doubt a scholar but I am inclined to think that it was an unfortunate moment for India when he began the study of Sanskrit. The descendants of the German savages of yesterday could not reconcile themselves to the ancient glory of India. It was therefore, their earnest effort to prove that the civilization of India was comparatively of recent origin. They could not persuade themselves to believe that the Mahabharata was composed centuries before Christ was born'.

2. Weber and his collegue **Otto Boehtlingk** prepared the famous Sanskrit dictionary called the **'Sanskrit Worterbuch'**. Prof. Ernst Kuhn was also one of their assistants. Being mainly based on speculative and incorrect principles of philology, the work was unreliable and misleading. The dictionary was subject to severe criticism by **Theodore Goldstucker** (1821-1872), who was professor of Sanskrit at the University College in London. Weber was so disturbed by Goldstucker's criticism that he resorted to abusing the Professor with the coarsest words possible. He added that the views of Goldstucker on his *Worterbuch* showed 'a perfect derangement of his mental faculties', since he was not willing to dismiss the authority of the Vedic scholars so easily. Replying to their undignified attacks, Goldstucker exposed the 'scholarship' of the likes of Roth, Boehtlingk, Weber and Kuhn and wrote:

'It will, of course, be my duty to show, at the earliest opportunity, that Dr. Boehtlingk is incapable of understanding even easy rules of Panini, much less those of Katyayana and still less is he capable of making use of them in the understanding of Classical texts. The errors in his department of the Dictionary are so numerous... that it will fill every serious Sanskritist with dismay, when he calculates the mischievous influence which they must exercise on the study of Sanskrit philology'.

He further remarked: '....that questions which ought to have been decided with the very utmost circumspection and which could not be decided without very laborious research have been trifled with in the Worterbuch in the most unwarranted manner…When I see that the most distinguished and most learned Hindu scholars and divines - the most valuable and sometimes the only source of all our knowledge of ancient India - are scorned in theory, mutilated in print, and, as a consequence, set aside in the interpretation of Vaidik texts; ...when a clique of Sanskritists of this description vapours about giving us the sense of the Veda as it existed at the commencement of Hindu antiquity; ...when I consider that those whose words apparently derive weight and influence from the professional position they hold...then I hold that it would be a want of courage and a dereliction of duty, if I did not make a stand against these Saturnalia of Sanskrit Philology.'



3. Referring to **Prof. Kuhn, Goldstucker** was positively venomous –'(Professor Kuhn) was 'an individual whose sole connection with Sanskrit studies consisted in handing Sanskrit books to those who could read them, a literary naught, wholly unknown, but assuming the airs of a quantity, because it had figures before it that prompted it on, a personage who, according to his own friends, was perfectly ignorant of Sanskrit'.

However, we should not make the mistake that Herr Goldstucker was championing the cause of the Vedic literatures. **Goldstucker's skirmish with his fellow indologists was purely on an academic basis. Goldstucker was of the opinion that the people of India were burdened by Vedic religion which had simply brought them world-wide 'contempt and ridicule'. He thus proposed to re-educate the Indians with Western values.** He wrote:

'The means for combating that enemy is as simple as it is irresitable: a proper instruction of the growing generation of its ancient literature.'

In his book, **'Inspired Writings of Hinduism'** Goldstucker a**ttacked the validity of the Vedas, stating that his aim was to inspire the new generation of Indians that their religious superstitions were backwards. This could only be achieved by scholastically destroying their sastras. The only recourse for the new generation would be to adopt European values in order to improve their character.**

(source: **Inspired Writings of Hinduism - By Theodore Goldstucker** p.115).

British historians - like Stirling, Hunter, Beams and Toynbee were in the British administrative services. They were eager to give the impression that foreign rule was a blessing for India. They present a dark picture of the Maratha administration. They depict the feudatory rajas as barbarians. There were many dark sides to British administration. There were corrupt and inefficient officers. There were judges who were deeply involved in unjust dealings. These facts have been kept hidden from the public eye.

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According to author **Paul William Roberts**, "Conversion has largely failed in India because Christianity offers nothing that is not already available somewhere in the many forms of Hinduism. Hinduism never rejected the teachings of Jesus. Those who have converted either agreed with a gun pressed at their skulls as in Goa, or because it provided an escape from caste tyranny, as well as a guaranteed professional advancement. Through its Vedic legacy, Hinduism respects all faiths. It clearly states that God is one, but has many forms. The Christian message must sound preposterous: that God is indeed one, but has only one recognized form, his son. The "savages" of India were sophisticated - so sophisticated that the imperialist mixture of church and state in Europe could not grasp such sophistication.

"The sheer power of Hinduism terrified the Christian soldiers."

The British were more cunning at the game than the Portuguese, careful to show respect for Indian religions. Yet they sneered at the pagans behind their back, educated the Indian elite in British-run schools, or at Eton and Cambridge - which, if it did not guarantee conversion to Christianity, resulted in lapsed Hinduism, agnosticism, or an intellectual humanism.
In India, Anglo indoctrination produced a generation of "brown sahibs" who looked down on the religion of the masses, the opium of the people. Such is the power of colonization that a whole generation must pass before the paralyzing spell wears off."

(source: **Empire of the Soul: Some journeys in India - By Paul William Roberts** p. 323-325).

Many Christian researchers have documented the cause of the antipathy of the missionaries towards the Brahmins. **Elizabeth Susan Alexander** wrote,

"For the missionaries Brahmans (sic) had been in the forefront of the staunch Hindu opposition to missionary endeavours in Madras Presidency. They had also been the vanguard of the Indian nationalist movement that had taken alarmingly extremist turns."

(source: **The Attitudes of British Protestant Missionaries Towards Nationalism in India,** Konark Publishers, Delhi, 1994, p 67.)

As the great **Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy,** late curator at Boston Museum of Fine Arts, a distinguished student of Indian history and culture, and author of several books, and unmatched in his understanding of Indian culture, language, religion and philosophy. Ananda Coomaraswamy, had this to say regarding the Macaulayite higher education:

"A single generation of English education suffices to break the threads of tradition and create a nondescript and superficial being deprived of all roots — an intellectual pariah who does not belong to the East or the West, to the past or the future. Of all Indian problems the educational is the most difficult and the most tragic."

(source: **The Dance of Shiva - By Dr. Ananda K Coomaraswamy** p. 127).

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(**Note**: The tragic consequences was that the convert now found himself cut off from his ancient roots, attached to a foreign godhead and a foreign culture, and taught to despise and revile everything that for millennia had been an object of worship for his ancestors - including his own country. **This proves how the so called "just and merciful rule" of the British was indeed barbaric tyranny.** The burning of ancient books on Ayurveda in Kerala, so as to impose the European system of medicine on the natives, the cutting of weavers' thumbs in Bengal with a view of crippling the production of superior Indian cloth and ensuring the sale of British products, the ruthless, often bloody, extortion of revenue from the peasants for decades on end, even in the midst of the worst famines, the whipping, hangings and tortures that awaited those who opposed the Empire - these are only a few among the unending examples of the "providential character" of the British rule. But they took place too far from the "civilized" world to attract any notice. The Britons like the relief of high-sounding speeches in London's salons, adorned with a few pagan objects d'art purloined from India.

(Source: **Readings in Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself - By Satsvarupa dasa Goswami** p. 173-181).

Since Independence, there has been a growing conviction that education should teach Indian values. One of India' leading experts on education, **Dr. Humayun Kabir,** former Minister of Science and Cultural Relations of the centrall government, had warned:

" The divorce of modern education from the Indian context is still a fact which threatens danger to the country's life....danger in ....the weaning away of the literate classes from the culture of the country....**The new literates no longer derive their strength from the age-long traditions of the land. Their outlook is Western or more frequently pseudo-Western. Cut off from their moorings, they are unstable, loud and factional."**

(source: **India: A World in Transition - By Beatrice Pitney Lamb** p. 191-192).

Prof. **Perceival Spear** of Cambridge University has said: “It was possible for a man to admire the West and to revere the East and to have European authority for both opinions.” **What arrogance!** The “unique” has to be replaced by “Universals” in the plural. We have to be the children of the horizons, or as the Atharvaveda (16.3.6) says, *Samudro Asmi Vidharmana,* “the Unbounded Ocean am I.”

(source: **Theo-Diversity and Humane Values - By Prof. Lokesh Chandra**).

The Indological scholars of the present day have inherited the pioneer's bias and thought; today's bias is not "evangelist" but "empiricist," it slants just the same.

Dilip K. Chakrabarti in his book, **Colonial Indology: Sociopolitics of the Ancient Indian Past - By Dilip K. Chakrabarty** thus summarized the situation:

"The model of the Indian past...was foisted on Indians by the hegemonic books written by Western Indologists concerned with language, literature and philosophy who were and perhaps have always been paternalistic at their best and racists at their worst.."

(source: http://members.tripod.com/~INDIA_RESOURCE/britishedu.htm).

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Thoughts of Modern Indian Scholars

But truth can never remain hidden for long. Now some modern Indian scholars of have also begun to see to some extent, though not thoroughly, through the thin veneer of European scholarship.

Prof. Rangacharya writes:

" Incalculable mischief has been done by almost all the English and American scholars in assuming arbitrarily the earliest dates for Egypt or Mesopotamia - dates going back to B.C. 5000 at least - and the latest possible dates for Ancient India on the ground that India borrowed from them."

(source: **History of Pre-Musulman India**, Vol. II, Vedic India, Part I. 1937 A.D., p. 145.)



Nilakantha Shastri, the Head of History Department of Madras University, although a supporter of many untenable Western theories, had to write:

'What is this but a critique of Indian society and Indian history in the light of the nineteenth century prepossessions of Europe? This criticism was started by the English administration and European missionaries and has been nearly focused by the vast erudition of Lassen; the unfulfilled aspirations of Germany in the early nineteenth century, doubtless had their share in shaping the line of Lassen's thought."

(source: **All India Oriental Conference**, December 1941, Part II., p. 64, printed in 1946.)

C. R. Krishnamacharlu, Ex-Epigraphist to the Government of India, having realised the ulterior motives of European writers, has expressed his views more strongly. He writes: '

"These authors, coming as they do from nations of recent growth, and writing this history with motives other than cultural, which in some cases are apparently racial and prejudicial to the correct elucidation of the past history of India, cannot acquire testimony for historic veracity of cultural sympathy."

(source: '**The Cradle of Indian History**', p. 3, Adyar Library, Madras, 19).

Prof. R. Subba Rao, M.A., L. T., in his Presidential Address, (Sectional), Sixteenth Session of Indian History Congress, Waltair, (29th December, 1953.) writes:

"Unfortunately, the historicity of Puranas and their testimony has been perverted by certain Western scholars who stated rather dogmatically that the historical age cannot go back beyond 2000 B.C., and that there is no need for fixing the Mahabharata war earlier than 1400 B.C. They accused the Brahmins of having raised their antiquity and questioned the authenticity of the Hindu astronomical works."

(source: **J.A.H.R.S.**, Vol. XX, p. 187). (source: **Vedic Knowledge Online**).

For those who came from the West to convert India into Christianity or to rule over India, the British in particular, saw India with a different eye. They saw nothing good in this country. Why? Because they wanted to justify conversions or British rule over India. Thus, **they did the greatest damage to the image of this country.**

A word on missionaries: they claim they brought "light" to this country. **Rabindranath Tagore** says: **they started fires.**

(source: **Image & image-makers of MEA - M. S. N. Menon** TribuneIndia 12/22/2001).

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Women in the Age of Imperialism NEW

"Until the females are raised by education as to hold their proper rank in society and until their hearts are brought under the influence of Christianity, there is little hope that the people of India will rise from idolatry and sin to the dignity and happiness of a Christian people."

– **American Mission Report**, Jaffna (1839-9-10).

Women believed, according to Hunter, that "Christianity was responsible for the elevated status of Western women" and that "in preaching the gospel they were only sharing what they had received in such bounty." This means that American women missionaries were moved to action by both **"the heinousness of heathen womanhood and gratitude for their own Christian womanhood."** Many had noted that such attitude were a kind of **"Imperial feminism"**

In both America and Britain, there, was a whole cult of missionary work, highlighting the "romance of missions." Women who were "doers" could fight oppressive conditions at home and boldly venture abroad to expose the "wrongs of women." Magazines, popular novels and poetry on women's work among "heathen" women abounded; there were journals like "The Heathen Women's Friend," "Helping Hand" and books such as Life and Light for Heathen Women were published by the Women's Board of Missions. Popular novelists also latched on to the theme of missionary adventure, introducing a new genre of daring missionary heroines in exotic settings fraught with dangers of various kinds. Emma Southworth (in Fair Play, 1868) created a character, Britomarte Conyers, whose main desire is to leave America and save other women. "Oh my sisters! My sisters!" she exclaims, "as Christ died to save the whole human race, so I would die for you."

In Britain, Priscilla Chapman wrote a book, Hindoo Female Education (1839), alerting her readers to **"the poor idolatrous females in bondage"** and wrote of "the necessity of an avowed Christian direction to the efforts which may affect the elevation of the Hindoo females from their present degradation to the proper level." And in 1878, Isabel Hart (of the

Baltimore Women's Foreign Missionary Society) described heathen women as "degraded, secluded and helpless" and reminded American women of their "responsibility and duty" to support missionary work.

Helen Montgomery writing of Western Women in Eastern Lands (1910) said: "Christianity was the most tremendous engine of democracy ever forged" and was "destined to break in pieces all castes, privileges, and oppression."

But missionaries had to also face the realities of rising nationalism in India and Sri Lanka. But the **tradition of the white man's and white woman's Christian burden** continued the belief, among many, that "premature independence for India would be….an abdication of the ordained exercise of Christian rule." A conservative member of parliament who opposed political reforms for India, which were being discussed in the early 1930s, wrote:

"…the whole ideal of British laws, justice, and administration….exactly interpret the Ten Commandements…our idea of government is the nearest approach to Christianity, and to exchange it for government which may lean towards…the worship of Shiva or Kali is…a "spiritual abdication."

"The holy church – now alas steering its malignant way through the Indian Ocean." - **W. B. Yeats** (around 1905), letter to Florence Farr.

(source: **The White Women's Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Rule - By Kumari Jayawardena** p. 24-32).

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Technology and Culture in India NEW

The reversal of the European image of Asia seems to have occurred, however, in a gradual period between 1780 and 1830, by which time the foundations of the industrial revolution in England had already been laid. **Voltaire** noticed a bit of it. **Having once considered India as "famous for its laws and sciences",** he felt it necessary to denounce the increasing preoccupations of Europeans in India with the amassing of "immense fortunes", and this led him to remark that "if the Indians had remained unknown to the Tartars and to us, they would have been the happiest people in the world."

By 1830, the British had acquired, in what was to become a completely European century, a flattering notion of the nature of their own civilization, and a thoroughgoing contempt for every other.

In India, itself, this new attitude found expression in the famous Minute of **Lord Macaulay** (1800-59) on the 2nd of February, 1835:

I have never found one amongst them (the Orientalists) who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia….It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgement used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same.

The next influential person on our list, **Karl Marx** (1818 - 1883), had his own theories about the role of the British industrial civilization in India. “England” he wrote, “has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating – the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia. He went on to emphasize how the British were breaking up the village community, uprooting handicraft industry, and establishing private property in land, which he termed “the great desideratum of Indian society”. Industrial life would wreck the caste system: “Modern industry, resulting from the railway system, will dissolve the hereditary divisions of labor, upon which rest the Indian castes, those decisive, impediments to Indian progress and Indian power.”

Here again, the remarkable fact is that a hundred years later, **Peter F Drucker** (1909 -) (the godfather of the global corporation) would still be theorizing along similar lines. In one of his not so well known books, **The Landmarks of Tomorrow**, he urged his readers to face “the new reality of the collapse of the East, that is, of non-Western culture and civilization, to the point where no viable society anywhere can be built except on Western foundations”. He based his pontification on the perception that: Every single one of the new countries in the world today – including those that have not yet shaken off colonial status – sees its goal in its transformation into a Western state, economy and society, and sees the means to achieve this goal in the theories, institutions, sciences, technologies and tools the West has developed.

And certainly no accurate description of non-Western human experience could ever have been possible with minds convinced, for example, that Western philosophy was the nearest approach to metaphysical truth ever attained by mankind, that the Christian religion contained truth incumbent upon all men everywhere to believe.

As **Dr. Joseph Needham** (1900-1995) put it, even European painting and sculpture had become “absolute” painting and sculpture, that “which artists of all cultures must have been trying unsuccessfully to attain”. European music was music, all other music, anthropology. **The study of white men, even, was a separate science called sociology: anthropology was for the rest.**

If Macaulay was one of the first to set out to prescribe how best, in his case Indians, might save their withered souls, he was also the virtual founder of a movement that would carry on his tradition to the present day.

(source: **Homo Faber: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West - By Claude Alphonso Alvares** p. 4 –6). For more on culture, refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture**).

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Conclusion

Macaulayism

Indian Marxism is only a passing phase in a much larger trend known as Macaulayism, named after the British administrator designed to create a class of people in Indian in skin color but British in every other respect. **"Macaulayites" are those Indians who have interiorized the colonial ideology of the "White Man's Burden" (as Rudyard Kipling called it in a famous poem): the Europeans had to come and liberate the natives, "half devil and half child", from their native culture, which consisted only of ignorance, superstition and the concomitant social evils;**

and after this liberation from themselves, these Indians became a kind of honorary Whites.

Macaulay's policy was implemented and became a resounding success. The pre-Macaulayan vernacular system of education was destroyed, even though British surveys had found it more effective and more democratic than the then-existing education system in Britain. The rivalling educationist party, the so-called Orientalists, had proposed a Sanskrit-based system of education, in which Indian graduates would not have been estranged from their mother civilization as they became through an English education....."

This is the continuance of, in a series the culmination of the Macaulay-Missionary technique. **The British calculated that to subjugate India and hold it, they must undermine the essence of the people: this was Hinduism, and everything which flowed from it. Hence the doggedness with which they set about to undermine the faith and regard of the people for five entities:**

- the gods and goddesses the Hindus revered;
- the temples and idols in which they were enshrined;
- the texts they held sacred;
- the language in which those texts and everything sacred in that tradition was enshrined and which was even in mid-19th century the lingua franca - that is, Sanskrit;
- and the group way of life - the Brahmins. The other component of the same exercise was to prop up the parts - the non-Hindus, the regional languages, the castes and groups which they calculated would be the most accessible to Missionaries and the Empire.



As **Ashish Nandy**, a Christian critic of old and new forms of colonialism, has observed: **"Schooling is the chosen instrument of alienation. The brightest children are snatched away from familiar surroundings to be introduced in schools based on Western model. When they leave, they speak the language of the colonizer and can no longer communicate with their own people."**

Persons no less than **Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekanada, Rabindranath Tagore** etc have called for a change in the teaching of history.

Mahatma Gandhi said “I find daily proof of the increasing and continuing wrong being done to the millions by our false **deindianising of education**. These graduates who are my valued associates flounder when they have to give expression to their innermost thoughts. They are strangers in their own homes. What is worse, even the swaraj for which we are struggling may become foreign in character when we finally get it.” His words were indeed prophetic

In spite of Islamic Onslaught and British Imperialism, our children should read what the **West Bengal's leftist government** is teaching kids. Refer to an extract from the, textbook for Class V**. “Islam and Christianity are the only religions which treated man with honor and equality..."**

Today the **Marxists** are in the same business of conversion. For their outlandish dreams to be realized it was just as essential that the people lose faith in, and regard for, that they cut themselves off from their roots. While our eminent historians try to belittle the achievements of Indian art and architecture in the ancient period - by insinuating that it was derived from other countries, by seeing in it only reflection of the life of the privileged classes - **Soviet historians** talk of the high standards the Indians attained in these spheres. They talk of high originality..."

(please refer to **Hindu Culture** for more on Soviet historians)

(source: **Eminent Historians - By Arun Shourie** Harper-Collins, New Delhi ISBN 8190019988 p. 193 -243 and **Decolonising The Hindu Mind - Ideological Development of Hindu Revivalism -**

By Koenraad Elst Publisher: Rupa ISBN: 81-7167-519-0 p. 25-26).

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Articles

The Early American Indologists

source:
http://www.gosai.com/chaitanya/saranagati/html/nmj_articles/east_west/east_west_5.html

The American Oriental Society, founded in 1842 though the study of Sanskrit itself, did not start in American universities until some years later. The first American Sanskrit scholar of any repute was Edward Elbridge Salisbury (1814-1901) who taught at Yale (Elihu Yale was himself ultimately connected with India and had profound respect for Vedic philosophy). Another early Sanskritist, Fitzedward Hall (1825-1901) was in the Harvard class of 1846 but left college to search for a runaway brother in-of all places-India, where he continued his studies of Indian languages and even became tutor and professor of Sanskrit at Banaras. He was the first American scholar to edit a Sanskrit text-the Vishnu Purana.

One of Salisbury's students at Yale, William Dwight Whitney (1827-1901) went on to become a distinguished Sanskritist in his own right having studied in Berlin under such distinguished German scholars as Bopp and Weber. Whitney became a full professor of Sanskrit language and literature at Yale in 1854, wrote his classic Sanskrit Grammar (1879) and was the doyen of Indologists of his period. Whitney was succeeded in the Chair of Sanskrit Studies of Yale by Edward Washburn Hopkins (1857-1932). Hopkins was an excellent scholar but made his name principally as an exponent of India's religions. His book The Religions of India (1895) was for many years one of the principal works on the subject available in America and his Origins and Evolution of Religion published in 1923, sold well.

With Yale leading the way, Harvard caught up and beginning with James Bradstreet Greenough (1833-1900), had a succession of great Sanskrit teachers, the most distinguished among them was Charles Rockwell Lanman who taught for over forty years, publishing such works as Sanskrit Reader and Beginnings of Hindu Pantheism. But his greatest contribution was planning and editing of the Harvard Oriental Series. In his time he was responsible for influencing such students of his who were later to achieve literary renown as T. S. Eliot, Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt. The tradition of American Indologists has been nobly kept up by those who followed: to mention only a few names, A. V. William Jackson, Franklin Edgerton, W. Norman Brown, and Joseph Campbell.

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Articles

1. **Western Response to Modern India** - **By D. P. Singhal**
2. **Indian Response to Modern Europe** - **By D. P. Singhal**
3. **Haunted by Macaulay's ghost** - **By Francois Gautier**



1.Western Response to Modern India

Excerpts from **India and World Civilization- By D. P. Singhal** pp- 268.

The growing influence of Indian thought in recent years has indeed frightened some Western religious writers, such as Hendrick Kraemmer (World Cultures and World Religions), who have designated it as the "Eastern invasion of the West". Perhaps excessive anxiety to defend the Western Christian traditions may have led Kraemer to over-rate Indian influence. But there are many European scholars who have denounced Indian thought in unmistakable terms. Whether response or resistance, admiration or denunciation, all are equally indicative of impact and stimulus.

In a limited way the migration of Indian labor to other countries provided yet another link between India and the outside world. Indian settlers began to move to other countries in 1830, mainly to work on British plantations. This made abolition of slavery commercially possible a few years later, when the notorious indenture system was introduced in the British Empire. According to estimate, twenty-eight million Indians migrated to various countries between 1834 and 1932.

An important social survey, carried out in Britain about some years ago, produced some surprising results. A quarter of all those who professed belief in an after-life- an eighth of the population-did not believe that this after-life would be eternal; eleven percent of the believers actually declared their faith in transmigration. This was "perhaps the most surprising single piece of information to be derived from this research". Belief in transmigration is a typically Indian doctrine and is contrary to the creeds of Europe and Western Asia.

Politically and intellectually it was inevitable that there should have been some reaction in Europe against an invasion of Indian learning. Reaction against alien ideas appears to be a common human irrationality. Certainly, the nature of political relationships and nationalistic pride understandably played a significant role. European nations generally were more receptive to Indian ideas during the early period of their relationship which was based on relative equality. But as European political, technological and economic supremacy over Asia came to be recognized, an attitude of superiority crept into the European – and particularly the British- outlook. The influence of political relationships on cultural intercourse is further illustrated by the fact that, once the British became overlords of India, Indian learning drew more sympathetic and imaginative understanding form other European countries than it did from the British.

The discovery of Indian thought by European scholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to an outburst of admiration and enthusiasm, mainly because they felt that Indian thought filled a need in their European culture. Neither Christianity nor the classical cultures of Greece and Rome were considered satisfactory any more and the European intelligentsia sought to apply the new knowledge, brought in increasingly by Indologists, to their own spiritual preoccupations.

It is significant that, with notable exceptions, India appears to have been most attractive to those Europeans who did not visit the country personally. In other words, Indian thought made a better impact on the European mind than did contemporary Indians.



Of all the European nations, **Germany**'s response to India was most enthusiastic and open hearted. Perhaps the similarity between the German and the Indian mind, in the sense that both are given to contemplation, abstract speculation, and pantheism, and both have a tendency towards formlessness, inwardness, and transcendentalism, contributed toward German understanding of Indian literature. **Leopold von Schroeder** says: "The Indians are the nation of romanticists of antiquity." The Germans are the romanticists of modern times". Sentimentality and feeling for nature are common to both German and Indian poetry, whereas they are foreign, for instance to Hebrew or Greek poetry. Another similarity is illustrated , by the Indian tendency to work scientific systems, India was the nation of scholars of antiquity, in the same way as the Germans are the nation of scholars of the modern times.


The **French** were not amongst the first Europeans to come into contact with India. But as soon, as French travelers, who are known for their literary taste, visited India and reported on their travels, French literary circles responded enthusiastically.


The British response to Indian learning was most mixed. Whilst India remained a trying political problem, she was a symbol of British power and achievement, as well as a major source of her economic wealth. Individual thinkers studied India closely and whilst some were fascinated, others were repelled. Often the political expedience-for instance the need to justify domination of India to the British public-British administrators were compelled to interpret Indian culture as degenerate and decadent.

Another barrier between Indian and British cultural co-operation was the Englishmen working in India. The early administrators were indifferent to anything except trade and profits; the later ones, after 1830, suffered from a sense of cultural inferiority, which compounded with political superiority, manifested itself in self-righteousness, prejudices, and arrogance. They often came to India for only a few years, invariably lived an exclusive life, and returned home to condemn Indian culture and traditions with gusto.

Their callous indifference to Indian art is well reflected by the fact that the liberal William Bentinck, who initiated social reforms in India, seriously considered the possibility of dismantling the Taj Mahal and selling the marble to meet the shortage of money in the Company's treasury. He was prevented because "the test auction of materials from the Agra palace proved unsatisfactory."

Fed on Macaulay, Mutiny, and Kipling, the English, no wonder, did not appreciate India.

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2. Indian Response to Modern Europe

Excerpts from **"India and World Civilization" - By D. P.Singhal** - Chapter VII pp- 273.



Whilst Europe sought ancient Indian learning, India focused her attention on modern European knowledge. In this cultural encounter, initiative remained for the most part with Europe, for she was a young developing society with an inquisitive mind and the material resources to obtain easy access to what she fancied. In contrast, Indians even if they knew what they needed, could not get at it at will.

Western tradition is a highly generalized, extremely vague, and ill-defined concept that is often stretched to include or exclude anything at will to suit the purpose in hand. It is not a unitary system of thought, nor has it an unbroken historical continuity. There are deep controversies as to its exact nature and value, and it is a complex of diverse, even contradictory, ideologies and traditions. For instance, it is equally proud of the imprints of early Greek and Christian traditions which were relentlessly opposed to each other.

Even a casual investigation reveals the inherent contradictions of Western traditions. Western tradition is often characterized as one of material progress and scientific advancement, yet Christian mystical thought is superbly well developed, and until recently science was positively denounced in the Christian West. In most

respects scientific inquiry was much more highly developed in the Hellenistic period than it was in mediaeval Europe. In fact, exactly why Hellenistic science declined needs an explanation. Again, it is repeatedly pointed out that Western tradition stems from the enlargement of individual liberties, and that individual liberty is the essence of Western civilization. Some Western scholars go even much farther and assert that the West has regarded " a denial of freedom as a denial of the value of the individual and therefore as a sin against the soul of man."



Yet it is not possible to completely ignore the Western institutions of slavery, feudalism, colonialism, and imperialism and racism. Western liberalism, of which the West can be justly proud , was born in the seventeenth century as a reaction against the violence and hatred that had prevailed during the almost unbelievably atrocious religious wars. But even since then, liberalism has not remained unchallenged in the West. Indeed, totalitarianism and suppression of freedom of thought and person appear to be the unbroken trend of a Western tradition that can claim most of the famous despots of world history, including Alexander, Julius Ceasar, Nero, Napoleon, Hitler, and Mussolini. This fact is even more startling when these dictators and conquerors are contrasted with the prophets of non-violence and peace, such as Gautama Buddha, Asoka, and Mahatma Gandhi, who were all born in Asia. Even the divine rights of kings, found far more serious advocates amongst Western monarchs- the Greek Alexander, the Roman Ceasars, Russians Czars, French Bourbons, and British Stuarts. It is true that the Western world has continuously fought for liberty, but this only serves to illustrate the existence of anti-freedom forces and a totalitarian current in Western tradition.

Again, it cannot be claimed, as it is often done, that the rise of Christianity did much to improve the position of the individual, for religious persecution has been a common feature of Western Christianity. The once persecuted Christians, having gained power, themselves became persecutors. The terrible struggles between Church and State were not fought for individual, or even religious freedom; the Church sought to compel the secular powers to serve its own purposes. Any individual who did not subscribe to the Church's belief was at once denounced as a heretic. Crusades and religious wars of extermination were often as bloody as Hitler's slaughter of the Jews and Gypsies.

The Church even persecuted the mediaeval minstrels and Gypsies because they loved freedom.



Christianity, which is in practice a unique combination of beliefs and clergy, whilst owing its religion to Jesus and his early Asian disciples, is, in strict ecclesiastical hierarchy, an essential Western movement. Whatever may have been the value of the Church in religious practice, it has inhibited freedom of thought and individual liberty by relentlessly enforcing its presuppositions as eternal truths. It is the Church which sets moral standards for the individual and prescribes his belief. The organization of the Church is unparalleled in history. No federation of states has been as comprehensive and universal in taking hold of the minds of people, and no monarch or dictator has been given the complete and willing obedience of such a wide and vast body of peoples, as has the Church.
The Islamic Caliphate and the Buddhist monasticism were, in this respect, no way comparable to the Christian Church.

Communism, with all its scientific reason, humanism, and economic equality, is essentially a totalitarian doctrine, negating individual liberty, and is a typical, almost, exclusive Western concept. Communism stresses the primary of reason, but like a missionary religion, it has a sense of its own infallibility and an obligation to world-wide expansion. Its greatest exponents have mainly been Western or Western-trained.

Even the British thought, which was more directly and closely linked with India than that of other European countries, had its own inner conflicts and contradictions in respect to India, ranging from

Edmund Burke's liberalism and John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism to John Bright's radicalism.

Burke desired India to stay Indian; in fact, he was rather anxious to reform the disreputable English trustees in India. He strongly condemned the facile and much used aspersion of "Oriental Despotism" and warned his countrymen against passing judgment upon a people, for ages civilized and cultivated, who formed their own laws and institutions prior to "our insect origins of yesterday." The Utilitarians and Evangelicals, on the contrary, saw little good in Indian society and desired to Westernize it completely by denying individual liberty to the Indian. The Utilitarians, whilst not denying the abstract right to liberty, could see no alternative to a benevolent British despotism in India, conducted from London. India exposed Utilitarianism's paradox between its principle of liberty and that of authority. The Evangelicals' viewpoint was religious; they believed that only through Christianity could temporal welfare and spiritual salvation be achieved. Hence, they looked upon the British conquest of India as a divine act to redeem themselves from their depraved system of superstition. Thus they sought the rapid conversion of the peoples of India to Christian ways, as interpreted by Western clergy. If Utilitarianism provided a justification and a practical basis for British imperial rule in India, Evangelicalism gave it a sense of urgency and intense zeal.



Whilst the 17th century marked the zenith of India's mediaeval glory, the 18th century was a spectacle of corruption, misery, and chaos. The glory of the Mughals had vanished, life had become insecure, the nobility was deceitful and oppressive, and intellectual curiosity had given way to superstitious beliefs. The country was in a state of military and political helplessness. In this atmosphere, literature, art and culture could barely survive. The malaise of India was aggravated in full measure by the East India Company with its indiscriminate exploitation, corruption and bribery.

In contrast, Europe was robust and vigorous. This was the Age of Enlightenment, and Europeans were going through a process of rebirth during which religion was detached from state, alchemy from science, theology from philosophy, and divinity from art. The impact of Western culture on India was that of a dynamic society on a static one. It is a cruel irony of history, that whilst two major revolutions – the French and the American-upholding the human rights to liberty and equality were taking place in the West, India was in the throes of losing her own freedom to Western mercantile imperialism.

" The British domination of India has been described as a "political and economic misfortune."

In 1937, a distinguished British civil servant, **G. T. Garratt, declared that the period of Indo-British civilization of the 150 years had been most disappointing, and "in some ways the most sterile in Indian history."**

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Haunted by Macaulay's ghost
By Francois Gautier -Publication: Organiser
Date: November 29, 1998
http://www.hvk.org/hvk/articles/articles/1298/0023.html

As a foreign journalist, one cannot understand all the excessive noise made about the Education Agenda of Murli Manohar Joshi: What is wrong in trying to "Indianise, nationalise and spiritualise" education in India? Joshi's critics-and there have been many-have called it "a hidden Hindu agenda". So what?



With 800 million souls, Hindus constitute the majority of this country. Why should Hindus then be ashamed of a "Hindu education"? Traditionally and historically, Hinduism has always been the most tolerant of all religions, allowing persecuted minorities from all over the world, whether the Jerusalem Jews, the Parsis from Persia, Christians from Syria, or even Arab merchants, to settle in India over the centuries and practice their religion in peace. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of India's invader, be they Muslims, who ruthlessly tried for 10 centuries to stamp out this most peaceful of all religions; or the Christians missionaries, who used every means at their disposal to convert Hindus to the “true” religion (and are still trying today).

But Hinduism, never tried to convert anybody, never sent its armies or missionaries to neighbouring countries, to impose its religion and ways of life-not even by non-violence means, as the Buddhists did all over Asia. It should also be said that Hinduism is much more than a religion, it's a way of life, a universal spiritual outlook, which has allowed numerous sects, branches, philosophies, to develop within its fold, as long as they were faithful to the central truth of Hinduism: Dharma. It even recognises the truth and validity of other creeds-and it's perfectly normal for a Hindu to have pictures of Guru Govind, Christ, Buddha and Krishna in their homes. For are they not avatars? And is that not true secularism (and not the .opportunistic secularism of India’s politicians, which has divided India along caste and religious lines)?



Then why should Hindus not be proud of Hinduism? It has not only shaped the psyches of Hindus, but also of Indian Christians, Jains, Parsis, even Muslims, who are like no other Muslims in the world. And why should Indians be ashamed of their own civilisation whose greatness was foremost Hindu? Why should they refuse to have their children read the Vedas, which constitute one of the great Mountains of spiritual wisdom, or the Bhagavad Gita, which contains all the secrets of eternal life? Or the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which teach the great values of human nature: courage, selflessness, spiritual endeavour, love of one’s wife and neighbours. ...

Are the French ashamed of their Greeco-Roman inheritance? Not at all! On the contrary they even think that civilization started with the Greeks. Would you call the Germans or the Italians “nationalists" because they have Christian Democrats Parties? Christianity is the founding stone of Western civilisation and nobody dares deny it. Clinton goes to the mass and swears on the Bible and none finds anything to say. We French are brought-up
listening to the values of Homer's Iliad, or Corneille's Le Cid. It is true that in France there has been a separation of the State and the Church; but that is because at one time the Church misused its enormous political power and grabbed enormous amounts of lands and gold. But no such thing ever happened in India. The Brahmins never interfered in politics and today they are often a neglected lot.



When they took over India, the British set about establishing an intermediary race of Indians, whom they could entrust with their work at the middle level echelons and who could one day be convenient instruments to rule by proxy or semi-proxy. The tool to shape these "British clones" was Education. In the words of Macaulay, the 'Pope' of British schooling in India: "We must at present do our best to form a class, who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions in morals and in intellects". Macaulay had very little regard for Hindu culture

and education: "All the historical information which can be collected from all the books which have been written in the Sanskrit language, is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgement used at preparatory schools in England".

It seems today that India's Marxist and Muslim intelligentsia could not agree more with Macaulay or with Charles Grant. For the dream of Macaulay has come true: Nowadays, the greatest adversaries of the "Indianised and spiritualised education" of Joshi, are the descendants of these "**Brown Sahibs'** the "secular" politicians, the journalists, the top bureaucrats, in fact the whole Westernised cream of India. And what is even more paradoxical, is that most of them are Hindus. It is they who upon getting independence, have denied India its true identity and borrowed blindly from the British education system, without trying to adapt it to the unique Indian mentality and psychology; and it is they who are refusing to accept "an Indianisation, nationalisation and spiritualisation" of India's education system, which is totally western-oriented. And what India is getting from this education is a youth which apes the West.

But then, what does makes Indian unique? Take the proposal of Joshi to make Sanskrit compulsory in school. Great idea! Sanskrit is the mother of all languages, and it could become the unifying language of India, apart from. English, which is spoken only, by a tiny minority. "Sanskrit. ought still to have a future as the language of the learned and it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongues cease entirely to be written or spoken", admonished 50 years ago Sri Aurobindo, India's great Sage and Seer.

A dead language, you say! Impossible to revive? But that's what they argued about Hebrew. And did not the Jewish people, when they got back their land in 1948, revive their "dead" language, so that it is spoken today by all Jewish people and has become alive again? The same thing ought to be done with Sanskrit. Let the scholars begin now to revive and modernize the Sanskrit language, it would be a sure sign of the dawning of the Renaissance of India. In a few years it should be taught as the second language in schools throughout the country, with the regional language as the first and English as the third. Then will India again have its own unifying language.



The Ministers walked out when the Saraswati Vandanam was played. But why should anyone object to Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning who bestowed so much grace on India. In 1939, a disciple told Sri Aurobindo that: "there are some people who object to singing of Vande Mataram as a national song; Sri Aurobindo had replied; "in that case Hindus should give up their culture". But the disciple had continued: "the argument is that the song speaks of Hindu- gods, like Durga and that it is offensive to Muslims". Said Sri Aurobindo: "but it is not a religious song, it is a national song and the Durga spoken of is India as the Mother. Why should not the Muslims accept it? In the Indian concept of nationality, the Hindu view should be naturally there. If it cannot find a place, the Hindus may as well be asked to give-up their culture. The Hindus don't object to "Allah-Ho-Akbar".

It is then obvious that Education in India has to be. totally revamped. The kind of Westernised education which is standard in India, does have its place, because India wants to be on par with the rest of the world, and Indian youth should be able to deal confidently with the West: do business, talk, and relate to a universal world culture. But nevertheless, the first thing that Indian children should be taught is the greatness of their own culture. They should learn to revere the Vedas, they should be taught the genius of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, they should be told that in this country everything has been done, that it was an unsurpassed civilisation, when the West was still mumbling its first words, that Indian civilisation reached heights, which have been since unsurpassed. But they should be taught early that India's greatness is her spirituality her world-wide wisdom. India’s new education has to be spiritualised, it has to be an inner education, which teaches to look at things from the inner prism, not through the western artificial looking glass.

India's Dharma, her eternal quest for truth, should be drilled in the child from an early age. And from this firm base, everything then can be taught - from the most modem forms of mathematics, to

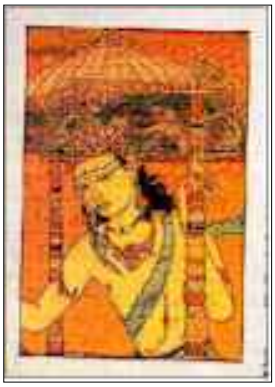
the latest scientific technologies.

(The author is correspondent in South Asia of Le Figaro, France's largest circulated newspaper)
(The Hindustan Times, 8-11-1998)

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Did You Know?

Much of Modern Medicine can be traced to the Hindu surgeon, Sushruta, circa 600 BCE.



Best known for plastic surgery, his other notable achievements include cosmetic surgery, treatises on medical ethics, definitions, for 121 surgical implements, control of infection through antiseptics, use of drugs, to control bleeding, toxicology, psychiatry, midwifery, cataract operations and classifications of burns. And if all this weren't enough, Sushruta was among the first to prescribe surgical anesthesia - which in his day was a healthy dose of strong wine!

For more on medicine, please refer to chapter on **Hindu Culture**).

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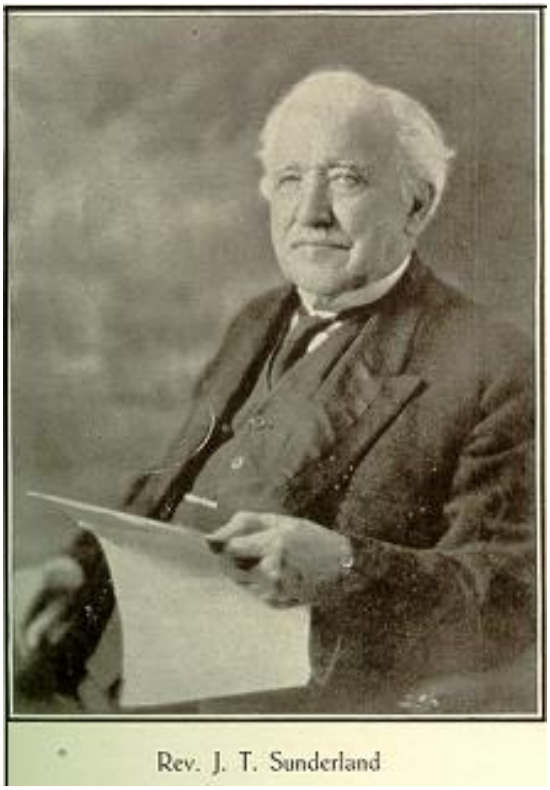
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Show in alphabetical order

221. **Rev. Jabez T. Sunderland** (1842-1936) American born, former President of the India Information Bureau of America and Editor of Young India (New York). Author of **India, America and World Brotherhood**, and **Causes of Famine in India**. He has written glowingly about India's culture:

"India is a highly civilized nation - a nation which **developed a rich culture much earlier than any nation of Europe, and has never lost it."**

India was the first and only nation that proved too powerful for Alexander the Great. It was India that stopped his advance and compelled him to turn back in his career of world conquest. India was the richest nation in the world until conquered and robbed of her wealth by Great Britain.


Rev. J. T. Sunderland

India gave to the world two out of six of its greatest Historic religions. Of the six greatest Epic Poems of the world India produced two. India gave to mankind - **Kalidasa**. India contributed enormously to the origin and advancement of Civilization by giving to the world its immensely important decimal system, or so-called "Arabic Notation" which is the foundation of modern mathematics and much modern science.

India early created the beginning of nearly all of the sciences, some of which she carried forward to remarkable degrees of development, thus leading the world. India has produced great literature, great arts, great philosophical systems, great religions, and great men in every department of life - rulers, statesmen, financiers, scholars, poets, generals, colonizers, ship-builders, skilled artisans and craftsmen of every kind, agriculturists, industrial organizers and leaders in far-reaching trade and commerce by land and sea.

For 2,500 years India was pre-eminently the intellectual and spiritual teacher of Asia, which means of half the human race.

"When the British first appeared on the scene, India was one of the richest countries of the world; indeed, it was her great riches that attracted the British to her shores. For 2,500 years before the British came on the scene and robbed her of her freedom, India was self-ruling and one of the most influential and illustrious nations of the world."

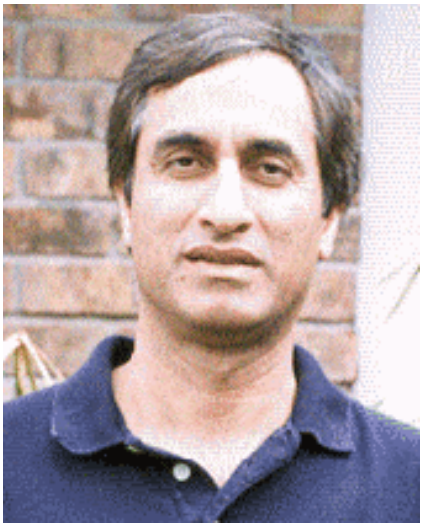
"This wealth, was created by the Hindus' vast and varied industries. Nearly every kind of manufacture or product known to the civilized world – nearly every kind of creation of Man's brain and hand, existing anywhere, and prized either for its utility or beauty – had long, long been produced in India. India was a far greater industrial and manufacturing nation than any in Europe or than any other in Asia. Her textile goods – the fine products of her loom, in cotton, wool, linen, and silk – were famous over the civilized world; so were her exquisite jewelry and her precious stones, cut in every lovely form; so were her pottery, porcelains, ceramics of every kind, quality, color and beautiful shape; so were her fine works in metal – iron, steel, silver and gold. She had great architecture – equal in beauty to any in the world. She had great engineering works. She had great merchants, great business men, great bankers and financiers. **Not only was she the greatest**

ship-building nation, but she had great commerce and trade by land and sea which extended to all known civilized countries. Such was the India which the British found when they came."

"The fact is, not Europe but Asia seems to have been the cradle of political liberty, the cradle of democratic and republican government, in the world...research makes it clear that the democratic and republican institutions of Europe and America actually send their roots back to Asia, and especially to India. Republics actually existed in India at least as early as the days of the Buddha (6th century before Christ). The republican form of government in ancient India had a duration of at least a thousand years. We have records of no other country, ancient or modern, where republics have existed and continued for so long a period. Even more important than her republics has been the spirit of freedom and democracy which has manifested itself in many forms among the Indian people from the earliest ages. The **Vedas** show that the principle of representative government were held by the ancient Aryans 12-13 centuries before the Christian era."

(source: **India in Bondage: Her Right to Freedom - By Rev. Jabez T. Sunderland** p.1- 61 and 196 -197).

222. **Dr. Subhash Kak** (1949 -) is a widely known scientist and a Indic scholar. Currently a Professor at Louisiana State University, he has authored ten books and more than 200 research papers in the fields of information theory, quantum mechanics, and Indic studies. He is a Sanskrit scholar and is author of **Astronomical Code of the Rig Veda**, and **India at Century's End: Essays on History and Politics**. He has observed:



"India has had cultural continuity for at least 10,000 years. Before that we had a rock-art tradition which, according to some estimates, goes back to 40,000 BCE. Not only are we one of the most ancient civilizations, we have found in India the record of the earliest astronomy, geometry, mathematics, and medicine. Artistic, philosophical and religious impulses, central to the history of mankind, arose first in India.

Vedic Indians were scientific. They believed in laws of nature. They represented their astronomy in terms of the altar constructions. One problem they considered was that of the synchronization of the lunar and the solar years: the lunar year is about 11 days shorter than the solar year and if we add a round number of days every few years to make up for the discrepancy, we find we cannot do it elegantly unless we have a correction cycle of 95 years or its multiples. This 95-year cycle is described in the earliest Vedic prose books.

The altars were to be built to slightly larger dimensions each year of the cycle to represent the corrections. There were other symbolic constructions. Like building a square altar (representing the sky) with the same area as a circular altar (representing the earth), which is the problem of squaring the circle. This led to the discovery of the earliest geometry. They were aware that the sun and the moon were at 108 times their own diameters from the earth."

" Our school books talk about Socrates, Plato and Aristotle -- and rightly so -- but they don't mention **Yajnavalkya, Panini and Patanjali, which is a grave omission.** Our grand boulevards in Delhi and other cities are named after Copernicus, Kepler and Newton, but there are no memorials to **Aryabhata, Bhaskara, Madhava and Nilakantha!"**

"For at least 50 years, **Indian intellectual life was stifled by a Stalinist attitude.** And before that, for two centuries, colonialist historians appropriated Indian past for their own purposes. **What they left for us was a mutilated version of our past.** We are barely emerging from that hell."

(source: **rediff.com interview** - For more on Astronomical Code refer to chapter on **India and Egypt**).

223. **Lord Curzon** (1859-1925) the late Viceroy of India, in an address delivered at the great Delhi Durbar in 1901:



"Powerful Empires existed and flourished here [in India] while Englishmen were still wandering painted in the woods, and while the British Colonies were a wilderness and a jungle.

India has left a deeper mark upon the history, the philosophy, and the religion of mankind, than any other terrestrial unit in the universe."

It is such a land that England has conquered and is holding as a dependency. It is such a people that she is ruling without giving them any voice whatever in the shaping of their own destiny.

(source: **India in Bondage: Her Right to Freedom - By Jabez T. Sunderland** p. 7 and source: **theatlantic.com**).

224. **Yaqubi** the 9th century Muslim historian has written:

"The Hindus are superior to all other nations in intelligence and thoughtfulness. They are more exact in astronomy and astrology than any other people.

The Siddhanta is a good proof of their intellectual powers; by this book the Greeks and Persians have also profited. In medicine their opinion ranks first."

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisirkumar Mitra** p. 226).

225. **Harvey Cox** (1929 -) of the Harvard Divinity School remarks,



”I agree that the quest for Truth is the quest for God. This is the core teaching of all religions. The Scientist’s motivation is to seek the very kind of truth that **Krishna speaks about in the Bhagavad Gita. I also agree that the word Religion is an invention of modern western thought.”**

(source: **The Lost City of Dvaraka - S. R. Rao** p. 2).

226. **L. Adams Beck** (? - 1931) author of **The splendour of Asia : the story and teaching of the Buddha** and **The Story of Oriental Philosophy** writes:

India has had a spiritual freedom never known until lately to the West. Christianity when it came offering its spiritual philosophy of life imposed an iron dogma upon the European peoples. Those who could not accept this dogma, whatever it happened to be at the moment, paid so heavy a penalty that the legend of the Car of Juggernaut (Jagarnath) is far truer of Europe than Asia.

Whereas in India the soul was free from the beginning to choose what it would, ranging from the dry bread of atheism to the banquets offered by many-colored passionate gods and goddesses, each shadowing forth some different aspect of the One whom in the inmost chambers of her heart India has always adored. Therefore the spiritual outlook was universal. Each took un rebuked what he needed. The children were at home in the house of their father, while Europe crouched under the lash of a capricious Deity whose ways were beyond all understanding.

But while India fixed her eyes on the Ultimate she did not forget that objective science in the beginning of wisdom. In India, in relation to this consciousness, all roads lead home. A prayer daily repeated by millions says: "As different streams, having different sources and with wanderings crooked or straight, all reach the sea, so Lord, the different paths which men take, guided by their different tendencies, all lead to Thee."



There the foundation of mathematical and mechanical knowledge were well and truly laid by the Noble Race. **Here, written two thousand years before the birth of Copernicus, is an interesting passage from the Aitareya Brhamana**:

“The sun never sets or rises. When people think the sun is setting he only changes about after reaching the end of the day and makes night below and day to what is on the other side. Then, when people think he rises in the morning, he only shifts himself about after reaching the end of the night, and makes day below and night to what is on the other side. In truth, he does not set at all.”

It is interesting to wonder along what lines the philosophies of this great race might have developed later if its ancestral heritage had been less diffused and intermingled with other such different stocks as it found in India on arrival, or were forced by many invasions and conquests to accept later.

Regarding the **Mahabharata** and **Bhagavad Gita**, he writes:

"I read almost daily in both, marveling at the vast fertility, the tropic splendor of romance unfolded in either, but still more at the nobility of ideals set forth, the great passion for the Unseen, the Beautiful, and Entirely Desirable, both in man and woman, which has always been the soul of India."

"The **Bhagavad Gita** is known as the Lord's Song - or the Song Celestial - and **it represents one of the highest flights of the conditioned spirit to its unconditioned Source ever achieved."**

(source: **The Story of Oriental Philosophy - By L. Adams Beck** p. 10 - 120).

227. **Father Heras** (1885-1955) was a Spanish Jesuit priest who worked in India and was a celebrated Professor of History in Bombay. He wrote in **Studies in Proto-Indo-Mediterranean Culture**:

"India has not changed much in the course of ages. Invasions have taken place, wars have been waged in her vast plains, new nations and races have conquered the land and ruled over it, foreign civilizations have brought new notions and new ideals; but everybody and everything has been remodeled and reshaped and recast by the influence of the Indian nation and its ancient civilization. The ancient civilization of Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria have been blotted out from the map of the world. **But that of India, the first lights of which have been discovered in modern times along the banks of the Indus, is still alive...."**

(source: **East and West - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 19).



228. **Friedrich Creuzer** (1771-1858) German philologist and archaeologist, was born at Marburg, the son of a bookbinder. In 1802 he was appointed professor at Marburg, and two years later professor of philology and ancient history at Heidelberg. Creuzer's first and most famous work was his **Symbolik und Mythologie der allen VOlker**. He says:

"If there is a country on earth which can justly claim the honor of having been the cradle of the human race or at least the scene of primitive claim the honor of having been the cradle of the human race or at least the scene of primitive civilization, the successive developments of which carried into all parts of the ancient world and even beyond, the blessings of knowledge which is the second life of man, **that country assuredly is India."**

(source: **India: Mother Of Us All - By Chaman Lal** p. 24).

229. **Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren** (1760-1842) an Egyptologist has observed:

"India is the source from which not only the rest of Asia but the whole Western World derived their knowledge and their religion."

"The literature of the Sanskrit literature incontestably belongs to a highly cultivated people, whom we may with great reason consider to have been the most informed of all the East. It is, at the same time, a scientific and poetic literature.

(source: **Historical researches into the politics, intercourse, and trade of the Carthaginians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians - By A. H. Heeren** Vol. II p. 201).

"India is the source from which not only the rest of Asia but the whole western world derived their knowledge and religion."

(source: **Yoga: A Vision of its Future - By Gopi Krishna** p. 119).

"The literature of the Hindus is rich in epic poetry." "It will scarcely be possible to deny the Mahabharata to be one of the richest compositions in Epic poetry that was ever produced." "The Hindu lyric surpassed that of the Greeks in admitting both the rhyme and blank verse."

(source: **Historical researches into the politics, intercourse, and trade of the Carthaginians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians - By A. H. Heeren** p. 45).

"If we compare the mythology of the Hindus with that of the Greeks, it will have nothing to apprehend on the score of intrinsic copiousness. In point of aesthetic value, it is sometimes superior, at others, inferior to Greek: while in luxuriance and splendor it has the decided advantage. Olympus, with all its family of gods and goddesses, must yield in pomp and majesty to the palaces of Vishnu and Indra." The Hindu Mythology like the sublime compositions of Milton and Klopstock, extends its poetic flight far into the regions of unlimited space."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - Har Bilas Sarda** p. 244).



230. **Richard Wagner** (1813 -1883) German composer, known for his 13 operas

Wagner absorbed Indian ideas and transformed them to suit his aesthetic purpose. They appear in the libretti of such operas as **Parsifal** (1882), in which he used an episode from the great epic of the **Ramayana** (c.400 BC). In a sense, he succeeded in producing a synthesis of East and West, and from it derived the materials of a universal drama. In this, he was in a direct line from the early German romantics.

(source: **British India: 1772-1947 - By Michael Edwardes** p. 306).

231. **Carl Suneson** author of **Richard Wagner och den indiska tankevärlden** has said: "Parsifal" is in my opinion, of Wagner's completed music-dramas, that in which the Indian influence is most demonstrable.

(source: **Richard Wagner Und Die Indische Geisteswelt - By Carl Suneson**).

232. **Flavius Arrian** (2nd century) Greek historian of the campaigns of Alexander, wrote of the **Hindus**:

"They are remarkably brave, and superior in war to all Asiatics; they are remarkable for integrity; they are so reasonable as seldom to have recourse to law suits, and so honest as to require neither locks to their doors nor writings to bind their agreements. They are in the highest degree truthful."

(source: **India in Bondage: Her Right to Freedom - By Rev. Jabez T. Sunderland** p. 178).

233 **Swami Abhedananda** (1866-1939) in his book, **India and her people** Kessinger Publishing Company February 1998 ISBN 076610186X writes:



"Hinduism stands like a huge banian tree spreading its far reaching branches over hundreds of sects, creed and denomination and covering with innumerable leaves, all forms of worship, the dualistic, the qualified non-dualistic and monistic worship of the one Supreme God, the worship, of the Incarnation of God and also hero worship, saint worship, ancestor worship and the worship of the departed spirit. It is based on the grand idea of universal receptivity. It receives everything."

(source: **Ancient Indian Culture At A Glance - By Swami Tattwananda** p. 50).

234. **John Davies** (? -1890) author of **Hindu philosophy** has written:

"The latest German philosophy, the system of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, is mainly a reproduction of the philosophic system of Kapila in its materialistic part, presented in a more elaborate form but on the same fundamental lines. In this respect the human intellect has gone over the same ground, that it occupied more than two thousand years ago; but on a more important question it has taken a step in retreat. Kaipila recognized fully the existence of a soul in man, forring indeed his proper nature - the absolute ego of Fichte - distinct from matter and immortal; our latest philosophy, both here and in Germany, can see in man only a highly developed physical organization. 'All external things' says Kapila 'were formed that the soul might know itself and be free.' "The study of psychology is vain says, Schopenhauer, "for there is no Psyche."

(source: **Hindu Philosophy: The Sânkhya Kârikâ of Îúwara Krishna. An Exposition of the System of Kapila - By John Davies** Elibron Classics reprint. Paperback. New. Based on 1881 edition by TrLbner & Co., London - in preface).

"Scythianus was a contemporary of the Apostles, and was engaged as a merchant in the Indian trade. In the course of his traffic he often visited India and made himself **acquainted with Hindu philosophy.** According to Epiphanius and Cyril, he wrote a book in four parts, which they affirm to be the source from which the Manichaean doctrines were derived."

(source: **Bhagwad Gita - by John Davies** p. 196 and **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 282).



235. **Guillaume Apollinaire** (1880-1918) French poet, novelist, dramatist, and art and literary critic. He became a leader of the avant-garde in Paris in the early 20th century and is believed to have coined the term surrealist. He was christened Wilhelm Apollinaris de Kostrowitzky.

He used the **Shakuntala** theme in his poem in **La Chanson du Mal-Aime**:

" L'époux royal de Sacontale
Las de vaincre se réjouit
Quand il la retrouva plus pâle
D'attente et d'amour yeux pâlis
Caressant sa gazelle mâle."

"The royal spouse of Sacontale
(Shakuntala)
Weary of victories, rejoices
When he finds her paler
From waiting and eyes pale from love,
Petting her male gazelle."

(source: **The India I Love - By Marie-Simone Renou** p. 45-46).

236. **Dr. Aidan Rankin** author of **Lifting the shadow : why Conservatives must reclaim human rights** and was a Research Fellow in Government at the London School of Economics and editor of the Britain's leading environmental magazine, the Ecologist has written:

"Hinduism, whose **rishis** or seers the Greeks admired from afar, provides the strongest, most consistent critique of materialism. It is the philosophical tradition best adapted to our post-modern age.

"...Hinduism, offers true universalism, that is to say unity-in-diversity. In the Hindu dharma, the individual can approach the divine in his or her own way. The eternal truth is the same truth, but can be pursued by different means, according to personal or cultural preference. Hindu economics is based on local production for local need, a principle to which the green movement now looks. Rooted in Hindu philosophy it offers a humane alternative to the failed socialist planning of Nehru - and the ascendant Coco Cola capitalism, the iniquities of which become more apparent every day. Similarly, the ethical teachings of the **Vedas** provide for a healthy balance between masculine and feminine principles, to the advantage of both and the detriment of neither. Above superficial ' rights' for individuals or groups, Vedic teaching exalts our responsibilities - for each other, as human beings, and to our fellow creatures who have souls as we do. **Hinduism gives spiritual underpinnings to the new wisdom of Deep Ecology and the revelations of modern science."**

"Hinduism has survived its historical tribulations and is finding a new voice in world affairs."

(source: **Hinduism and the Clash of Civilizations - By David Frawley** p. foreword vi -x).

237. **Percy B Shelley** (1792-1822) English Romantic poet who rebelled against English politics and conservative



values. His pantheism is full of unconscious reminiscences of Hindu thought, which reached them through the medium of Neoplatonism. Sir William Jones was also a strong influence on Shelley, as was Southey's "The Curse of Kehama." Indeed, Jones served as a "catalyst" for Shelley's thought. Shelley used Indian imagery throughout **Prometheus Unbound**, and John M L Drew, author of **India and the Romantic Imagination**, thinks that particularly in the final act one can discern Shelley's acceptance of Jones's optimism that India was the primeval fount of wisdom and understanding.

Similar to the Yugas and the cosmic cycles in Hinduism, he wrote in his poem - Worlds on worlds are rolling ever

"Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river
Sparkling, bursting, borne away."

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction By T. C. Galav** Universal Science-Religion. ISBN: 0964237709 p 91).

Nowhere is the **Vedantic doctrine of Maya** more magnificently propounded than in **Adonais**:

"The One remains, the many change and pass,
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly,
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stain the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments."

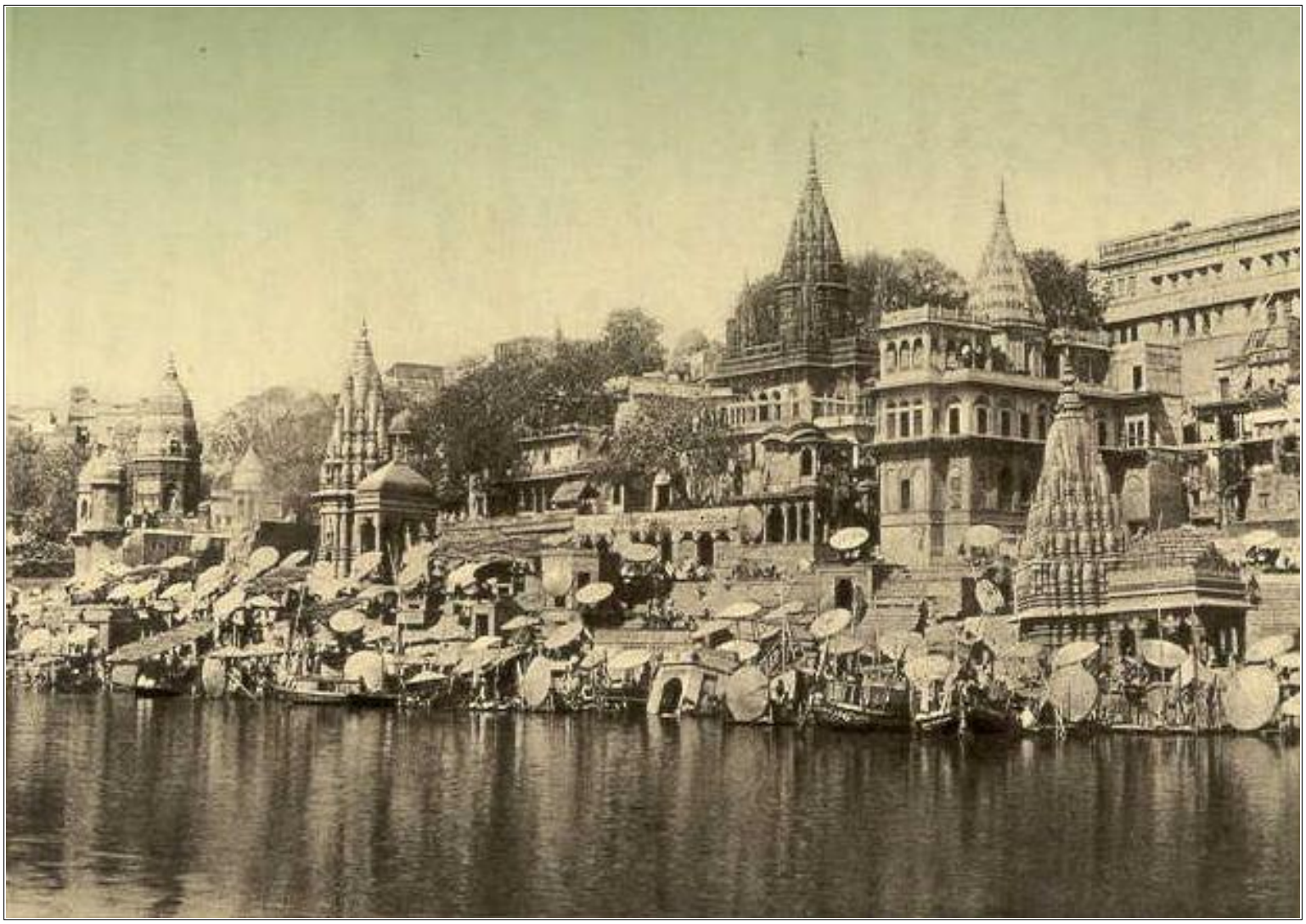
Even more striking is Shelley's passionate conviction that Adonais has found that final absorption which in **Hindu philosophy is the end of the Quest.** He is not dead: he has 'awakened from the dream of Life.' He is 'made one with Nature':

(source: **The Legacy of India - Edited by G. T. Garrett.** p. 33-34).

238. **Kenneth Saunders** (1883-1937) author of **The Heritage of Asia** has written:

"India is not only a mother of civilization, she is pre-eminently a spiritual mother of Asia. Her arts - noble architecture, fresco painting, sculpture, chamber-music and poetry - these have in India been handmaiden of religion. And this is no less true of her poetry from the rich anthology of the Rig Veda and the Great Epics to the lyrics of Rabindranath Tagore, the best of which are hymns. The tradition, too, of her education, from the university of Nalanda, where ten thousand students sat at the feet of religious teachers, to the guru seated under a tree with his handful of disciples, has been pre-eminently religious. India, in a word, is a God-intoxicated country; and her philosophy, which has in many ways and by many centuries anticipated the systems of European thought, is for the most part a religious philosophy; it deals with the One behind the many, the Real behind the illusory, and is perhaps **man's most courageous attempt to reach an ultimate unity.**

The essential **unity of ancient India** may be sufficiently demonstrated for our purpose by two facts. Firstly, her sacred places are known and visited by all; they are a common heritage, and a network of pilgrim-roads links them one with another. "The institution of pilgrimage," says a Hindu writer, "is entirely an expression of love for the motherland, one of the modes of worship of the country which strengthens the religious sentiment and expands the geographical consciousness." Whether amidst the snowy peaks of the Himalayas or the palm-fringed shores of Bengal or Madras, these shrines are all set in scenes of great natural beauty. Indian religion and Indian patriotism are, the, inseparably intertwined; **the motherland is a holy land, one for every Indian** from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin."



Mark Twain called Benares older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together.

India's noblest gift to humanity - a belief that the unseen and intangible values are stronger and more real than the things of sense, and to this, her philosophy, with its unshaken conviction that there is One behind the many. One alone supremely real, bears witness.

Her most ancient prayer is a summary of her immemorial quest:

From the unreal to Reality
From death to Immortality.

(source: **The Heritage of Asia - By Kenneth Saunders** p. 35 - 41 - Student Christian Movement Press).

We may say schematically that India has been more concerned with the mystical than the ethical, with the beauty of the unseen mind at play in the universe….."

In the golden age of Korea, too, something of Indian mysticism and of Chinese humanism was blend in a fine synthesis which inspired the Japanese…."

(source: **The Heritage of Asia - By Kenneth Saunders** p. 24 - Student Christian Movement Press).

239. **Francois Gautier** (1950 -) Paris-born, he has lived in India for 30 years, is a political analyst for Le Figaro, one of France's largest circulation newspaper. He defends Indian nationalism. He caused a storm of controversy in India by advocating reunification with Pakistan. Author of several books, including **A Western journalist on India : The Ferengi's Columns** and **Rewriting Indian History**



He has called India, Spiritual leader of the world.

"Ancient Hindus were intensely secular in spirit, as their spirituality was absolutely non-sectarian - and still is today in a lesser measure. Seven thousand years ago, **Vedic sages**, to define the Universal Law which they had experienced within themselves on an occult and supra-spiritual plane, had invented the word **dharma.** In a nutshell, dharma is all that which helps you to become more and more aware of jiva inside yourself.

"India also survived the immense threat of European colonialization, which has annihilated the souls of so many countries, some more powerful than India. **The British came, conquered...understood nothing...left nothing...and India's spirituality remained.** It survived the cruel partition of its ancient land, tearing its limbs into Pakistan and Bangladesh, any other nation might never have recovered from such a maiming. It survives today the Hindu-bashing of its westernized elite..."

Thus, for India, the Muslims invasions and later the European ones, must be the result of bad karma....India's soul is so strong, so old, so vibrant, that she has managed so far to survive the terrible Muslim onslaughts and later the more devious British soul-stifling occupation."

"Yet because of this extraordinary spirituality, because of the **Dharma stored by its great Rishis**, India always had the extra impetus to renew itself, to spring forward again, when it seemed she was on the brink of collapsing."

(source: **Arise O' India - By Francois Gautier** Har Anand publisher ISBN: 81-241-0518-9 p. 11 and 155-156).

Speaking about the legendary tolerance of Hinduism, he recently wrote:

" But, once again my "fringe" Hindu brothers and sisters, as well as the Christian and Muslim communities of India, should remind themselves than in the entire Indian history, **Hinduism has always shown that it is not fundamentalist, that it accepts the others with their religions and customs as long as they do not try to impose these beliefs on the majority community.**

Indeed, in a recent report, **UNESCO pointed out that out of 128 countries where Jews lived before Israel was created, only one, India, did not persecute them and allowed them to prosper and practice Judaism in peace.**

Hinduism is probably the only religion in the world which has never tried to convert others, or conquer other countries to propagate itself as a new religion. The same is not true of Islam and Christianity. "

(source: **Redefining India - By Francois Gautier** - dailypioneer.com December 11 '02) For more visit **Francois Gautier**).



240. **Sita Ram Goel** (1921- 2003) scholar, writer, publisher, the founder of Voice of India, an 'intellectual' Kshatriya' par excellence, and a Hindu revivalist. Author of several books, including **The Story of Islamic Imperialism**, **Defence of Hindu Society** and **History of Hindu-Christian Encounters**. He writes:

"It is an intuition ingrained in the Hindu psyche to inhabit our entire environment - celestial, physical, vegetable, animal, and human - with innumerable Gods and Goddesses. Some of these divinities are installed in temples as icons, and worshipped with well-defined rituals. Some others are worshipped as and where they are invoked. Hindu shastras, saints and sages have paid homage to many Gods and Goddesses in many sublime hymns."

" I am a Hindu, which to me means the inheritor of the oldest and the highest spiritual culture known to human history."

Hindu seers and sages as also Hindu shastras, no matter to what Hindu sect they belong, designate this spiritual center of Hindu society as Sanãtana Dharma. Sanãtana Dharma says that the aspiration for Truth (satyam), Goodness (šivam), Beauty (sundaram), and Power (aišvarya) is inherent in every soul, everywhere, and at all times, like the physical hunger of the body for food and drink.

The Upanishadic prescription, ãtmãnam viddhi (know thyself) is a variation on the same theme. It leads to the same attainment - aham brahmo'smi (I am Brahma), tat tvam asi (thou art That), and sah tadasti (he is That). It is a steep spiritual ascent at the end of which the Ãtman (Self) becomes Paramãtman (Supreme Self), and the PuruSa (Person) becomes PuruSottama (Superperson). In the language of Theism, man becomes God."

(source: **Defence of Hindu Society - By Sita Ram Goel - voi.org**).

241 **Sir Chetpat Pattabhirama Ramaswami Aiyar** (1879-1966) former Dewan of Travancore, and eminent scholar-statesman and former Vice-Chancellor, who was the first to ban hunting in India

"Indian Culture in the past is analogous to a subterranean river that has been fertilizing many countries which have not only on the landscape but also on all the countries of the mind."

He has shown how we see manifestations of the **pervasive influence of Hindu Culture** in Greece and Egypt and in Peru and Mexico as also in Sumatra and Java and Bali and in Burma and Siam and Cambodia and Indo-China and even in China and Japan. He has shown how Vedanta has inspired the Sufi doctrine.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, who had reached New York en route to San Francisco, met on the 30th September a group of American intellectuals and journalists. British historian had observed that India was conquered in a spirit of British absent-mindedness. Free India wanted to make sure that there was not going to be such absent-mindedness on anybody' part again. Asked if India would accept Communist doctrine, he replied it could not, because the **Indian was a rugged individualist.**

(source: **Sir C. P. on India and the U. S**).



242. **Count Magnus Fredrik Ferdinand Bjornstjerna** (1779-1847) author of **The Theogony of the Hindoos with their systems of Philosophy and Cosmogony** after quoting from the Vedas says:

"These truly sublime ideas cannot fail to convince us that the Vedas recognize only one God, who is Almighty, Infinite, Eternal, Self-existent, the Light and the Lord of the Universe."

He says: “No nation on earth can vie with the Hindus in respect of the antiquity of their civilization and the antiquity of their religion.”

"In a metaphysical point of view we find among the Hindus all the fundamental ideas of those vast systems which, regarded merely as the offspring of fantasy, nevertheless inspire admiration on account of the boldness of flight and of the faculty of human mind to elevate itself to such remote ethereal regions. We find among them all the principles of Pantheism, Spinozism and Hegelianism, of God as being one with the universe; spiritual life of mankind; and of the return of the emanative sparks after death to their divine origin; of the uninterrupted alternation between life and death, which is nothing else but a transition between different modes of existence. All this we find among the philosophies of the Hindus exhibited as clearly as by our modern philosophers more than three thousand years since."



Referring to the practical character of Hindu philosophy, he said, In this respect the Hindus were far in advance of the philosophers of Greece and Rome, who considered the immortality of the soul as problematical."

"The literature of India makes us acquainted with a great nation of past ages, which grasped every branch of knowledge, and which will always occupy a distinguished place in the history of the civilization of mankind."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 203-278).

243. **Rick Briggs** NASA researcher, has written about India's ancient language - Sanskrit:

" In ancient India the intention to discover truth was so consuming, that in the process, they discovered perhaps the most perfect tool for fulfilling such a search that the world has ever known -- the Sanskrit language.

It is mind-boggling to consider that we have available to us a language which has been spoken for 4-7000 years that appears to be in every respect a perfect language designed for enlightened communication. But the most stunning aspect of the discovery is this: NASA the most advanced research center in the world for cutting edge technology has discovered that Sanskrit, the world's oldest spiritual language is the only unambiguous spoken language on the planet. Considering Sanskrit's status as a spiritual language, a further implication of this discovery is that the age old dichotomy between religion and science is an entirely unjustified one.

Why has Sanskrit endured? Fundamentally it generates clarity and inspiration. And that clarity and inspiration is directly responsible for a brilliance of creative expression such as the world has rarely seen.

Another hope for the return of Sanskrit lies in computers. Sanskrit and computers are a perfect fit.



(source: **Knowledge Representation in Sanskrit and Artificial Intelligence - By Rick Briggs - Artificial Intelligence Magazine** 6(1) 32-39 1985).

244. **Dr. Alexander Duff** (1806-1878) British Christian missionary, is reported to have said, in a speech delivered in Scotland, that:

"Hindu philosophy was so comprehensive that counterparts of all systems of European philosophy were to be found in it."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - BY Har Bilas Sarda** p. 277).

245. **Al-Jahiz** 9th century Muslim historian writes:

"The Hindus excel in astrology, mathematics, medicine and in various other sciences. They have developed to a perfection arts like sculpture, painting, and architecture. They have collections of poetry, philosophy, literature and science of morals. From India we received the book called Kalilah wa Dimnah. These people have judgment and are brave. They posses the virtues of cleanliness and purity. Contemplation has originated with them."

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisirkumar Mitra** p. 226).

246. **Abdullah Wassaf**, writing in the 14th century A.D. says of India in his history book, **Tazjiyatul Amsar**:

" India, according to the concurrent opinion of all writers, is the most agreeable abode on earth and the most pleasant quarter of the world. Its dust is purer than air and its air is purer than purity itself: Its delightful plains resemble the garden of paradise.

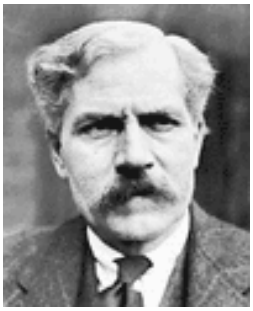
248. **Alexander Dow** author of **History of Hindustan** and had published an essay on Hinduism, entitled **A Dissertation Concerning the Customs, Manners, Language, Religion, and Philosophy of the Hindus** (1768). The first European scholar to produce a real dissertation on Sanskrit learning, he pointed out the vast quantities of Sanskrit literature in existence, plus the fact that **the history of the Hindus was older than that of any other people.**

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. Pg 242).

248. **Theordore Goldstucker** (1821-1872) born in Germany, professor of Sanskrit at London's University College wrote the Dictionary of Indian Biography. He finds in the Upanishads: "the germs of all the philosophies."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 277).

249. **James Ramsey MacDonald** (1866-1937) first Labor Party prime minister of Great Britain could grasp the truth when he said in his Introduction to the "The Fundamental Unity of India:



"The Hindu from his traditions and religion regards India not only as a political unit naturally the subject of one sovereignty, but as the outward embodiment, as the temple - nay even as the Goddess Mother of his spiritual culture. **"India and Hinduism are organically related as body and soul."**

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p.208).

250. **Michael Pym** (1889 -) author of **The Power of India** writes:

"Hindu philosophy has had more effect upon the world than is perhaps generally realized, though it has often come through at second and third hand. Hinduism as a practical working institution is intended for and has grown out of Indian condition."

***

"India challenged, one realized, the whole of the West. Not Western inventions, Western science, Western conveniences, which India was perfectly ready to adopt insofar as they suited India's convenience. ...Not that. **The challenge was a much deeper thing. A challenge of values, of ethics, of attitude to life.**

India, like the rest of the East, had bowed to the illusion of Western superiority, taken it all quite literally - Christianity as the religion of peace and love, of the brotherhood of man. Western education and Western progress as the panacea for the evils of existence.

The West spoke fairly enough, talking of honor, the sanctity of the given word, and of promises; of freedom and enlightenment. **It vaunted its poets, its philosophers, its scientists, its classical inheritance from that beautiful, far off Greece, whose greatest philosophers, it forgot to mention, had been inspired through Egypt and Persia, by India.**

For years India and all the East really believed all this. Complete subscribers to Nordicism and the theory of the Great Race. Indians did their best to Westernize themselves. **It was a dis-illusionizing period.** This great Western civilization, what was it? The West brought certain material benefits, certain aspects of learning which nobody could deny….**But also it seemed to bring a deadly poison. Beneath its hand, the East withered – its morality destroyed, its physical body destroyed, its ancient learning destroyed.** Only its vices added to by the new vices of the West, remained and flourished.



So this wonderful Western civilization made its own people no more happy, no better off ultimately, than the ancient systems of the East. India understood greed; she understood treachery and lies, violence and vice. All that exists wherever humanity exists, is a part of life. **But it could not understand a claim to superiority** which, as far as it could see, was based upon just these things. It saw that in the West vice hardly troubled any longer even to pay tribute to virtue. The West, India observed, did not revere its holy men. It seemed always to prefer killing them. **It saw the West take possession of other lands, because the people to whom they first belonged were, said the West, ignorant and miserable and it was the sacred duty of the Christian West – "the White Man's Burden" – to bring them enlightenment, education, freedom.**

It saw these people, in their turn, strive towards Western education, imitating the White Man, and saw the White man, when this or that individual had successfully obtained the prize, gone through Western universities, Western schools, scornfully deny them equality, and openly declare that Western education spoilt a good Orient. Finally, India, the East, saw the West in its frenzy of destruction turn upon itself, and, in **the most horrible of all wars** – a conflict disgraced by its barbarism, its inhumanity, its slimy filth of propaganda, tear itself to pieces. The forces of Western civilization revealed themselves to the East as forces of sheer, mad, destruction.

Then India shuddered. It did not condemn the peoples of the West. But it realized that somewhere in the Western scheme existed a dreadful flaw. India does not believe in the validity of Western civilization. It does not believe in Western ethics or in Western standards – taken as a whole. It challenges dynamic action with dynamic thought. It challenges the intolerance which conceives of a personal Deity creating, at his pleasure, a Chosen Race to inherit and rifle the earth, with the tolerance which sees all the world as changing forms expressing the same essential divinity. **It challenges the intellectual conceit which sees no divinity anywhere,** man as the supreme formation of matter, with the spiritual wisdom which realizes the limitations of the senses and of the intellect. It lifts above the five pointed star, the seven pointed!

That is India's challenge to the West – a question of values, of attitude to existence. India as Vishnu, preserving the sacred flame; as Shiva dancing the dance of creation over the Darkness he has destroyed; even as Kali, garlanded with skulls, smeared with blood, destroying destruction. **India will win. Matter is always molded by spirit.** But what is this spiritual power of India? As a sensitive Russian woman asked me: **"Why does God seem so much nearer in India?"**



India is God-intoxicated. Not, as the limited view has it, religion mad, but **infected by what Plato called the divine madness of the philosopher, the seeker after wisdom.** Nothing of that explains India's spiritual power.

It may be that India has realized God. Is that the secret of her power?

India regards the attempt to understand the **ultimate reality** as the highest and finest aim of existence... **This freedom is more priceless than any political institution. Because of this, India has been able to arrive at spiritual knowledge and strength unequalled anywhere in the world.**

Were India ever to be influenced by superficial Western ideas as to institute foolish vagrancy laws and organized charity distribution societies, **it would lose living torches of spiritual wisdom and knowledge, and perhaps even sink to levels of materialistic barbarism.** The spiritual adventurers of India are the yogis, sadhus, holy men and women of all creeds and descriptions…They have existed in India since the earliest days of history, and through all its magnificent and wealthy civilization they have kept alive in India the thought of another beauty, a more wonderful existence, of which is all this is but a lovely veil.

To reach the reality which is concealed by the unrealities of the visible world. That is yoga – literally union with God. With ruthless logic, India dismisses the unthinking Western deification of science as a means of discovering ultimate truth. Science, especially as the popular mind understands it, with its test tubes, its microscopes, its laboratories, all its most delicate instruments, while it is helpful, has an inherent limitation. It is still confined to the bounds of this form world. India, through centuries upon centuries, has taught another method of attaining reality. This is the system of yoga. It is based upon two things: intuitive knowledge; and the development of other faculties, other states of consciousness.

(source: **The Power of India - By Michael Pym** p. 156 - 160 and 302 - 306 Putnam Publication NY 1930).

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

Show in alphabetical order



61. **Mihai Eminescu** (1850-1889), the greatest poet of Rumania, learnt of Indian philosophy through Schopenhauer. The Hindu approach to reality and beauty is found in his verses. The title of his poem "**Tattwamasi**," indicates his familiarity with Upanishadic thought, but the content deals with the identity of Atman and Brahman. Hindu Monoism is reflected in his poem:

" So it is that bird and man,
Sun and moon
Are born and die in **Brahma**
the Sacred -
Where all things become one."

Eminescu's poetry also contains many erotic themes, such as Kamadeva, after the Hindu god of love, the spark of creation. That Eminescu chose an Indian symbol to express one of his intimate sentiments is held as " yet another proof of the deep and wide contact he had with the ancient literature of India."

(source: **India and World Civilization** - **By D. P. Singhal** p. 252).

62. **Leo Tolstoy** (1828-1910) was a champion of nonviolent protest; he was "an influential factor in the social restlessness that swept Russia before the revolution." **He was a mystic who started Russia's first vegetarian society.** After the Bolshevik revolution in 1971, his followers were persecuted and all vegetarian communities were closed.

Tolstoy, a late-comer, was also deeply influenced by Indian religious thought. Like Wagner, his introduction to it was through Burnoff and Schopenhauer. Beginning with his *Confessions*, there is no work of his "which is not inspired, in part by Hindu thought", to put it in the words of Markovitch quoted by Raymond Schwab in *The Oriental Renaissance*. He further adds that Tolstoy also **"remains the most striking example, among a great many , of these who sought a cure for the western spirit in India."**

(source: **On Hinduism Reviews and Reflections - By Ram Swarup** p. 105).



Tolstoy the famous Russian author of 'War and Peace', responded to India with sensitivity. Ancient Indian literature and the writings of Swami Vivekanada made a deep impression on him. In a letter to Gandhi in 1909, he quoted from the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Tamil Kural, and Vivekananda. His philosophy contradicted official church doctrine and was deemed heretical. Tolstoy is only one of the many Western writers and thinkers to find much of illumination within Hinduism's pages.

He urged Indians to adopt what he called :

"The Law of Love," and not to give up their ancient religious culture for the materialism of the West."

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p. 252).

Mr. Alexander Shifman Research scholar of **Tolstoy Museum in Moscow** wrote in his article entitled **A Leo Tolstoy and the Indian Epics'** published in several papers during Tolstoy centenary celebrations in 1963.

"Leo Tolstoy was deeply interested in ancient Indian literature and its great epics. The themes of the Vedas were the first to attract his attention. Appreciating the profundity of the Vedas, Tolstoy gave a particular attention to those cantos which deal with the problem of ethics, a subject in which interested him deeply."

Tolstoy not only read the Vedas, but also spread their teachings in Russia. He included many of the sayings of the Vedas and Upanishads (Vedic expositions) in his collections **"Range of Reading", "Thoughts of wise men"** and others. It would have been an ideal time to introduce this great learning with the birth of Marxism where all dogmas were outlawed. The intellects were freer of perversion and could have been easily found acceptance by a great many young Russians.

(source: http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Ithaca/3440/revelation.html).

63. **Anquetil-Duperron** (1731-1805) a French Orientalist. He gave up studying for the priesthood to pursue his deep interest in Eastern languages. In India he learned Persian, Sanskrit, Zend, Avestan, and Pahlavi. He also translated the Upanishads into Latin (1804) and wrote several works on India. He spent seven year in India, had recorded in his moving testimony in 1778:

"**Peaceful Indians**,... did the rumor of your riches have to penetrate a clime in which artificial needs know no bounds? Soon, new foreigners reached your shores; inconvenient guests, everything they touched belonged to them....

If the British ...neglect any longer to enrich Europe's scholars with the Sanskrit scriptures...they will bear the shame of having sacrificed honor, probity, and humanity to the vile love for gold and money, without human knowledge having derived the least lustre, the least growth from their conquests."

(source: **The Invasion That Never Was** - **By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 14-15).

64. **Louis Francois Jacolliot** (1837-1890), who worked in French India as a government official and was at one time President of the Court in Chandranagar, translated numerous Vedic hymns, the **Manusmriti**, and the Tamil work, **Kural.** His masterpiece, **La Bible dans l'Inde**, stirred a storm of controversy. He praised the Vedas in his Sons of God, and said,:

"The Hindu revelation, which proclaims the slow and gradual formation of worlds, is of all revelations the only one whose ideas are in complete harmony with modern science. "

Jacolliot feels India has given to the West much more than she is credited with when he says:

" Besides the discoverers of geometry and algebra, the constructors of human speech, the parents of philosophy, the primal expounders of religion, the adepts in psychological and physical science, how even the greatest of our

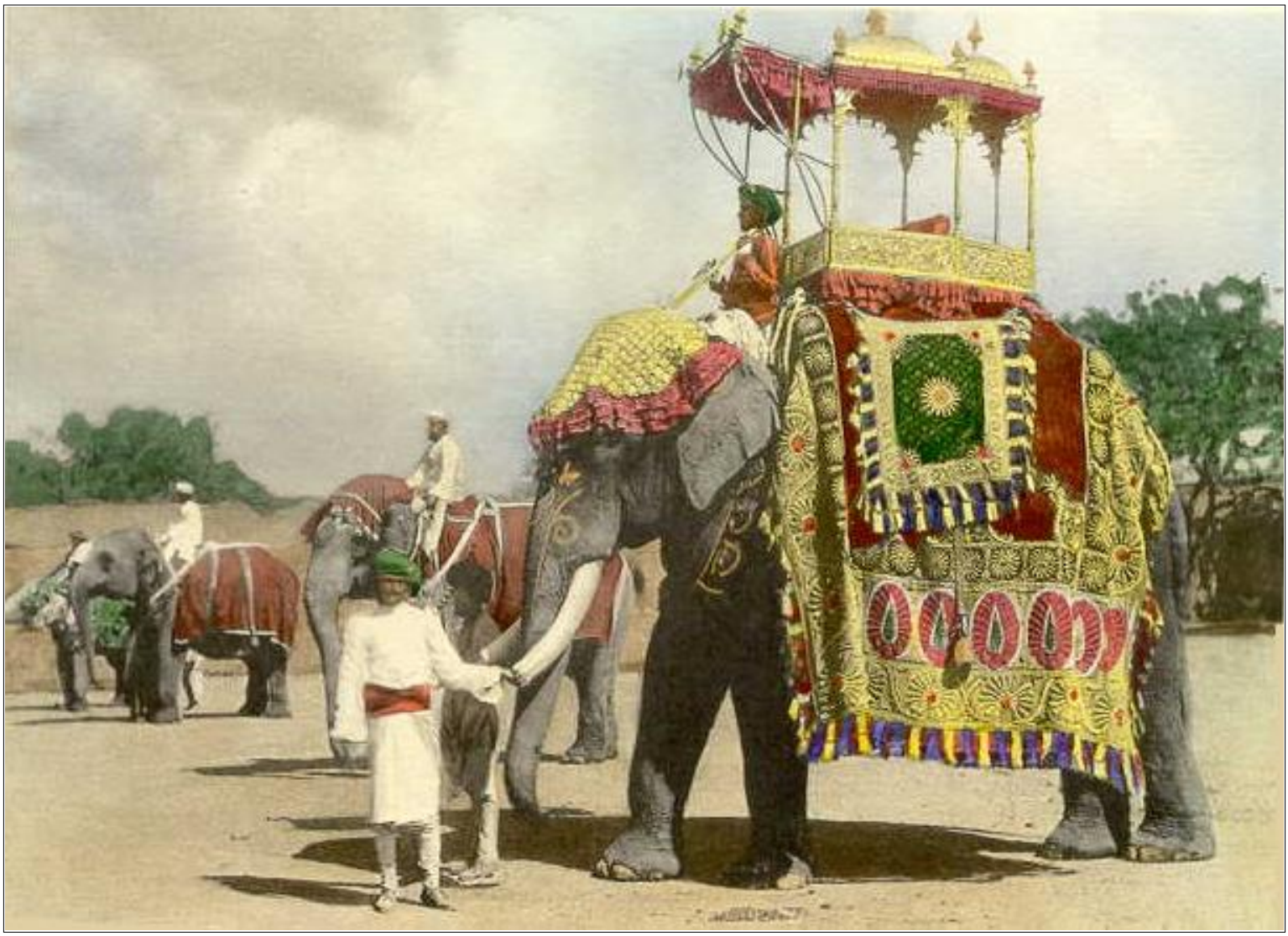
biological and theologians seem dwarfed! Name of us any modern discovery, and we venture to say that Indian history need not long be searched before the prototype will be found on record. Here we are with the transit of science half accomplished, and all our Vedic ideas in process of readjustment to the theories of force correlation, natural selection, atomic polarity and evolution. And here, to mock our conceit, our apprehension, and our despair, we may read what Manu said, perhaps 10,000 years before the birth of Christ:

The first germ of life was developed by water and heat.' (Book I, sloka 8,9)
' Water ascends towards the sky in vapors; from the sun it descends in rain, from the rains are born the plants, and from the plants, animals.' (Book III, sloka 76)

(source: **Krishna and Christ - By Louis Jacolliot** p. 15).

"Aware of the resentment I am provoking, I yet shrink not from the encounter. We are no longer burnt at the stake, as in the times of Michael Servetus, Savanarola, and of Philip II, of Spain, and free thought may be freely proclaimed in an atmosphere of freedom.

Soil of Ancient India, cradle of humanity, hail! Hail, venerable and efficient nurse whom centuries of brutal invasions have not yet burned under the dust of oblivion! Hail, farther land of faith, of love, of poetry and of science! May we hail a revival of thy past in our West in future!



State elephants - History of India - By Romesh Chunder Dutt - edited by A V William Jackson. vol. I

"I have dwelt midst the depths of your mysterious forests, seeking to comprehend the language of your lofty nature, and the evening airs that murmured midst the foliage of banyans and tamarinds whispered to my spirit these three

magic words: Zeus, Jehova, Brahma."

" How glorious the epoch that then presented itself to my study and comprehension! I made tradition speak from the temple's recess. I enquired of monuments and ruins, **I questioned the Vedas whose pages count their existence by thousands of years and whence enquiring youth imbibed the science of life long before Thebes of the hundred gates or Babylon the great had traced our their foundations."**

"And then **India appears to me in all the living power of her originality** – I traced her progress in the expansion of her enlightenment over the world – I saw her giving her laws, her customs, her morale, her religion to Egypt, to Persia, to Greece and Rome – I saw Jaiminy and Veda Vyasa precede Socrates and Plato, and Krishna, the son of the Virgin Devajani (in Sanskrit, created by God) precede the son of the Virgin of Bethelehem.

" Very few travelers have sought to understand India, very few have submitted to the labor necessary to a knowledge of her past splendor, looking only at the surface they have ever denied them and with an unreasoning confidence of criticism that made them the easy victims of ignorance."

(source: **La Bible dans l'Inde - By Louis Jacolliot** p 1 - 16).

He has said in his book, **Bible in India: Hindoo origin of Hebrew and Christian revelation**

"India of the **Vedas** entertained a respect for women amounting to worship; a fact which we seem little to suspect in Europe when we accuse the extreme East of having denied the dignity of woman, and of having only made her an instrument of pleasure and of passive obedience." He also said: "What! here is a civilization, which you cannot deny to be older than your own, which places the woman on a level with the man and gives her an equal place in the family and in society."

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** - p. 253).

Regarding the branching out of the primeval human family, he confirmed his views in his book Bible in India:

"In returning to the fountainhead do we find in India all the poetic and religious traditions of ancient and modern peoples. **India is the world's cradle.** Thence it is that the Common Mother in sending forth her children even to the remotest West has in an unfading testimony of our original, bequeathed us the legacy of her language, her laws, her morals, her literature, her religion."

(source: **Hinduism in The Space Age - By E. Vedavyas** p. 87).

"In point of authenticity, the Vedas have incontestable precedence over the most ancient records. These holy books which, according to the Brahmins, contains the revealed word of God were honored in India long before Persia, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Europe, were colonized or inhabited."

"Of the Sastras and the Mahabharata, which profess the same doctrines, the dates are lost in the night of time. If we accept the chronology of the Brahmins, as calculated by the learned Orientalist, Halhed, they must possess, the first an antiquity of Seven and the second of four million years – a chronology which strikes point blank at all our European ideas or matter. Such things easily excite laughter, especially in France, the country of superficial spirits and of inconsiderate affirmation. We have made a little world for ourselves, dating from scarce 6,000 years, and created in 6 days, that satisfies all, and needs no thought."

(source: **Bible in India: Hindoo origin of Hebrew and Christian revelation - By Louis Jacolliot** p 53 – 57). For more on Louis Jacolliot refer to chapter - **Women in Hinduism**).

65. **Novalis** (1772-1801),was the pseudonym of the young Baron Friedrich von Hardenberg. He was a pioneer of the early German Romantics, one of Germany's greatest Romantic poets.



Novalis wrote in his essay, "Christendom in Europe," in 1799, that poetry, pure and colorful like a beautiful India, stood opposed to the cold and deadening mountains of philistine reason.
For him **Sanskrit** was the most mysterious linguistic symbol of any human expression: Sanskrit took him back to the "original people" who had been forgotten.

66. **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) was also attracted by Indian thought, as it is clearly attested by numerous passages and notes referring to Indian ideas and texts found in the Beethoven papers. He was first introduced to Indian literature by the Austrian Orientalist, Hammer-Purgstal, who founded a periodical for the dissemination of Eastern knowledge in Europe as early as January 1809.
Beethoven had a deep interest in Indian knowledge long before Indological studies began in Germany. The fragments of Indian religious texts that have been discovered in the Beethoven manuscripts are partly translations and partly adaptations of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita.

67. **Friedrich Ruckert** (1788-1866), Professor of Oriental Languages at the University of Erlangen from 1827 to 1841, produced, under the inspiration of August Wilhelm von Schlegel, numerous skilful translations from Sanskrit. His published translations from Indian classical poetry made Indian lyrics and poems widely popular in Germany.
Amongst **Ruckert's** translations are **Nalopakhyana,** the **Amarusataka,** the **Raghuvamsa,** and the **Gita Govinda,** which lost nothing of its beauty, color and atmosphere in Ruckert's German version. The Indian poem is such a complex work from the viewpoint of rhyme, alliteration, and allusion that Ruckert's version represents a brilliant accomplishment. Of all the German poets, it was he who best understood the character of Indian poetry.

Ruckert's translation of the Gitagovinda, Bonn 1836, is a work of art. Written in beautiful language, it comes very close to the original in spirit and form. In his **Brahmanische Erzaehlungen ('Brahmin stories'),** Leipzig 1836, he brought out free renderings of Hindu legends from the epics. His translation of the Savitri episode is particularly noteworthy.

(source: **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German** - By Valentine Stache-Rosen. p.11-12).



68. **Henrich Heine** (1797-1856), a late Romantic lyric poet, whose influence was enormous not only in Germany but in most countries of the Western world, describes the India of his imagination: " ...in the glass I saw the dear motherland, the blue and sacred Ganges, the eternally shining Himalayas, the gigantic forests of Banyan trees on whose wide shadowy paths quietly walk wise elephants and while pilgrims ...

Heine's poem, "Auf Flugeln des Gesanges,"
" Am **Ganges** duftet's und leuchtet's
Und Riesenbaume bluhn,
Und schone, stille Menschen
Vor Lotosblumen knien. "

created a picture of India widely familiar in Germany.

69. **Paul Verlaine** (1844-1896), The French lyric poet known for the musical quality of his verse, wrote the French poem, **"Savitri."**

Verlaine became keenly interested in **Hindu mythology** during his high school days. His enthusiasm was such that he said:

"Par Indra! que c'est beau, et comme ca vous degotte la Bible, l'Evangile et toute la degueulade des Peres de l'Eglise."

"By Indra! how beautiful this is and how much better than the Bible, the Gospel and all the words of the Fathers of the Church."



70. **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1832), German Poet, Dramatist, Novelist, Natural Scientist. His own enthusiasm for Shakuntala was no less exuberant than Herder's.

He wrote in 1792:

"Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits
of its decline
And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured.
feasted, fed,
Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole name
combine?
I name thee, **O Sakuntala!** and all at once is said. "

Goethe expressed this admiration for Kalidasa's **Shakuntala** more than once. nearly 40 years later, in 1830 when **de Chenzy** sent him his edition of the original with his French translation, he wrote to the Frenchman expressing his gratitude:

"The first time I came across this inexhaustible work it aroused such enthusiasm in me and so held me that I could not stop studying it. I even felt impelled to make the impossible attempt to bring it in some form to the German stage. These efforts were fruitless but they made me so thoroughly acquainted with this most valuable work, it represented such an epoch in my life, I so absorbed it, that for thirty years I did not look at either the English or the German version....It is only now that I understand the enormous impression that work made on me at an earlier age."

(source: **Letters from Goethe - By Marianne Von Herzfeld** and **c. Melvil Sym**. (trans). p. 514).

No wonder he modeled the prologue of his **Faust** (1797) on the prologue to Sakuntala. The jester in the prologue of Faust is reminiscent of one of the vidusaka in the Indian drama, a parallel first noticed by Heinrich Heine. Goethe friend Schiller, was moved to enthusiastic praise of Sakuntala, he wrote, "in the whole world of Greek antiquity there is no poetical representation of beautiful love which approaches even afar."

He also admired other Indian poems such as **Jayadeva's Gita Govinda** and **Kalidasa's Meghduta** (Cloud Messenger) which he read in Wilson's English translation in 1817 and welcomed as "a great treasure."

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. Pg 230).



Shakuntala painting

The Sakuntala furor has lasted till almost today. One of the noblest "overtures" in European music is the **Sakuntala overture** of the Hungarian composer **Carl Goldmark** (1830-1915).

(source: **Creative India - By Benoy Kumar Sarkar** published Motilal Banarsi Dass, Lahore 1937. p. 110).

71. **Louis Revel** - French author of **The Fragrance of India : landmarks for the world of tomorrow** and **Les Routes Ardentes de L'Inde**. He went a long step further when he remarked that if Greek culture had influenced Western civilization, the ancient Greeks themselves were the **"sons of Hindu thought."**

"If Greek culture has influenced Western civilization, we must not forget that, in spite of the inestimable benefits of Greece to India, the ancient Greeks themselves were also sons of Hindu thought. As has already been mentioned, Pythagoras went to India in order to draw from the very source the principles which constituted the foundation of his doctrine and which in its turn influenced Plato, Socrates and even Aristotle to a certain degree. Apollonius of Tyanae, Plotin, did they not follow in the footprints of their predecessors, in directing themselves towards far-off India? China, Persia, Islam – the three-fourths of Asia – these civilizations which had already been influenced by the missions of Asoka, were they not attracted by India's wisdom? **That is the reason why ancient India is our Mother. In the measure that we Westerners make our intellectual and spiritual genealogy reach back to India shall we learn to love her and to consider in its true light her wisdom, the patrimony of every man."**

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. Pg 241 and **The Fragrance of India : landmarks for the world of tomorrow - By Louis Revel** p 232- 238 Kitabistan Allahabad 1946).

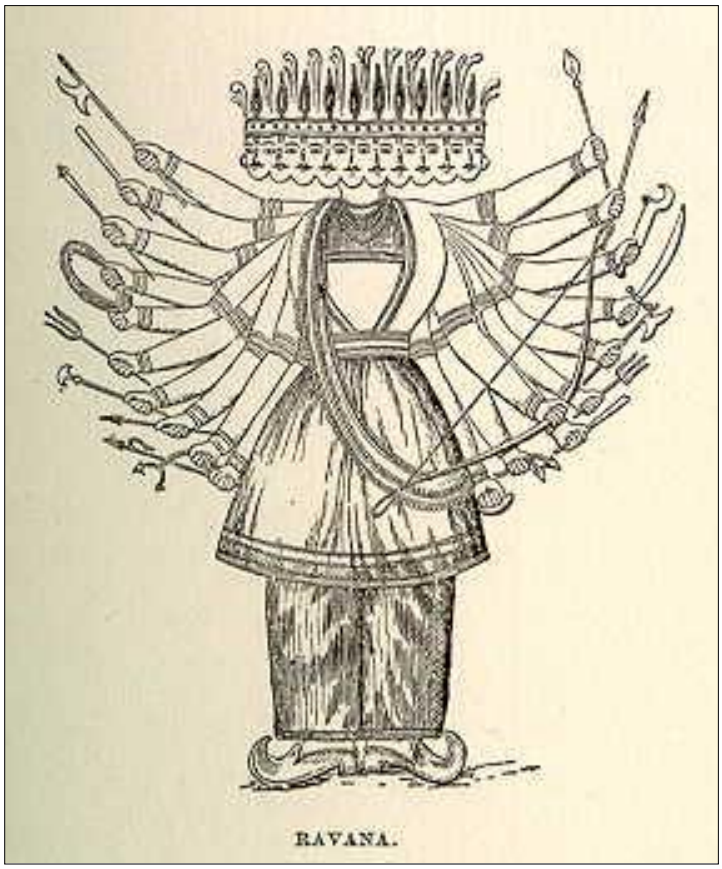
He has dedicated his book **The Fragrance of India : landmarks for the world of tomorrow** to the Great rishis of India:

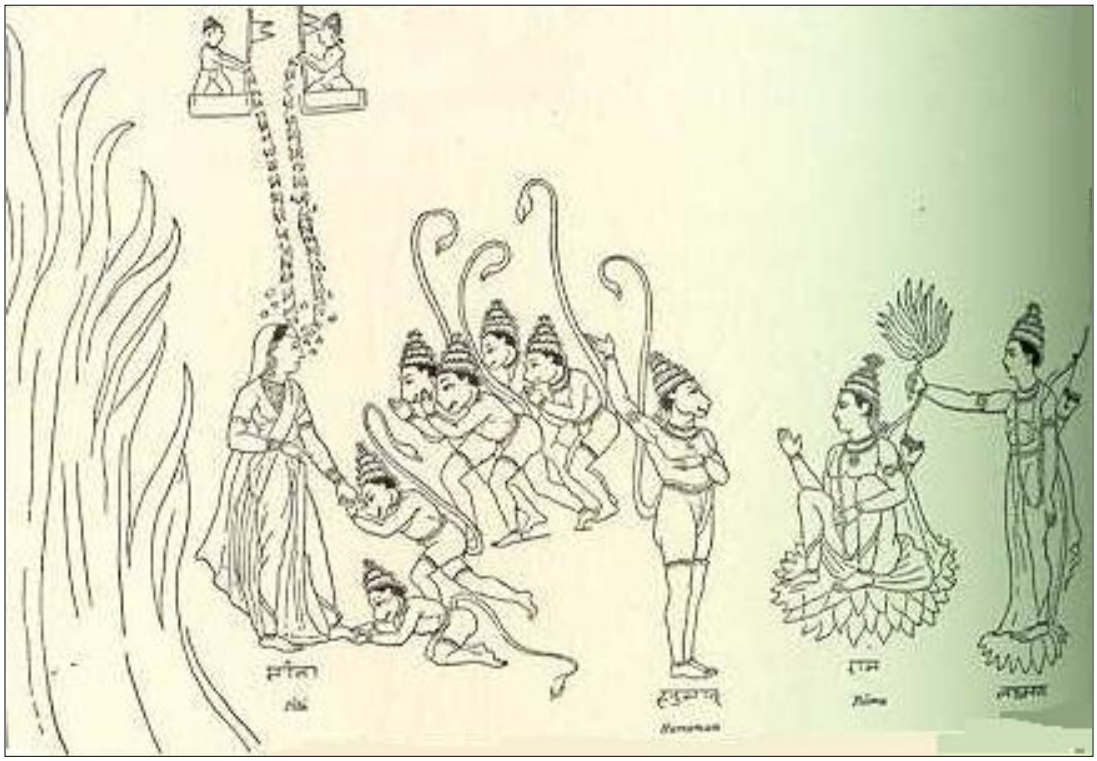
“These pages are a humble offering,
To the Great rishis of India,
Those wise men who loved the people,
lived for the people,
and who taught the brotherhood of peoples.

The soul of the world is in danger. It is a banal truth to write but, nevertheless, it ought to be ceaselessly repeated. When we seek in the buried centuries for vestiges of these columns of glory, a name, among others, emerges: INDIA.

It is a fact, whether we wish to accept it or not, that India is the Mother of all of us. **She has given us everything: religion, philosophy, science, art.** All that has been truly great, noble, and generous, throughout the ages has come from India. At this moment when a hurricane of violence and hate is raging across the world, and will rage still more through the world of the future, making the very frame-work of our civilization crack, at this moment when intellectual and moral values are being trampled upon by the hordes of egotism, brutality, and lying, let us go together, towards India from whom we can learn so much.

Ramayana is one of the greatest epic poems of the world and that, correctly understood, it leads us, scholars tell us to an understanding of the evolution of humanity:





Hanuman and the Vanara rejoicing at the restoration of Sita

The **Ramayana** shows us also, in the story of Rama and Sita, the ideal of human love, love which is inspired by the noblest of ideas. The Illiad and Odyssey have touched many Western hearts; nevertheless, those epic poems which contain so much truths, when translated into our modern languages, fail unfortunately, to influence intimately the lives of people. In India, on the other hand, there is scarcely a Hindu family or dwelling where the divinity of Rama and of Krishna are not adored; where the chastity of Sita or of Draupadi is not extolled; or where the courage of Hanuman – the monkey god who aided Rama to vanquish his enemies – is not a subject of conversation. These heroes for Hindus, are living personages, as are those of the Gospel for Christians, modeling, kneading India's thought, even in our modern times of upheavals and violence, and it is they, these heroes, who preserve perhaps, or who help to preserve the glory of ancient Aryavarta in the India of today.

Every civilization which is not based on the culture of the spirit is doomed to perish in brutality and blood. Oh! Rama and Sita, noble human heroes, you who give the example of a sublime spiritual ideal, in your atmosphere of peace and infinite tenderness there reigns a hope, the hope of the regeneration of humanity through the understanding of these ancient symbols and by their realization in the inner lives of men.

(source: **The Fragrance of India : landmarks for the world of tomorrow - By Louis Revel** p 83-86 Kitabistan Allahabad 1946).

"The **Bhagavad Gita** is **par excellence the Book of Democracy**; that is what gives it its peculiar radiance. It is not necessary to be a great scholar on the subject to perceive this. It unites all men in the same Principle which "resides in all hearts." If Krishna makes no distinction between races, castes, sects, he also shows us how men, nations, can sink in the typhoon of unchained passions. The message of the Gita is a universal call to Democracy, liberty for the peoples, liberty for each individual. The great affirmation of the Bhagavad Gita is that every individual, whatever he may be, rich or poor, can and must raise himself on life's path and that he has a right to his emancipation, social, intellectual, and spiritual."

"Even if thou were the greatest of all sinners, thou shalt be able to cross over all sins in the bark of spiritual knowledge." (BG iv).

….in the temple of Somanthpur, the stone figure looms out from the shadows. A ray of light rests on the face of Krishna. Above the wind of the plains swirling under the vaults, it seems to me that the flute of Shri Krishna sings melodies on this day of fete, the glory of life, the dawn of a new world, in the eternal verses:

"Know, son of Pritha, that I am the pure fragrance of the earth, sound in the air; in the fire, its splendor; life in all beings; continence in ascetics.

Oh! Govinda. The Friend! May we find, we also, the resting-place, the refuge, the friend who guides and inspires our life!

(source: **The Fragrance of India : landmarks for the world of tomorrow - By Louis Revel** p.158 -167 Kitabistan Allahabad 1946).

72. **Herman Hesse** (1877-1962), German poet and novelist, awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1946, found in Indian thought an answer to his yearning for deliverance from "ego" and from the tyrannical dictates of temporality. Indian thought offered the most radical possibility of undoing the curse of individuation, of annihilating the "idiotic one-after-the-other" by the postulation of the eternal simultaneity of nirvana.



The positive attitude of the **Bhagavad Gita** also appealed to Hesse.

"The marvel of the Bhagavad-Gita is its truly beautiful revelation of life's wisdom which enables philosophy to blossom into religion."

Hesse claimed that **Yoga** had an invaluable effect upon him as a means of improving his powers of concentration. Yoga and Maya are the background to the events portrayed in **The Glass Beads Game.**

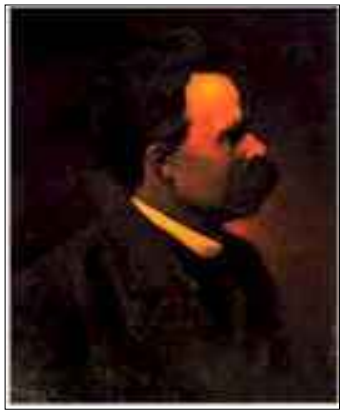
He visited India in 1911 and the study of ancient Hindu texts affected Hesse deeply and had great influence on his works. The threefold sequence of sensual love, wisdom, and self-denial experienced by the poet **Bhartrihari** is interpreted by Hesse as the result of humble and wise humanity. In the **Journey to the Orient,** Hesse says about India:

"It is not only a country and something geographical, but the home and the youth of the soul, the everywhere and nowhere, the oneness of all times."

It is significant that Hesse, although a Christian, repeatedly substituted the **upanishadic tat tvamasi,** literally "love your neighbor for he is yourself. In **Siddhartha** which is subtitled "Indic Poetic Work (1922) he tried to reconcile Christian and Indian piety. There are many parallels in Siddhartha and Bhagavad Gita.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. Pg 240).

73. **Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844-1900) the great German Philosopher, poet, classical philologist, who became one of the most provocative and influential thinkers of the 19th century. He was deeply influenced by Schopenhauer in his youth. One of the great European philosophers, Friedrich Nietzsche's beliefs were best expressed in his **Thus Spake Zarathustra,** in which his teachings are put into the mouth of the wandering prophet Zarathustra.



He was very appreciative of the Upanishads and, indeed, contemptuous of those Europeans who, devoid of intellectual discernment, wanted to convert and "civilize" the Brahmans.

When **Paul Deussen** told him his plan of translating ancient Hindu texts and expounding their wisdom, he expressed great enthusiasm saying that Indian philosophy was the one parallel to their own European philosophy.

He found in the **Manusmriti** one of the source of his own philosophy of superman. The Laws of Manu have been hailed by Friedrich Nietzsche, as ' a work which is spirited and superior by comparision."

(source: **Advanced History of India - By Nilakanta Sastri and G. Srinivasachari** p. 10).

Nietzsche so highly esteemed the **Hindu text** that he declared all other ethical codes to be imitations and even caricatures of this.

(source: **India and World Civilization** - **By D. P. Singhal** p. 237-238).

"One draws a breath of relief when coming out of the Christian sick-house and dungeon atmosphere into this healthier, higher wider world. How paltry the 'New Testament' is compared with Manu, how ill it smells! One sees immediately that it has a real philosophy behind it, in it, not merely an ill-smelling Jewish acidity compounded of rabbinisim and superstition.....All the things upon which Christianity vents its abysmal vulgarity, procreation, for example, woman, marriage, are here treated seriously, with reverence, with love and trust."

"Christianity has been up till now mankind's greatest misfortune." Nietzsche angrily denounced Christianity as a "slave morality," created by the weak as a means of checking the strong."

(source: **The Twilight of the Idols - By Friedrich Nietzsche** (1889) p. 57. **The Antichrist - By Friedrich Nietzsche** p. 176).



"One breathes more freely, after stepping out of the Christian atmosphere of hospitals and poisons into this more salubrious, loftier and more spacious world. "

In Nietzsche's estimation Manu is also better because more frank teacher of political science than the philosophers, insincere as they are, of the Western world.

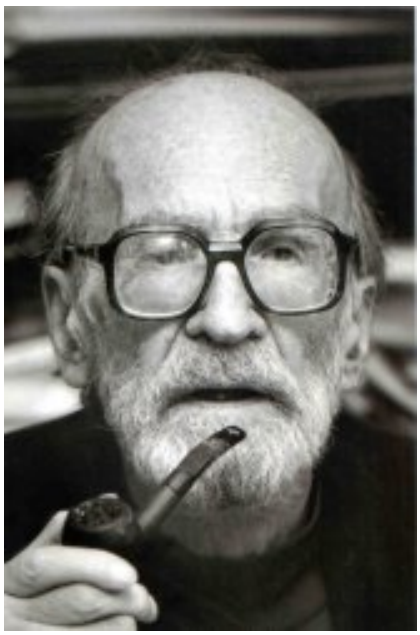
(source: **Creative India - By Benoy Kumar Sarkar** p. 112-115).

Nietzsche himself had read the Vedas, which he admired profoundly, could quote from the Laws of Manu and thought that **"Buddhism and Brahmanism are a hundred times deeper and more objective than Christianity."**

(source: **Arise O' India! - By Francois Gautier** ISBN 81-241-0518-9 Har-Anand Publication p. 25).

74. **Mircea Eliade** (1907-1986) born in Bucharest, Romania and was educated as a philosopher lectured in the Ecole des Hautes-Etudes of the Sorbonne. He is author of **Yoga: Immortality and Freedom**

"**Yoga**, as a 'science' of achieving this transformation of finite man into the infinite One, has to be recognized as something intrinsically Indian or, as 'a specific dimension of the Indian mind."



"Yoga constitutes a characteristic dimension of the Indian mind, to such a point that whatever Indian religion and culture have made their way, we also find a more or less pure form of Yoga. In India, Yoga was adopted and valorized by all religious movements, whether Hinduist or 'heretical.' The various Christian or syncretistic Yogas of modern India constitutes another proof that Indian religious experience finds the yogic methods of "meditation" and "concentration" a necessity.

"Yoga had to meet all the deepest needs of the Indian soul. In the universal history of mysticism, Yoga occupies a place of its own, and one that is difficult to define. It represents a living fossil, a modality of archaic spirituality that has survived nowhere else. Yoga takes over and continues the immemorial symbolism of initiation; in other words, it finds its place in a universal tradition of the religious history of mankind." "From the Upanishads onward, India has been seriously preoccupied with but one great problem - the structure of the human condition. **With a rigor unknown elsewhere, India has applied itself to analyzing the various conditionings of the human being."**

"The conquest of this absolute freedom, or perfect spontaneity, is the goal of all Indian philosophies and mystical techniques; but it is above all through Yoga, through one of the many forms of Yoga, that India has held that it can be assured."

"Yoga is present everywhere - no less in the oral tradition of India than in the Sanskrit and vernacular literature....To such a degree is this true that Yoga has ended by becoming a characteristic dimension of Indian spirituality."

(source: **Yoga: Immortality and Freedom - by Mircea Eliade** p. xvi - xx and 101 and 359-364).

Commenting on history which has no metaphysical significance for either Hinduism or Buddhism, he states that:

"Profane time must be abolished, at least symbolically, so that man forgets his "historical situation". The highest human ideal is the **jivamukta** - one who is liberated from Time. Man, according to the Indian view, 'must, at all costs, find in his world a road that issues upon a tran-historical and atemporal plane.'

(source: **The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society - By Richard Lannoy** p. 292). For more on Mircea Eliade refer to chapter on **Yoga and Hindu Philosophy**).

75. **Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa** (1836-1886) the surreal Hindu Bengali Saint spent a lifetime seeking spiritual enlightenment, beginning in his childhood with a mystical encounter he experienced at the age of six. A temple priest at Dakshinesvar and a mystical **devotee of Kali,** became a source of religious renewal for a large number of Bengalis who met him during his lifetime.

Mahatma Gandhi said: "The story of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face." Romain Rolland wrote "Ramakrishna was a rare combination of individuality and universality, personality and impersonality. His word and example have been echoed in the hearts of Western men and women. His soul animates modern India." His influence was felt throughout the social life of Bengal, where he passed his life in continuation of the bhakti tradition so deeply rooted in that region. ...Among the crowds that went to see Sri Ramakrishna were **Keshub Chunder Sen.**

He experimented with the truths of Vedanta. He attained God-realization through four different religions (Tantrism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity), each time meeting the same Absolute God--which prompted him to declare that all religions lead to the same God.

Ramakrishna said,

" In Hinduism, there can be as many spiritual paths as there are spiritual aspirants & similarly there can really be as many Gods as there are devotees to suit the moods, feelings, emotions & social background of the devotees."

" The Eternal Religion, the religion of the rishis, has been in existence from time immemorial and will exist eternally. **There exists in this Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism) all forms of worship -- worship of God with form and worship of the impersonal Deity as well. It contains all paths--the path of knowledge, the path of devotion and so on. Other forms of religion, the modern cults, will remain for a few days and then disappear."**

(source: - unknown).



He was addressed as Master by his disciples. Once one of his disciples asked him: "Do you believe in God, sir?" "Yes," the Master replied. "Can you prove it, sir?" "Yes," "How?" "Because I see Him just as I see you here, and rather more intensely." The Master said: "So long as God seems to be outside and far away, so long there is ignorance. But where God is realized within, that is true knowledge."

"In the kingdom of God, reason, intellect and learning are of no avail. There the dumb speaks, the blind sees, and deaf hears."

Years of aspiration, meditation and adoration in silence ripened into Ramakrishna's realization of the **Divine Mother**. The great disciple of Ramakrishna was **Swami Vivekananda** whose message has inspired, influenced and transformed thousands of lives around the world. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Vivekananda started the **renaissance of Hinduism** at this time.

(source: **Great Indian Saints - By Pranab Bandyopadhyaya** p. 277 - 285).

76. **Abraham Seidenberg** an American historian of mathematics, has said:

" Ancient Egyptian, Babylonian and Greek geometries derive from the mathematics recorded in the **Sulbasutras.**

(source: **The Invasion That Never Was** - **By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 79).

77. **Severus Sebokbt**, Bishop of Kenneserin, a Syrain astronomer wrote the following in A.D. 662:

"I shall now speak of the knowledge of the Hindus...of their subtle discoveries even more ingenious than those of the Greeks and Babylonians - of their rational system of mathematics or of their method of calculation which no word can praise strongly enough - I mean the system using the nine symbols. If these things were known by the people who think that they alone have mastered the sciences because they speak Greek, they would perhaps be convinced that every folk, not only Greeks, but men of a different tongues, know something as well as they."

(source: **The Wonder That Was India - By A. L. Basham** p. vi).

78. **Barend Van Nooten** author of **Rig Veda, a metrically restored text** with an introduction and notes, and **The Mahabharata; Attributed to Krsna Dvaipayana Vyasa,** writes:

"Borrowings by western scholars in the sphere of literature and philosophy are obvious and well-known. There are near virtual; copies of plots, characters, episodes, situations and time duration from the Mahabharata in Homer and Virgil."

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction - By T. C. Galav** p. 18).



79. **Carl Gustav Jung** (1875-1961), student of Sigmund Freud, psychiatrist, interpreted Hinduism in terms of his psychological system, and pointed out the great significance of Indian thought for the modern West:

"We do not yet realize that while we are turning upside down the material world of the East with our technical proficiency, the East with its psychic proficiency, is throwing our spiritual world into confusion. We have never yet hit upon the thought that while we are overpowering the Orient from without, it may be fastening its hold upon us from within."

Jung found out in 1909 that myth and dream were linked, but it had been well known in India forever. It is implicit in the syllable OM, or A-U-M according to Mandukya Upanishad.

(source: **A Joseph Campbell Companion** - Selected and edited by **Diane K. Osborn** p. 122)

No system of thought or body control is more widely known today than **Yoga.** "When a religious method recommends itself as 'scientific', it can be certain of its public in the West. Yoga fulfills this expectation. "Quite apart from the charm of the new and the fascination of the half-understood, there is good cause for Yoga to have many adherents. It offers the possibility of controllable experience and thus satisfies the scientific need for 'facts'; and, besides this, by reason of its breadth and depth, its venerable age, its doctrine and method which include every phase of life, **it promises undreamed of possibilities."**

(source: **Let's regain our lost soul - By Nani A Palkhivala** - Tapovan Prasad - Chinmaya Mission vol. 39 #2 February 2001p 29-30).

Jung says: **"The Christian West considers man to be wholly dependent upon the grace of God, or at least upon the Church as the exclusive and divinely sanctioned earthly instrument of man's redemption. The East (India), however, insists that man is the sole cause of his higher development, for it believes in "self-liberation."**

"While we are overpowering the Orient from without, it may be fastening its hold upon us from within."

(source: **In Search Of The Cradle of Civilization: New Light on Ancient India - By Georg Feurerstein, Subhash Kak & David Frawley** p. 267).



"The idea that man is like unto an inverted tree seems to have been current in by gone ages. The link with Vedic conceptions is provided by Plato in his Timaeus in which it states..." behold we are not an earthly but a heavenly plant."

What is of special interest to us is the surprising affinity between Jung's conclusions and Hindu thought. He himself was aware of it. He thought that it was no mere accident that soon after the French Revolution the **Frenchman Anquetil du Perron brought to Europe a translation of the Upanishads** "which gave the Western world its first deep insight into the baffling mind of the East."

He says, "To the historian this is mere chance without any factors of cause and effect. But in view of my medical experience I cannot take it as an accident…In the crowds that poured into the Notre Dame, bent on destruction, dark and nameless forces were at work that swept the individual off his feet; these forces worked also upon Anquetil du Perron and provoked an answer which has come down in history. For he brought the Eastern mind to the West, and its influence upon us we cannot measure. Let us beware of under-estimating it!" He had a great respect for the Eastern civilizations which had discovered and learnt to use the resources of the subliminal mind. In his own words, "Great and **enduring civilizations like those of the Hindus** and the Chinese were built upon this foundation and developed from it a discipline of self-knowledge which they brought to a high pitch of refinement both in philosophy and practice."

As the **Upanishad** describes it, the Self is that which being known all else becomes known.

(source: **Hindu Culture - By K. Guru Dutt** - With a foreword by Sir C.Ramaswami Aiyar p. 227-228).

He admired Hinduism. He said if Rama can cry in the forest when he lost Sita and if still Rama could be an altar of worship, that is why Hindu society is a sane society. He said the Hindu society legitimised sorrow, while other religions do not do that.

(source: **'There is reverse discrimination against Hindus' - T R Jawahar** - newstodaynet.com).

Jung says: "We have not yet clearly grasped the fact that Western Theosophy is an amateurish imitation of the East." Our studies of sexual life, originating in Vienna and England, are matched or surpassed by Hindu teachings on the subject, Oriental texts ten centuries introduce us to philosophical relativism."

(source: **The Wisdom of China and India - By Lin Yutang** p. 118).

Jung in **Psychological Types** examines Indian Philosophy from a psychological perspective in glowing terms. His theories have some intuitively and aesthetically resonant qualities. Simple but precise and partially derived from Indian Thought:

"If the attainment of the middle path consisted in a mere surrender to instinct, as the bewailers of "naturalism" suppose, the profoundest philosophical speculation that the human mind has ever known would have no *raison d'être*. **But, as we study the philosophy of the Upanishads, the impression grows on us that the attainment of this path is not exactly the simplest of tasks. Our Western superciliousness in the face of these Indian insights is a mark of our barbarian nature, which has not the remotest inkling of their extraordinary depth and astonishing psychological accuracy. We are still so uneducated that we actually need laws from without, and a task-master or Father above, to show us what is good and the right thing to do. And because we are still such barbarians, any trust in human nature seems to us a dangerous and unethical naturalism. Why is this? Because under the barbarian's thin veneer of culture the wild beast lurks in readiness, amply justifying his fear.** But the beast is not tamed by locking it up in cage. *There is no morality without freedom.* When the barbarian lets loose the beast within him, that is not freedom but bondage. Barbarism must first be vanquished before freedom can be won. This happens, in principle, when the basic root and driving force of morality are felt by the individual as constituents of his own nature and not as external restrictions. How else is man to attain this

realization but through the conflicts of opposites?"

(source: **Psychological Types – By C G Jung** p 213 – Routledge 1971 Reprinted 1999. This quote has been contributed to this site by a visitor).



80. **Walt Whitman** (1813-1892), who championed American intellectual independence, was amongst those who came under the influence of the American Transcendentalists. He wrote his famous poem **Leaves Of Grass** in 1855. The continuing success of of his Leaves of Grass led to the publication of its fifth edition which included his poem entitled **Passage to India**. According to some Whitman is claimed to have read ancient **Hindu poems** before writing his Leaves of Grass. There is a reference to Brahma and the following verse in his Salut Au Monde:

"I hear the Hindoo teaching his favorite pupil he loves, wars, adages, transmitted safely to this day from poets who wrote three thousand years ago."

(source: **India in the American Mind - By B. G. Gokhale** p.29).

Whitman turned to the East in his anxiety to escape from the complexities of civilization and the bewilderments of a baffled intellectualism.

In **"Passage to India"** he wrote:

O Thou transcedent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universe, thou centre of them...
Athwart the shapeless vastness of space,
How should I think, how breathe a single breath, how speak, if out of myself,
I could not launch, to those, superior universes?

(source: **Hinduism - By Linda Johnsen** p. 367).

Whitman had poetically expressed a philosophy which some had said was similar to Krishana's teachings in the Bhagavad Gita. The relationship of Walt Whitman to Vedic thought is considerably complex.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once described Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* as a **blending of *Gita*** and the New York Tribune Herald. In his reminiscing essay, "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads" (1889) Whitman claims to have read "the ancient Hindu poems" and there is enough evidence to show that in 1875 he had received a copy of the **Gita** as a Christmas present from and English friend, Thomas Dixon. **Edward Carpenter** (1844-1929) English poet, indicated parallels between Whitman's Leaves of Grass and the Upanishads.

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p. 74).

Leaves of Grass



The nest of languages, the bequeather of poems
The race of old
Florid with blood, pensive, rapt with musings, hot with passion,
Sultry with perfume,
with ample and flowering garments,
With sunburnt visage,
with intense soul and glittering eyes
The Race of Brahma Comes!

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41. **Alan Watts** (1915-1973) a professor, graduate school dean and research fellow of Harvard University, drew heavily on the insights of Vedanta. **Watts** became well known in the 1960s as a pioneer in bringing Eastern philosophy to the West.

"There is an unrecognized but mighty taboo--our tacit conspiracy to ignore who, or what, we really are. Briefly, the thesis is that the prevalent sensation of oneself as a separate ego enclosed in a bag of skin is a hallucination which accords neither with Western science nor with the experimental philosophy religions of the East--in particular the central and germinal Vedanta philosophy of Hinduism. This hallucination underlies the misuse of technology for the violent subjugation of man's natural environment and, consequently, its eventual destruction. It is rather a cross-fertilization of Western science with an Eastern intuition".

"To the philosophers of India, however, Relativity is no new discovery, just as the concept of light years is no matter for astonishment to people used to thinking of time in millions of kalpas, (A kalpa is about 4,320,000 years). The fact that the wise men of India have not been concerned with technological applications of this knowledge arises from the circumstance that technology is but one of innumerable ways of applying it."

It is, indeed, a remarkable circumstance that when Western civilization discovers Relativity it applies it to the manufacture of atom-bombs, whereas Oriental civilization applies it to the development of new states of consciousness."

(source: **Spiritual Practices of India - By Frederic Spiegelberg** Introduction by **Alan Watts** p. 8-9).

"It was once customary to refer to these people of India and China as heathens....apart from Sufism, the Near East produced nothing to approach the high level of mystical and psychological philosophy attained in India and China."



"Hinduism, therefore, is perhaps the most catholic of all religions, for it has not become so in the course of its evolution but was based on the principle of catholicity from the beginnings. Those who laid down the code of Manu made provision both for different mentalities and different vocations in the most through going manner; they showed an understanding of the social organism which in subsequent times has seldom been equaled..."

"It is almost certain, however, that Taoist Yoga was derived in great measure from India, and it is here that we must look for the greater wealth of information."

(source: **The Legacy of Asia and Western Man - By Allan Watts** p.1-2 and 28-29 and 85).

42. **Friedrich Majer** (1771-1818) a disciple of Johann Gottfried Herder, an Orientalist found that:

" It will no longer remain to be doubted that the priests of Egypt and the sages of Greece have drawn directly from the original well of India," that it is to 'the banks of the Ganges and the Indus that our hearts feel drawn as by some hidden urge."

And again:

"Towards the Orient, to the banks of the Ganges and the Indus, it is there our hearts feel drawn by some hidden urge - it is there that all the dark presentiments point which lie in the depths of our heart...In the Orient, the heavens poured forth into the earth."

(source: **On Hinduism Reviews and Reflections - By Ram Swarup** p. 102).

43. **Johann Gottfried Herder** (1744-1803) German philosopher, poet and critic, clergyman, born in East Prussia. Herder was an enormously influential literary critic and a leader in the Sturn und Drang movement. He saw in India the:

"lost paradise of all religions and philosophies," 'the cradle of humanity,' and also its 'eternal home,' the great Orient 'waiting to be discovered within ourselves.'

According to him, "mankind's origins can be traced to India, where the human mind got the first shapes of wisdom and virtue with a simplicity, strength and sublimity which has - frankly spoken - nothing, nothing at all equivalent in our philosophical, cold European world."

Herder regarded the Hindus, because of their ethical teachings, as the most gentle and peaceful people on earth. Herder's **"Thoughts of Some Brahmins "**(1792) which contains a selection of gnomic stanzas in free translations, gathered from Bhartrihari, the Hitopdesa and the Bhagavad Gita, expressed these ideals.

Herder pointed out to the spiritual treasures of India in search of which later German Sansritists and Indologists had devoted their lives.

(source: **Johann Gottfried Herder's Image of India** (1900) - By **Pranebendranath Ghosh** p-334).



Herder admired India, as did Novalis and Heine, for its simplicity, and denounced the Europeans for their greed, corruption, and economic exploitation of India.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p. 231).

"O holy land (India), I salute thee, thou source of all music, thou voice of the heart' and "Behold the East - cradle of the human race, of human emotion, of all religion."

Like Sir William Jones, Herder, a Lutheran pastor, was also attracted by the Hindu ideas of pantheism and of world-soul (atman), both of which came to be viewed by the German Romantics as providing support for their own views about the transcendent wholeness and the fundamentally spiritual essence of the natural world.

(source: **Oriental Enlightenment: The encounter between Asian and Western thought - By J. J. Clarke** p. 61-63).

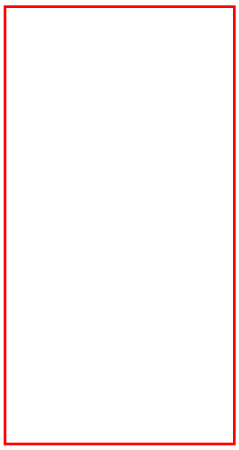


44. **Troy Wilson Organ** a professor at Ohio University and author of **The Hindu quest for the perfection of man** and **Hinduism; its historical development**, wrote:

"Hindu thought is not a philosophy. It is a philosophical religion... "Hinduism is a sadhana which seeks to guide man to integration, to spiritualization, and to liberation.....The concept of reincarnation is the Hindu way of asserting that there are no temporal nor developmental limits to the perfecting. "Hindu thought is natural, reasonable, and scientific. It is a process, not a result - a process of perfecting man". In the Hindu Monism (Advaita) God is not anthropomorphic being. He is All; He is not a despot or autocratic God.

(source: **Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction By T. C. Galav** Universal Science-Religion. Pg 123)

"In the Hindu world, the folklore and popular mythology carry the truths and teachings of the philosophers to the masses. In India, the mythology never ceased to support and facilitate the expression of philosophic thought. The rich pictorial script of the epic tradition, the features of the divinities whose incarnations and exploits constituted the myth, became the vehicles of communication for the priests. In this way a wonderful friendship of mythology and philosophy was effected; and this has been sustained with such result that the whole edifice of Indian civilization is imbued with spiritual meaning. The close interdependence of the two has served to counteract the natural tendency of the philosophy to become esoteric, removed from solving life's problems. In this symbolic form, the ideas have not been watered down to become popular. The vivid, perfectly appropriate pictorial script preserves the doctrines without the slightest damage to their senses."



45. **Andre Malraux** (1901-1976) author of **Anti-memoir**, profound thinker and French prolific writer, an essayist, novelist, art-historian, and political speech writer, **Malraux** did give his readers a philosophy.

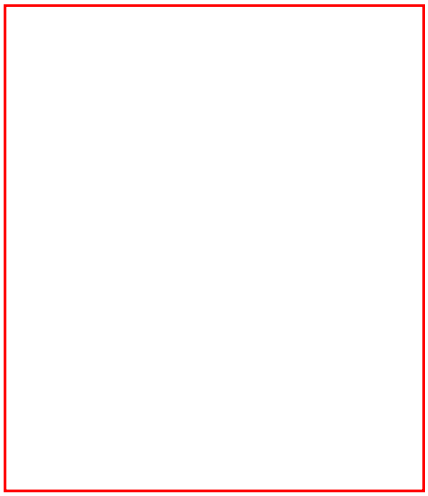
"The problem of this century is the religious problem and the discovery of Hindu thought will have a great deal to do with the solving of that particular problem".

“Europe is destructive, suicidal,” said André Malraux to Nehru in 1936, whom he would meet several times until the 1960s, trying in vain to persuade him of the relevance of India’s spirituality in today’s world. Malraux also reflected :

"...The West regards as truth what the Hindu regards as appearance (for if human life, in the age of Christendom, was doubtless an ordeal it was certainly truth and not illusion), and the Westerner can regard knowledge of the the universe as the supreme value, while for the Hindu the supreme value is accession to the divine Absolute. But the most profound difference is based on the fact that the fundamental reality for the West, Christian or athiest, is death, in whatever sense it may be interpreted --- while the fundamental reality for **India is the endlessness of life in the endlessness of time: Who can kill immortality?**

(source: **Malraux & India** - (New Delhi : Embassy of France in India, 1996), p. 46.and **Antimemires - By André Malraux** (Paris : Gallimard, 1967), p. 287-288).
http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/culture/france/biblio/folio/malraux/

46. **Dr. Karan Singh** (1931 -) heir apparent to the Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir, Indian Ambassador to the U.S. and an outstanding thinker and leader. A philosopher, environmentalist, statesman, orator, author and politician, life is a continuous effort to realize the eternal Brahman and work for the greatest common good.



"The Entire Cosmos is all pervaded by the same divine power. there is no ultimate duality in human existence or in consciousness. This is a truth which in the West is only recently being under stood after Einstein and Heisenberg and quantum mechanics. The Newtonian-Cartesian-Marxist paradigm of a materialistic universe has now been finally abolished, it has collapsed in the face of the new physics. Our ancient seers had a deeper insights into the nature of reality than people had even until very recently".

(source: **Essays on Hinduism - By Karan Singh** p. 69-71).

"The master principles upon which Hinduism is based are to be found essentially in the Upanishads, which represent the high watermark not only of Indian but of world philosophy. It is in these luminous dialogues that the great issues confronting humanity have been addressed in a manner that seems to grow in relevance as we move into the global society. "

"The first and most basic concept is that of the all-pervasive Brahman — “Isavasyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat” (Whatever exists and wherever it exists is permeated by the same divine power.) While many philosophies have postulated unbridgeable

dichotomies between god and the world, matter and spirit, the Upanishadic view is that all that exists is a manifestation without the light of consciousness behind it, and this, in a way, is the realization of the new science.

The second concept is that this Brahman resides within each individual consciousness, in the Atman. The Atman is the reflection of this all-pervasive Brahman in individual consciousness; but it is not ultimately separate from the Brahman. The concept of “Isvarah sarvabhutanam hriddese tishthati” (The lord resides within the heart of each individual) is the second great insight of the Upanishads, and the relationship between the Atman and the Brahman is the pivot upon which the whole Vedantic teaching revolves.



Another important Vedantic concept is that all human beings, because of their shared spirituality, are members of a single family. The Upanishads have an extraordinary phrase for the human race, ‘Amritasya putrah’ (Children of immortality), because we carry within our consciousness the light and the power of the Brahman regardless of race, colour, creed, sex, caste or nationality. That is the basis of the concept of human beings as an extended family — ‘Vasudhaiva kutumbakam’ — which is engraved on the first gate into our Parliament House.

"It is certainly true that Hinduism has provided the broad cultural and religious framework that has held India together despite its astonishing linguistic, ethnic and political diversity and divisions. **Hinduism is as essential for an understanding of Indian culture and civilization"**

(source: **Keep the light shining - By Karan Singh** - Hindustantimes.com).

47. **August Wilhelm von Schlegel** (1767-1845).German Scholar and Poet who also learnt Sanskrit. The impulse to Indological studies was first given in Germany, through his book, ' **The Language and Wisdom of the Indians'** which appeared in 1818. He wrote The Bhagavat-geeta, or, Dialogues of Krishna and Arjoon : in eighteen lectures.

"The divine origin of man, as taught in Vedanta, is continually inculcated, to stimulate his efforts to return, to animate him in the struggle, and incite him to consider a reunion and re-incorporation with Divinity as the one primary object of every action and reaction. Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason as it is set forth by the Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigor of Oriental idealism like a feeble Promethean spark in the full fold of heavenly glory of the noonday sun, faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished."

Schlegel edited to original text of the **Bhagavad Gita**, together with a Latin translation, and paid tribute to its authors:

"I shall always adore the imprints of their feet"

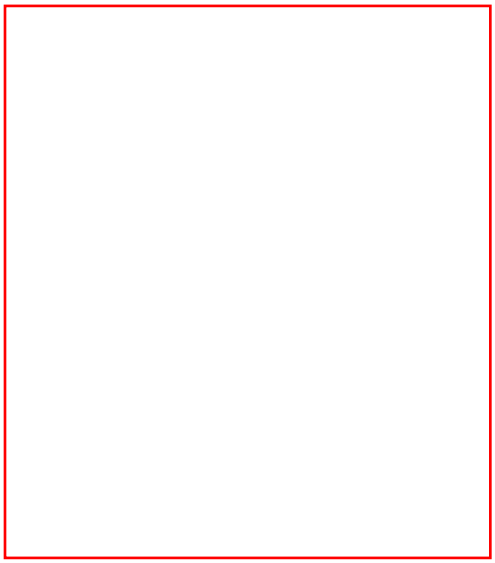
He noted in his book, **Wisdom of the Ancient Indians**, " It cannot be denied that the early Indians possessed a knowledge of the God. All their writings are replete with sentiments

and expressions, noble, clear, severely grand, as deeply conceived in any human language in which men have spoken of their God..."

(source: **Proof of Vedic Culture's Global Existence - By Stephen Knapp** p. vii).

Hindu philosophy in comparison with which, in the words of Schlegel, **"even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans" appears "like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noonday sun faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished."**

(source: **A History of Hindu Civilization During British Rule - By Pramatha Nath Bose** volume I p. x).



48. **Jawaharlal Nehru** (1889-1964) first prime minister of free India, was more than a deeply moral human being. He yearned for spiritual light. He was particularly drawn to Swami Vivekananda and the Sri Ramakrishna Ashram. The Upanishads fascinated him. **Nehru** called the Vedas as:

"The unfolding of the human mind in the earliest stages of thought. And what a wonderful mind it was!." It is the first outpourings of the human mind, the glow of poetry, the rapture at nature's loveliness and mystery." A brooding spirit crept in gradually till the author of the Vedas cried out: 'O Faith, endow us with belief'. It raised deeper question in a hymn called the ' The Song of Creation'.

"The **Bhagavad-Gita** deals essentially with the spiritual foundation of human existence. It is a call of action to meet the obligations and duties of life; yet keeping in view the spiritual nature and grander purpose of the universe."

"I am proud of this noble heritage which was and still is ours, and I am aware that I too, like all of us, am a link in that uninterrupted chain which finds its origin in the dawn of history, in India's immemorial past. It is in testimony of this and as a last homage to the cultural heritage of India that I request that a handful of my ashes be thrown in the **Ganges** at Allahabad (formerly known as Prayag) so that they may be borne to the vast ocean that bears on the shores of India."

(source: **The India I Love - By Marie-Simone Renou** p.128).

Jawaharlal Nehru in his book **- A Discovery of India** wrote:

" **The statue of Nataraja (dance pose of Lord Shiva) is a well known example for the artistic, scientific and philosophical significance of Hinduism."**

(source: **A Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 214).

49. **A. E. George Russell** (1867 - 1935) the Irish poet, essayist, painter, Nationalist leader, mystic, and economist; a leader in movement for cooperation among Irish farmers; editor The Irish Statesman 1923-30.

Russel paid an eloquent tribute to the **Upanishads** and the **Bhagavad Gita**.

'Goethe, Wordsworth, Emerson, and Thoreau among moderns have something of this vitality and wisdom but we can find all they have said and much more in the grand sacred books of India."

"The Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads contain such godlike fullness of wisdom on all things that I feel the authors must have looked with calm remembrance back through a thousand passionate lives, full of feverish strife for and with shadows, ere they could have written with such certainty of things which the soul feels to be sure."

(source: **A Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 93).

50. **Paul Deussen** (1845-1919) a direct disciple of Arthur Schopenhauer, preferred to be called in Sanskrit, **Deva-Sena** was a scholar of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, has observed:

"Whatever may be the discoveries of the scientific mind, none can dispute the eternal truths propounded by the Upanishads. Though they may appear as riddles, the key to solving them lies in our heart and if one were to approach them with an open mind one could secure the treasure as did the Rishis of ancient times"



About **Vedanta**, he said : It is now, as in the ancient times, living in the mind and heart of every thoughtful Hindu."

(source: **Indian Antiquary** (1902) - By **Paul Deussen** and reprinted in **Outline of Indian Philosophy** - 1907).

He writes in his **Philosophy of the Upanishads**,

"God, the sole author of all good in us, is not, as in the Old Testament, a Being contrasted with and distinct form us, but rather.....our divine self. This and much more we may learn the lesson if we are willing to put the finishing touch to the Christian consciousness, and make it on all sides consistent and complete."

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** p.234).

The Vedanta gives profoundly based reasons for all charity and brotherliness.

Dr. Deussen says, "the fact is nevertheless that the highest and purest morality is the immediate consequence of the Vedanta. The Gospels fix quite correctly as the highest law of morality 'love your neighbor as yourself'. But why should I do so, since by the order of nature I feel pain and pleasure only in myself and not in my neighbor?' **" The answer is**

not," he says, "in the Bible but it is in the Veda in the great formula:

'That thou art' (Tat tvam asi) which gives in three words, metaphysics and morals together.

(source: **Is India Civilized - Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p. 264).



In his **Philosophy of the Upanishads**, recently translated by Rev. A. S. Geden, Prof. Deussen claims, for its fundamental thought **"an inestimable value for the whole race of mankind."** It is in "marvelous agreement with the philosophy founded by Kant, and adopted and perfected by his great successor Schopenhauer." differing from it, where it does differ, only to excel.

"It was here that for the first time the original thinkers of the Upanishads , to their immortal honour, found it when they recognized our Atman, our innermost individual being as the Brahman, the inmost being of universal nature and of all her phenomenon." (p. 39-40)

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 298-299).

" the Upanishads have tackled every fundamental problem of life. They have given us an intimate account of reality."

"On the tree of wisdom there is no fairer flower than the *Upanishads*, and no finer fruit than the Vedanta philosophy,' and he added,

'The system of Vedanta, as founded on the **Upanishads** and **Vedanta Sutras** and accompanied by Shankara's commentary on them---equal in rank to Plato and Kant---is one of the most valuable products of the genius of mankind in his researches of the eternal truth.'

(source: **Paul Deussen's address before the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society** on February 25, 1893).



51. **F. C. Frederick Crossfield Happold** (1893 -) author of several books including **Mysticism: a study and an anthology** and **Religious faith and twentieth-century man**, said about the **Upanishads**:

"The most profound and revolutionary statement on the nature of reality, which mankind has as yet made"

(source: **The Upanishads Translated for the Modern Reader By Eknath Easwaran**. Nilgiri Press. 1987 quoted on book cover).

52. **Dr. Heinrich Zimmer** (1890 -1943) was a scholar with a great deal of first-hand knowledge of Indian philosophy and art history. **Zimmer** declared in his book **Philosophies of India**:

"We of the Occident are about to arrive at crossroads that was reached by the thinkers of India hundreds of years before Christ"

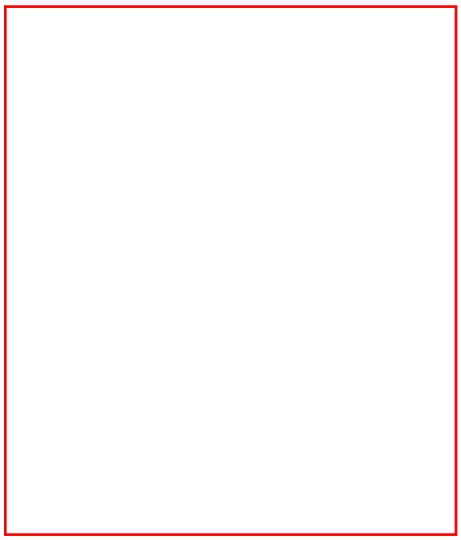
Regarding the **Cosmic Dance of Shiva**, he has said:

"His gesture wild and full of grace, precipitate the cosmic illusion; his flying arms, and legs and the swaying of his torso produce – indeed, they are – the continuous creation-destruction of the universe, death exactly balancing birth, annihilation the end of every coming-forth."

(source: **The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism - By Fritjof Capra** p.243).

53. **Ashby Philips** of Princeton University echoes:

"The Hindu argument that all religions are equally valid may well sweep the world in the next 25 years. **It may well be that within the foreseeable future, it will be Hinduism which will be challenging Christianity not only in India but in the west as well.** Hinduism indeed has a new vitality not only suitable for defense but also adaptable for offense against Western religions."



54. **Nani Ardeshir Palkhiwala** (1920-2002) a brilliant legal brain and a philanthropist. Former prime minister Morarji Desai had described him as 'India's finest intellectual'. A vocal proponent of press freedom, Palkhivala was one of the directors of Press Trust of India (PTI) representing public interest since 1985. None other than C Rajagopalachari had once observed, "Nani is God's gift to India". India's best known constitutional lawyer, author, former Indian ambassador to the US, has said:

"India is eternal. Though the beginnings of her numerous civilizations go so far back in time that they are lost in the twilight of history, she has the gift of perpetual youth. Her culture is ageless and is as relevant to this present 20th century as it was to the 20th century before Christ."

"Our culture is primarily concerned with spiritual development is of special significance in our age which is marked by the obsolescence of the materialistic civilization."

Ahimsa, peace and non-aggression were the hallmarks of Indian culture. In her crowded history of over 5,000 years during which she had thrown up vast and puissant empires, India never practiced military aggression on countries outside her borders. Thanks to our ethos, even today the Indian people patiently suffer miseries and endure injustices which would result in devastating explosions in any other country. In these days of spiritual illiteracy and poverty of the spirit, when people find that wealth can only multiply itself and attain nothing, when people have to deceive their souls with counterfeit after having killed the poetry of life, it is necessary to remind ourselves that civilization is an act of the spirit.

Material progress is not to be mistaken for inner progress. When technology outstrips moral development, the prospect is not that of a millennium but of extinction. Our ancient heritage is a potent antidote to the current tendency to standardize souls and seek salvation in herds.

"It has been my long-standing conviction that India is like a donkey carrying a sack of gold - the donkey does not know what it is carrying but is content to go along with the load on

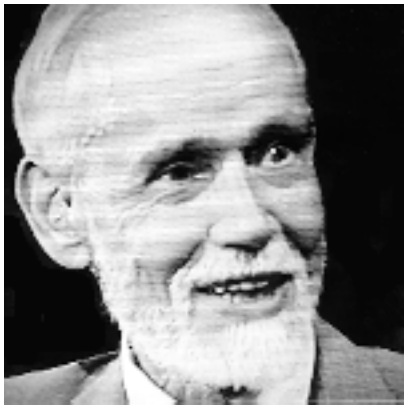
its back. The load of gold is the fantastic treasure - in arts, literature, culture, and some sciences like Ayurvedic medicine - which we have inherited from the days of the splendor that was India."

" Indian culture encouraged the cultivation of the intellect, not as a commodity for sale in the market-place, but for the inner joy experienced by the questing mind."

(source: **India's Priceless Heritage - By Nani A. Palkhivala** 1980 p.1 - 39).

"Modern India will find her identity and the modern Indian will regain his soul when our people begin to have some understanding of our priceless heritage. A nation which has had a great past can look forward with confidence to a great future. It would be restorative to national self-confidence to know that many discoveries of today are really re-discoveries and represent knowledge which ancient India had at her command. World thinkers have stood in marvel at the sublimity of our scriptures."

(source: **Let's regain our lost soul - By Nani A Palkhivala** - Tapovan Prasad - Chinmaya Mission vol. 39 #2 February 2001p 29).



55. **Huston Smith** born in China to Methodist missionaries, a philosopher, most eloquent writer, world-famous religion scholar who practices Hatha Yoga. Has taught at MIT and is currently visiting professor at Univ. of California at Berkley. Smith has also produced PBS series. He has written various books, **The World's Religions**, "Science and Human Responsibility", and "The Religions of Man".

He found in **Vedantic Hinduism** what he described as: **"a profundity of worldview that made my Christianity look like third grade."**

(source: **Philadelphia Inquirer Section: Faith - By David O'Reilly** Sunday June 18, 2000).

He was "perfectly content" with Christianity until the Vedanta came into his life some five decades ago. **"When I read the Upanishads, I found a profundity of world view that made my Christianity seem like third grade."**

(source: **Rediff.com - 'Religions are like human beings**).

"Men and women that are lining the Bathing Ghats are all Hindus, but how different they are. But India looked past their bodies into their minds where she found the **prolific ness of the infinite** exploding like a Roman cantle.

No other civilization saw, appreciated, and classified so precisely the full spectrum of human personality types…an achievement that has earned for India – the title of the world's introspective psychologist. The key to this psychological perceptiveness is her recognition to the extent to which people will differ and the degree to which these differences are to be respected.

The stages of life - The kind of person and way we approach God – affective – loving him, reflective person – by knowing him, active person – by serving him, contemplative – by meditating. All four of these way to yoga – union reach the same summit – which you follow depends on your spiritual temperament. Side of the mountain – which you start climbing. **Hinduism's cosmology was prodigious in scope and depth, but India did not stop there. She went on to advance what was probably the most daring**

hypothesis man has ever conceived. We are ourselves are the infinite, the very infinite from which the Universe proceeds. Everything in Hinduism works to drive the point home.

(source: **The Mystic's Journey - India and the Infinite: The Soul of a People – By Huston Smith**).

Here are Smith's views on **Symbols and Idols of Hinduism:**



"Enter Hinduism's myths, her magnificent symbols, her several hundred images of God, her rituals that keep turning night and day like never-ending prayer wheels. It is obtuse to confuse Hinduism's images with idolatry, and their multiplicity with polytheism. They are 'runways' from which the sense-laden human spirit can rise for its "flight of the alone to the Alone". Even village priest will frequently open their temple ceremonies with the following beloved invocation:

O Lord, forgive three sins that are due to my human limitations:
Thou art everywhere, but I worship you here;
Thou art without form, but I worship you in these forms;
Thou needest no praise, yet I offer you these prayers and salutations,
Lord, forgive three sins that are due to my human limitations.

(source: **The World's Religions** - **By Huston Smith** p. 34).

"The invisible excludes nothing, the invisible that excludes nothing is the infinite – the soul of India is the infinite."

"Philosophers tell us that the Indians were the first ones to conceive of a true infinite from which nothing is excluded. The West shied away from this notion. The West likes form, boundaries that distinguish and demarcate. The trouble is that boundaries also imprison – they restrict and confine."

"India saw this clearly and turned her face to that which has no boundary or whatever." "India anchored her soul in the infinite seeing the things of the world as masks of the infinite assumes – there can be no end to these masks, of course. If they express a true infinity." And It is here that India's mind boggling variety links up to her infinite soul."

"India includes so much because her soul being infinite excludes nothing." It goes without saying that the universe that India saw emerging from the infinite was **stupendous**."

While the West was still thinking, perhaps, of 6,000 years old universe – India was already envisioning ages and eons and galaxies as numerous as the sands of the Ganges. The Universe so vast that modern astronomy slips into its folds

without a ripple."

(source: **The Mystic's Journey - India and the Infinite: The Soul of a People – By Huston Smith**).

56. **Rudyard Kipling** (1865-1936) imperial poet of British India, as well as a writer, who spent his earliest years blissfully happy in an India full of exotic sights and sounds. **Kipling** was a Nobel Laureate in Literature, and was famous for his poem, **The White Man's Burden**. He said this to Fundamental Christian Missionaries :



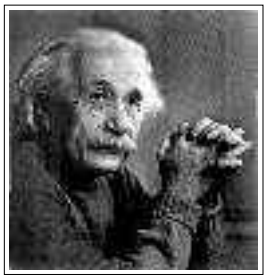


"Now it is not good for the Christian's health to hustle the Hindu brown for the Christian riles and the Hindu smiles and weareth the Christian down ; and the end of the fight is a tombstone while with the name of the late deceased and the epitaph drear , " A fool lies here who tried to hustle the east".

57. **William Macintosh** wrote: "All history points to India as the mother of science and art,"

"This country was anciently so renowned for knowledge and wisdom that the philosophers of Greece did not disdain to travel thither for their improvement."

(source: **The Invasion That Never Was - By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 18).



58. **Albert Einstein**, (1879-1955) physicist. In 1905 He published his theory of Relativity. **Einstein** said:

" When I read the Bhagavad-Gita and reflect about how God created this universe everything else seems so superfluous."

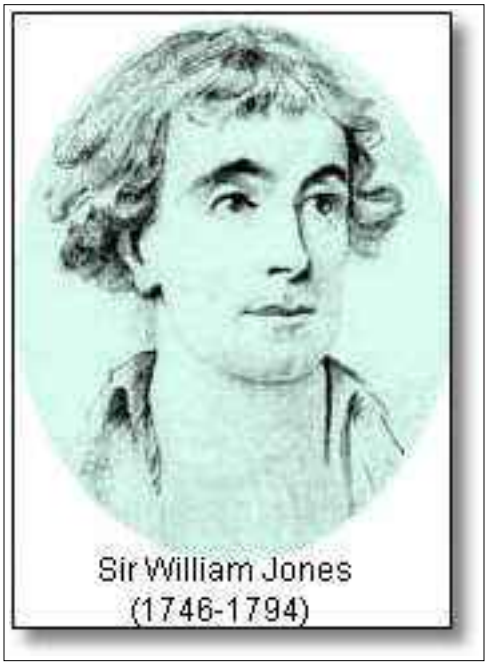
"We owe a lot to Indians who taught us how to count, without which no worthwhile scientific discovery could have been made."

(source: http://www.agbioworld.org/biotech_info/articles/prakash/prakashart/plant_biotech.html).

59. **Pierre Sonnerat** (1748 - 1814) a French naturalist, and author of **Voyage aux Indes Orientales et a la Chine**, concurred:

"We find among the Indians the vestiges of the most remote antiquity....We know that all peoples came there to draw the elements of their knowledge ... India, in her splendor, gave religions and laws to all the other peoples; Egypt and Greece owed to her both their fables and their wisdom."

(source: **The Invasion That Never Was - By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 18).



60. **Sir William Jones** (1746-1794),came to India as a judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta. He pioneered Sanskrit studies. His admiration for Indian thought and culture was almost limitless. Even at a time when Hinduism was at a low ebb and it was quite fashionable to run it down, he held it in great esteem. While he believed in Christianity, he was attracted to the Hindu concepts of the non-duality of God, as interpreted by Sankara, and the transmigration of the human soul. The later theory he found more rational than the Christian doctrine of punishment and eternity of pain. Writing to his close friend, Earl Spencer, in 1787, he said:

" I am no Hindu, but I hold the doctrine of the Hindus concerning a future state to be incomparably more rational, more pious, and more likely to deter men from vice, than the horrid opinions, inculcated on punishments without end"

He writes of the Hindus that they are **"a people with a fertile and inventive genius" who in some early age...were splendid in arts and arms, happy in government; wise in legislation, and eminent in various knowledge..."**

" I am in love with the **gopis,** he wrote to Wilkins in 1784, 'charmed with Krishna, an enthusiastic admirer of Rama and a devout adorer of Brahma. Yudhisthir, Arjuna, Bhima and other warriors of the Mahabharata appear greater in my eyes than Agamemnon, Ajax, and Achilles appeared when I first read the Iliad.'

(source: **India Discovered By John Keay** p-28).

In 1794, he published a translation of the Ordinances of Manu. He said about Manu:

"A spirit of sublime devotion, of benevolence to mankind, and of amiable tenderness to all sentient creatures pervades the whole work: the style of it has a certain austere majesty, that sounds like the language of legislation and extorts a respectful awe; the sentiments of independence on all beings but God, and the harsh admonition even to kings are truly noble: and the many panagyrics on the Gayatri, the mother, as it is called, of the Veda, prove the author to have adored not the visible material sun, but the divine and incomparably greater light, to use the words of the most venerable text in the Indian Scripture, which illumines all, delights all, from which all proceed, to which all must return, and which alone can irradiate not our visual organs merely but our souls and our intellects."

(source: **Eminent Orientalists: Indian European American** - Asian Educational Services. p.6).



"To read the Vedanta, or the many fine compositions in illustration of it, without believing that Pythagoras and Plato derived their sublime theories from the same fountain with the sages of India." He also gave arguments to show that a group of Egyptian priests had settled down in India and borrowed much from it."

(source: **The Hindu Phenomenon - By Girilal Jain** p- 35-36).

Equally interesting are his poems. A Hymn to Narayana, in which he describes the Hindu theory of creation. A Hymn to Lakshmi and A Hymn to Ganga are equally fine.

A Hymn to Ganga

"How sweetly Ganga smiles, and glides,
Luxuriant o'er her broad autumnal bed!
Her waves perpetual verdure spread;
Whilst health and plenty deck her golden sides."

(source: **Eminent Orientalists: Indian European American** - Asian Educational Services. p.13-18).

"The analogies between Greek and Pythagorean philosophy and the Sankhya school are very obvious."



Jones firm belief in the Vedas is challenging and at the same time illuminating:

" I can venture to affirm, without meaning to pluck a leaf from the never-fading laurels of our immortal Newton, that the whole of his theology, and part of his philosophy, may be found in the Vedas".

"The six philosophical schools, whose principles are explained in the Darsana Sastra, comprise all the metaphysics of the old Academy, the Stoa, the Lyceum; nor is it possible to read the Vedanta, or the many fine compositions in illustration of it, without believing that Pythagoras and Plato derived their sublime theories from the same fountain with the Sages of India."

"We are told by the Greek writers that the Indians were the wisest of nations, and in moral wisdom, they were certainly eminent."

(source: **Eminent Orientalists: Indian European American** - Asian Educational Services. p.11).

Of **Sankara's** commentary upon the Vedanta, Sir Jones says that "it is not possible to speak with too much applause of so excellent a work."

Sir Jones says of **Vedanta**:

"The fundamental tenet of the Vedantic school consisted not in denying the existence of matter, that is, of solidity, impenetrability and extended figure (to deny would be lunacy), but in correcting the popular notion of it, and in contending that it has no essence independent of mental perception, that existence and perceptibility are convertible terms, that external appearances and sensations are illusory and would vanish into nothing if the divine energy, which alone sustains them were suspended but for a moment: an opinion which Epicharmus and Plato seem to have adopted, and which has been maintained in the present century with great elegance, but with little applause, partly because it has been misunderstood, and partly because it has been misapplied by the false reasoning of some popular writers, who are said to have disbelieved in the moral attributes of God, whose omnipresence, wisdom, and goodness are the basis of the Indian philosophy."

He adds: "The system is built on the purest devotion."

"Human life would not be sufficient to make oneself acquainted with any considerable part of Hindu literature."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - by Har Bilas Sarda** p. 203 and 296 -297).

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

201.**Professor Kakuzo Okakura** (1862-1913) a Japanese philosopher, art expert, curator and author of **The Book of Tea** and **The Ideals of the East, with Special Reference to the Art of Japan** says:



"We catch a glimpse of the great river of science which never ceases to flow in India. For India has carried and scattered the data of intellectual progress for the whole world, ever since the pre-Buddhist period when she produced the Sankhya philosophy and the atomic theory; the fifth century, when her mathematics and astronomy find their blossom in Arya Bhatta; the seventh when Brahmagupta uses his highly-developed Algebra and makes astronomical observations; the twelfth, brilliant with the glory of Bhaskaracharya, and his famous daughter, down to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries themselves with Ram Chandra the mathematician and Jagdish Chandra Bose the physicist.

Okakura adds that in this scientific age: India had faith.

"Such a faith in its early energy and enthusiasm was the natural incentive to that great scientific age which was to produce astronomers like Aryabhatta, discovering the revolution of the earth on its own axis, and his not less illustrious successor Varamihira; who brought Hindu medicine to its height, perhaps under Susruta; and which finally gave to Arabia the knowledge with which she was later to fructify Europe.

The religion and culture of China are undoubtedly of Hindu origin. At one time in the single province of loyang there were more than three thousand Indian monks and ten thousand Indian families to impress their national religion and art on Chinese soil.

(source: **The Ideals of the East, with Special Reference to the Art of Japan - By Kakuzo Okakura** ISBN 4925080261).

Asia is one," says Okakura "The Himalayas divide only to unite."

(source: **The Heritage of Asia - By Kenneth Saunders** p.24 1932 Student Christian Movement Press).

202. **Sir Michael Sadler** (1861-1943) authority on education, wrote in 1919:

"One cannot walk through the streets of any center of population in India without meeting face after face which is eloquent of thought, of fine feeling, and of insight into the profound things of life. In a very true sense the people of India are nearer to the spiritual hearts of things than we in England are. As for brain power, there is that in India which is comparable with the best in our country."



(source: **India and British Imperialism - By Gorham D. Sanderson** p. 49).

203. **Dr. Arthur Versluis** (1959 -) Associate Professor of American Thought and Language at Michigan State University, a scholar and researcher of several currents of the hermetic, gnostic, theosophic and mystic traditions and author of The Egyptian Mystery, has said:

"It is necessary that we turn to the Vedanta....because the Upanishads provide the purest metaphysics available to us from the primordial past."

(source: **The Egyptian Mystery - By Arthur Versluis** SBN 014019018X).

204. **Count Maurice Maeterlinck** (1862-1949) was a Belgian writer of poetry and a wide variety of essays. He won the 1911 Nobel Prize for literature. In his book **Mountain Paths**, in the **doctrine of Karma**, he finds **"the only satisfactory solution of life's injustices."**

"he falls back upon the earliest and greatest of Revelations, those of the Sacred Books of India with a Cosmogony which no European conception has ever surpassed."

(source: **Mountain Paths - By Maurice Maeterlinck** ISBN 1589632532).



Maeterlinck writes in his book **The Great Secret** pages 26-98:

"We cannot tell how the religion of the Hindus came into being. When we become aware of it, we find it already complete in its broad outlines, its main principles. Not only is it complete, but the **farther back we go, the more perfect it is, the more unadulterated, the more closely related to the loftiest speculations of our modern agnosticism."**

"When the world had emerged from the darkness," says the **Bhagavata Puranam**, "the subtle elementary principle produced the vegetable seed which first of all gave life to the plants. From the plants, life passed into the fantastic creatures which were born of the slime in the waters; then, through a series of different shapes and animals, it came to Man." They passed in succession by way of the plants, the worms, the insects, the serpents, the tortoises, cattle, and the wild animals - such is the lower stage," says Manu again, who adds, "Creatures acquired the qualities of those that preceded them, so that the farther down its position in the series, the greater its qualities.

"Have we not here the whole of Darwinian evolution confirmed by geology and foreseen at least 6,000 years ago? On the other hand, is this not the theory of Akasa which we more clumsily call the ether, the sole source of all substances, to which our science is returning? Is it true that the recent theories of Einstein deny ether, supposing that radiant energy - visible light, for example - is propagated independently through a space that is an absolute void. But the scientific ether is not precisely the Hindu Akasa which is much more subtle and immaterial being a sort of spiritual element or divine energy, space uncreated, imperishable, and infinite."



Commenting on the **Vedic hymns** Maseterlinck says:

"Is it possible to find, in our human annals, words more majestic, more full of solemn anguish, more august in tone, more devout, more terrible? Where, from the depths of an agnosticism, which thousands of years have augmented, can we point to a wider horizon? At the very outset, it surpasses all that has been said, and goes farther than we shall even dare to go. No spectacle could be more absorbing than this struggle of our forefathers of five to ten thousand years ago with the Unknowable, the unknowable nature of the causeless Cause of all Causes. But of this cause, or this God, we should never have known anything, had He remained self-absorbed, had He never manifested Himself." Thus it is, say the Laws of Manu, "that, by an alternation of awakening and repose, the immutable Being causes all this assemblage of creatures, mobile and immobile, eternally to return to life and to die." He exhales Himself, or expels His breath, throughout the Universe, innumerable worlds are born, multiply and evolve. He Himself inhales, drawing His breath, and Matter enters into Spirit, which is but an invisible form of Matter: and the worlds disappear, without perishing, to reintegrate the Eternal cause, and emerge once more upon the awakening of Brahma - that is, thousands of millions of years later; to enter into Him so it has been and ever shall be, through all eternity, without beginning, without cessation, without end."

(source: **Ancient Indian Education - By Radha Kumud Mookerji** p.17 and 49 ISBN 8120804236).

Maeterlinck in his book **The Great Secret**, calls The **Bhagavad Gita** or "Song of the Blessed" **a magnificent flower of Hindu mysticism**.

(source: **The Great Secret** - **By Maurice Maeterlinck** ASIN 0806511559 p. 14).

205. **John Adam Cramb** (1862-1913) author of **The Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain** says:

"India is not only the Italy of Asia, it is not only the land of romance of art and beauty, it is in religion, earth's central shrine. India is religion."

(source: **Ancient Indian Culture At A Glance - By Swami Tattwananda** p.76).



206. **James Bissett Pratt** (1875-1944) American author of **Why Religions Die** and **India and its Faiths**, makes these observations about Hinduism, which according to him, is the only religion which tends to survive the present crisis in the life of all religions.

Hinduism, which he calls the "Vedic Way" is a **"self perpetuating" religion. The Vedic way...the way of constant spiritual re-interpretation.. leads to life - life which is self perpetuating, self-renewing and which for the individual and for the world may be eternal. "**

Unlike other religions "not death, but development" has been the fate of Hinduism. "that which in it was vital and true cast off the old shell and clothed itself in more suitable expression, with no break in the continuity of life and no loss in the sanctity and weight of its authority." Generalizing on the secret of **longevity of the Vedic religion,** Professor Pratt says: "If a religion is to live it must adapt itself to new and changing conditions; if it is to feed the spiritual life of its children, it must have the sensitivity and inventiveness that shall enable it to modify their as their needs demand."

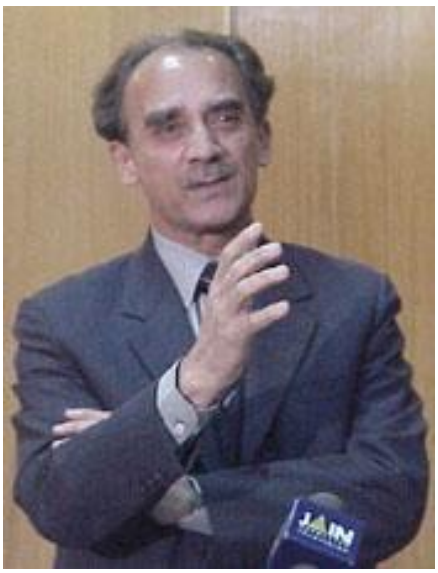
Another secret of the **vitality of Hindu religion, is its catholicity**. He says: "Mutually contradictory creeds can and do keep house together without quarrel within the wide and hospitable Hindu family." **"Hindu thought....because of its ingrained conclusiveness, its tolerance, and its indifference to doctrinal divergences, stressed the essential unity of all Indian Dharmas,** whether Hindu or Buddhist, and minimized differences."

(source: **Why Religions Die - By James Bissett Pratt** Berkeley. University of California Press. 1940 p. 122).

207. **William Harten Gilbert** (1904 -) author of **Peoples of India** has said:

"In the history of human culture the contribution of the Indian peoples in all fields has been of the greatest importance. From India we are said to have derived domestic poultry, shellac, lemons, cotton, jute, rice, sugar, indigo, the buffalo, cinnamon, ginger, pepper, sugar-cane, the games of chess, Pachisi, Polo, the Zero concept, the decimal system, the basis of certain philological concepts, a wealth of fables with moral import, an astonishing variety of artistic products, and innumerable ideas in philosophy and religion such as asceticism and monasticism."

(source: **Peoples of India - By William Harten Gilbert**).



208. **Arun Shourie** (1941-) is a Rajya Sabha member and among India's best known commentators on current and political affairs. His writings are backed by rigorous analysis and meticulous research. **Shourie** has been an economist with the World Bank, a consultant in the planning commission and the editor of Indian Express. Among the many honors and awards, he has received the Magsaysay Award, the International Editor of the Year, the Dadabhai Naoroji and the Astor Award. Author of several books, including **Secular Agenda**, **Eminent Historians**, **Harvesting Our Souls**, **Religions in Politics**.

Shourie writes:

"The traditions of India were rich as can be. They had attained insights of the first water...And they were inclusive. A person devoted to a tree was not traduced as an 'animist', a person devoted to a bull or an elephant, or a lion or a snake or even the lowly mouse was not laughed away. The

objects of his devotion were received with reverence - they became part of a pantheon.. Nor was this artifice. The inclusiveness flowed from deep conviction, from what had been experienced at the deepest.. But no one could impede reform by an appeal to 'fundamentals', for these fundamentals made the individual's own experience the ultimate referrent. That everything should reform and transform, the tradition regarded as natural. Differences were harmonized through discourse..."

(source: **Missionaries in India - By Arun Shourie** 1994 - ISBN 8172232705 p. 41-43). For more on Arun Shourie refer to chapter **GlimpsesVII** and **Conversion**).



Bronze four armed Nataraja

209. **Prof. Brian David Josephson** (1940 -) Welsh physicist, the youngest Nobel Laureate has said:

"The Vedanta and the Sankhya hold the key to the laws of mind and thought process which are co-related to the Quantum Field, i.e. the operation and distribution of particles at atomic and molecular levels."

"He has turned to meditation and Indian Philosophy especially the Vedanta and Smakhya philosophy to find" scientific explanations" for the laws of mind and thought processes and their correlation to the quantum field in physics, which deals with creation and destruction of particles at atomic and molecular levels. 'Indian philosophy shows the relationship between mind and matter. Mind as seen in Indian philosophy enables one to describe subjective reality or the process of decision making as a wave function in terms of quantum physics".

Samkhya and Vedanta propound the evolution of universe in it inanimate and animate aspects, more comprehensively than modern science does. Vedananta derives it from primal Divine Energy or Sakti and Samkhya from proto-Nature or Prakriti.

(source: **Science and Vedanta - By H. M. Ganesh Rao** and **Mera Bharat Mahan**).

210. **Michael Wood** (1948 -) British historian/host/writer of **The Barbarian West** public TV documentary. At the heart of the Western Civilization, says Wood, lies a deep streak of violence which drives them to exploit nature and mankind.

"Usually it is said that the East is hopelessly backward and needs to catch up with the West. But, a consideration of the legacy of these great civilizations suggests, says wood, that the West has some catching up to do. It needs to learn from the East a way of cultivating its inner space, of accepting limits and desires in an increasingly finite world.

"In the past 200 years one form of civilization, that of the West, has changed the balance of nature for ever. And now it is civilization itself which has become a central problem of our world."

Taking the Eastern perspective of life, Wood leads us through Western history from its Greco/Roman beginnings to Sir Francis Bacon's and momentous treatise declaring science's supremacy over God. Wood says this is where the West really got off-track, into matter, away from spirit. Final frames of this uncomplimentary portrait of Western societies-and their claims of superiority over Eastern cultures-are cuts from NASA spaceships to a worship scene in Meenaskhi temple, South India, where Wood suggests real civilization has been flourishing for millennia.

He forcefully appreciates India's spirituality and culture and narrates:

"History is full of empires of the sword, but India alone created an empire of the spirit."



"India was one of the earliest of the great civilizations and it defined the goals of civilized life very differently from the West. The West raised individualism, materialism, rationality, [and] masculinity as it ideals. India's great tradition insisted on non violence, renunciation, the inner life, [and] the female as pillars of civilization. And through all the triumphs and disasters of her history she hung on to that ideal, an eternal quest to identify humanity with the whole of creation, a unity in diversity ... History is full of empires of the sword but India alone created an empire of the spirit."

"Ancient India is with us today in the living tradition of the Hindu religion, the basis of Indian culture. The traditions that are honored by millions of Hindus in the present were born in the Indus Valley 5,000 years ago."

(source: **India: Empire of the Spirit - Michael Wood**, quoted from program 2 of the television documentary "Legacy").

211. **Gary Zukav** author of **The Dancing Wu Li Masters: an overview of the new physics** says,

"Hindu mythology is virtually a large scale projection into the psychological realm of microscopic scientific discoveries." "The Wu Li Masters know that physicists are doing more than 'discovering the endless diversity of nature.' They are dancing with Kali, the Divine Mother of Hindu mythology."

(source: **The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An overview of the new physics** ASIN 0553249142).



212. **Dr. Koenraad Elst** (1959 -) Dutch historian, born in Leuven, Belgium, on 7 August 1959, into a Flemish (i.e. Dutch-speaking Belgian) Catholic family. He graduated in Philosophy, Chinese Studies and Indo-Iranian Studies at the Catholic University of Leuven. During a stay at the Benares Hindu University, he discovered India's communal problem and wrote his first book about the budding Ayodhya conflict.

An strong advocate for **Hindu revivalism in the West.** He writes:

"The struggle of Hindu society is not primarily with the Muslim community. The most important opponents of Hindu society today are not the Islamic communal leaders, but the **interiorized colonial rulers of India, the alienated English-educated and mostly Left-leaning elite that noisily advertises its "secularism."** It is these people who impose anti-Hindu policies on Hindu society, and who **keep Hinduism down and prevent it from proudly raising its head after a thousand years of oppression."**

"The Hindu fight is not at all with Muslims; the fight is between Hindus anxious to renew themselves in the spirit of their civilization, and the state, Indian in name and not in spirit and the political and intellectual class trapped in the debris the British managed to bury us under before they left."

"The worst torment for Hindu society today is this **mental slavery, this sense of inferiority which Leftist intellectuals,** through their power positions in education and the media, and their direct influence on the public and political arena, keep on inflicting on the Hindu mind."

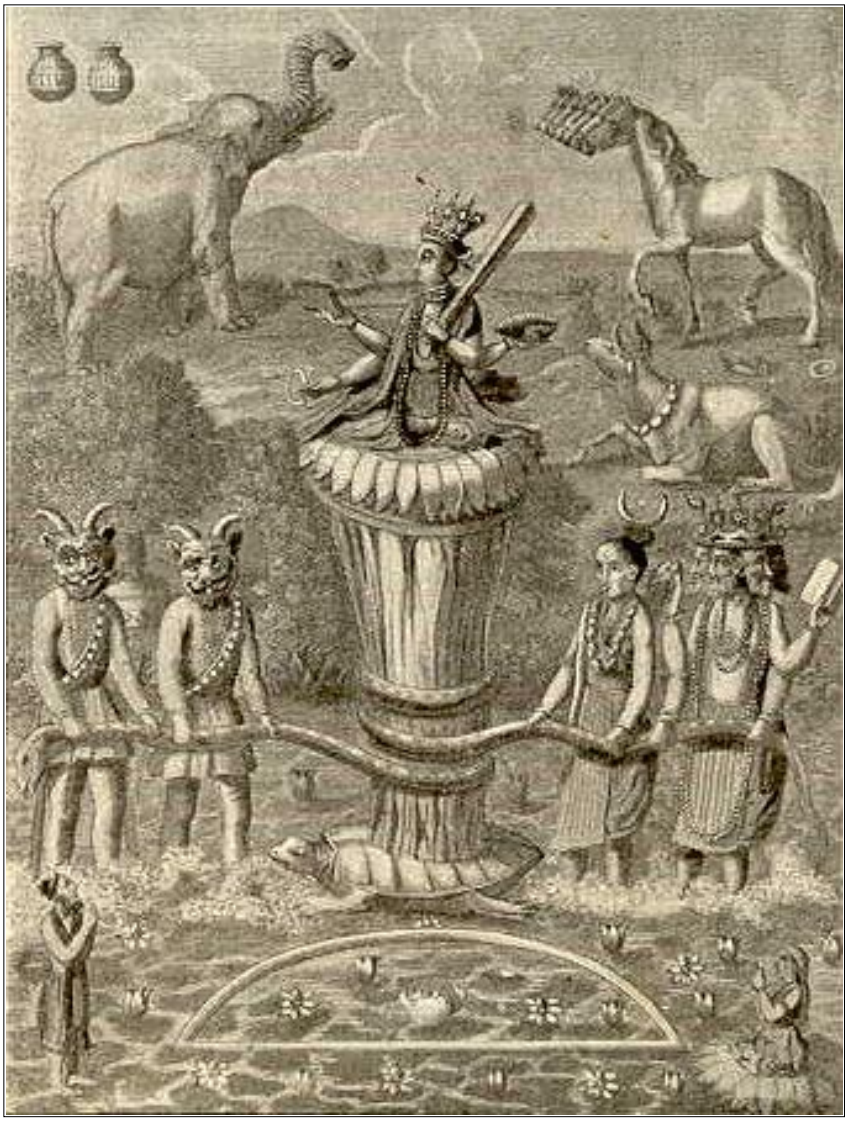
"Pride in being Indian means, for 99%, pride in Hinduism. So, this legitimate pride has to be nourished with broad and in-depth knowledge of Hindu culture. The two enemies of this effort are the pseudo-secularist morbidity that glorifies the destroyers of Hindu culture, and discourages its study altogether..."

(source: **Ayodhya and After: Issues Before Hindu Society - By Koenraad Elst** p. vi - vii and p. 356. Voice of India publication).

Elst notes that Eastern philosophy has appeal in the West these days because ‘‘of their aura of rationality and the absence of a conflict between science and religion as there is in Islam or Christianity.’’

(source: **Elst probes, discovers India for himself** - newindpress.com).

"Hinduism applauds diversity and consequently accepts that people of different temperaments, circumstances and levels of understanding develop different viewpoints and different forms to express even the same view point. In that sense, it has always paid equal respect to shramanas and brahmanas, to jnana and bhakti etc. It showed samabhava to all traditions which counted as dharma. This respect was never extended to **adharma** practices and doctrines such as Christianity and Islam, the religions for whose benefit the slogan is used mostly."



The Churning of the Milky Ocean or Samudra-Manthana. For more refer to chapter on Hindu

Cosmology.

The **fundamental mistake of Indian secularism** is that Hinduism is put in the same category as Islam and Christianity. Islam and Christianity's intrinsic irrationality and hostility to independent critical thought warranted secularism as a kind of containment policy. **By contrast, Hinduism recognizes freedom of thought and does not need to be contained by secularism. "**

"Historically, Hindus have quickly recognized Islam and missionary Christianity as mlecchа, barbaric predatory religions, not as instances of **dharma** to which any respect is due. **Until Swami Dayananda Saraswati, they didn't even consider these religions as worthy of a detailed critique."**

"Christianity and Islam are wrong in their central truth claims and can immediately be discarded. Humanity has lived without these **pretentious doctrines** for long, and that it is a matter of mathematical certainty that it will resume doing so. The question is only how much damage they will be allowed to add to their record before expiring." "A very optimistic objection could be that Hindu society need not bother about Christianity and Islam, because the thrust of their **historical aggression against Hinduism** is weakening and will weaken further in the future. It has happened before; while **Communists were plotting the death of Hinduism** and the dismemberment of India, the Hindutva movement did very little to counter Communism, yet Communism collapsed under its own failure in its very stronghold."

(source: **Bharatiya Janata Party vis-a-vis Hindu Resurgence - By Koenraad Elst** p. 9-142).

"The Hindu revivalist movement perceives itself as the cultural chapter of India's **decolonization**. This means that it tries to free the Indians from the colonial condition at the mental and cultural level, to complete the process of political and economic decolonization. The need for "reviving" Hinduism springs from the fact that the said hostile ideologies (mostly Islam) have managed to eliminate Hinduism physically in certain geographic parts and social segments of India, and also (mostly the Western ideology) to neutralize the Hindu spirit among many nominal Hindus."

(source: **Decolonising The Hindu Mind - Ideological Development of Hindu Revivalism - By Koenraad** Elst Rupa & Co. January 2001 ISBN 8171675190 p. 10).

He advocates the **intellectual mobilization of Hindu society.** He has observed: "Consider the situation in Africa: in 1900, 50% of all Africans practiced Pagan religions; today, Christian and Islamic missionaries have reduced this number to less than 10%. This is the **kind of threat Hinduism is up against.** So far, the biggest success of these aggressors is at the level of thought: many Hindus have interiorized the depreciation of Hindu culture and society which their enemies have been feeding them from the relative power positions...."

(source: **Negationism in India: Concealilng the Record of Islam - By Koenraad Elst** Voice of India p. 79).

"Hindu tradition is based on the experience of sages, sane men and women who observed the world and explored consciousness. Its approach is scientific: the Vedic truths are verifiable, universal and repeatable, not dependent on the views of privileged individuals ("prophets") but apaurusheya, "impersonal"."

(source: **Bharatiya Janata Party vis-a-vis Hindu Resurgence - By Koenraad Elst** p. 145 -146).



213. **Edmund Burke** (1729-1797) British statesman, parliamentary orator and political thinker, played a prominent part in all major political issues for about 30 years after 1765, and remained an important figure in the history of political theory.

In all his speeches in Parliament on India - those made in connection with his Impeachment of Warren Hastings and others - **Edmund Burke invariably represented the civilization of India as high.** In his speech on the East India Bill, he said:

"This multitude of men (the Indian nation) does not consist of an abject and barbarous populace, much less of gangs of savages; **but of a people for ages civilized and cultivated; cultured by all the arts of polished life while we (Englishmen) were yet dwelling in the woods.** There have been in (India) princes of great dignity, authority and opulence. There (in India) is to be found an ancient and venerable priesthood, the depositary of laws, learning and history, the guides of the people while living and their consolation in death. There is a nobility of great antiquity and renown; a multitude of cities not exceeded in population and trade by those of the first class in Europe; merchants and bankers who vie in capital with the banks of England; millions of ingenious manufacturers and mechanics; and millions of the most diligent tillers of the earth."

(source: **India in Bondage: Her Right to Freedom - By Rev. Jabez T. Sunderland** p. 325).

214. **Fredrick von Schiller** (1759-1805) was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's friend, who otherwise took little interest in Indian literature, was also moved to enthusiastic praise of Shakuntala, which he found in some respects un paralled in the classical literature of Greece and Rome. He published part of the **Shakuntala in Thalia**, and in a letter to **Wilhelm von Humboldt** he wrote that:

"in the whole of Greek antiquity there is no poetical representation of beautiful love which approaches Sakuntala even afar."

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993 ASIN 0870131435 p. 230-231).

215. **H. M. Hyndman** (1842-1921) the eminent British publicist thus describes the important place of India in the world's history and civilization:



"Many hundreds of years before the coming of the English, the nations of India had been a collection of wealthy and highly civilized people, possessed of a great language with an elaborate code of laws and social regulations, with exquisite artistic taste in architecture and decoration, producing beautiful manufactures of all kinds, and endowed with religious ideas and philosophic and scientific conceptions which have greatly influenced the development of the most progressive races of the West. One of the noblest individual moralists who ever lived, Sankya Muni was a Hindu; the Code of Manu, dating from before the Christian era, is still an essential a study for the jurist....and there are in India, in this later age, worthy descendants of the great authors of the Vedas, of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana."

"and yet, nine-tenths of what has been written by the British about India is so expressed that we are made to believe the shameful falsehood that stability and civilized government in Hindustan began only with the rule of the British."

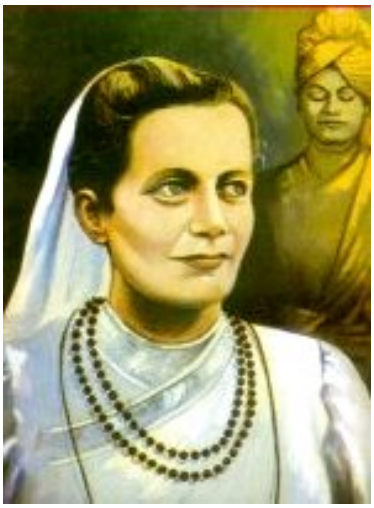
(source: **India in Bondage: Her Right to Freedom - By Rev. Jabez T. Sunderland** p. 350).

216. **Ernest E. Kellett** (1864-1950) author of **A Short History of Religions**:

"On the other hand there seems to be an increasing number of persons who have been led by natural and acquired sympathy to adopt in some form one of the Eastern religions." The new German faith is said to have for its main source of interpretation Eckhart and the **Bhagavad-Gita.**

(source: **Eastern Religions & Western Thought - By S. Radhakrishnan** p. 251 South Asia Books 1990ISBN 0195624564).

217. **Sister Nivedita** - **Margaret Noble** (1867-1911). Her first literary achievement was **Kali the Mother**, in which she expounds the conception of Kali. There are many 'educated Indians - of Christian missionaries we need not speak - who think that Kali is some blood-thirsty deity worshipped by barbarous people. to such people this book ought to be a revelation. **The Web of Indian Life**, may be at once said that it is the greatest in the English language upon India. It is not a travel book, but a revelation of the soul of a people.



Sister Nivedita probed into the heart of Indian womanhood and reflected in her rhythmic and eloquent prose the natural simplicity and spiritual fervor of the women of India. Women, she contended, are the embodiment and repository of the ancient wisdom of the East. They are the inheritors of a radiant orthodoxy, unspoilt by age and undimmed by the passing fashions of the day to which men so easily succumb.

In the chapter on the **Bhagavad Gita**, she writes: "The book is nowhere a call to leave the world, but everywhere an interpretation of common life as the path to that which lies beyond. "Better for a man is his own duty, however, badly done than the duty of another, though that be easy. "Holding gain and loss as one, *prepare for battle*." That the man who throws away his weapons, and permits himself to be slain, unresisting in the battle, is not the hero of religion, but a sluggard and a coward; that the true seer is he who carries his vision into action, regardless of the consequences to himself; this is the doctrine of the "Gita" repeated again and again....Not the withdrawn, but the transfigured life, radiant, with power and energy, triumphant in its selflessness, is religion. "Arise!" thunders the voice of Sri Krishna, "and be thou an apparent cause!"

Sister Nivedita talked about the task before India. "We must create a history of India in living terms. Up to the present that history, as written by the English, practically begins with Warren Hastings, and crams in certain unavoidable preliminaries, which cover a few thousands of years...The history of India has yet to be written for the first time. It has to be humanized, emotionalized, made the trumpet-voice and evangel of the race that inhabit India."

(source: **Eminent Orientalists: Indian European American** - Asian Educational Services. ISBN 8120606973 p. 257-276).

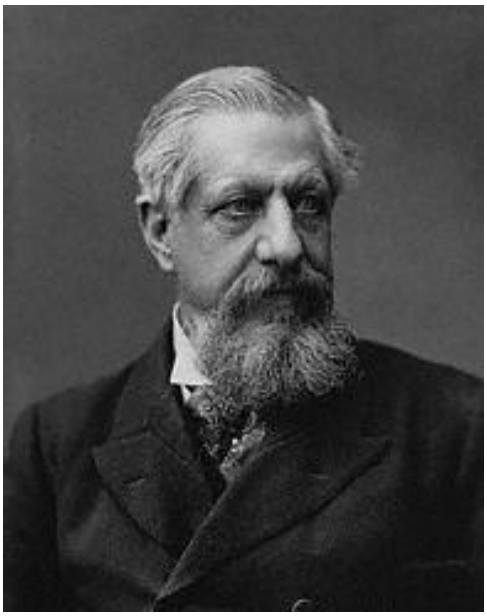
"Beauty of place," writes Sister Nivedita, "translates itself to the Indian consciousness as God's cry to the soul. Had Niagara been situated on the Ganges, it is odd to think how different would have been its valuation by humanity. Instead of fashionable picnics and railway pleasure-trips, the yearly or monthly incursion of worshipping crowds; instead of hotels, temples; instead of ostentatious excess, austerity; instead of the desire to harness its mighty forces to the chariot of human utility, the unrestrained longing to throw away the body, and realize at once the ecstatic madness of Supreme Union. Could contrast be greater?"

(source: **The Web of Indian Life - By Sister Nivedita** Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. London, 1904. p. 262).

Sister Nivedita realised that India's unrivalled, integrating culture that had spread from the Himalayas in the North to Kanyakumari in the South was due to this **closeness with the ancient epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, a closeness that had been attacked and almost severed by Colonial style of education: "These two great works form together the outstanding educational agencies of Indian life.** All over the country, in every province, especially during the winter session, audiences of Hindus and Mohammedans gather round the Brahmin storyteller at nightfall, and listen to his rendering of the ancient tales. The Mohammedans of Bengal have their own version of the Mahabharata."

This is why she would never call Indian women as ever having been illiterate. They had imbibed the best in the Indian tradition and strove to bring up their children as a Rama or Krishna, Arjuna or Karna, Sita or Savitri.

(source: **In her Bharati saw the Modern Woman of India - By Prem Nandakumar** - hindu.com).



218. **Sir Edwin Arnold** (1832-1904) poet and scholar. Author of **The Song Celestial**, which is a translation of the **Bhagavad Gita**. It has great elevation of tone and majesty and dignity of style. There are many translations of the Gita but Arnold's translation has a place apart among them by its accuracy and the grave harmony of the verse. The translation is dedicated by the poet to India.

The dedicatory verses are in Arnold's own translation:

"So have I read this wonderful and spirit-thrilling speech,
By **Krishna and Prince Arjuna** held, discoursing each with each;
So have I writ its wisdom here, its hidden mystery,
For England; O our India! as dear to me as she!

He wrote in his preface:

"This famous and marvelous Sanskrit poem occurs as an episode of the Mahabharata, in the sixth - or "Bhishma" - Parva of the great Hindu epic. It enjoys immense popularity and authority in India, where it is reckoned as one of the "Five Jewels" - pancharatnani - of Devanagari literature. **In plain but noble language it unfolds a philosophical system which remains to this day the prevailing Brahmanic belief blending as it does the doctrine of Kapila, Patanjali, and the Vedas."**

(source: **Eminent Orientalists: Indian European American** - Asian Educational Services. ISBN 8120606973 p. 234-235).

Arnold already well known for the Light of Asia, wrote in **India Revisited** of the rite of bathing in the Ganges, and he described with emotion the people he observed at their prayers:

"Some are old and feeble, weary with long journeys of life, emaciated by maladies, saddened from loses and troubles; and the morning air blows sharp, the river wave runs chilly. Yet there they stand, breast-deep in the cold river, with dripping cotton garments clinging to their thin or aged limbs, visibly shuddering under the shock of the water, and their lips blue and quivering, while they eagerly mutter their invocations. None of them hesitates; into the Gunga they plunge on arrival, ill or well, robust or sickly; and ladle the holy liquid up with small, dark, trembling hands, repeating the sacred names, and softly mentioning the sins they would expiate and the beloved souls they would plead for."

(source: **Banaras: City of Light - By Diana L Eck** p. 15 -17).

219. **Acharya Jiwatram Bhagwandas Kriplani** (1888 -) Noted Gandhian, and Eminent National Leader. When speaking as the President of the Congress in India, he said:

" I am a Hindu and am proud of the fact. But this is because Hinduism for me has stood for tolerance, for truth and for non-violence....

(source: **Indian Controversies - By Arun Shourie** South Asia Books ASIN 8190019929 p. 173).



220. **Guy Sorman** (1944 -) French intellectual, writer, economist and a professor of political science at Paris University, visiting scholar at Hoover Institution at Stanford and the leader of new liberalism in France. He has observed India with a keen eye, a great deal of intelligence and genuine affection. He has written:

" Temporal notions in Europe were overturned by an India rooted in eternity. The Bible had been the yardstick for measuring time, but the infinitely vast time cycles of India suggested that the world was much older than anything the Bible spoke of. **It seem as if the Indian mind was better prepared for the chronological mutations of Darwinian evolution and astrophysics."**

He has commented on the wise division of life in India: "Here is a philosophy far removed from the grotesque refusal to grow old in the West, where wisdom has been replaced by cosmetic surgery and psychiatric help."

"The Indian tradition, on the other hand, is that men submit to nature and form part of it, there nature preserves its sacredness, lost in the West since the Industrial Revolution." He further states that the idea of feminism and **ecology came from the 1968 movement, from the meeting between India and the West.** He says: **"There is hardly anything in European thought to predispose the West to reject virility, the respect for authority, the mastery over nature.** India too has a warrior (khastriya) tradition of virility as exemplified in the **Mahabharata**, only it is secondary. First, comes the veneration of thousands of goddesses - for the Indians, India is above all **Mother India.** India's femininity and sexual ambiguity, is the very antithesis of Western virility. For example, when the British scaled earth's highest peak, the exploit was widely hailed as the **"conquest of the Everest."** It was not realized and is often not realized still, that the word "conquest" was totally out of place in the context of the peak which is considered an object of reverence by many.

"The Brahmins attached to knowledge and learning is what has helped the Indian civilization endure and allowed the arts to flourish. If comparisons have to be made, it may be said that the endurance of the Brahmins in India has kept her elite intact, whereas in neighboring China the anti-intellectualism of communist peasants has completely wiped out the intelligentsia of that country. The Brahmins kept knowledge and art alive in India, preserving not only their savant but also their popular forms. The Brahmin elite is perhaps egoistical and domineering, nonetheless it has preserved a sense of dignity and beauty that has disappeared from China where all that remains is vulgarity and crass ignorance."



Lord Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter.

"The more decentralized, diversified and ritualized a religion is the better it can withstand the onslaught of rationalist thought. Hinduism, derives its strength from the fact that it is not a single unified religion but the sum total of thousands of local faiths. Every village has its own cult, rooted in the local culture without any universalist pretensions."

"India is a marvelous example of the art of living together at a time when Westerners are apprehensive about the future of their society."

"You cannot be a Hindu fundamentalist. It does not mean anything...The concept of fundamentalism does not exist in Hinduism." No one man embodies the spirit of universalism, it runs through the whole of India and there is a place for all religious groups and communities. The spiritual message of India is her capacity to let so many divergent practices coexist. The Enlightenment philosophers seemed to have grasped this profound originality...This the real message of India."

He says, **"India has a strong cultural image in the west; unfortunately, it is not being commercially exploited." This should sink into the heads of those of us who are happy to be third-rate imitators of the US.**

Sorman asserts that India is not a rogue state when he talks of the nuclear option. But there seem to be some Indians who are not so sure of their own country. He points out that "Nobody knows what is right. Each civilization...has its sense of the right. No one can impose his perception of right over others."

"Each Indian looks for God in his own way and worships one or several of the millions of deities who are the supposed reincarnation or expression of God, a Spirit or a Force. This has never led to a religious war. There have been communal clashes, but **India has never had to face religious wars or crusades save those that were thrust on it from outside. The multiple revelation of the East has proved to be in many ways more advantageous than the single revelation of the West."**

(source: **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman** (**Le Genie de l'Inde**) Macmillan India Ltd. 2001. ISBN 0333 93600 0 p.195 , 122).



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161. **Eduard Roeer** (1805-1866) German Indologist, born in Braunschweig Germany, made a name for himself on account of his research in Hindu philosophy. His knowledge of philosophy and philology enabled him to publish a number of valuable editions of philosophical texts. On Roeer's suggestion the **Asiatic Society of Bengal** decided to publish the Upanishads together with Shankara's commentary.

In a letter to Albrecht Weber, he wrote, " Although the philological frame is very important, it is the philosophy of the Hindus which interests me most in Sanskrit literature and it has been my chief aim to bring about a better understanding of the same."

Roeer called the **Upanishads**, **"sublime emanations of the Human mind"** and Shankara's commentary "**a shining example of comprehensive erudition, patient research and philosophical acumen of the ancient Hindus".**

(source: **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German** - **By Valentine Stache-Rosen**. p.5-6).

162 **Arthur Koestler**, (1905-1983) Hungarian-born British novelist, journalist, and critic. He is best known for his novel Darkness at Noon and **The Lotus and the Robot,** in which he examines Eastern mysticism and wrote:

"Rome was saved in A.D. 408 by the ransom the Senate paid to Alaric the Goth; ever since, when Europe found itself in an impasse or in a questing mood, it has turned yearningly to the land of culinary and spiritual spices. The greatest influence during the dark ages was Augustine, who was influenced by Plotinus, who was influenced by **Indian mysticism.** Long before Aldous Huxley found Yoga a remedy for our Brave New World, Schopenhauer called the Upanishads the consolation of his life."

(source: **Richer by Asia - By Edmond Taylor**, p. 7).



163. **Jean Herbert** (1897-) famous Indianist, author of several books including **Ganesha, précédé d'une étude sur Dieu chez les Hindous, Spiritualité hindoue**, **An Introduction To Asia** and **Vedantisme et vie pratique et autre études**, reminds us that:

"Many many centuries before us, India had devised most of the philosophical systems which Europe experienced with later. They contained, at least in its essence, the philosophy of the Greeks, the Alexandrine mystique, the religious speculation of the Middle Ages, the rationalism, of the XIXth century and even the most recent incarnations of modern pantheism."

(source: **Arise O' India - By Francois Gautier** Har-Anand publications. p. 25)

164. **The Fourth Caliph, Ali bin Abi Talib**(656-661 A.D.) had remarked:

" The land where books were first written and from where wisdom and knowledge sprang is India."

(Note: Many Islamic traditions support the high standing of Indian culture with the Arabs. This shows the affection and respect of early Muslims had for India. In any case, Caliph Umar, was opposed to attacking India, even when he was told that "Indian rivers are pearls, her mountains rubies, her trees perfumes," for he regarded India as a country of complete freedom of thought and belief where Muslims and others were free to practice their faith.

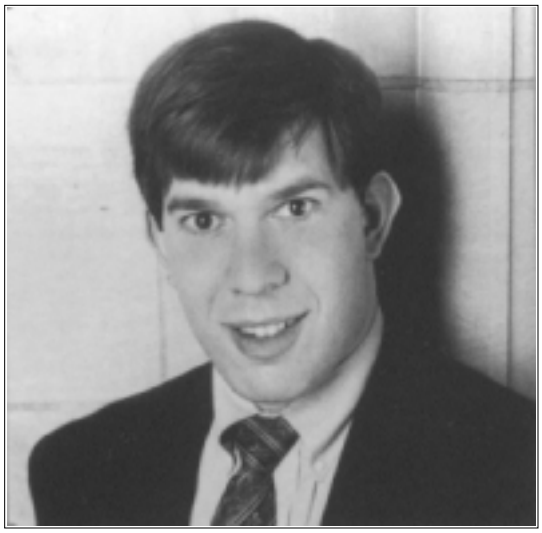
(source: **Hindu Muslim Cultural Accord - By Syed Mohamud** Bombay 1949 p. 18and 21).

165. **Edmond Taylor**, author of **Richer By Asia** has said:

"The sophisticated philosophies of the East (India) are even more abstract, subtle, and given to the splitting of unsubstantial hairs than those of the West, but the emotional basis of the oldest and richest Oriental religion - Hinduism - is perfectly accessible, it sometimes seemed to me, than certain Christian moods."

"The underlying mood of Hinduism is one of **joyous acceptance of the universe**." It is more richly endowed with gods and goddesses and all the trappings of mythology than even the religion of ancient Greece, and this **imaginative exuberance** is certainly connected with the pantheist emotional mood."

(source: **Richer by Asia - By Edmond Taylor**, p. 297-299).



166. **Charles Seife,** a journalist with *Science* magazine, has also written for *New Scientist*, *Scientific American*, *The Economist*, *Science*, *Wired UK*, *The Sciences*, and numerous other publications. He holds an M.S. in mathematics from Yale University and his areas of research include probability theory and artificial intelligence. He is a mathematician and science writer, author of **Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea**, says:

"Perhaps no one has embraced nothing as strongly as the Indians who, Seife notes,

"never had a fear of the infinite or of the void." Hinduism has embedded within it, a complex philosophy of nothingness, seeing everything in the world as arising from the pregnant void, known as Sunya."

The ultimate goal of the Hindu was to free himself from the endless cycle of pain found in continual reincarnation and reconnect with the Nothingness that is the source and fundament of the All. For Indians, the void of Sunya was the very font of all potential; nothingness was liberation. No surprise then that it is from this sophisticated culture that we inherit the mathematical analog of nothing, zero. Like Sunya, zero is a kind of place holder, a symbol signifying a pregnant space where any other number might potentially reside."

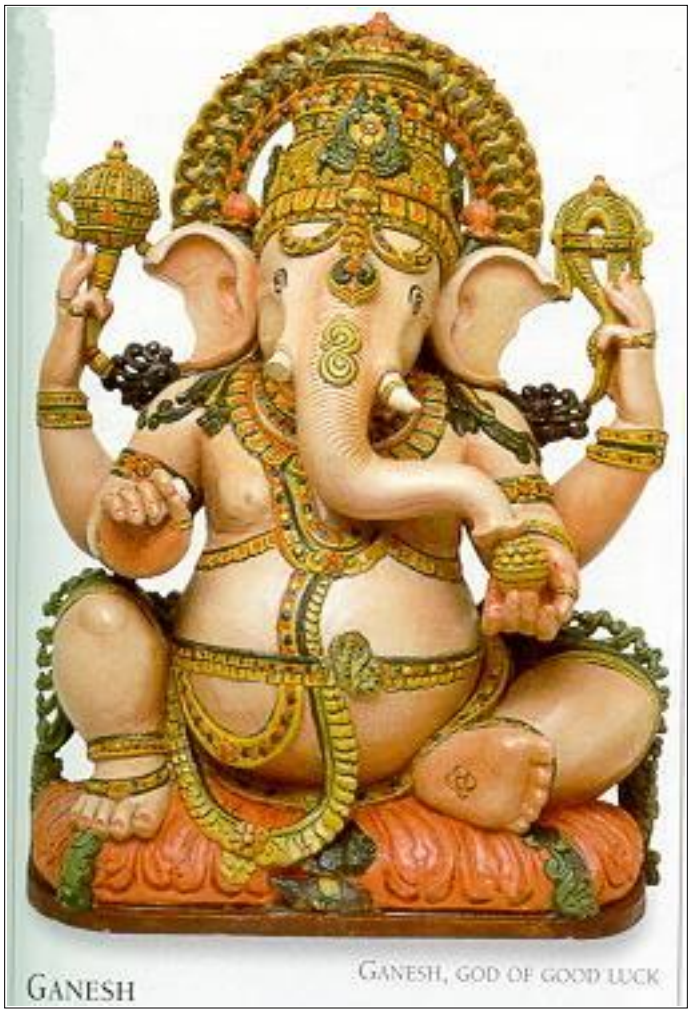
(source: **Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea: It's weird, it's counterintuitive and the Greeks hated it. Why did the Church reject the use of zero?** http://www.calendarlive.com/top/1,1419,L-LATimes-Books-X!ArticleDetail-26133,00.html http://www.salon.com/books/review/2000/03/03/seife/index.html).

167. **Bhagwan S. Gidwani** author of **The Return of the Aryans**, has correctly shows that **Hinduism is based on supremacy of conduct, and not creed.** His view also is simple and forthright --that Hinduism is the one religion that honors and respects human rights. Most other religions consign non-believers to hell, everlasting. Hinduism has room for non-believers, agnostics and atheists. What Hinduism seeks is purity of conduct, and not creed.

In 'The Return of the Aryans' he clarifies that **Bharat** who composed the **Song of the Hindu**, was the 19th Karkarta (Elected Supreme Chief) of the Hindu clan from 5,106 BC. He retired as a hermit at the age of sixty. Long after he retired, the name **Bharat Varsha was given to the country to honor his memory.**

The book unfolds the **drama of the birth and beginnings of Hinduism prior to 8,000 BC, and its early roots of Sanatana Dharma** and Sanatanah. It also tells the story of how in 5,000 BC, the **Aryans originated from India**, and why they moved out of their homeland; their trials and triumphs, battles and bloodshed, adventures and exploits in Europe and elsewhere, including Russian Lands, Finland, Lithuania, Scandinavia, Italy, Greece and Germany; and finally their return to the home-town and heritage of Bharat Varsha.

The Song of the Hindu



"Our desires have grown immeasurable. But they should be desires to give, not merely to receive, to accept and not to reject; to honour and respect, not to deny or belittle...

"God's gracious purpose includes all human beings and all creation_ "For God is the Creator; and God is the Creation... "Each man has his own stepping stones to reach the One-Supreme..."God's grace is withdrawn from no one; not even from those who have chosen to withdraw from God's grace..."How does it matter what idols they worship, or what images they bow to, so long as the conduct remains pure…"It is conduct then - theirs and ours - that needs to be purified..

"There can be no compulsion; each man must be free to worship his gods as he chooses...

"Does every Hindu worship all the gods of all the Hindus? No, he has a free will; a free choice_" A Hindu may worship Agni (fire), and ignore other deities. Do we deny that he is a Hindu? ..."Another may worship God, through an idol of his choosing. Do we deny that he is a Hindu?..."Yet another will find God everywhere and not in any image or idol. Is he not a Hindu?..."He who was Karkarta before me was a Sun-worshiper. Did the worshipers of Siva ever say that he was not a good Hindu? ..."Do the worshipers of Vishnu feel that he who worships before the image of Brahma is not a Hindu?...

"How can a scheme of salvation be limited to a single view of God's nature and worship?_ "Is then God, not an all-loving Universal God?..."Clearly then, he who seeks to deny protection to another on the basis of his faith, offends against the Hindu way of life, and denies an all-loving God... "Those who love their own sects, idols and images more than Truth, will end up by loving themselves more than their gods.." He who seeks to convert another to his own faith, offends against his own soul and the will of God and the law of humanity..."In the Kingdom of God, there is no higher nor lower. The passion for perfection burns equally in all, for there is only one class even as there is only one God..."The Hindu way of life?... Always it has been and always it shall be...that God wills a rich harmony - not a colorless uniformity..."A Hindu must enlarge the heritage of mankind_ "For a Hindu is not a mere preserver of custom. "For a Hindu is not a mere protector of present knowledge...

"Hinduism is a movement, not a position; a growing tradition and not a fixed revelation..."A Hindu must grow and evolve, with all that was good in the past, with all that is good in the present, and with all goodness that future ages shall bring ..."Yet he remains a Hindu_ **"Hinduism is the law of life, not a dogma; its aim is not to create a creed but character, and its goal is to achieve perfection through most varied spiritual knowledge which rejects nothing, and yet refines everything, through**

continuous testing and experiencing..."Yet he must remain strong and united, for a Hindu must know that not an external, outside force can ever crush him, except when he is divided and betrays his own..."What then is the final goal of the Hindu? Through strength, unity, discipline, selfless work, to reach the ultimate in being, ultimate in awareness and ultimate in bliss, not for himself alone, but for all..."This was the silent pledge that our ancient ancestors had taken, when they called themselves the Hindu…"If I cannot abide by that pledge, how can I retain the right to call myself a Hindu?"

Gidwani meets another issue headlong, and demonstrates clearly that caste system was never a tenet of the Hindu faith. Tracing the development of caste system, he shows that it is in fact antagonistic to the Hindu religion, and its ideals.

(source: **The Return of the Aryans - By B S Gidwani** p. 65 & 82-83. For more quotes by Gidwani, please refer to the chapter **Introduction to Hinduism**. For information on the caste system, refer to chapter on **Caste System**).

168. **Roger-Pol Droit,** French philosopher and journalist has remarked that the philosophy of the Vedas and spirituality, seems to disappeared from the consciousness of Europeans and the references to the Indian culture after the collapse of Nietzsche. Since then, Europe has practiced what he calls "helleno-centrism" (Greece-centered) education, which means that the West believes that all philosophical systems started with Greece and that there was nothing worth the name before them.

In his remarkable book, **L'oubli de l''Inde : une amnâesie philosophique** (The forgetting of India) **Droit explains the reasons of this "intellectual amnesia"**. One reason was due to the German philosopher Hegel, who did not discover the Greeks, but created them and made up for them a destiny and thoughts which they did not always have."

In India, things add up, they don't complete to replace each other. It is this gift for coexistence that we have to learn from this **exuberant yet impassive civilization.**

(source: **Arise O' India - By Francois Gautier** p. 26 and **The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman -** Macmillan India Ltd. 2001. ISBN 0333 93600 0 back cover).



169. **Alexander Hamilton** (1757-1804) aide-de-camp to George Washington and first secretary of the Treasury, epitomized this attitude in these words: "When we read in the valuable production of those great Oriental scholars...those of a Jones, a Wilkings, a Colebrooke, or a Halhed, - **we uniformly discover in the Hindus a nation, whose polished manners are the result of a mild disposition and an extensive benevolence."**

(source: **The Invasion That Never Was - By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 17).

170. **Professor Arthur Holmes** (1895-1965) geologist, professor at the University of Durham. He writes regarding the age of the earth in his great book, **The Age of Earth** (1913) as follows:

"Long before it became a scientific aspiration to estimate the age of the earth, many elaborate systems of the world chronology had been devised by the sages of antiquity. **The most remarkable of these occult time-scales is that of**

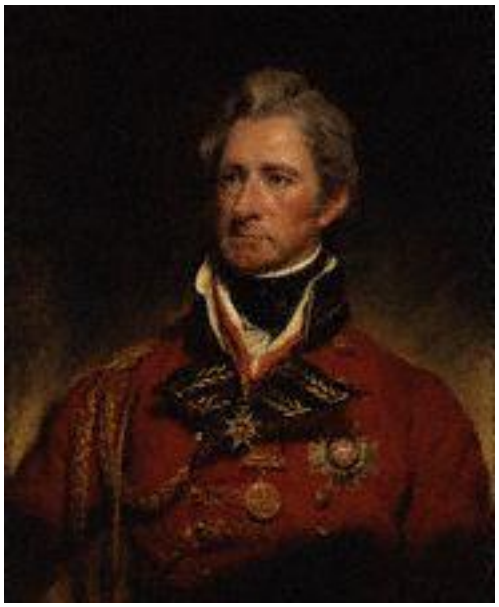
the ancient Hindus, whose astonishing concept of the Earth's duration has been traced back to Manusmriti, a sacred book."

(source: **Hinduism and Scientific Quest - By T. R. R. Iyengar** p. 20).

171. **J. Ovington**, Chaplain to the British King, the seventeenth-century English traveler, wrote in his **A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689**, that:

" Of all the regions of the Earth (India is) the only Public theatre of Justice and Tenderness to Brutes and all living creatures." He also found that, because of their diet, the Hindus kept a comely and proportionate body and lived a long life. The simple and meatless food made their thoughts 'quick and nimble,' their 'comprehension of things' easier and developed in them a spirit of fearlessness."

(source: **Indian Vegetarian Cookery - By Jack Santa Maria** p. 17).



172. **Sir Thomas Munro** (1761-1827) held various posts in the colonial administration of India, served as brigadier-general during the third Maratha War (1817–18) and was appointed Governor of Madras in 1819. A distinguished Governor of Madras, in a statement made by him before a Committee of the House of Commons, in 1813, ("Hansard's Debates, April 12), he noted:

"If a good system of agriculture, unrivalled manufacturing skill, a capacity to produce whatever can contribute to convenience or luxury, schools established in every village for teaching, reading, writing and arithmetic; the general practice of hospitality and charity among each other; and above all, a treatment of the female sex full of confidence, respect, and delicacy, (if all these) are among the signs which denote a civilized people, then the Hindus, are not inferior to the nations of Europe; and if civilization is to become an article of trade between England and India, I am convinced that England will gain by the import cargo."

(source: **India in Bondage: Her Right to Freedom - By Rev. Jabez T. Sunderland** p.324-325) and **The Invasion That Never Was - By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 17).

173. **Austin Coates,** son of composer Eric Coates, Assistant Colonial Secretary and a magistrate in Hong Kong during the World War II, and First Secretary to the British High Commission in Kaula Lumpur and Penang in 1959-62).

" What we generally fail to realize is that in talking today to the Indians we are face to face with the direct descendants, as often as not, of people who were contemporaries of Ancient Egypt, and whose present culture, in most of its main essentials, is nearly the same as it was then, and is in any event directly descended from that age, and even possibly before it."

(source: **China, India and the Ruins of Washington - By Austin Coates** p- 20)

174. **Robert Ernest Hume**, whose renderings of thirteen principal Upanishads published

in 1921 are still widely read. His translation of the thirteen principal Upanishads was published more than a hundred years ago, and revised more than sixty years ago. It has long been recognized as a classic translation which provides a faithful rendering of the original Sanskrit into twentieth-century English. He wrote:

" In the long history of man's endeavor to grasp the fundamental truths of being, the metaphysical treatises known as the **Upanishads** hold an honored place...they are replete with sublime conceptions and with intuitions of universal truth."

source: **The Thirteen Principal Upanishads - By R. E. Hume** London: Oxford Univ. Press. 1921, p. vii).



175. **Sa`Id Al-Andalusi** (1029-1070) who was a prolific author and in the powerful position of a judge for the king in Muslim Spain. He focused on India as a major center for science, mathematics and culture. He wrote **Kitab Tabaqat al-Uman** or "**Book of the Categories of Nations**," which recorded the contributions to science of all known nations. He has said:

"The Indians among all nations, through many centuries and since antiquity, have been the source of wisdom, fairness and moderation. They are creators of sublime thoughts, universal apologues, rare inventions and remarkable concepts."

"... **They referred to the king of India as the "king of wisdom" because of the Indians' careful treatment of 'ulum [sciences] and all the branches of knowledge.**

"The Indians, known to all nations for many centuries, are the metal [essence] of wisdom, the source of fairness and objectivity. They are people of sublime pensiveness, universal apologues, and useful and rare inventions."

“That which has reached us from the discoveries of their clear thinking and the marvels of their inventions is the (game) of chess. The Indians have, in the construction of its cells, its double numbers, its symbols and secrets, reached the forefront of knowledge. They have extracted its mysteries from supernatural forces. While the game is being played and its pieces are being maneuvered, there appear the beauty of structure and the greatness of harmony. It demonstrates the manifestation of high intentions and noble deeds, as it provides various forms of warnings from enemies and points out ruses as well as ways to avoid dangers. And in this, there is considerable gain and useful profit.”

(source: **The Categories of Nations - By Said al-Andalusi**. A translation was published by University of Texas Press: “Science in the Medieval World”. This is the first English translation of this eleventh-century manuscript. Quotes are from Chapter V: “Science in India”). **A Concise History of Science in India eds. D. M. Bose, S. N. Sen & B. V. Subbarayappa**. New Delhi. Indian National Science Academy, 1989), p. i and **The Invasion That Never Was - By Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar** p. 16).



176. **Gustav Oppert** (1836-1908) born in Hamburg, Germany, he taught Sanskrit and comparative linguistics at the Presidency College, Madras for 21 years. He was the Telugu translator to the Government and Curator, Government Oriental Manuscript Library. He writes of his high esteem for the Bharatas, the original inhabitants of India:

" I venture to suggest that the inhabitants of this country would do well if they were to assume the ancient, honorable, and national name of Bharata, remembering that India has become famous as Bharatvarsa, the land of the Bharats."

(source: **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German** - **By Valentine Stache-Rosen** p.81-82).

177. **Shri V. Shankar,** ICS (Retd.) former Defense Secretary and earlier Private Secretary to the late Sardar Patel.

" It is nothing short of a miracle that the Hindu society and Hindu Dharma have survived so long in spite of repeated aggressions. The secret of our continued existence lies in the fact that our culture has the requisite vitality to influence and absorb outside elements." “India will be saved by Dharma, not by Political maneuvers.” Regarding marriage within caste, he says: "It is human nature to marry some one who is from a similar background. Everyone does it. A Sunni Muslim wants to marry only a Sunni Muslim. How about Jews, Catholics, Whites, Chinese? They all advertise and seek only their own kind. It is universal. A honest narrow minded person creates less harm to the society than a pseudo broad minded person. Are you saying an fifty year old white American who marries a twenty year old mail order bride from Phillipines is better than the typical Indian who marries within his sub caste?"

178. **Vincent A Smith,** British historian, and author of **The Oxford History of India,** says:

" India ...beyond all doubt possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, far more profound that that produced either by geographical isolation or by political suzerainty. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, color, language, dress, manners and sect."

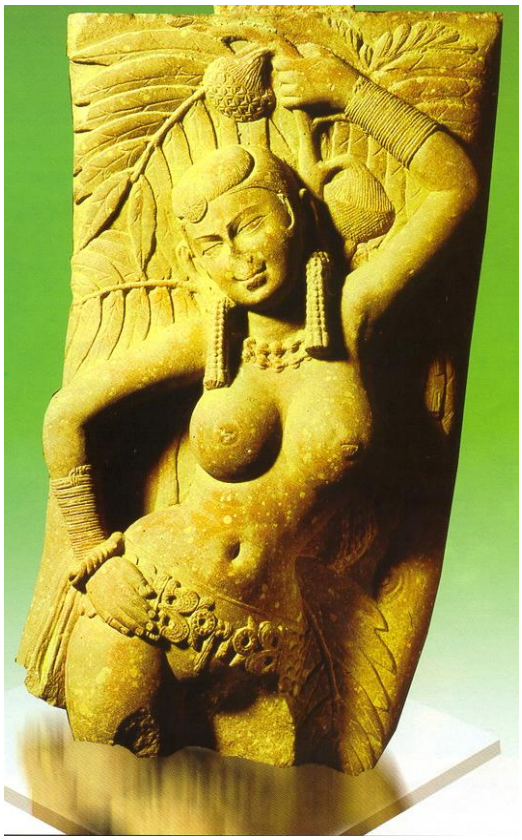
"Hinduism has never produced an exclusive, dominant, orthodox sect, with a formula of faith to be professed or rejected under pain of damnation."

(source: **Essays on National Idealism - By Ananda K. Coomaraswamy** p. 131).

Regarding astronomy, he wrote:

"The most systematic record of Indian Historical tradition is that preserved in the dynastic lists of the Puranas, five out of the eighteen works of this class, namely the Vayu, Matsya, Vishnu, Bramhanda and Bhagvata contain such lists. The Brahmanda and the Vayu as well as the Matsya, which has large later additions, appear to be the earliest and most authoratative."

(source: **Hinduism in the Space Age - by E. Vedavyas** p. 108).



179. **Richard Bernstein,** a former New York Times correspondent in China, book critic, author of The book, **Ultimate Journey**

On a visit to India, was struck by how Hinduism is so detached from materialistic values. A meeting with the Shankaracharya of Kanchipuram, a leading figure of Hinduism, was particularly enlightening. "With his entourage, the kind of conspicuous anti-materialism of it, really kind of brought home to me that Hinduism really is an ascetic religion," he said.

"It is a religion which encourages people to look into themselves for truth as the goal of life rather than to get rich or to acquire power." As evidence of this, Bernstein compared the Shankaracharya of Kanchipuram to the Pope, who, he said, holds a comparable spiritual position in Roman Catholicism. **Yet, "their appearance to the world is utterly, utterly different", he said. "One is surrounded by the trappings of splendor -- vast cathedrals and palaces and fabulous museums full of zillion-dollar paintings and sculptures... and all the trappings of power.** I couldn't show up in Rome and say 'Gee, could I come and see the Pope?' and be welcomed, but there I was in India, asking if I could meet the Shankaracharya of Kanchipuram and I was welcomed."

"One of the elements of India that is most difficult for the Western mind to grapple with is the depth and power of Hindu spirituality," Bernstein said. "It's both troubling and inspiring that so many people who are so poor have time and energy for very, very thorough-going, intense and profound spiritual searches."

(source: **Rediff.com - Down The Road With Huien Tsang** http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/may/23usspec.htm).

180. **Dr. Ernest Binfield Havell** (1861-1934) principal to the Madras College of Art in the 1890s and left as principal of the Calcutta College of Art some 20 years later. He wrote several books, including his book, **Indian Architecture - Its Psychology, Structure and History from the First Mohammedan Invasion to the Present Day**. He has said:

"India, whether regarded from a physical or intellectual stand-point, is herself the great exemplar of the doctrine of the one in the many, which her philosophers proclaimed to the world."

(source: **The History of Aryan Rule in India - E. B. Havell**).



"In India, religion is hardly a dogma, but a working hypothesis of human conduct, adapted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life. A dogma might continue to be believed in, isolated from life, but a working hypothesis of human conduct must work and conform to life, or it obstructs life. The very raison d'etre of such a hypothesis is its workableness, its conformity to life, and its capacity to adapt itself to changing conditions. So long as it can do so it serves its purpose and performs its allotted function. when it goes off at a tangent from the curve of life, loses contact with social needs, and the distance between it and life grows, it loses all its vitality and significance."

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** Oxford University Press. 1995. p. 182).

"It was India, not Greece, that taught Islam in the impressionable years of its youth, formed its philosophy and esoteric religious ideals and inspired its most characteristic expression in literature, art and architecture."

(source: **The History of Aryan Rule in India - E. B. Havell**).

Comparing the European and Hindu art, **E. B. Havell** says:

"European art has, as it were its wings clipped: it knows only the beauty of earthly things. Indian art, soaring into the highest empyrean, is ever trying to bring down to earth something of the beauty of the things above."

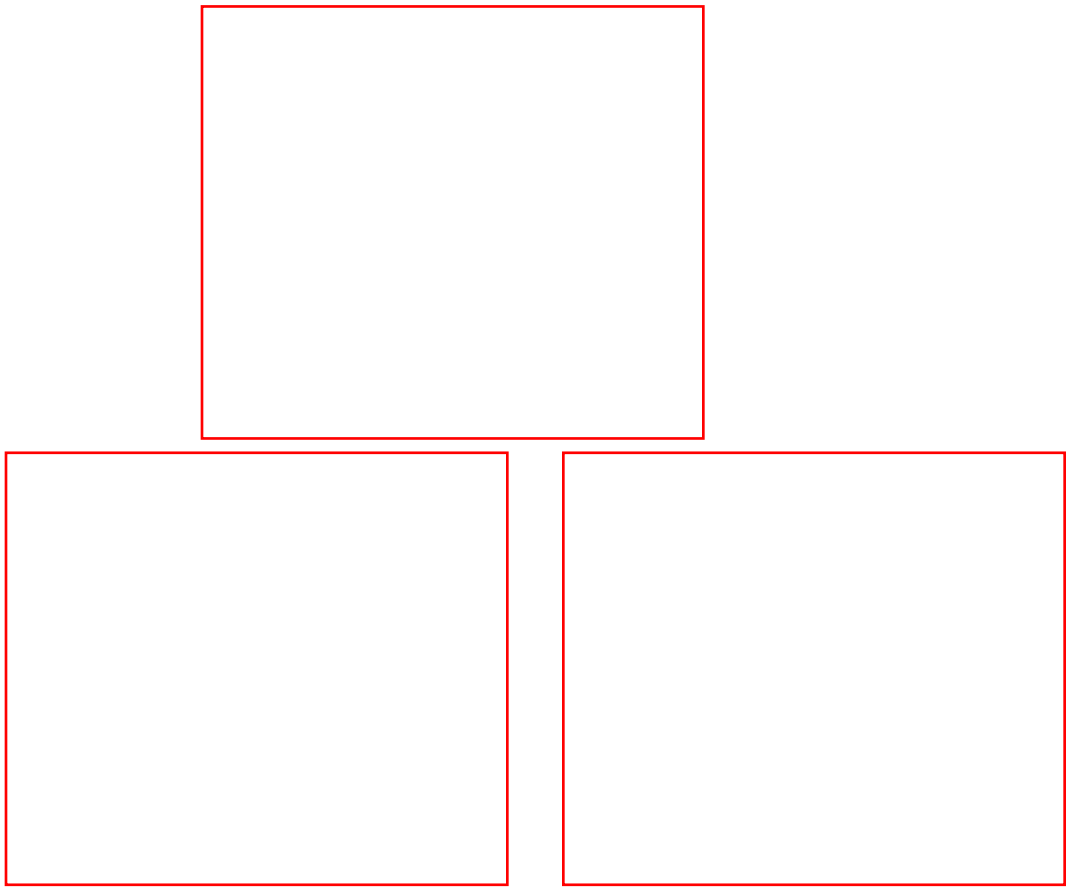
Just as angels are given wings, or saints halos, or just as the Holy Spirit was portrayed as a dove, so Shiva or Vishnu were given extra arms to hold the symbols of their various attributes, or extra heads for their different roles. Havell showed how consummately the Indian artist could handle movement. Taking the example of the famous Nataraja (dancing Shiva) bronzes of south India, he first explored its symbolism. No work of Indian art is without a wealth of allegory and symbol, ignorance of which was, and still is, a major stumbling block for most non-Indians. The Nataraja deals with the divine ecstasy of creation expressed in dance.

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Says **Havell**:

“The design of the Kailasa remained, for all time, the perfect model of a Shivalinga, - the temple craftsman’s vision of Shiva’s wondrous palace in his Himalayan glacier, where in his Yogi’s cell the Lord of the Universe, the great magician, controls the cosmic forces by the power of thought; the holy rivers, creating the life in the world below, enshrined in His matted locks; Parvati, His other Self, the Universal Mother, watching by His side.”

(source: **Indian Sculpture and Painting - By Ernest Binfield Havell** Elibron Classics reprint. Paperback. New. Based on 1908 edition by John Murray, London. p.24 - 69). (source: **The Splendour That Was 'Ind' - By K T Shah** p. 153-154). For more Mr. Havell refer to chapter on **Hindu Art**).



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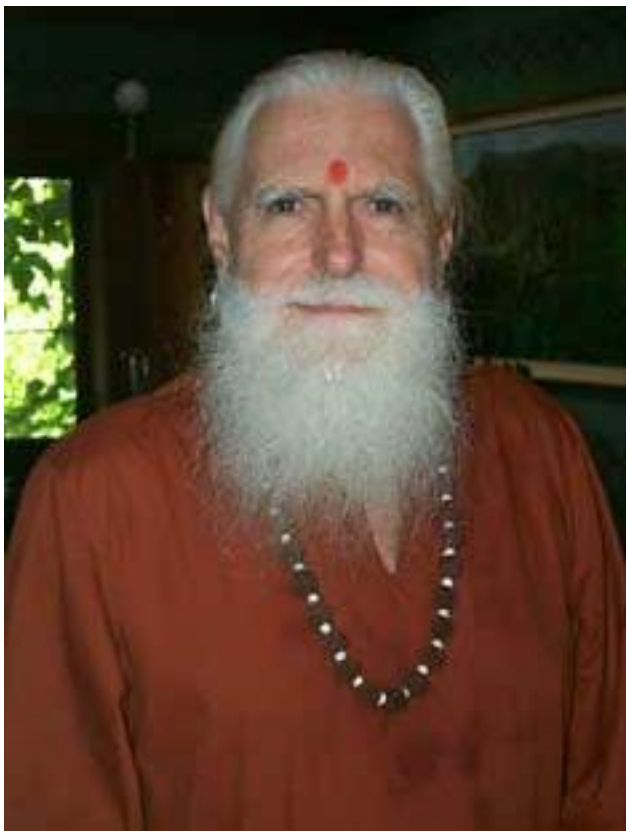
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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

101. **Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami** (1927-2001) American born, was one of Hinduism's foremost spiritual teachers, a prolific author and publisher of **Hinduism Today** magazine.



He has called **Hinduism, the Greatest Religion in the World.**

"Hinduism is so broad. Within it there is a place for the insane and a place for the saint...There is a place for the intelligent person and plenty of room for the fool. The beauty of Hinduism is that it does not demand of every soul perfection in this life, a necessary conclusion for those who believe in a single lifetime during which human perfection or grace must be achieved. Belief in reincarnation gives the Hindu an acceptance of every level of humanity. Some souls are simply older souls than others, but all are inherently the same, inherently immortal and of the nature of the Divine."

"Hinduism, the Eternal Way or Sanatana Dharma, has no beginning, therefore will certainly have no end. It was never created, and therefore it cannot be destroyed. It is a God-centric religion. The center of it is God. All of the other religions are prophet-centric. It is the only religion that has such breadth and depth. Hinduism contains the deities and the sanctified temples, the esoteric knowledge of inner states of consciousness, yoga and the disciplines of meditation. It possesses a gentle compassion and a genuine tolerance and appreciation for other religions. **It remains undogmatic and open to inquiry. It believes in a just world in which every soul is guided by karma to the ultimate goal of Self Realization, or moksha, freedom from rebirth. It rest content in the knowledge of the divine origin of the soul. It cherishes the largest storehouse of scripture and philosophy on the Earth, and the oldest. It is endowed with a tradition of saints and sages, of realized men and women, unrivaled on the Earth.**

It is the sum of these, and more, which makes me boldly declare that Hinduism is the greatest religion in the world.

(source: **Hinduism Today - March/April 2000** p. 10-11).

102. **Dr. Heinrich Zimmer** (1890-1943), the great German Indologist, a man of penetrating intellect, the keenest esthetic sensibility. **Zimmer** came to the United States in 1940, at the height of his career, and was lecturing at Columbia University when he died in 1943. His other works in the Bollingen series include **Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization and Philosophies of India.**

"We of the Occident are about to arrive at a crossroads that was reached by the thinkers of India some seven hundred years before Christ. This is the real reason, why we become both vexed and stimulated, uneasy and yet interested, when confronted with the concepts and images of Oriental wisdom."



(source: **Readings in Eastern Religious Thought - Hinduism - Edited by Allie M. Frazier** vol 1. p 17).

"It is well known that our Christian Western tradition has long refused to accept the wisdom of the pagans on an equal footing with the body of revelation that it cherishes and worships as its own." The fact that there are virtue, wisdom, and inspiration to be found even among the historical enemies of Christianity."

(source: **Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization - by Heinrich Zimmer and Joseph Campbell** p. 217-218).

''The whole edifice of Indian civilization is imbued with spiritual meaning. The close interdependence and perfect harmonization of the two serve to counteract the natural tendency of Indian philosophy to become recondite and esoteric, removed from life and the task of the education of society. In the Hindu world, the folklore and popular mythology carry the truths and teachings of the philosophers to the masses. In this symbolic form the ideas do not have to be watered down to be popularized. The vivid, perfectly appropriate pictorial script preserves the doctrines without the slightest damage to their sense."

(source: **Philosophies of India - By Heinrich Zimmer** p. 26).

Regarding the **Cosmic Dance of Shiva**, he has said:

"His gesture wild and full of grace, precipitate the cosmic illusion; his flying arms, and legs and the swaying of his torso produce – indeed, they are – the continuous creation-destruction of the universe, death exactly balancing birth, annihilation the end of every coming-forth."

(source: **The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism - By Fritjof Capra** p.243).

103. **Irwin Babbitt** (1865-1933) the Harvard literary scholar and cultural thinker, will



always stand as a monument to American intellectual culture at its finest. **Babbitt** had a fascination with Asian religion and philosophy. He was one of the principal critics of the twentieth century and an influential teacher of **T. S. Eliot.**

"East bowed low before the blast in humble deep disdain,
It let the legions thunder past, and plunged in thought again."

104. **Dr. Ananda Kentish Cooraswamy** (1877-1947) the late curator of Indian art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, was unexcelled in his knowledge of the art of the Orient, and unmatched in his understanding of Indian culture, language, religion and philosophy. He is the author of ' **The Dance of Shiva: Essays on Indian Art and Culture'**

Praising this grand achievement of art, he writes about the **image of the Nataraja**:

"This conception itself is a synthesis of science, religion and art. In the night of Brahma, Nature is inert, and cannot dance till Shiva wills it. He rises from His rapture, and dancing sends through inert matter pushing waves of awakening sound, and lo! matter also dances appearing as a glory round about Him. This is poetry; but nonetheless, science.

Whatever the origins of Siva's dance, it became in time the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of.

“How amazing the range of thought and sympathy of those rishi-artists who conceived such a type as this, affording an image of reality, a key to the complex tissue of life, a theory of nature, note merely satisfactory to a single clique or race, not acceptable to the thinkers of a country only, but Universal in its appeal to the philosopher, the lover and the artist of all ages and all countries…”

“Every part of such an image as this is directly expressive not of any superstition or dogma, but of evident facts. **No artist of today, however great, could more exactly or more wisely create an image of that Energy which science must postulate behind all phenomena.** “It is not strange that the figure of Nataraja has commanded the adoration of so many generations past; familiar with all skepticisms, expert in tracing all beliefs to primitive superstitions, explorers of the infinitely great and infinitely small, we are worshippers of Nataraja still.”

(source: **The Dance of Shiva - By Dr. Ananda K Coomaraswamy** p. 57-66).



" Hindus have grasped more firmly than others the fundamental meaning and purpose of life, and more deliberately than others organized society with a view to the attainment of the fruit of life; and this organization was designed, not for the advantage of a single class, but, to use a modern formula, to take from each according to his capacity, and to give to each according to his needs." " If it be asked what inner riches India brings to aid in the realization of a civilization of the world, then, from the Indian standpoint, the answer must be found in her religions and her philosophy, and her constant application of abstract theory to practical life."

The essence of the Indian experience, rooted in " a constant intuition" of the unity and harmony of all life. Everything has its place, every being its function and all play a part in the divine concert led by Nataraja (Siva), Lord of Dancers.

He has described the Bhagavad Gita as "a compendium of the whole Vedic doctrine to be found in the earlier *Vedas, Brahmanas and Upanishads*, and being therefore the basis of all later developments, it can be regarded as the focus of all Indian religion."

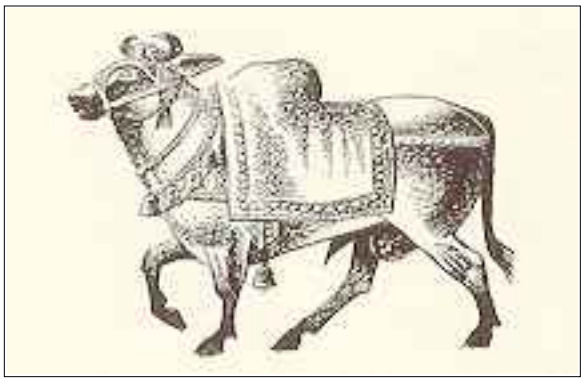
(source: **Readings in Vedic Literature - By Satsvarupa dasa Goswami** p. 38).

"There are many gods in Hindu pantheon, but they are no more than **the imaginative shadowing forth of all-compassing, all penetrating spirit."**

"Hinduism emerges, not as a post-Vedic development, atheistic declension from the lofty visions of the Upanishads, but as something handed on from a prehistoric past, ever-changing and yet ever essentially itself, raised at various times by devotional ecstasy and **philosophic speculation to heights beyond the grasp of thought,** and yet preserving in its popular aspects the most archaic rites and animistic imagery."

(source: **The Wisdom of Ananda Coomaraswamy - presented by S. Durai Raja Singam** 1979 p. 97).

He detected in **India "a strong national genius... since the beginning of her history." He found Indian art and culture "a joint creation of the Dravidian and Aryan genius."** Of Buddhism, he wrote:' "the more profound our study, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish Buddhism from Brahmanism, or to say in what respects, if any, Buddhism is really unorthodox. The outstanding distinction lies in the fact that Buddhist doctrine is propounded by an apparently historical founder. Beyond this there are only broad distinctions of emphasis." No right-wing historian could dare put it so boldly in Indian today.



(source: **Non-saffron history unnerves reads - By Meenakshi Jain**).

"Almost all that belongs to the common spiritual consciousness of Asia, the ambient in which its diversities are reconcilable, is of Indian origin in the Gupta period."

(source: **The Heritage of Asia - By Kenneth Saunders** p. 45 -46).

"Hinduism is not only the oldest of the mystery religions, or rather metaphysical disciplines, of which we have a full and precise knowledge from literary sources .....but also perhaps the only one of these that has **survived with an unbroken tradition** and that is lived and understood at the present by millions of men..."

The Indian tradition is one of the forms of the Philosophia Perennis, and as such, embodies those universal truths, to which no one people or age can make exclusive claim.

"....We must, however, specially mention the **Bhagavad Gita** as probably the most important single work ever produced in India; this book of eighteen chapters is not, as it has been sometimes called, a "sectarian " work, but one universally studied and often repeated daily from memory by millions of Indians of all persuasions; it may be described as a compendium of the whole Vedic doctrine to be found in the earlier Vedas, Brahmanas, and Upanishads, and being therefore the basis of all the later developments, it can be regarded at the focus of all Indian religion.

(source: **Hinduism and Buddhism - By Ananda Coomaraswamy** p. 3-5). For more on Ananda Coomaraswamy refer to chapter on **Hindu Art** and **Hindu Music**).



105. **Robert Arnett,** professor, has lectured widely throughout America including the Smithsonian Institute and Harvard and Yale Universities. He has been interviewed on National Public Radio, Voice of America and various television programs. **Arnett** in his new book ' **India Unveiled** ' says:

"Hinduism is greatly misunderstood in the West. Most occidentals do not realize that Hinduism is a monotheistic belief in only one God, who as Creator is beyond time, space and physical form. The entire pantheon of Hindu gods and goddesses are merely representations of different attributes of the One, Unmanifested Spirit. Hinduism created a different deity for each of God's numerous

qualities to make God seem more real and approachable."

" Hinduism is a very tolerant religion. It does not have claim exclusivity of the true God for only itself.'

The Rig Veda, clearly states: "Though men call it by many names, it is really One."

106. **Pierre Simon de Laplace, Pierre Simon de Laplace,** (1749-1827) French mathematician, philosopher, and astronomer, a contemporary of Napoleon. **Laplace** is best known for his nebular hypothesis of the origin of the solar system.



" It is India that gave us the ingenious method of expressing all numbers by ten symbols, each receiving a value of position as well as an absolute value, a profound and important idea which appears so simple to us now that we ignore its true merit. But its very simplicity, the great ease which it has lent to all computations, puts our arithmetic in the first rank of useful inventions, and we shall appreciate the grandeur of this achievement the more when we remember that it escaped the genius of Archimedes and Appollnius, two of the greatest men produced by antiquity."

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** Oxford University Press.1995 p. 217)

107. **Ninian Smart,** Professor of Sociology. Born in Scotland, he taught at the Universities of London, Birmingham, and Wales for many years before moving to the University of California, Santa Barbara,

" The genius of Hinduism is to combine divergent practices and beliefs into one overall system. "

108. **Von Rene Guenon** (1887-1951) French metaphysician has described our own era as "the reign of quantity". In his many books, Guenon exposed its shortcomings and called for a return to sacred tradition.

" Among the Neo-Platonists, Eastern (Hindu) influences were ... to make their appearances, and it is there ... that ... the Infinite (is) met with for the first time among the Greeks."

109. **Francesco Clemente,** Italian born Indophile, New York artist Clemente was born in 1952. His art was displayed at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum recently. He is the youngest artist ever to receive a full-museum retrospective at the Guggenheim. Clemente arrived in India in 1973 and 1978 made more than ten trips there, immersing himself deep in India's philosophy, religion, art and crafts.

"The Gods who left thousands of years ago in Milan (Europe) are still in India."

"In Indian diversity there is still the memory of very refined expressions which we have lost."



110. **Geoffrey Moorhouse** (1931 -) author of **Om: an Indian Pilgrimage**

" No other country has lived with so complicated a past so equably, assimilating everything that has happened to it, obliterating naught, so that not even the intricate histories of European states have produced such a rich pattern as that bequeathed by the Mauryas, the Ashokas, the Pahlavas, the Guptas, the Chalykyas, the Hoysalas, the Pandyas, the Cholas, the Mughals, and the British - to identify a few of the people that have shaped India's inheritance. "

" Religion, flourishes here as it does nowhere else. Other lands may surrender themselves totally to a particular faith, but in India most creeds are deeply rooted and acknowledged fervently. Virtually the whole population practices some form of devotion: the Indian without the slightest feeling for the divine, without a spiritual dimension to his life, is exceedingly rare."

Incomparable and inimitable she is, India is also our great paradigm."

(source: **Om: an Indian Pilgrimage - By Geoffrey Moorhouse** p. 15-16).

111. **Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson** (1862-1932), A friend of E. M. Forster, wrote in his "**Essay on the Civilizations**" thesis.

" The real antithesis is not between East and West, but between India and the rest of the world." Only India is different; only India un spools some other possibility fantastically. India is the odd man out of the global citizenry." Dickinson held, because religion, religion, religion everywhere had transported the land to somewhere nearly extraterrestrial. All other countries were located on planet Earth, in present time, in specific material conditions- which were so much "maya" or secondary reality in India, where what was important had migrated over the mountaintops into the clouds.

"Indian religion has never been a system of dogma, and is not entangled in questionable history. Indian philosophy and religion have always affirmed that there is; that by meditation and discipline an internal perception is opened which is perception of truth."

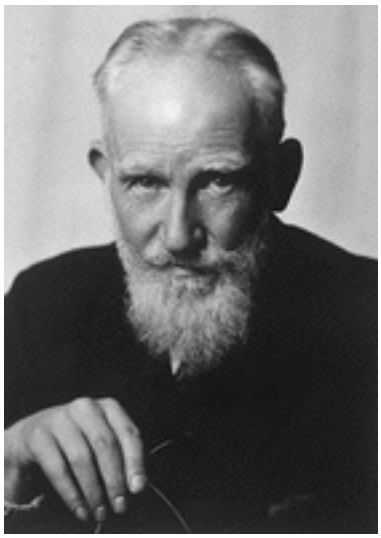
"In the first place, India has never put Man in the center of the universe. In India, and wherever Indian influence has penetrated, it is, on the one hand, the tremendous forces of nature, and what lies behind them that is the object of worship and of speculation; and, on the other hand, Mind and Spirit; not the mind or spirit of the individual person, but the universal Mind or Spirit, which is in him, but which he can only have access by philosophic mediation and discipline....It is very much in harmony with the spirit of western science than with that of western religion. And this fact is exemplified not only by the religious and philosophic literature of India, but by its art."

(source: **An Essay on the Civilizations of India, China and Japan - By G. Lowes Dickinson** p.11-31).

Thus India stands for something which distinguishes it from all other peoples, and so she calls Herself a Karmabhumi as opposed to the Bhoga-bhumi of all other peoples. For this

she has been wonderfully preserved until today. Even now we can see the life of thousand of years ago. Standing on the Ghats at Benares or by any village well we are transported into the beautiful antique world.

(source: **Is India Civilized - Essays on Indian Culture - By Sir John Woodroffe** p. 136-137).



112. **George Bernard Shaw**, (1856-1950) a vegetarian and Nobel Laureate in Literature. He was an active socialist on the executive committee of the Fabian Society along with **Annie Besant**. Famous British Author and Playwright, of books such as Pygmalion.

Shaw remarked:

"The Indian way of life provides the vision of the natural, real way of life. We veil ourselves with unnatural masks. On the face of India are the tender expressions which carry the mark of the Creators hand. "

In the face of an Indian, you can see the natural glory of life, while we have covered ourselves with an artificial clock.

"The apparent multiplication of gods is bewildering at the first glance, but you soon discover that they are the same GOD. There is always one uttermost God who defies personification. **This makes Hinduism the most tolerant religion in the world, because its one transcendent God includes all possible gods. In fact Hinduism is so elastic and so subtle that the most profound Methodist, and crudest idolater, are equally at home with it."**

(source: http://www.geocities.com/hindusoc/special/hindintr.htm).

113. **W. Crooke** in his book " **The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India**" (Oxford University Press, 1896.

" Among all the great religions of the world there is none more catholic, more assimilative, than the mass of beliefs which go to make up what is popularly known as Hinduism."

114. **Sir Charles Eliot** (1862-1931), British diplomat and colonial administrator, a famous scholar and linguist of Oxford, observed on his book **Hinduism and Buddhism - An Historical Sketch**:

" Let me confess that I cannot share the confidence in the superiority of Europeans and their ways which is prevalent in the West." " European civilization is not satisfying and Asia can still offer something more attractive to many who are far from Asiatic in spirit."

"Indian religions have more spirituality and a greater sense of the Infinite than our western creeds and more liberality. They are not merely tolerant but often hold that different classes of mankind have their own rules of life and suitable beliefs and that he who follows such partial truths does no wrong to the greater and all-inclusive truths on which his circumstances do not permit him to fix his attention....and are more penetrated with the idea that civilization means a gentle and enlightened temper - an idea sadly forgotten in these days of war. "



"I do not think that Christianity will ever make much progress in Asia, for what is commonly known by that name is not the teaching of Christ but a rearrangement of it made in Europe and like most European institutions practical rather than thoughtful. And as for the teaching of Christ himself, the Indian finds it excellent but not ample or satisfying. **There is little in it which cannot be found in some of the many scriptures of Hinduism..."**

"The claim of India to the attention of the world is that she, more than any other nation since history began, has devoted herself to contemplating the ultimate mysteries of existence and, in my eyes, the fact that Indian thought diverges widely from our own popular thought is a positive merit."

(source: **Hinduism and Buddhism - An Historical Sketch -** 3 volume set p. xcviii - xcix).

"Hinduism has not been made, but has grown. It is a jungle, not a building. It is a living example of a great national paganism such as might have existed in Europe if Christianity had not become the state religion of the Roman Empire, if there had remained an incongruous jumble of old local superstitions, Greek philosophy, and oriental cults such as the worship of Sarapis or Mitras."

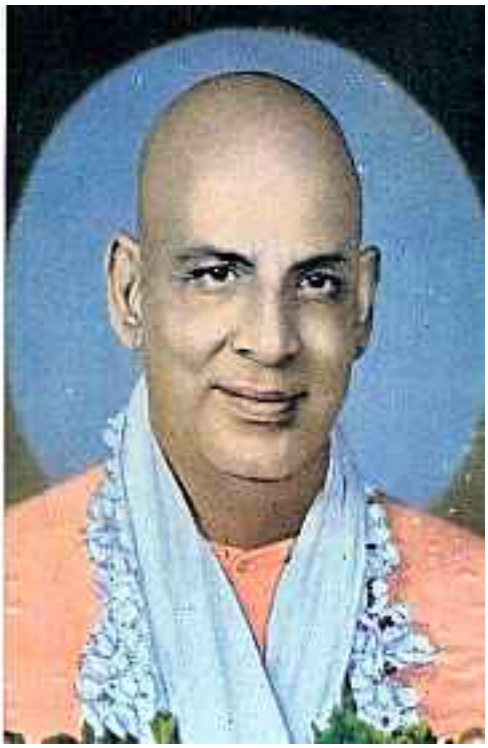
(source: **Hinduism - By A. C. Bouquet** p. 13).

Compared to Islam and Christianity, Hinduism's doctrines are extraordinarily fluid, and multiform. India deals in images and metaphors. **Restless, subtle and argumentative as Hindu thought is, it is less prone than European theology to the vice of distorting transcendental ideas by too stringent definition. It adumbrates the indescribable by metaphors and figures. It is not afraid of inconsistencies which may illustrate different aspects of the infinite, but it rarely tries to cramp the divine within the limits of a logical phrase.**

The Hindu has an extraordinary power of combining dogma and free thought, uniformity, and variety. Utmost latitude of interpretation is allowed. In all ages Hindus have been passionately devoted to speculation. It is also to point out that from the Upanishads down to the writings of Tagore in the present day literature from time to time enunciates the idea that the whole universe is the manifestation of some **exuberant force giving expression to itself in joyous movement.** Thus the **Taittiriya Upanishad** (III. 6) says:

"Bliss is Brahman, for from bliss all these being are born, by bliss when born they live, into bliss they enter at their death."

(source: **Hinduism and Buddhism: An Historical Sketch** Volume I p. 38-78).



115. **Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati Maharaj** (1887-1963) the founder of The Divine Life Society, with headquarters in Rishikesh, Himalayas, began as a physician before he turned sannyasi. **Swami** Sivananda said:

" Hinduism stands unrivaled in the depth and grandeur of its philosophy. Its ethical teachings are lofty, unique and sublime. It is highly flexible and adapted to every human need. It is a perfect religion by itself. It is not in need of anything from any other religion. No other religion has produced so many great saints, great patriots, great warriors, great Pativratas (chaste women devoted to their husbands). The more you know of the Hindu religion, the more you will honor and love it. The more you study it, the more it will enlighten you and satisfy your heart. "

116. **Juan Mascaro**, author of **The Bhagvad Gita - translated By Juan Mascaro**. Penguin Classics, 1962), pays tribute to the glory of the Sanskrit literature.

" Sanskrit literature is a great literature. We have the great songs of the Vedas, the splendor of the Upanishads, the glory of the Upanishads, the glory of the Bhagavad-Gita, the vastness (100,000 verses) of the Mahabharata, the tenderness and the heroism found in the Ramayana, the wisdom of the fables and stories of India, the scientific philosophy of Sankhya, the psychological philosophy of yoga, the poetical philosophy of Vedanta, the Laws of Manu, the grammar of Panini and other scientific writings, the lyrical poetry, and dramas of Kalidasa. Sanskrit literature, on the whole, is a romantic literature interwoven with idealism and practical wisdom, and with a passionate longing for spiritual vision."

"Amongst the sacred books of the past, the Upanishads can be called the truth the Himalayas of the soul. Their passionate wanderings of discovery to find that sun of the spirit in us, from whom we have the light of our consciousness and the fire of our life; the greatness of their questions, and the sublime simplicity of their answers; their radiance of joy..."

(source: **The Upanishads - By Juan Mascaro**).

"In the Bhagavad Gita Arjuna becomes the soul of man and Krishna the charioteer of the soul."

"The greatness of the Bhagavad Gita is the greatness of the universe, but even as the wonder of the stars in heaven only reveals itself in the silence of the night, the wonder of this poem only reveals itself in the silence of the soul."

(source: **The Bhagvad Gita - translated By Juan Mascaro**).

117. **Madame Alice Louis-Barthou** writes:

" I look upon the Occident (Europe) with abomination. It represents for me fog, grayness, chill, machinery, murderous science, factories with all the vices, the triumph of noise, of hustling, of ugliness...The Orient is calm, peace, beauty, color, mystery, charm, sunlight, joy, ease of life, and reverly: I find the exact opposite of our hateful and grotesque civilization..... If I had my way, I should have a wall built between the Orient and the

Occident to keep the latter from poisoning the former; I should go and live where you can see clearly and where there are no Europeans."

118. **Professor H. G. (Hugh George) Rawlinson** (1880 -) author of several books including **India, a short cultural history**, remarks that,

"almost all the theories, religious, philosophical, and mathematical, taught by the Pythagoreans were known in India in the sixth century B.C."



119. **W. J. Grant** in his book **The Spirit of India** says:

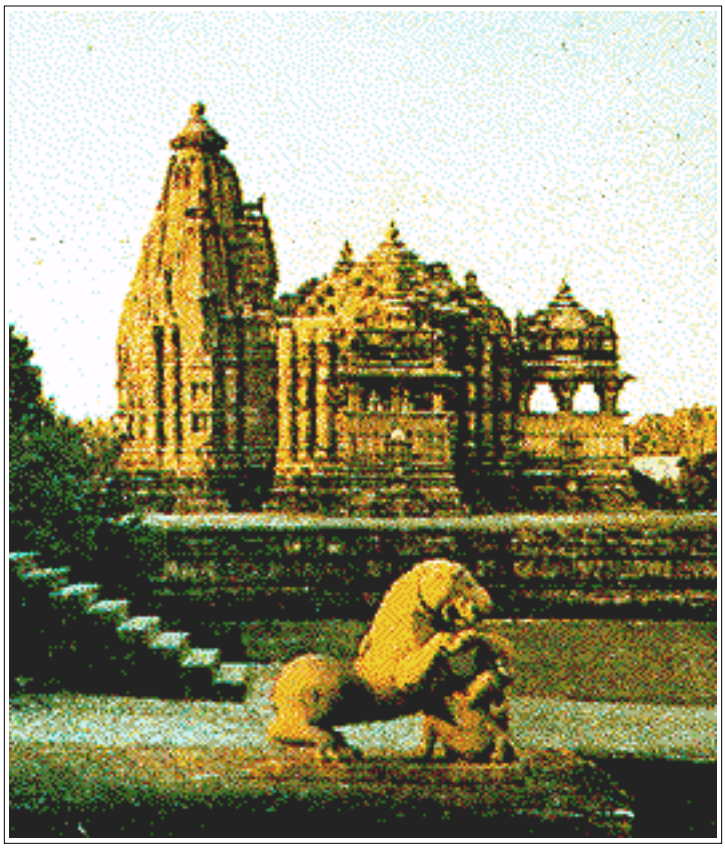
"India indeed has a preciousness which a materialistic age is in danger of missing. Some day the fragrance of her thought will win the hearts of men. This grim chase after our own tails which marks the present age cannot continue for ever. The future contains a new human urge towards the real beauty and holiness of life. When it comes India will be searched by loving eyes and defended by knightly hands."

"**The religion of the Hindus is rich in legend and stupendous allegory. It is a religion of great dignity and beauty. Its wrestlings with reality are as courageous as any in the whole history of mankind..' Indian thought has generally been contemplative, it has seldom been enamored of the material side of life**."

"In the realm of religious philosophy she has given to us the most searching examination of the ethical law the world is ever likely to have. No Greek was more splendid in his scientific fidelity than the quiet company of Indian thinkers who made the Upanishads and traced the whole beauteous outline of the Eastern spirit."

"There are cities in India whose grace and charm are matched only by the sweetness of an immemorial religion. Nowhere else in the world have I been so exquisitely invaded by the mystic quality of life."

"She is grave and old and stupendous. Her accents are for the calm and gracious. Her temples are laden with symbolism....and internal beauties. It is true, that India is royal...India has been royal at heart from her very foundations of her memory."



"Our sublimest delusion is that India is backward. This predicates, of course, that we are progressive. If backwardness and progress depend on the rate at which one can gobble up vanities perhaps India does not need our aid.....India's devotion to being good rather than being clever comes nearer the heart of a true civilization. Cleverness dies on the tongue like a social pleasantry, goodness echoes round the universe in an un extinguishable reality. We in the West are too busy to see that science without soul is like words without meaning."

"India's greatness is in her humility; her weakness is her strength. She is both wiser and more effective than the West, for she does not declare that reform is not a new shirt on Sunday morning but a clean heart at the Throne of Grace. Justice without spirit of justice is as much of an achievement as a river without its water."

(source: **The Spirit of India - By W. J. Grant** London published by B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1933 preface and p. vi - 58).

120. **Dr. A. L. Basham**, one of the leading authority of ancient Indian culture and author of **The Wonder That Was India**

"Our over-all impression is that no other part of the ancient world were the relations of man and man, and of man and the state, so fair and humane. In no other early civilization were slaves so few in number, and in no other ancient law book are their rights so well protected as in the **Arthashastra**....In all her history of warfare, Hindu India has few tales to tell of cities put to the sword or of the massacre of noncombatants...To us the most striking feature of ancient Indian civilization is its humanity....Our second general impression of ancient India is that her people enjoyed life, passionately delighting both in the things of the senses and the things of the spirit...India was a cheerful land, whose people, each finding a niche in a complex and slowly evolving social system, reached a higher level of kindliness and gentleness in their mutual relations than any other nation of antiquity. For this, as well as for her great achievements in religion, literature, art, science and mathematics, one European student at least would record his admiration of her ancient culture."

(source: **India: A World in Transition - By Beatrice Pitney Lamb** p. 33).

"India was cheerful land, whose people, each finding a niche in a complex and slowly evolving social system, reached a higher level of kindliness and gentleness in their mutual relationships than any other nation of antiquity."

(source: **The Wonder That Was India - By A L Basham** p. 8 - 9).

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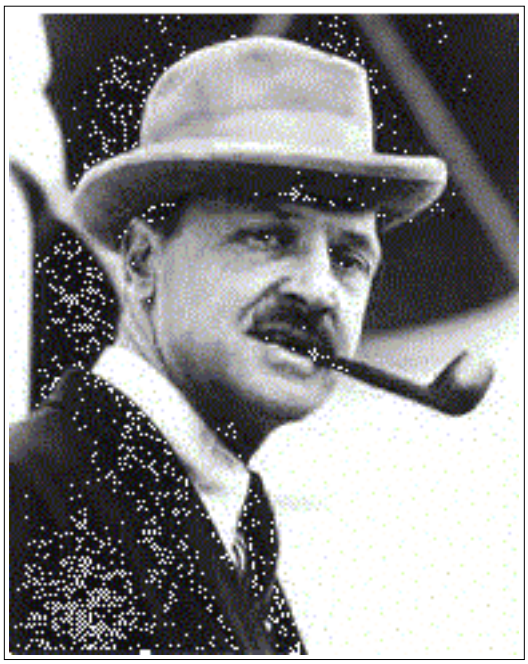
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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

Show in alphabetical order

121. **W. Somerset Maugham** (1874-1965) was born in the British Embassy in Paris and was educated in England and Germany. After medical school, a successful attempt at writing led him to widespread fame for his plays and novels. Author of several books including "Of Human Bondage" and " The Moon and Sixpence."



When **Maugham** arrived in India in 1938, he was hoping to find some inspiration for a novel he planned to write incorporating Hindu philosophy. Arriving in Chennai, he met Ramana Maharshi. This meeting inspired him to write his classic " The Razor's Edge". He derived this title from a passage in the **Katha-Upanishad** - **(Kshurasya Dhara):**

" Like the sharp edge of a razor, the sages say, is the path, Narrow it is, and difficult to tread."

His book **Razor's Edge** reveals his clear grasp of Hindu philosophy. The main character of the book seeks in the end relief in India from the horrors of war and gains a sense of being at one with the Absolute, through the Indian philosophical system known as Vedanta.

(Two movies and more than six editions of the book have appeared since 1944, with sales in the millions of copies.)

(source: **1940 Vedantic Novel Still a Hit - Hinduism Today - July/August 2000** p 54-57).

The greatest English novelist **Maugham**, advises **prospective writers to come to India for knowledge of the higher values of life.**

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisirkumar Mitra** p. 209).

122. **Marcus Leatherdale** Montreal born photojournalist has had a long love affair with India. To him Hinduism and India are almost synonymous. What he likes about Hinduism is that its very emotional, colorful and joyful. **Leatherdale** notes:

The photojournalist Marcus Leatherdale has also had a long love affair with India. For many years he rented a house in Benares, spending half the year there on the bustling

ghats, making friends with Brahmins and boatmen alike. He speaks some Hindi and calls himself an 'adha' Hindustani. He has shot images of maharanis and circus performers and ordinary Indians. His current focus is on the tribal folks who are an almost endangered species in India.

"You'd have to be brain dead to live in India and not be affected by Hinduism. It's not like Christianity in America, where you feel it only on Sunday mornings … if you go to church at all. Hinduism is an on-going daily procedure. You live it, you breathe it."

(source: **Westerners who have succumbed to India' legendary charm - By Lavina Melwani - littleindia.com**).



Dancing Ganesha

"Hinduism has a playful aspect which I've not experienced in any other religion. Its not so righteous or sober as is Christianity, nor is it puritanical. That's one of the reasons I enjoy India. I wake up in the morning, and I'm very content."

(source: **The timeless portraits of Marcus Leatherdale - By Lavina Melwani - Hinduism Today March 1977**).

123. **Jean-Paul Droit** French philosopher, and Le Monde journalist, recently wrote in his book "**The Forgetfulness of India,** that:

"The Greeks loved so much Indian philosophy that Demetrios Galianos had even translated the Bhagavad-Gita". There is absolutely not a shadow of a doubt that the Greeks knew all about Indian philosophy."

(source: **Arise O'India - By Francois Gautier** ISBN 81-241-0518-9 Har-Anand Publications 2000 p. 22).

124. **Herman Melville** (1819-1891) was the great American novelist, and author of **Moby Dick.or The Whale.** Melville's references to Hindu myth and thought, however, peripheral to his works some have thought them to be, are so numerous that there can be no doubt about his extensive knowledge of Hinduism.

That Melville should give a fairly detailed description of the story of **Vishnu** in two places is itself an indication that he did not intend it to be read and forgotten. While trying to present the "true form of this whale," he adverts to those "curious imaginary portraits of him" and describes the Hindu whale as the most ancient portrait available in the world:



"Now, by all odds, the most ancient extant portrait anyways purporting to the whale's is to be found in the famous cavern pagoda of Elephanta, in India. …The Hindoo whale referred to, occurs in a separate department of the wall, depicting the incarnation of Vishnu in the form of leviathan, learnedly known as the **Matse-Avatar**."

In addition to this reference to the portrait of the **Hindu leviathan at Elephanta,** Melville mentions the context in which Vishnu incarnates himself as a fish and relates him to the whaleman's fraternity:



“That wondrous oriental story is now to be rehearsed from the Sashras which gives us the dread Vishnoo, one of the three persons in the godhead of the Hindoos; gives us this divine Vishnoo himself for our Lord: - Vishnoo, who, by the first of his ten earthly incarnations, has forever set apart and sanctified the whale. When Brahma, or the God of Gods, saith the Shaster, resolved to recreate the world after one of its periodical dissolutions, he gave birth to Vishnoo, to preside over the work; but the Vedas, or mystical books, whose perusal would seem to have been indispensable to Vishnoo before beginning the creation, and which therefore must have contained something in the shape of practical hints to young architects, these Vedas were lying at the bottom of the waters; so Vishnu became incarnate in a whale, and sounding down in him to the utter-most depths, rescued the sacred volumes. Was not this Vishnoo a whaleman, then? Even as a man who rides a horse called a horseman?”

(source: **Moby Dick: A Hindu Avatar, a Study of Hindu Myth and Thought in Moby-Dick - By H. B. Kulkarni** p. 1-6).

125. **Jean-Sylvain Bailly** (1736–93) 18th century French astronomer and politician. His works on astronomy and on the history of science (notably the **Essai sur la théorie des satellites de Jupiter**) were distinguished both for scientific interest and literary elegance and earned him membership in the French Academy, the Academy of Sciences, and the Academy of Inscriptions.

Jean-Sylvain Bailly said:



"The motion of the stars calculated by the Hindus before some 4500 years vary not even a single minute from the tables of Cassine and Meyer (used in the 19-th century). The Indian tables give the same annual variation of the moon as the discovered by Tycho Brahe - a variation unknown to the school of Alexandria and also to the Arabs who followed the calculations of the school... "The Hindu systems of astronomy are by far the oldest and that from which the Egyptians, Greek, Romans and - even the Jews derived from the Hindus their knowledge."

(source: **The Politics of History - By N. S. Rajaram** Voice of India ISBN 81-85990-28-X. 1995 p. 47).

126. **R. Gordon Milburn** claims that:

"Christianity in India needs the Vedanta...as constituting what might be called an Ethnic Old Testament " in **Christian Vedantism - Indian Interpreter** 1913.



127. **Rene Guenon** (1886-1951) better known in Egypt as **Sheikh 'Abd Al Wahid Yahya**. But at the age of 21 he was already in Paris, when he came in contact with the Advaita Vedanta school. By the time he was nearly 30, his phenomenal intelligence had enabled him to see exactly what was wrong with the modern West.

He was one of the best-known European traditionalist authors on various civilizations, writes in his book **Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines** says:

" In India, we are in the presence of a tradition which is **purely**



metaphysical in its essence....A fact which stands out much more clearly here than in the Semitic tradition, chiefly owing to the absence of the religious point of view,....is the complete subordination of the various particular orders relatively to metaphysics, that is to say relatively to the realm of universal principles."

(source: **Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines - by Rene Guenon** p. 90-91).

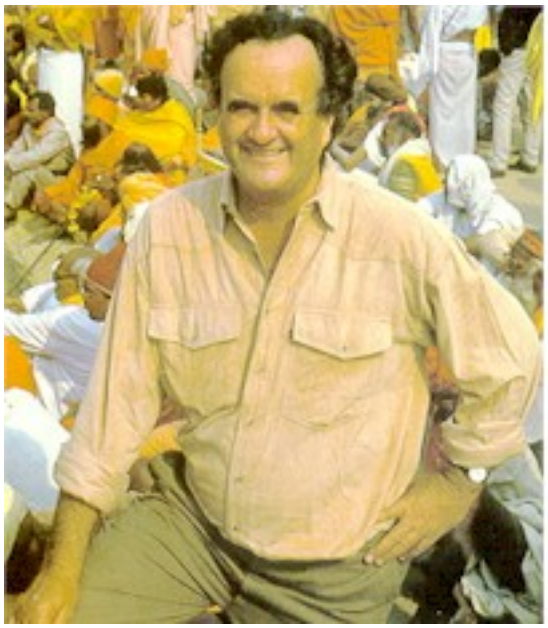
128. **Hans Torwesten** (1944 -) a native of Germany, studied art in Vienna and Indian philosophy, meditation, and yoga in England. A writer, lecturer, yoga teacher, and painter, he now lives in Austria. In his book **Vedanta - Heart of Hinduism** he writes:

"A fair number of leading physicists and biologists have found parallels between modern science and Hindu ideas. In America, many writers such as J. D. Salinger (An Adventure in Vedanta: J.D. Salinger's the Glass Family), Henry Miller, Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, and Christopher Isherwood, were in contact with the Vedanta. Most of them came from elevated intellectual circles which rejected the dogmatism of the Christian Churches yet longed for spirituality and satisfactory answers to the fundamental questions of existence. In Vedanta, they found a wide-open, universal, and philosophically oriented religion where even the penetrating scientific mind could find something to its taste".

"To the Hindu, shruti is what cannot be thought up by the limited human intellect, but is of God. It is what is forever valid, never changes, is not dependent on the limited capacity for understanding of any one historical person. The Hindu for this reason is proud not to need a historical founder. The founder and foundation of the Vedas and the Upanishads is the Brahman itself, is what is indestructible and timeless."

" The Upanishads are indeed thoroughly suffused with the spirit of transcendence."

(source: **Vedanta - Heart of Hinduism - by Hans Torwesten** p. 23 29 and 214).



129. **Mark Tully** former BBC correspondent in India, author of several books, including **No Full Stops in India** and **The Heart of India**, said:

"The genius of Hinduism, and the very reason of its survival for so long, was that it does not stand up and fight."

It changes and adapts and modernizes and its absorbs and that is the scientific and proper way of going about it as well."

" Why is Christianity in so much trouble at the moment? Because it is so difficult for it to adapt," says the celebrated television journalist. Saying that Hinduism would prove to be the religion of the next Millennium."

"The Kumbh Mela could only take place in India. In no other country would millions and millions of pilgrims, driven just by faith that the sins of this life and previous lives would be washed away by bathing in the confluence

of two rivers at an auspicious time, brave severe hardships, some walking barefooted, to get to bathe. Where else would you find hundreds of holy men willing to march naked in processions through the crowds of pilgrims, or one thousand Brahmins sitting around a hundred sacred fires offering a sacrifice for world peace?" At what gathering of one religion would you find such a variety of teaching, such an acceptance that there are many ways to God?"

(source: **cnn.com**).

Addressing the National Hindu Students Forum in Britain in August, 1997, he expressed the view that **Indian civilization has a Hindu base to it and that Hindus should proclaim their identity with pride.**

(source: **Knighthood at last for the 'Voice of India' - Tribune India** 1/6/02).

"It was the promotion of the **ancient Indian tradition of religious tolerance**, a tolerance which owes so much to Hinduism's own pluralism...This tradition provides a basis for Hindus and for Indians who believe in many of the many other religions of this country to live with self-respect, in peace, and proud of their national identity. This is very much an Indian tradition, a tradition which is very different too from the tradition of countries where Semitic religions like Christianity and Islam have dominated. It is the tradition which could meet the needs of so many other countries in the world"

(source: **Opposites distract - By Mark Tully** - hindustantimes.com).

130. **Betty Heimann** late professor of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy at Ceylon University,

"It is an undeniable fact that no philosophy outside India makes such a varied and manifold use of [spiritual] instruction in order to visualize the supreme Truth. It is the very metaphysical bent of Hindu thought which makes room for practical educational training."

131. **Dale M Riepe** (1918 -) says in his book **The Philosophy of India and its impact on American Thought**

"If the American empire meets with the fate of the British, if Americans cannot resolve their life-and-death struggle with the intelligent use of technology, if the alienation in American society cannot be alleviated, then a new attitude may gradually replace the 300 years reign of optimism. Such eventualities may lead to more philosophers turning to contemplation, meditation and increased poring over the **Hindu and Buddhist scriptures."**

" Western thinkers, through their study of Indian philosophies and religions have **"discovered a new technical philosophy of undreamed-of complexity and ingenuity"** and this contact has expanded the imagination, increased the number of categories, made possible new studies in the history of logic, revealed new sensations and has driven the mind back to its origin and out of its possibilities."

(source: **The Philosophy of India and its impact on American Thought - By Dale M Riepe** p. 275).



132. **Clarence Edward Dutton** (1841-1912), a captain of ordinance in the U.S. army, geologist-poet and a Yale man, Dutton was deeply influenced by the philosophies of India. It was Dutton who likened the snow-covered peaks of the canyon walls to the Hindu gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. There is even a



Hindu amphitheatre which Dutton likened to the "profusion and richness which suggests an Oriental character. On the 7,650-foot Shiva Temple he wrote:

"Dutton found the Shiva Temple the grandest of all, and most majestic in aspect.... All round it are side gorges sunk to a depth nearly as profound as that of the main channel...In such a stupendous scene of wreck, it seemed as if the fabled 'destroyer' might find an abode not wholly uncongenial." he observed.

He was particularly in awe of a 7,529-foot butte. 'It is a gigantic butte,' he wrote in 1860. 'So admirably designed and so exquisitely decorated that the sight of it must call forth an expression of wonder and delight from the most apathetic beholder. Such a magnificent nature-made spire needed a timeless name. He called it the **Vishnu Temple.**

Dutton went on to name other buttes with such names as Brahma Temple, (7,553 feet), Deva Temple (7,339).

According to Professor Stephen J. Payne, professor of history at the Arizona State University and author of the book - **How the Canyon Became Grand** - there is " no explicit explanation for naming the peaks after Hindu gods, only implicit." He likens the naming the peaks to the historical fact of the time. "When there was a growing awareness and respect in the West, particularly Europe, towards Indian philosophies, not economies of the past."

133. **George Hendrick** wrote in the Introduction to reprint edition of Charles Wilkins Bhagavad Gita. He noted about the Bhagwad Gita and its :

"antiquarian charm and historical importance."

(source: **The Universal Gita: Western Images of the Bhagavad Gita a Bicentenary Survey** - **By Eric J. Sharpe** p. 4-5).

134. **Klaus K. Klostermaier** Professor of Religion at the University of Manitoba. Author of several books including **A Survey of Hinduism** states:



"Hinduism has proven much more open than any other religion to new ideas, scientific thought, and social experimentation. Many concepts like *reincarnation, meditation, yoga* and others have found worldwide acceptance. It would not be surprising to find Hinduism the dominant religion of the twenty-first century. It would be a religion that doctrinally is less clear-cut than mainstream Christianity, politically less determined than Islam, ethically less heroic than Buddhism, but it would offer something to everybody. It will appear idealistic to those who look for

idealism, pragmatic to the pragmatists, spiritual to the seekers, sensual to the here-and-now generation. Hinduism, by virtue of its lack of an ideology and its reliance on intuition, will appear to be more plausible than those religions whose doctrinal positions petrified a thousand years ago."

135. **Professor Louis Renou** (1896-1966) French Indologists, author of several books including **Hinduism**, **Civilization in Ancient India**, **L'Inde fondamentale**. He wrote in 1962:

"Truth is for Hinduism an indivisible treasure; spiritual immediacy is widely distributed, the mystic path is open to everyone. **In its purest forms, this religion becomes a type of wisdom, that wisdom which impressed the ancient Greeks when they visited India and which could be of some fruitfulness again for our blase cultures.** It is as wisdom that we should like to define Hinduism rather than by the equivocal term spirituality."

(source: **Hinduism - By Louis Renou** p. 56 - 57).

"The fact remains that Hinduism provides an incomparable field of study for the historian of religion: its aberrations are many, but there is in it a great stream of mystical power: it manifests all the conceptions of religion, and its speculation is continually revealing them in a new light. It combines powers of constant renewal with a firm conservancy of fundamental tradition. In Bhakti and still more in Yoga, it has perfected unrivalled technique of mystical initiation, that contrast strongly with the frequently haphazard methods of spiritual training in the West. Above all, in the interpenetration of religion and dharma in general and the reciprocal stimulus of abstract thought and religious experiment, there is an underlying principle, that, given favorable conditions, may well lead to a new integration of the human personality."

(source: **Religions of Ancient India** - **By Louis Renou** p. 110).

He writes: "For almost everyone the **Bhagavad-Gita** is the book par excellence."

(source: **Readings in Vedic Literature - By Satsvarupa dasa Goswami** p. 38).



The well known Indologist and Sanskrit scholar at the University of Paris, in the course of a talk at Santiniketan in January 1949, said that the best writers and thinkers of France had been influenced by Indian thought and culture, and the intuitive sense of affinity between France and Indian culture had developed into devotion. In another talk he said:

"India has the good fortune of being the repository of the noblest spiritual tradition, the only one in the whole world which has been alive throughout the centuries. And Sanskrit

has been the privileged instrument of this tradition."

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisirkumar Mitra** p. 210-211).

"The importance of the Veda to India is well known. Its imprint on Hinduism is permanent and unmistakable; and on Buddhism and Jainism, too, it has left a deep impression, if only in the reaction it produced in them. It seems likely that many Indian literary disciplines would have developed quite differently if there had not originally been that striking sequence of hymns, commentaries, descriptive aphorisms and philosophoumena, which were drawn upon and imitated over a long a period. Vedism is a religion, but it is even more a technique; a technique of learned poets and erudite theologians, which has given rise to the most atheistic of the philosophical systems of India. Vedism even developed the secular disciplines, phonetics and grammar, astronomy, the rudiments of law, even geometry, because its teaching made use of them.

"To the Indian mind, God is 'l'hypostase deficiente de l'Absolut', as **M. Olivier Lacombe** (**L'Absolu selon le Vedanta** - The Absolute according to Vedanta) has said. The world is usually envisaged as an attribute of the divine. In short, the divine is both transcendent and immanent...from early times it was said that the Supreme Being is silence."

"India in her exhaustion has often taken refuge in ahimsa and the Vedantic scale of values; but a new and more self-assertive generation may be at hand, a generation imbued with the spirit of Yajnavalkaya." The Veda may once again become a great source of inspiration, as it was to the fiery Dayananda Saraswati in the nineteenth century, who set out to establish a mystique of national and social import based on the Vedas."

(source: **Religions of Ancient India** - **By Louis Renou** p. 42 - 69).



136. **Georg Feuerstein** is a specialist in the Sanskrit literature of yoga and has written considerable number of articles on various aspects of Indian thought. He has written various books including the **Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy, and Practice** and ' **The Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita: Its philosophy and Cultural Setting**. He observes:

" From earliest times Indian man has shown a distinct predilection for philosophical speculation about the nature of man and the universe. Long before the rise of Greek thought, he grappled with the profoundest problems of philosophy. By the time the Gita was complied, philosophical enquiry had already reached a noteworthy degree of maturity, complexity and coherence. The musings of the early Vedic seers had developed in depth and breadth as well as in clarity and precision."

"The dry, academically stilted approach of contemporary Indology, with little interest in the inner meaning of its subject matter, becomes singularly apparent in the Gita, which is brimming with significance."

(source: **The Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita: Its philosophy and Cultural Setting** p. 61 and 84- 85).

"India's spirituality is undoubtedly the most versatile in the world. In fact, it is hard

to think of any metaphysical problem or solution that has not already been thought of by the sages and pundits of ancient or medieval India."

"Our world, the sages of ancient India tell us, is but a wonderfully bewitching collage of name (nama) and form (rupa). In this they anticipated contemporary philosophy."

"God, is not the Creator-God of deistic religions like Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Rather, God is the transcendental totality of existence, which in the non-dualist schools of Hinduism is styled the Brahman, "Absolute".



"In a sense, Monoism justifies the emotional discord apparent in most of its Occidental followers and rationalizes their self-centeredness. In the case of India, this is the whole pan-en-theistic current of thought so beautifully exemplified in the Gita, some Upanishads, the schools of Vaisnavism, the Saktivada of the Hindu Tantras and in the remarkable South Indian system of Saiva-Siddhanta. This proliferative movement was of cardinal importance in the making of India. By acting as a counter-balance to the other-worldliness of the monistic trends, it literally prevented the Indian culture from total self-extermination."

(source: **Yoga: The Technology of Ecstasy - By Georg Feuerstein** p. 2 - 15 ASIN 0874775205). For more refer to chapter on **Yoga and Hindu Philosophy**).

137. **Philostratus,** (AD 220) ancient Greek writer, son-in-law of Flavius Philostratus. **Philostratus** puts in the mouth of Apollonius of Tyana these words:

"All wish to live in the nearness of God, but only the Hindus bring it to pass."

(source: **Hinduism and Buddhism - By Sir Charles Eliot** volume 1 p. lxii).

138. **Prema Chaitanya,** praises Hinduism's classic contention "Truth is one; sages call it by different names." or "Ekam sath, Vipraah bahudhaa vadanti"

" How artistic, that there should be room for such variety - how rich the texture is, and how much more interesting than if the Almighty had decreed one antiseptically safe, exclusive, orthodox way. Although he is Unity, God finds, it seems, his recreation in variety!" But beyond these differences, the same goal beckons.

(source: **The World's Religions - By Huston Smith** p 73 & 81).



139. **Ella Wheeler Wilcox,** (1850-1919), **Ella Wheeler Wilcox,** (1850-1919), famous American poet and journalist who is perhaps best remembered for verse tinged with an eroticism that was still unconventional for her time. **Wilcox** poems have been collected in volumes such as **Poems of Pleasure** (1897) and **Maurine and Other Poems** (1888), states that:

" India - the land of Vedas, the remarkable works contains not only religious ideas for a perfect life, but also facts which science has proved true. Electricity, radium, electronics, airship, all are known to the seers who founded the Vedas."

140. **Paul William Roberts** taught at Oxford for a year before setting off around the world, stopping in India before settling in Canada, where he has been an award-winning television writer and producer, university lecturer, journalist, film and book critic and novelist. He journeyed through India for twenty years, and in his book ' **Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys in India.'** creates a dazzling mosaic, by turns tragic and comic, of the subcontinent and its people says:

"India is the only country that feels like home to me, the only country whose airport tarmac I have ever kissed upon landing."



"The Vedas still represent eternal truth in the purest form ever written. And they are what drew me to India in the first place, what kept me there, and what draws me back still." " There is no stable principle of evil in Vedic philosophy. There is no infernal realm for sinners. Its non dualism is really beyond monotheism - which creates a fundamental duality of God and man. Evil is not envisaged as a quality opposed to good. It is the absence of good, just as darkness is the absence of light, not its opposite quality."

(source: **Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys in India.'** p. 299 -325).

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Guest Book

Updated - August 31, 2003

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81. **Ramanuja** (1017-1137) was, like Sankara, a great exponent of **Visistadvaita Vedanta,** was concerned with the same problems, and adopted the same assumptions and texts. But they came to entirely different conclusions because while Sankara was intellectual, Ramanujan was devotional. Sankara's cold and relentless logic made him identify the soul with Nirguna Brahman while Ramanuja's devotional spirit led him along the Bhakti Marga.

Ramanjua's teachings were based on the Vaishnava mystical Tamil poems, the Upanishads, theBrahma Sutras and the Puranas. He regarded the Brahman as the Supreme Reality, free from imperfections and possessing innumerable auspicious qualities of unparalleled excellence. He is the Lord or Ishvara and the highest person or Purushottama.

" The Bhagavad-Gita was spoken by Lord Krishna to reveal the science of devotion to God which is the essence of all spiritual knowledge."

The Supreme Lord Krishna's primary purpose for descending and incarnating is relieve the world of any demoniac and negative, undesirable influences that are opposed to spiritual development, yet simultaneously it is His incomparable intention to be perpetually within reach of all humanity. "

(source: **Main Currents in India Culture - By S. Natarajan** p. 37-39 Indo-Middle East Cultural Studies Hyderabad 1960).

82. **Serge Elisseev** - Asian scholar, author of several books, **Etudes D'Orientalisme, Publiees Par Le Musee Guimet a La Memoire De Raymonde Linossier: Notes Sur Le Portrait En Extreme-Orient** and **Peinture Contemporaine au Japon** says:

" The East is impenetrable to the West only for the man who deliberately refuses to get rid of certain ideas which, like armor, prevent him from bending . . . **The teaching of the great Indian thinkers could spiritually enrich the European soul**. In the course of its

history, the European civilization has lost most of its spiritual values. It can no longer recover them though it still realizes their necessity. For the best of men cannot exist simply on the ideal of "efficiency of work" in the American way. In the condition in which the West finds itself, it is easier for us to go and search for truths in the India, than to come back to the few values we have left in the course of the development of our civilization."

83. **Dr. Albert Schweizer** (1875-1965) humanitarian, theologian, missionary, organist, and medical doctor.

"The Bhagavad-Gita has a profound influence on the spirit of mankind by its devotion to God which is manifested by actions."

84. **Richard Waterstone** (?) studied Sanskrit at the University of Edinburgh, journalist, creator of BBC documentary, author, comments in his book on **India: Living Wisdom**



"Shiva's dance is a symbol of the unity and rhythm of existence. The unending dynamic process of creation and destruction is expressed in the energetic posture of the god. Shiva dances in a ring of fire that refers to the life-death process of the universe."

"There is a striking resemblance between the equivalence of mass and energy symbolized by Shiva's cosmic dance and the Western theory, first expounded by Einstein, which calculates the amount of energy contained in a subatomic particle by multiplying its mass by the square of the speed of light : E=mc2. "

"Well before 700 BC. Hindu sages were chanting neti neti (not that, not that), denying the ultimate reality of an external world in which they saw little more than illusion, and searching instead for the eternal spark of Brahman in the soul within all beings.

(source: **India: Living Wisdom - By Richard Waterstone** p. 134-135 and 22).

85. **Roger Housden** (?) author of **Travels Through Sacred India** and a student of the spiritual traditions of India for over 20 years, concurs in his book:

"Time, for example, is intimately connected with the **goddess Kali,** which partly accounts for her destructive nature. Energy - in Einstein's equation, E=MC2 - is personified in India as **Shakti** in her various guises."

"...The magnificent portrayal of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, when he appears to Arjuna and gives him the most profound of spiritual teaching."

"India is a vast network of sacred places. The entire country is a sacred land. The sacrality of the land of India, is what, still today, gives a sense of unity to this country of so many religions, cultures, races and factions."

"The Ganges is a living presence, a protector, a healer of ills. The Ganges is as alive as it ever was with the hopes and dreams of an entire culture. Countless flowers are strewn across her body daily; millions of lights set sail every evening upon her waters. While stories of gods and goddesses come and go with the ages, while one myth replaces or rivals another, the organic presence of Ganga continues as ever, absorbing her devotees' offerings and ashes in the same way she has done since time immemorial."



(source: **Travels Through Sacred India - By Roger Housden** p. 56-57, 73 and 2 -23)..

86. **Vinoba Bhave**, (1894-1982), the great spiritual leaders and social reformers of modern India, was a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. Founder of the Bhoodan, or land-gift, movement, seeking donations of land for redistribution to the landless, said :

"The Supreme Lord of the Gita confirms the faith of each and grants the rewards each seeks....No matter what we revere, so long as our reverence is serious, it helps progress."

"Hinduism gives its followers complete freedom. It does not insist on any particular discipline or prayer. Religion has to release us from bondage. The only imperative commandment it can have is to ask us to purify ourselves. Hinduism has emphasized the need for inner purity. Indian civilization and culture has shown a tremendous capacity for assimilation and absorption. If Hinduism becomes narrow, we shall be destroying our precious heritage. "

87. **J. W. Hauer** (1881-1961) a missionary in India and an official exponent of "the German faith", and a Sanskrit scholar, who gave to the **Bhagavad Gita,** a central place in the German faith. He declares that the Bhagavad-Gita::



"gives us not only profound insights that are valid for all time and all religious life, but it contains as well the classical presentation of one of the most significant phases of Indo-Germanic religious history....Here spirit is at work that belongs to our spirit." "We are not called to solve the meaning of life but to find out the Deed demanded of us and to work and so, by action, to master the riddle of life."

88. **W. Norman Brown** professor of Sanskrit at University of Pennsylvania, author of several books, including **Mahimnastava or Praise of Shiva's Greatness**, **Mythology of India** has stated:

" As a religion, Hinduism has set side by side in peaceful coexistence every shade of belief ranging from the most primitive sort of animism to a highly sophisticated philosophical monism, and with this has gone a corresponding range of worship of practice extending from the simplest disease spirits to the most concentrated meditation designed to produce knowledge of abstract impersonal reality."



89. **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** (1856-1920) freedom fighter, great Sanskrit scholar and astronomer. He was an ardent patriot and a born fighter. **He has been called the Father of Indian Nationalism.** He is the author of **The Orion** and **The Artic Home in the Vedas** in English and of **Gita Rahasya** in Marathi. He was the fearless editor of the two leading newspapers of the Deccan - the Kesari and the Mahratta. He suffered imprisonment thrice - one of them a rigorous one for twelve months in 1897 and deportation to Manadalay .

His contribution to modern India stands on par with that of Mahatma Gandhi's. Proclaimed to the nation, "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it!" Wrote his famous commentary on Bhagavad-Gita, the sacred book of Hindus.

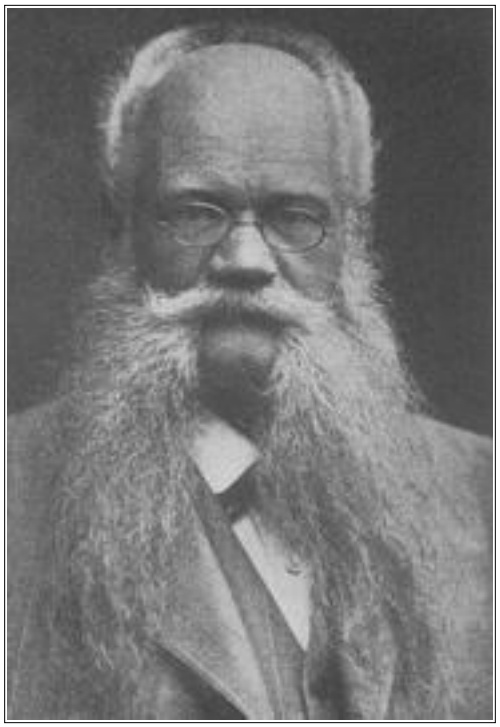
He stressed that Gita taught Karma (action), nothing but action. Religion or spiritual message were secondary and the need of the hour was to arise and fight. This was Lord Krishna's message to Arjuna.

He explained: "The most practical teaching of the Gita, and one for which it is of abiding interest and value to the men of the world with whom life is a series of struggles, is not to give way to any morbid sentimentality when duty demands sternness and the boldness to face terrible things."

(source: **The Soul of India- By Amaury de Riencourt** p. 301).

"The Shrimad Bhagavad Gita is one of the most brilliant and pure gems of our ancient sacred books. It would be difficult to find a simpler work in Sanskrit literature ore even in all the literature of the world than the Gita, which explains to us in an unambiguous and succinct manner the deep, and sacred principles of the sacred science of the SELF (Atman), after imparting to us the knowledge of the human body and the cosmos, and on the authority of those principles acquaints every human being with the most perfect and complete condition of the Self...."

(source: **Gita Rahasya - By B. G. Tilak** p. 1).



90. **Leopold von Schroeder** (1851-1920) German Indologist. In 1884, Schroeder published **Pythagoras und die Inder, Eine Untersuchung ueber Herkunft und Anstammung Pythagoreischer Ideen -** Pythagoras and the Indians. An examination of the origin and derivation of the ideas of Pythagoras.

He says:

"The Indians are the nation of romanticists of antiquity. The Germans are the romantics of modern times. Sentimentality and feelings for Nature are common to both German and Indian poetry. He concludes that all the romantic minds of the West turn towards India because of the deep-rooted similarity between romanticism in Europe."

(Off all the European nations Germany's response to India was most enthusiastic and open hearted).

91. **Jagdish Chandra Bose** (1858-1937), a pioneer of modern Indian science, combined ancient Indian introspective methods with modern experimental methods to demonstrate "the universal livingness of matter" or the "omnipresence of Life in Matter."

Modern science thus endorsed the **ancient Upanishadic** truth that the entire universe is born of a life-force and is quivering with a touch of animation. His work represents the triumph of spirituality over extreme materialism.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. p. 266).

92. **Kenneth Walker** (?) a famous British surgeon, has devoted a good deal of time and writing to the study of Indian thought and literature in search of an answer:



The eminent English thinker, presiding over the Sri Ramakrishna birthday anniversary meeting in London in March, 1949, said:

"If the two great nations, India and England, cannot be united by political chords, the ties of spiritual and intellectual co-operation will certainly prove a stronger bond of union. **India, the greatest spiritual force of the world,** even maintains today those fountain sources of eternal life, which are the only hope of the spiritual resurrection of humanity."

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisirkumar Mitra** p.209-210).

"From the point of view of science, we see man as an elaborate piece of mechanism, his actions determined by his central nervous system and his environment. From philosophy we learn that his capacity for knowledge is strictly limited, so that by means of his sense organs alone he can never know reality. This is confirmed by Hindu philosophy, but a new idea is added.

Man, as he is can see no more and do no more, but by right effort and right method, he can gain powers, understand more and achieve more."



93. **Rudolph Steiner** (1861-1925), Austrian architect, highly interested in the alignment between science and nature, matter and spirit, he developed an anthropomorphic architecture for his own Anthroposophical Society. A scholar who had edited the works of German dramatist/poet Johann Wolfgang Goethe.

" In order to approach a creation as sublime as the Bhagavad-Gita with full understanding it is necessary to attune our soul to it."

"What we read in the Vedas, those archives of Hindu wisdom, gives us only a faint idea of the sublime doctrines of the ancient teachers, and even so these are not in their original form. Only the gaze of the clairvoyant, directed upon the mysteries of the past, many reveal the unuttered wisdom which lies hidden behind these writings."

(source: **Ancient Indian Education - By Radha Kumud Mookerji** p. 17).

94. **William Butler Yeats** (1856-1939) a 1923 Nobel Laureate in Literature, described his first meeting with a Hindu philosopher at Dublin.



"It was my first meeting with a philosophy that confirmed my vague speculations and seemed at once logical and boundless. "

In his **"Meru"** written in 1935 - Meru is the central mountain of the world in Hindu Mythology - Yeats contrasts the peaceful life of the mystic, despite the hardships of nature, with the transitory cycles of creation and destruction exemplified in the world of man.

Yeats was keenly interested in Yoga system and the Tantra.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Pan Macmillan Limited. 1993. p. 262-263).

95. **Stephen P. Huyler** (?) art historian, cultural anthropologist, curator at the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler gallery, in his book **Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion** defines Hinduism:

" Hinduism is a religion of individuality'. Both good and evil are believed to be of God, and the purpose of most rituals is to maintain a balance between such opposites: creation and destruction, light and dark, masculine and feminine. All Hindus believe that the Absolute is the pure blend of opposites, neither masculine nor feminine. For the Hindu, as every aspect of existence has a purpose, human meaning involves a fundamental sense of duty and of conscientious accountability. All individuals are considered part of the greater whole, which functions well only when each person fulfills his or her obligations. The focus and means of worship are many, but the process has a common thread. It acknowledges

one of the fundamental principles of Hinduism. God is a universal force, indivisible and yet infinitely divisible, the one and the many, the perfect mixture of all facets of existence."

" Hinduism is a religion of strength, vitality, innovation, and balance."



"For the average Hindu, the Divine is personal and approachable. God is universal force, indivisible, and yet infinitely divisible, the one and the many, the perfect mixture of all facets of existence."

"Many Hindu texts state that the Absolute, Brahman, is pure sound."

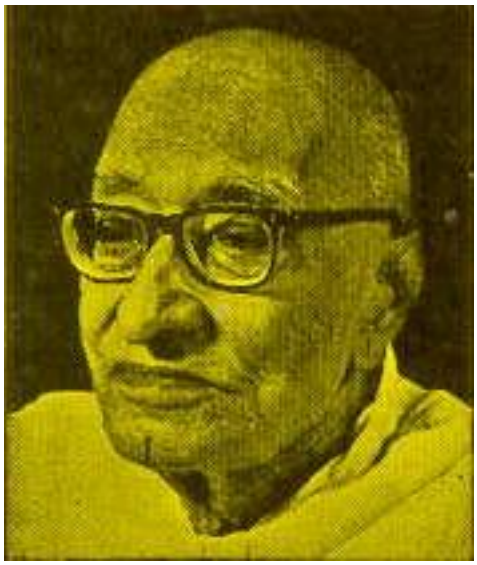
"Hinduism is often said to be a religion of millions of Gods, and it is indeed a religion of diversity. But it is essential to understand that underlying all is the belief in the unity in one great God: the Absolute, often known as Brahman. Some Hindus believe that this Absolute is formless, a supreme cosmic force that cannot be completely known by humankind. Hindu philosophers state that existence as we know it is an illusion. The universe is relative, ever changing, whereas its source, the Absolute, is the only permanent thing, never changing. To truly reach the Divine we must divest ourselves of all physical attachments and open our minds and spirit to the great void."

(source: **Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion - By Stephen P Huyler** p. 28 -56).

96. **Roger Garaudy** (?) a Muslim philosopher says:

"The **Bhagavad-Gita** is a rich message, directed toward the human being, showing him the path for his actions, in order to establish a divine society on earth."

(source: unknown).



97. **C. Rajagopalachari** (1878-1972) popularly known as "Rajaji" was a great patriot. He was a scholar, a statesman, and a linguist. A contemporary of Mohandas Gandhi, he was also free India's first Governor General. Perhaps his most signal accomplishment was his thoughtful rendition of the Mahabharata and Ramayana in English, making the stories and wisdom contained in those classics available to a new generation of English educated Indians. In his book **Ramayana**, Rajaji captures for us the pathos and beauty of Valmiki's magic in an inimitable manner.

He spoke eloquently of the **Upanishads.**

"The spacious imagination, the majestic sweep of thought, and the almost reckless spirit of exploration with which, urged by the compelling thirst for truth, the Upanishad teachers and pupils dig into the "open secret" of the universe, make this most ancient of the world's holy books still the most modern and most satisfying."

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** Oxford University Press. 1995. pg 90).



Rajagopalachari has observed on indestructible culture of India:

"If there is any honesty in India today, any hospitality, any chastity, any philanthropy, any tenderness to the dumb creatures, any aversion to evil, any love to do good, it is due to whatever remains of the old faith and the old culture."

(source: **India's Priceless Heritage - By Nani A. Palkhivala** 1980 p. 39).

"The Hindu doctrine of all ways trading to God with the resulting attitude of the Hindu creed towards all other religions is unique. No other creed has arrived at this all embracing fraternity of faiths, which Hinduism stand for.

Akasat Sarvadeva Namaskarah Kesavam Prati Gachati. The quotation is from Mahabharata."

(source: **TribuneIndia.com**).

"The Mahabharata has molded the character and civilization of one of the most numerous of the world's people. How? By its gospel of dharma, which like a golden thread runs through all the complex movements in the epic; by its lesson that hatred breed hatred, that covetousness and violence leads inevitably to ruin, that the only real conquest is in the battle against one's lower nature."

(source: **Hinduism - By Linda Johnsen** p. 65).



98. **Octovio Paz** (1914-1998) was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1990. He served as Mexico's ambassador to India from 1962 until 1968. This is what he says about Hindu art in his book **In Light of India**:

"The Hindu genius is a love for abstraction and, at the same time, a passion for the concrete image. At times it is rich, at others prolix. It has created the most lucid and the most instinctive art. It is abstract and realistic, sexual and intellectual, pedantic and sublime. It lives between extremes, it embraces the extremes, rooted in the earth and drawn to an invisible beyond."

(source: **In Light of India - By Octavio Paz** p. 185).

99. **Thomas Merton** (1915-1968) was a Trappist monk, poet, social critic and author of many books, including *Seeds of Contemplation*, *Life and Holiness*, *Mystics and Zen Masters*. **Merton** , in his book **Thoughts on the East** talks about the living importance of the *Bhagavad-Gita:*

" It brings to the West a salutary reminder that our highly activistic and one-sided culture is faced with a crisis that may end in self-destruction because it lacks the inner depth of an authentic metaphysical consciousness. Without such depth, our moral and political protestations are just so verbiage. If, in the West, God can no longer be experienced as other than "dead", it is because of an inner split and self-alienation which have characterized the Western mind in its single-minded dedication to only the half of life: that

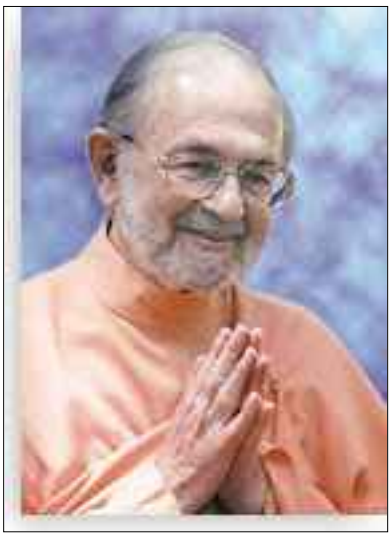
which is exterior, objective and quantitative."

100. **J. Donald Walters** (Swami Kriyananda) (?) World renowned as a singer, composer, and lecturer, founder of the Ananda Village is perhaps the most successful intentional community in the world. In his book " **The Hindu Way of Awakening: Its Revelation, Its Symbols**" says:

"Hinduism, in its plethora of symbols and images, is endlessly complex and therefore endlessly misunderstood, but its true mission is both simple and universal: **soul enlightenment. The way to understand this mission is to realize that it is goal-oriented, not way-oriented. In other words, its focus is the ultimate attainment, Self-realization."**

For even today, thousands of years since they were were first expounded by the ancient rishis (spiritual sages), the religious teachings of India nourish what continues to be the **most spiritually grounded civilization in the world."**

"Ancient rishis made claims so cosmic that even modern physics seems only to be catching up with them and realizing after every scientific breakthrough, that the ancients were there long before them! Even as recently as a century ago, the West was still reeling under the impact of the discovery of geologists that the earth was formed eons ago, and not in 4004 BC. as theologians had determined.



" India, has accomplished in the field of spirituality what, in the world of finance, the free market (as opposed to a controlled economy) has succeeded in doing: The individual seeker has been left free to explore and develop his own spiritual potentials. Other scriptures have hinted at the deeper truths of inward religion. But the priests in every religion seldom quote those passages, which they rightly see as threatening to their institutional preeminence."

"Hinduism is the most ancient expression of Sanatan Dharma, the eternal and universal religion."

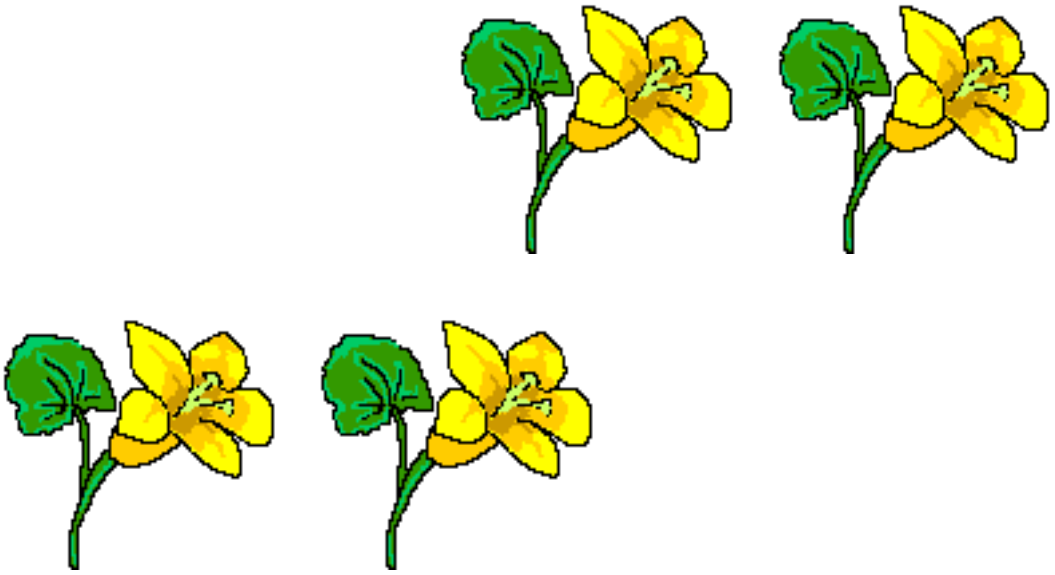
" The insights of which the Hindu teachings are based were revelation in the highest sense of the word."

"A special charm of studying Indian philosophy today is that it is more truly Western, in the modern, scientific sense, than any system of philosophy that the West has produced. Whereas Western rationalism has broken down under the impact of scientific discoveries, **Indian thought cheerfully rides the crest of the wave, and is only pushed higher by every new scientific finding."**

(source: **The Hindu Way of Awakening: Its Revelation, Its Symbols** - By Swami Kriyananda p. 12 - 86 and 150 and **Crises in Modern Thought: Vol. I: The Crises of Reason - By Swami Kriyananda** (**J. Donald Walters**) p. x).

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Guest Book

Updated - December 19, 2003

141. **Niels Henrik David Bohr,** (1885-1962) Danish nuclear physicist who developed the Bohr model of the atom. His received the Nobel Prize in physics in 1922, for his theory of atomic structure (**Quantum Theory**).



He is on record as saying that he goes into the Upanishads to ask questions.

(source: From article - **Indian Conquests of the Mind - By Saibal Gupta. The Statesman.org**)

142. **John Archibald Wheeler**, (1911-) physicist, the first American involved in the theoretical development of the atomic bomb. He also originated a novel approach to the unified field theory. Professor Emeritus at Princeton and Texas universities, studied with Niels Bohr, was named winner of the 1997 Wolf Prize in Physics, for developing the modern "black hole" theory. Has taught students include scientists like Richard Feynman, now occupies the chair that was held by Einstein.

Wheeler wrote: **"I like to think that someone will trace how the deepest thinking of India made its way to Greece and from there to the philosophy of our times."**

It is curious that people like Schroedinger, Niels Bohr, Oppenheimer and John Wheeler are Upanishad scholars.

(source: From article - **Indian Conquests of the Mind - By Saibal Gupta. The Statesman.org**).

143. **Lin Yutang** (1895-1976) Chinese scholar and author of the book, **The Wisdom of China and India**, writes:

"Hindus are natural mystics, mysticism meaning a form of religion aiming at achieving direct union with God. To achieve the union of the individual soul (atman) with the world soul (brahman) behind all things may be said to be the whole effort of the Vedic philosophy."

He further writes:



"My love and true respect for India was born when I first read the Indian epics, the **Ramayana** and the **Mahabharata** in the present translation in my college days. In these two masterpieces we are brought closer to the atmosphere, ideals and customs of ancient Hindu life than by a hundred volumes of commentary on the Upanishads, and through them Hindu ideals, as well as Hindu men and women, become real to us. And the fact that Hindu imagination produced such masterpieces of literature, closely rivaling Homer in antiquity and in beauty and power of portraying human passions, is definite pledge of the worth and richness of the Hindu civilization."

"The creative imagination of the Hindus has conceived no loftier and holier character than Sita; the literature of the world has not produced a higher ideal of womanly love, womanly truth, and womanly devotion."

"The contact with poets, forest saints and the best wits of the land, the glimpse into the first awakening of Ancient India's mind as it searched, at times childishly and naively, at times with a deep intuition, but at all times earnestly and passionately, for the spiritual truths and the meaning of existence - this experience must be highly stimulating to anyone, particularly because the Hindu culture is so different and therefore so much to offer." "Not until we see the richness of the Hindu mind and its essential spirituality can we understand India...."

"India was China's teacher in religion and imaginative literature, and the world's teacher in trignometry, quandratic equations, grammar, phonetics, Arabian Nights, animal fables, chess, as well as in philosophy, and that she inspired Boccaccio, Goethe, Herder, Schopenhauer, Emerson, and probably also old Aesop."

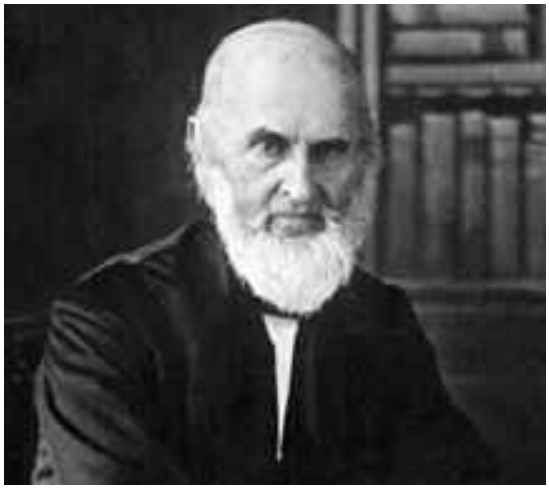
"India produced too much religion and China too little." **A trickle of Indian religious spirit overflowed to China and inundated the whole of Eastern Asia.** It would seem logical and appropriate that any one suffering from a deficiency of the religious spirit should turn to India rather than to any other country in the world."

It is apparent that only in India is religion still a living emotion.

India is the home of fables...one must say that the Hindu mind is fabulous. The genius for creating fables seems inexhaustible in Indian literature....**Ernest Rhys**, in his Introduction to Fable, Aesop and Others justly remarks, "We have to admit that the beast-fable did not begin with him (Aesop), or in Greece at all. We have, in fact, to go East and to look to India and burrow in the 'tale of tales' of **Hitopadesa** to get an idea how old the antiquity of the fable actually is. When one remembers also that many of the stories in the Arabian Nights, including that of the famous Sindbad the Sailor, are of **Hindu origin**, it is not easy to accept the view that such tales are not of native Indian growth."

The Indian culture is **highly creative** and in fact has enriched the world literature with the droll humor that we associate with the Arabian Nights.

(source: **The Wisdom of China and India - By Lin Yutang** p. 3-4 and 135 -141 and 265-7).



144. **John Greenleaf Whittier** (1807-1892) was a talented poet who was influenced by Emerson and from whom he borrowed a copy of the Bhagavad Gita. To **Emerson** he wrote: "I will e'en keep it until I restore it to thee personally in exchange for George Fox (founder of the Society of Friends, the Quakers). "It is a wonderful book-and has greatly excited my curiosity to know more of the religious literature of the East."
(source: **The Oriental Religions and American Thought** (Nineteenth-Century Explorations), Carl T. Jackson - Greenwood Press, London, England, 1981, p. 80.)

The results of Whittier's reading are evident in a good number of his poems like "The Oval Heart," "The Cypress Tree of Ceylon," "The Dead Feast of the Kol-Folk," and "The Khan's Devil." A particularly striking example of his use of Indian material is his well-known poem "The Brewing of Soma," which describes the preparation and use of the Vedic sacrificial drink (source: www.gosai.com)

145. **Maurice Winternitz** (1863-1937) famed Indologist, author of **History of Indian Literature**, states:

" From the mystical doctrines of the Upanishads, one current of thought may be traced to the mysticism of Persian Sufism, to the mystic, theosophic logos doctrine of the Neo-Platonics and the Alexandrian Christian Mystics, Eckhart and Tauler, and finally to the philosophy of the great German mystic of the nineteenth century, Schopenhauer."

(source: **History of Indian Literature - By Maurice Winternitz** volume 1. p. 266.)

146. **M. A. Sherring,** noted missionary of the 19th century, eloquently described **the antiquity of Varanasi,** in the following words:



“When Babylon was struggling with Nineveh for supremacy, when Tyre was planting her colonies, when Athens was growing in strength, before Rome had become known, or Greece had contended with Persia, or Cyprus had added lustre to the Persian monarchy, or Nebuchadnezzar had captured Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of Judaea had been carried into captivity, she (Varanasi) had already risen to greatness, if not to glory.”

(source: **Banaras - City of Light - By Diana L. Eck** p. 4-5).

147. **H. Stutfield** author of **Mysticism and Catholicism** states:

"Especially does there seem to be a growing probability that, from the historical standpoint at any rate, **India was the birthplace of our fundamental imaginings, the cradle of contemplative religion and the nobler philosophy."**

(source: **Mysticism and Catholicism - By H Stutfield** 1925 p. 31).

148. **F. W. J. Schelling** (1773-1854) a crucial figure in the development of German idealist and nature philosophy, Eastern ideas pervade and color much of his thinking. In his book **Philosophy of Mythology**, he devoted to India more than one hundred pages. He regarded **Vedanta as an**

'exalted idealism' and this enthusiasm for Indian thought was taken up by Arthur Schopenhauer.

(source: **An Introduction to Hinduism - By Gavin Flood** p. 269).

Through out his life Schelling expressed great interest in and support for Indian studies, and in his 1802 lecture he lavished praise on the 'sacred texts of the Indians, claiming that they were superior to the Bible.

(source: **Oriental Enlightenment: The encounter between Asian and Western thought - By J. J. Clarke** p. 61-63).



149. **Robert Southey** (1774-1843), English poet, generally considered a member of the romantic movement. He was born in Bristol and educated at the University of Oxford. **Southey** was a good friend of poet Samuel Taylor Cole ridge.

He had read the Bhagavad Gita in the preparation of his lurid narrative poem The Curse of Kehama written in 1810.

(source: **British Attitudes to India, 1784-1858** - **By Bearce** (Oxford 1961) p. 103)

150. **Ludwig von Schröder** German philosopher, author of the book **Pythagoras und die Inder (Pythagoras and the Indians),** published in 1884, he argued that Pythagoras had been influenced by the Samkhya school of thought, the most prominent branch of the Indic philosophy next to Vedanta.

"Nearly all the philosophical and mathematical doctrines attributed to Pythagoras are derived from India."

151. **F. W. Thomas**, wrote in his book **The Mutual Influence of Mohammedans and Hindus**,

"Hinduism is one of the greatest assimilants that the world has known." "It is infinitely absorbent like the ocean."

(source: **The Mutual Influence of Mohammedans and Hindus - by F W Thomas**).

152. **Deepak Chopra** Vedantic sage and wise-man from the East, author of several books including **Ageless Body, Timeless Mind** says of Hinduism:

"I find that Vedanta, of all great traditions, does have a framework that I can come to terms with as a person who thinks that science is the most legitimate way of understanding the secrets of nature." " I regard Vedanta as a source which inspired Hinduism." He emphasizes the Bhagavad Gita, as one of the gemstones of the Vedantic traditions.

(source: **Deepak Chopra: Vedantic Evangelist - Hinduism Today July/August 2000**).



153. **Sir Jacob Epstein** (1880-1959), leading English Sculptor. After studying with Rodin in Paris, he revolted against the ornate and pretty in art, producing bold, often harsh and massive forms in stone and bronze. His best-known pieces include the Oscar Wilde Memorial (1911; Père-Lachaise, Paris), a marble Venus (1917; Yale Univ., New Haven, Conn.), and a Madonna and Child (Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, London).

Epstein has written about **Shiva Nataraja**:

"Shiva dances, creating the world and destroying it, his large rhythms conjure up vast aeons of time, and his movements have a relentless magical power of incantation. Our European allegories are banal and pointless by comparison with these profound works, devoid of the trappings of symbolism, concentrating on the essential, the essentially plastic."

(source: **Let There Be Sculpture - By Sir Jacob Epstein** 1942 p. 193).

154. **Apollonius Tyanaeus,** Greek Thinker and Traveler. 1st Century AD, said:

"In India I found a race of mortals living upon the Earth. but not adhering to it. Inhabiting cities, but not being fixed to them, possessing everything but possessed by nothing."

155. **Mr. Thorton,** in his book **History of British India**, observed:

"the Hindus are indisputably entitled to rank among the most ancient of existing nations, as well as among those most early and most rapidly civilized ...ere yet the Pyramids looked down upon the Valley of the Nile.. when Greece and Italy, those cradles of modern civilization, housed only the tenants of the wilderness, India was the seat of wealth and grandeur.."



156 **Professor Eugene Burnouf** (1801-1852) in his **Discourse on Sanskrit and Its Literature**, given at the College of France, states:

" We will study India with its philosophy and its myths, its literature, its laws and its language. Nay it is more than India, it is a page of the origin of the world that we will attempt to decipher."

(source: **Discourse on Sanskrit and Its Literature - By Eugene Burnouf**).



157. **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar** (?) founder of the Bangalore based **Art of Living** an International Foundation. He recently addressed the UN Peace Summit on Aug 28. He is the only non-westerner to serve on the advisory board of Yale University's School of Divinity and is author of the book - **Hinduism and Christianity .**

"Hinduism is not a religion; it is just a way of life that thousands of Rishis have written about. **It is such a democratic religion where everybody has the freedom to think, write or say whatever they want. We have no opposition for any other philosophy coming into us.** We have no opposition for the Bible to be part of our own study. Nobody here will say, 'If you read the Bible, you will go to hell'. It is an inclusive way of looking at life, and that is what we need in the world today. We have no objection taking food from every part of the world, listening to music from every part of the world. So we need to globalize wisdom too."

(source: **Re-establish The Human Values, Globalize The Knowledge**).

He explains that Hindu astrology has a very ancient lineage. Ten thousand years ago the Rig-Veda saw the earth as round and the sun was at the center and all the planets revolved around it. The West is thus committing an injustice by not giving Indian astronomy and astrology due credit.

"Indian astronomers had calculated that life started 1 billion, 955 million, 818 thousand and 501 years ago and that 28 cycles of yugas have already happened."

"The ancient sages knew these facts. This is why they devised the mala (necklace) with 108 beads, which stand for the 12 constellations and the nine planets and the 108 different permutations which affect one's life." Everything is this universe is interconnected."



158. **Hu Shih** (1891-1962), Chinese philosopher in Republican China. He promoted vernacular literature to replace writing in the classical style. He was ambassador to the U.S. (1938-42) and chancellor of Peking University (1946-48). **Hu Shih** has commented on the peace-loving nature of Indians:

"India conquered and dominated China culturally for 20 centuries without ever having to send a single soldier across her border."

"Never before had China seen a religion so rich in imagery, so beautiful and captivating in ritualism and so bold in cosmological and metaphysical speculations. Like a poor beggar suddenly halting before a magnificent storehouse of precious stones of dazzling brilliancy and splendor, China was overwhelmed, baffled and overjoyed. She begged and borrowed freely from this munificent giver. The first borrowings were chiefly from the religious life of India,

in which China's indebtedness to India can never be fully told."

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p. 338).

159. **Professor Gordon Childe** writes:

"It would be absurd to suggest that any two tribes living, say, in Greece and India, and speaking quite unconnected dialects, on reaching the same level of development should have hit upon such similar words for "father," "fall," and "five" and inflected them in such similar ways as the Vedic Indians and the Homeric Greeks did in fact do. The primitive culture must be the stage of development reached by several peoples while living sufficiently close together to communicate." -- **The European Inheritance** 1: 84



160. **Frederich von Schlegel** (1772-1829), German philosopher, critic, and writer, the most prominent founder of German Romanticism. Educated in law, he turned to writing. His brother, August Wilhelm von Schlegel, was a scholar and poet. With his brother, August Wilhelm, he published the Athenaeum, the principal organ of the romantic school. He was so impressed with Indic spirituality that he declared:

" When one considers the sublime disposition underlying the truly universal education (of traditional India)...**then what is or has been called religion in Europe seems to us to be scarcely deserving of that name.** And one feels compelled to advise those who wish to witness religion to travel to India for that purpose...."

(source: **In Search of The Cradle of Civilization: : New Light on Ancient India - By Georg Feuerstein, Subhash Kak & David Frawley** p. 276).

Schlegel study of Sanskrit and of Indian civilization, **On the Language and Wisdom of India** (1808), was outstanding.

He said that, **" There is no language in the world, even Greek, which has the clarity and the philosophical precision of Sanskrit,"** adding that:

" India is not only at the origin of everything she is superior in everything, intellectually, religiously or politically and even the Greek heritage seems pale in comparison."

(source: **Arise, O India - By Francois Gautier** ISBN 81-241-0518-9 Har-Anand Publications 2000. p. 25).

He wrote to his friend and comrade, the poet **Ludwig Tieck** (1773-1853): "Here is the actual source of all languages, all the thoughts and poems of the human spirit; everything, everything without exception comes from India."

(source: **On Hinduism Reviews and Reflections - By Ram Swarup** p. 105 and **The Aryan Hoax: That Dupes The Indians - By Paramesh Choudhary** p. 109).

Schelegel speaks of the noble, clear and severely grand accents of Indian thought. He wrote in his book, **Indian Languages, Literature and Philosophy**, p. 471:

"The divine origin of man, as taught by Vedanta, is continually inculcated, to stimulate his efforts to return, to animate him in the struggle, and incite him to consider a reunion and reincorporation with Divinity as the one primary object of every action and reaction. Even the loftiest philosophy of the European, the idealism of reason as it is set forth by the Greek philosophers, appears in

comparison with the abundant light and vigor of Oriental idealism like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noonday sun, faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished."

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** - p.23-24).



Schegel spoke for his generation when he wrote that:

"In India lay the real source of all tongues, of all thoughts and utterances of the human mind. Everything - yes, everything without exception - has it origin in India." and "The primary source of all intellectual development - in a word the whole human culture - is unquestionably to be found in the traditions of the East."

(source: **Oriental Enlightenment: The encounter between Asian and Western thought - By J. J. Clarke** p.65).

"India is pre-eminently distinguished for the many traits of original grandeur of thought and of the wonderful remains of immediate knowledge."

"The doctrine of the transmigration of souls was indigenous to India and was brought into Greece by Pythagoras."

"Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason, as is set forth by Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigor of Oriental idealism **like a feeble promethean spark** in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noonday sun - faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished."

(source: **Lectures on the history of literature: ancient and modern** p. 126 and **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 276 - 280).



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